

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Chicago socialist candidate:

'Why workers need a labor party now'

By Doug Jenness

CHICAGO—Andrew Pulley, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago, told a meeting of auto workers here March 20 that launching an independent labor party is a life-and-death question for the union movement.

"It is absolutely essential if we are going to defend ourselves against the class war of the bosses and bankers," Pulley said, "a war which is political as well as economic, which is being carried out by the Democrats as well as the Republicans."

Addressing the Joint Council meeting of Amalgamated Local 453 of the United Auto Workers union at the Roy Stroud Labor Center, the socialist candidate challenged his audience to help take the first step toward launching a labor party by running an independent labor candidate for Congress in the next election.

"A labor party will never get started unless somebody starts it somewhere," Pulley explained. "Some local, in some city, must start it."

"You can do it. You have an organization, money, offices, the know-how. We've had enough resolutions. Now somebody must seize the time."

"If you take even this modest step," Pulley argued, "it will attract lots of attention. The *Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune* will attack it. But workers all over the country will sit up and take

notice. Other unions will follow your example. You can show the way forward."

Pulley, a member of United Steelworkers Local 1066 at U.S. Steel's Gary Works, is an ex-GI who organized in the army against the Vietnam War. He is also a veteran in the fight for Black rights.

Pulley's socialist campaign in Chicago has received increasing news media coverage since the February 27 Democratic primary, in which Jane Byrne upset incumbent Mayor Michael Bilandic.

Pulley's message—that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans offer any alternative for workers—has caught the attention of growing numbers of Chicago workers.

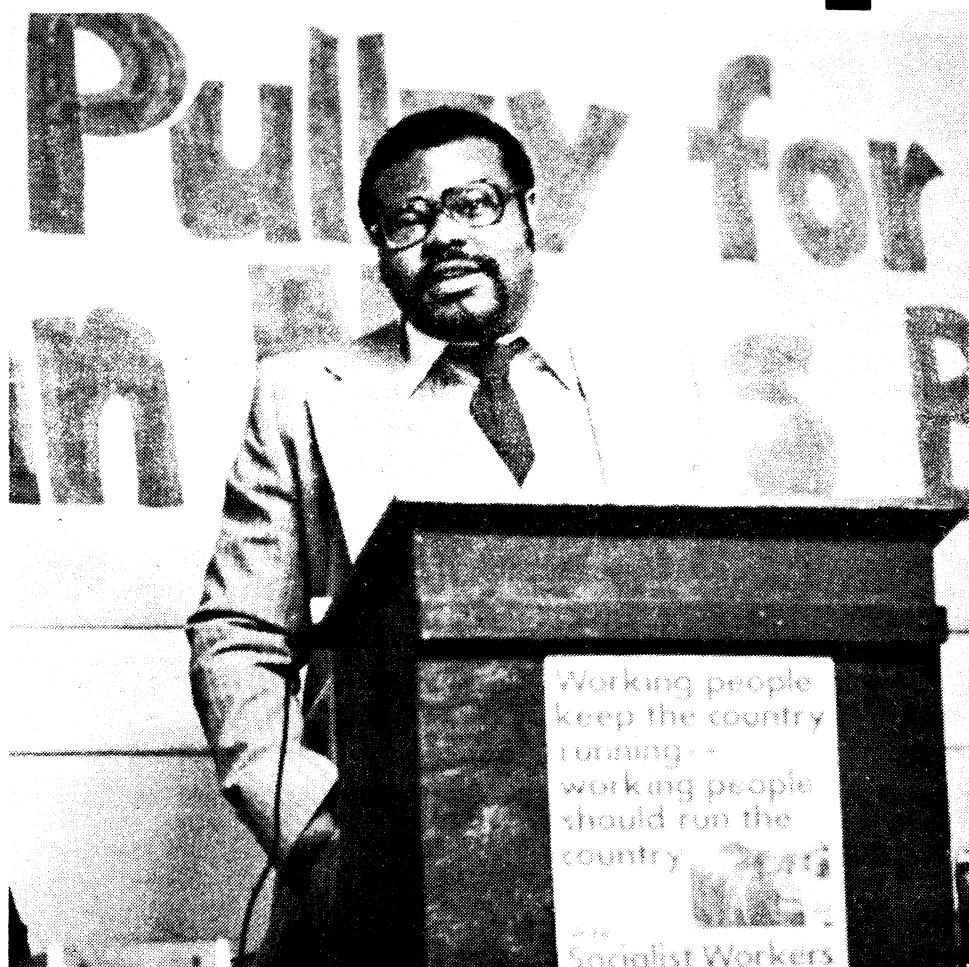
At the UAW meeting, Pulley explained that a labor party is urgently needed because of the scope and nature of the government-employer attacks on the working class.

"If we don't act to establish a political party, the unions will be destroyed," he declared.

"We are so used to our unions being there, so used to the fact that steelworkers are organized, that auto workers are organized, that sometimes we forget that the employers would prefer that unions not exist."

"And as they try to squeeze more and more out of us in order to compete

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Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate Andrew Pulley—a steelworker, ex-GI, and Black rights fighter—is challenging two-party monopoly in Chicago elections.

U.S. gov't v. democratic rights

Court upholds Bell
in socialist lawsuit

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WEBER

Job rights for
Blacks and women
hinge on defeating
antiunion lawsuit

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'Weber' challenge

Brian Weber's challenge to one affirmative-action plan negotiated by the United Steelworkers, which will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court March 28, has become widely recognized for what it is—a challenge to the entire labor movement.

It is also a challenge for the labor movement:

How will the unions respond to this assault on their collective-bargaining rights?

How will they respond to this attempt to take back the employment gains that Blacks and women have won?

Weber and his backers portray this as a case of white rights versus uppity Blacks and women.

This is absolutely wrong.

Weber is a case of employer "rights" to run roughshod over workers versus union rights to defend its members.

The fight for affirmative action does not take rights from one group of workers in favor of another. If that were true, affirmative action would divide and weaken the unions—and the employers might very well support it.

But they don't. They know that every step toward equality for women and Black workers makes it that much harder to use one group against another to the detriment of all workers.

Active defense of affirmative action strengthens and unifies the unions. It attracts to their cause the young, militant Black and women workers who are the most ready to fight every aspect of the antilabor offensive.

The power of such united struggle is most evident in Newport News, Virginia, where shipyard workers are battling to be represented by the United Steelworkers. Half of the yard's 15,500 production and maintenance workers are Black. Several thousand are women.

They have put their jobs on the line in this fight for a union because they are convinced that the USWA will defend their rights and give them a voice that the racist, company union never did.

In this respect the future of union organizing is at stake in the Weber case and in the union movement's response to it.

The Weber case also poses a challenge to

Black groups, women's rights organizations, students, and others who want to defend affirmative action:

Will they direct their efforts toward bringing into play the only force that can block the assault—the power of the organized labor movement?

It took big struggles to win civil rights laws and the initial steps toward affirmative action. But those gains were won without the unions (which were and are held back by a conservative, bureaucratic misleadership) really entering the fray.

The kinds of struggles that won affirmative action will not be enough to defend it.

This is a new period, in which the capitalist economy is wracked by crisis; in which the employers are driven to harsher and harsher antilabor attacks in order to defend their profits. This is a period of polarization of class forces.

The only class that has an interest in defending affirmative action is the working class. And the fight to defend affirmative action must be taken right to the center of the only mass organizations of the working class—the unions.

Waiting in the wings for the Weber case to be decided are other threats to affirmative action. Several similar "reverse discrimination" lawsuits are pending. Then there is the Sears "class action" suit against complying with federal antidiscrimination laws. And extension of the basic steel consent decree hinges on Weber.

Some important steps have been taken. Five hundred people, mostly steelworkers, joined a March 14 meeting in Gary cosponsored by USWA District 31 Director James Balanoff and Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher. A March 4 rally in New Orleans heard from a broad list of labor and community speakers, including a representative from the USWA international civil rights department. In New York on March 8 an International Women's Day panel included a Black woman steelworker, who is part of the program Weber seeks to outlaw.

Union locals across the country have begun to pass resolutions against Weber. Picket lines are scheduled in some cities to coincide with the beginning of the court hearing. Other meetings are in the works.

These are the necessary steps to get out the truth and begin to mobilize labor's power against Weber. It is time to intensify this campaign. We urge our readers to join the fight.

New battles in Iran

Fierce fighting broke out March 18 between the Iranian army and Kurdish townspeople in the city of Sanandaj.

Under the U.S.-backed tyranny of the shah, the Kurds were forbidden to publish books and newspapers in their own language. Education in Kurdish was forbidden. The Kurdish people faced systematic discrimination.

Having participated in the victorious struggle against the shah's dictatorship, the Kurds are now demanding their own autonomous government to ensure their rights.

Instead of meeting the just demands of the Kurds, the Bazargan government, backed by the Ayatollah Khomeini, has vowed to crush their struggle.

Such a course is not in the interests of the Iranian workers and peasants, nor of the soldiers who are being called upon to fight their brothers and sisters in Kurdistan.

Together, the oppressed minorities comprise the majority of the Iranian people. The Iranian revolution can move forward only on the basis of a firm alliance between the oppressed nationalities and the Persian workers and peasants—an alliance based on support to the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination.

The struggle of the Kurds is a reflection of the revolution—of the refusal of the Iranian people to settle for anything less than full liberation, of their determination to push forward in the fight for their rights.

The Iranian capitalists are trying desperately to stop this movement of the masses. They are telling the workers to stop forming factory committees. They are telling women to return to domestic slavery. They are telling peasants to stop thinking about taking over the big estates. And they are telling the Iranian people as a whole to accept a capitalist "Islamic republic."

But the Iranian masses have shown no inclination to give up their aspirations. Under these circumstances, and with the government's March 30 referendum offering only a choice between the monarchy and an Islamic republic, the demand for the election of a constituent assembly is more timely than ever.

The fight for such a representative assembly to democratically debate and decide the future of Iran is key to countering the Bazargan government's attacks on democratic rights and opening the way for the Iranian masses to move forward.

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The Militant

Editor: STEVE CLARK
Associate Editors: CINDY JAQUITH
ANDY ROSE
Business Manager: ANDREA BARON

Editorial Staff: Peter Archer, Nancy Cole, Fred Feldman, David Frankel, Osborne Hart, Shelley Kramer, Ivan Licho, Omari Musa, August Nimitz, Harry Ring, Dick Roberts, Priscilla Schenk, Arnold Weissberg.

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Biggest steel union local in U.S. defends Marroquin

EAST CHICAGO, Ind.—The largest local of the United Steelworkers has given its support to Héctor Marroquin in his fight against deportation to Mexico.

A motion to back Marroquin's right to asylum and to contribute \$275 to his defense was adopted unanimously by a March 15 meeting of Local 1010. The local represents 18,000 workers at the huge Inland Steel plant here.

Local 1010's action is a major advance in the fight to save Marroquin's life—it is the first big industrial union local to take a stand on his case.

Coming just a few weeks before Marroquin's deportation hearing in Houston, this action can open the door to further support by neighboring locals in Steelworkers District 31 and throughout the country.

The March 15 meeting, which was attended by about 200 members, acted after hearing a brief address by Marroquin.

He explained that he had fled Mexico after being framed up on charges of "terrorism." If forced to return, he would face torture or death at the hands of the repressive Mexican government.

Marroquin said that many unionists have been victimized in Mexico. He cited cases of government attacks on striking electrical workers, miners, and campus workers.

The motion to support Marroquin was made by Aristeo Torres.

The meeting was chaired by Cliff "Cowboy" Mezo, vice-president of Local 1010 and an early endorser of Marroquin's case.

The meeting heard Marroquin on the recommendation of the executive board of the union. Local 1010 has a big latino membership, many from Mexico.

The Marroquin Defense Committee had a table at the hall, and just about everyone coming into the meeting got a piece of literature on the case.

A petition endorsing Marroquin's fight was circulated during the meeting and signed by sixty-nine unionists.

A dozen bought copies of Marroquin's pamphlet, *My Story*.

The few available Marroquin defense buttons were quickly sold. Individuals contributed twenty-two dollars to his defense.

Some U.S. workers were surprised to hear that repression exists in Mexico. Workers from Mexico replied to this, describing their own experiences.

One told of having worked at a mine in Durango. The workers went on strike, and paratroopers were brought in to attack them. He personally was roughed up by the paratroopers.

One union member said he was especially interested in Marroquin's case because he had a nephew who had also been a student activist and who disappeared after being jailed by the government.

Dick McBride, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and a member of Local 1010, told the *Militant* afterwards that he thought the local's action was a big step forward not only for Marroquin's defense but for the entire labor movement.

"There is a growing awareness of the need for working-class solidarity," McBride said. "Solidarity with other workers on strike, like in Newport News. Solidarity with Black, latino, and women workers fighting for equality. Every step in this direction makes the unions stronger."

"To support the rights of a Mexican brother—an undocumented worker and political refugee—that's solidarity, too."

"I think discussion around this case is making workers more aware of the plight of undocumented workers and why they are not our enemies, as the bosses want us to think. And more aware of how the U.S. government backs up repressive regimes."

"This vote is a sign of the changes in the labor movement. You know, just the night before we voted to endorse Héctor Marroquin's case, the Steelworkers district here cosponsored a meeting on the Weber case. Nearly 600 people came out to support affirmative action."

"Actions like these show what more and more workers want the labor movement to be—a movement that

stands up for the rights of all who are beaten down and exploited in this society."

Support for Marroquin by workers in basic industry has apparently also provoked concern in the northern Indiana power structure.

The Gary *Post-Tribune* carried a report on the Local 1010 action, including a scurrilous red-baiting attack on Marroquin.

Pointing to his acknowledged membership in the Socialist Workers Party and suggesting some sinister purpose to the defense effort, the article presented the trumped-up charges against Marroquin as though they were proven facts.

The paper quoted an official of the Mexican consulate in Chicago who claimed Marroquin could be assured of justice and fair play if he were returned.

It didn't explain why the Mexican government accuses Marroquin of killing a cop at a time when he has irrefutable proof, in the form of hospital records, that he was already in the United States.

As the April 3 date approaches for the hearing on Héctor Marroquin's appeal against deportation, activity in his behalf is escalating.

On Tuesday, April 3, the day the hearing begins, Marroquin supporters will picket the INS office at the federal building in Houston, 515 Rusk Street, corner of Smith.



Militant/Susan Ellis

HECTOR MARROQUIN

In other parts of the country new support has been gained. On March 9, Marroquin spoke at a public meeting in Washington, D.C., cosponsored by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs and the United States Student Association, along with the Marroquin Defense Committee. Speakers included Frank Jackalone, president of the student organization, and Hilda Mason, member of the D.C. City Council.

At the meeting it was announced that INS director Leonel Castillo will be greeted by a picket line when he speaks in Washington March 29.

In Detroit, the defense committee sponsored a benefit featuring Alborada, a group that does Latin American folk songs. This raised \$500 for the defense.

In Pittsburgh a picket is being organized for Friday, March 30, when Castillo is slated to speak at the University of Pittsburgh.

In San Francisco, the Marroquin Defense Committee will sponsor a picket at the INS, Sixth and Market streets, on Tuesday, March 27, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Texas memo:

The Héctor Marroquin movement center in Houston is open daily. Help with mailings, pickets, leafletting, fund raising, and a lot more. 108 Main Street #105, Houston, Texas 77002. Telephone (713) 224-1870.

DON'T MISS THE RALLY
Saturday night, March 31.
Héctor Marroquin and prominent supporters speak at Maritime Union Hall, 8329 Lawndale Avenue, Houston.

The Nation.

Right of Asylum

An important human rights case comes to trial on April 3 in Houston, when the Government moves to deport Hector Marroquin to Mexico. A 25-year-old student leader, trade unionist and Socialist, Marroquin seeks political asylum here. If deported, he faces jail, torture and possible death.

If Marroquin wins, he will be the first Mexican granted political asylum in this country—and a historic precedent will be set for thousands of political refugees seeking asylum from the right-wing dictatorships of Haiti, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Argentina and Chile. These refugees, unlike those from Communist nations, have normally been turned down by our Government.

Marroquin became politically active after the Mexican Government's massacre of 500 demonstrators on the eve of the 1968 Olympics. Later, while a college student, he offended Mexican officials by helping to organize marches for democratic rights. He and three other students were falsely accused of committing a terrorist assault, and a newspaper sought to link him to a murder case.

Two of the three students were later assassinated by the police and the third was kidnapped. Convinced that he could not get a fair trial, Marroquin fled, got work in Texas and asked for asylum. He has since become active in a Teamster organizing drive and has

joined the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party.

Several of Marroquin's co-workers in Houston corroborate that he was there at the time he was supposedly committing crimes in Mexico. Medical testimony confirms he was in a hip-to-toe cast in Galveston, following a car accident, when he was supposedly launching a Mexican guerrilla attack.

When the Immigration and Naturalization Service turned down Marroquin's request for asylum on December 21, 1978, it based its decision on an advisory opinion of the State Department which, in turn, was derived from the State Department's Report on Human Rights of the previous year, denying that there was serious repression in Mexico. In its latest report the State Department admits that there is repression. By its own logic, the I.N.S. should reverse its ruling.

Last September, an amnesty was declared by the Mexican Government for some of its political prisoners. A Government list of 160 prisoners eligible for amnesty included Marroquin's name. Yet the amnesty applies only to prisoners facing Federal charges, not state charges as in Marroquin's case. Neither Marroquin nor his attorney, Margaret Winter, has ever been informed of the charges against him.

Letters urging asylum for Hector Marroquin should be sent to Leonel Castillo, director of Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C. 20536. Contributions to defray Hector's legal costs may be sent to the Marroquin Defense Committee, P.O. Box 843 Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003 (telephone: 691-3587). JAMES COCKCROFT

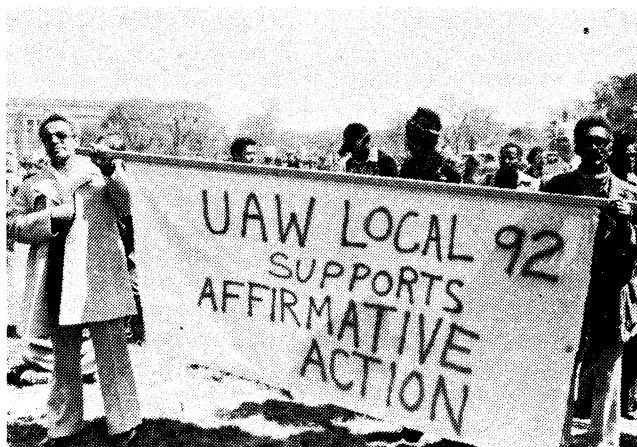
James Cockcroft is a professor of sociology at Rutgers University.

From 'The Nation,' March 24

Special offer to new readers

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The *Militant* campaigns every week for labor solidarity—against the Weber 'reverse discrimination' case, for affirmative action, for the Equal Rights Amendment, for the Newport News strikers. If these fights are your fights, you won't want to miss a single issue.



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Why court upheld Bell in socialist lawsuit

By Cindy Jaquith

NEW YORK—Escalating the government's offensive against the democratic rights of working people, the U.S. Court of Appeals issued a unanimous decision March 19 that the attorney general and the secret police stand above the law.

The decision threw out a contempt citation against Attorney General Griffin Bell, who had refused to obey a court order to turn over the files of eighteen FBI informers to attorneys for the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP is suing the government for its massive spying against party members and supporters.

The court's ruling underscored the fact that in the face of rising class struggle here and abroad, the U.S. rulers are moving to clamp down even harder on democratic rights.

The court rulings against striking steelworkers in Newport News, Virginia; the government's campaign against the Vietnamese revolution; and its war-like moves in Yemen are all part of this drive to attack the living standards and rights of working people around the world.

Since it was filed in 1973, the Socialist Workers Party lawsuit has been in the forefront of exposing the government's secret-police attacks on the labor movement, Blacks, women, and socialists. The FBI was forced to admit that it stole from, bugged, and infiltrated the SWP. But it stopped cold when Judge Thomas Griesa ordered the informer files on the socialists be released to their lawyers. Attorney General Bell was slapped with the contempt citation for withholding the documents.

In overturning this citation, the Court of Appeals virtually admitted its decision was political, not legal. Acknowledging that "this case is unusually important," the judges' ruling went on to "unequivocally affirm the principle that no person is above the law." Except the officials of the U.S. government! "A contempt sanction imposed on the Attorney General in his official capacity has greater public importance . . . and warrants more sensitive judicial scrutiny than such a sanction imposed on an ordinary litigant," the ruling piously explained.

For the "ordinary litigants," such as the striker hauled into court for walking a picket line, there is one kind of justice: jail. For the top cop in the government, there is another.

Rarely have the courts stated so frankly the class nature of the American justice system. It is designed to protect the capitalist status quo, not democratic rights. When push comes to shove, the courts, like Congress and the White House, are weapons to defend the interests of the employing class against the working class.

Today the employers see their interests in jeopardy around the world. The



Newport News, Virginia. In reaction to rise of class struggle, U.S. rulers are intensifying drive against democratic rights.

Iranian revolution has sent shivers throughout the U.S.-backed regimes of the Middle East. In Africa, the revolutionary soldiers of Cuba are coming to the aid of the Black liberation struggle. And here in the United States, the coal miners' strike of 1978 opened a new stage in the radicalization of the labor movement.

The Carter administration is probing for ways to reassert U.S. military might abroad and to reconstitute its secret-police forces at home. It wants to legitimize the antidemocratic functions of the FBI, and the court of appeals ruling on informer files is one step in that direction.

A review of the history of the SWP suit makes this clear.

In September 1976, then-Attorney General Edward Levi announced that he had ordered the thirty-eight-year investigation of the SWP ended.

This statement came after the release of more than 100,000 pages of documents on FBI crimes against the SWP and the labor movement in general. It came after the SWP suit had won the support of prominent individuals and organizations. Even major capitalist papers such as the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* had editorialized in support of the socialists' democratic rights.

In the wake of the Watergate scandal, the ruling class and its two parties sought to give the impression that they were eliminating the worst abuses from the political police system. To this end, they admitted some past wrongdoing, claiming they were cleaning things up.

Levi's 1976 order ending the investigation of the SWP was clearly the last step they were willing to take along this road.

That, in their minds, was supposed to be the end. The SWP was supposed to believe the FBI would really stop its attacks, and act accordingly by dropping its fight against the government.

But the SWP refused to go along. It pressed its suit further, demanding the informer files.

Then the government fought tooth and nail, defending the "informer privilege" of the finks it hires to assassinate, steal, and squeal.

It used every stalling tactic in the book to delay a trial and exhaust the resources of the SWP.

The government's defiance of the order to release its informer files was part of a broader campaign. The *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, for example, supported Bell's defiance of the court ruling. Other examples of the Carter administration's new posture include:

- The July 1978 conviction of David Truong and Ronald Humphrey, who were accused of espionage for Vietnam. This case was used as a means of asserting the right of the White House to order warrantless phone taps and electronic surveillance on the grounds of "national security."

- The injunction against the *Progressive* magazine, issued March 8, 1979, barring it from publishing an article on the hydrogen bomb.

- FBI chief William Webster's quiet dropping of the prosecution of numerous agents through deals with Justice Department prosecutors.

- The rumored dropping of the case against former FBI chief L. Patrick Gray and his co-defendants.

Despite the, adverse ruling on the informer files, the SWP and its attorneys are determined to press forward with the suit. "We're going to fight this decision in the Supreme Court," said attorney Margaret Winter.

"But at the same time, we're going to push ahead toward the trial stage of the case. This decision doesn't affect our right to get the damages and injunctive relief we've been fighting for. Rather, it just underscores the importance of this suit in challenging government violations of democratic rights."

Andrew Pulley hits 'dual system of injustice'

CHICAGO—The following statement was released by Andrew Pulley, SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago and a member of United Steelworkers Local 1066.

Monday's appeals court ruling against the Socialist Workers Party is an attack on working people and all those who support democratic rights.

It is one of the series of court rulings—like the *Weber* and *Bakke* decisions against affirmative action and the Newport News, Virginia, ruling where an appeals court tried

to reverse the democratic vote of thousands of shipyard workers and break their strike.

By lifting the contempt citation against Attorney General Griffin Bell, the court has said he doesn't have to hand over files on spies and provocateurs who disrupted the Socialist Workers Party. The government admits these informers committed criminal acts, acts like the beatings and burglaries carried out by the Legion of Justice here in Chicago ten years ago under protection of city police and Military Intelligence.

The court decision upholding Bell

is a political act, designed to prevent further disclosure of the crimes of the FBI against the labor movement, the Black and *latino* communities, women struggling for their rights, and socialists.

The court has said once again that there are two sets of laws: one for the bankers and businessmen who run the country and the Griffin Bells who do their bidding; the other for working people.

It has never been clearer that we cannot rely on the capitalists' institutions to give us justice. Neither can we rely on their parties, the Democrats and Republicans, who

write the laws and appoint the judges.

We need our own party, a labor party, a party of the trade unions. We need a party that can represent the vast majority, the working people and all the oppressed.

Just as my brother and sister steelworkers in Newport News were not intimidated by the court decision there, the Socialist Workers Party will not be stopped in our campaign to defend and strengthen democratic rights. We will not be silenced about the need for labor to establish our own political party and end this dual system of injustice.

Workers will pay the price

Mideast 'peace' treaty veils plans for war

By David Frankel

With each passing day the real meaning of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement worked out under President Carter's supervision is becoming clearer.

The "peace" treaty—so-called by Washington and the mass media—is in fact a war treaty.

- Carter is pouring \$5 billion in new U.S. arms into Israel and Egypt.

- More arms—\$540 million worth according to Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.)—are being rushed to the rightist regime in North Yemen. A U.S. naval task force and U.S. "advisers" accompany the arms.

- Israeli troops, meanwhile, are gunning down Palestinian demonstrators on the occupied West Bank.

Two Palestinians were killed March 15, and four were wounded a few days earlier.

Actions speak louder than words, but U.S. officials are not making any secret of their intentions. *Washington Post* correspondent Jim Hoagland noted March 15 that the administration is explaining the treaty "as part of a new American commitment to an increased military role in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East."

Peace through war?

Of course, Carter claims that his military build-up is intended to bring peace. Such assurances are reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson's claim that World War I would be a "war to end all wars."

The Egyptian-Israeli pact engineered by Carter, and the U.S. military moves that accompany it, are aimed at crushing the struggles of the Arab masses against imperialist domination and against the capitalist exploiters who rule in their own countries.

Driven by fear of new upheavals such as the one that toppled the shah's dictatorship, Washington is desperately trying to free its hands for the kind of military intervention it was unable to carry out in Iran. U.S. moves in Yemen are an example.

Carter tries to justify his aggressive military posture there by claiming that South Yemen, with the aid of Soviet and Cuban advisers, invaded Saudi-backed North Yemen. But the government in South Yemen insisted that the confrontation was sparked by a rebellion in the North.

The South Yemeni version was corroborated by a report in the March 14 *Christian Science Monitor*. Describing the experience of a Lebanese journalist who had just returned from North Yemen, Helena Cobban said:

"During his tour, which included two distinct rebel-held areas, including the towns of Baydah, Qaatabah, and Harib, the correspondent saw no members of the South Yemeni armed forces, and no foreign advisers or fighters.

"Rebel fighters described themselves as coming from three main groups: NDF [National Democratic Front] fighters who had retreated to nearby mountains after the failure of a previous rebellion in 1972; supporters who had remained 'underground' in the towns since then; and former members of the North Yemeni armed forces who had defected since the beginning of the current fighting."

By pouring tanks, jets, and advisers into North Yemen, Carter is making a calculated move. He is trying to lay the political groundwork for future interventions. That is why he made a point of bypassing congressional review of his actions. And he is trying to establish a direct U.S. military presence in the Arabian peninsula, a presence that can be rapidly expanded.

Nor is the White House mincing any words about how it sees the issue. One Carter aide, quoted March 18 by *New York Times* reporter Richard Burt, said: "You've got to understand that



From top: Palestinians protest on West Bank. Israeli workers rally against high prices. Egyptian workers burn trolleys in 1977 rebellion against price hikes. Washington's counterrevolutionary deal is directed against working masses throughout Middle East and in United States as well.

our actions in Yemen and the Middle East peace process are intimately linked. Both form a wider policy of salvaging American influence in the area after Iran."

Zionist regime strengthened

One aspect of Carter's Mideast "peace" plan is preparation for the use of U.S. forces to defend imperialist interests—oil in particular.

A second aspect is an attempt to strengthen Israel as an anchor for imperialism in the Middle East. To begin with, the Israeli regime will get \$3 billion in military aid—over and above the \$1.8 billion per year it is already receiving.

Peacemaker Carter is sending the Zionist regime 200 M-60 tanks, 800 armored personnel carriers, 200 artillery pieces, 600 Maverick air-to-ground missiles, and 600 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles. In addition, deliveries of F-16 jet fighters are being speeded up. And that is only the first installment.

The Zionist regime has also been strengthened politically by securing formal recognition from the most populous Arab country. Moreover, under the guise of promising self-rule for the Palestinians on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, the treaty will reinforce

continued Israeli occupation and annexation of these areas.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin spelled out his view of Palestinian "autonomy" March 20 during the debate in the Knesset over the proposed treaty. Begin vowed never to withdraw Israeli troops from the occupied territories, never to give up control of Arab East Jerusalem, and never to allow the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Begin declared that Zionist settlements built on expropriated Arab land in Gaza and the West Bank would remain, and more would be established.

When asked if he thought Zionist settlements would still be on the West Bank in twenty years, one colonist told *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Daniel Southerland: "It might be more pertinent to ask whether the Arab population will be here."

Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat's acceptance of these plans was the price he paid for Begin's promise to return the Sinai Peninsula. Carter, meanwhile, is doing the best he can to strengthen Sadat's hand against the Egyptian masses at home.

As the *Economist* remarked in its lead editorial March 17, "If Mr Sadat falls during the early or middle stages

of Mr Carter's peace treaty, that will be the end of it."

With this in mind, Carter has promised Sadat \$2 billion in U.S. arms in addition to the \$800 million in economic aid already being provided by Washington.

The weakest link

However, Sadat's regime remains the weakest link in the Washington-Tel Aviv-Cairo counterrevolutionary axis that Carter is trying to set up.

Sadat himself says he needs \$21 billion over the next five years to pull Egypt's economy out of the hole it is in. The Egyptian regime is currently spending \$1.3 billion a year on debt payments—the largest item in its budget except for arms, which total \$1.4 billion.

Promises of prosperity as a result of Sadat's attempts to encourage foreign investment and capitalist development have not materialized. Instead, corruption, inflation, and social inequality have flourished. Speculators have enriched themselves while the lot of the masses has worsened.

Although Carter is willing to arm Sadat against his own people and is urging the Saudi regime to step up its financial support, there is not the slightest possibility of Sadat getting the type of aid that would enable him to make significant improvements in Egypt's economic situation.

But the Egyptian workers and peasants are not the only ones who may upset Carter's counterrevolutionary alliance from within. *Carter's treaty is an attack on the Israeli and American workers as well as the Arab masses.*

The \$5 billion in additional U.S. military aid to Egypt and Israel announced March 19 is not included in the all-time-record \$135 billion war budget already proposed by Carter. It will be paid for by the American workers through more taxes, more cuts in social services, and higher inflation.

And if Carter is successful in his attempts to set the stage for direct U.S. military involvement against the Arab revolution, that \$5 billion will be only a small downpayment on the blood and treasure that the American workers will be called upon to sacrifice in defense of U.S. corporate interests in the Middle East.

Protest in Israel

Israeli workers have already had a taste of what Carter's Mideast plan means for them. The Begin government followed up Carter's visit with the announcement that it was canceling the subsidy holding down the price of eggs and raising prices on staples such as bread, poultry, edible oil, and dairy products.

On one day, March 19, food prices rose between 20 and 30 percent.

Less than a month earlier, the government raised the retail price index 10 percent at one stroke through increases in the price of petroleum products.

A four-hour strike to protest these moves was carried out by as many as 1 million Israeli workers March 19. Israeli workers already bear the burden of a military budget that gobbles up 23 percent of the country's gross national product, and if Carter gets his way there will be no letup.

Jewish workers such as those who struck March 19 want peace and a decent standard of living. Neither is possible as long as they are tied together with American imperialism against the struggles of the Arab masses.

It is in the real interests of both Israeli and American workers to join with the Arab masses in a common struggle to defend the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and to oppose Carter's Mideast war pact.

Chicago socialist candidate: why

Continued from front page

with each other, both nationally and internationally, they will try to weaken and destroy our organization."

Pulley outlined how the employers are going after labor on every front.

Wage limits

"Our wages aren't going up as fast as prices, so it becomes harder and harder to buy the basic necessities of life. Yet the government tries to impose wage guidelines.

"They deregulate oil prices, driving

up monopoly profits at our expense.

"They try to curtail our right to strike. Probes are continually under way," the socialist candidate reminded the predominantly Black audience, "to take away affirmative-action gains for Black and women workers. That's the meaning of the *Weber* case—to nullify hard-won civil rights victories.

"The employers are trying to ram through more anti-union 'right to work' laws.

"There is speedup and deterioration of safety on the job.

"Then there's the stepped-up preparation for war—the massive war budget, the shipment of planes and 'advisers' to Yemen, the build-up in Thailand, the serious talk about reestablishing the draft.

"These are not only aimed at our fellow workers in other countries, but at us too. They're trying to force us to accept less."

This antilabor offensive has been noted by such top union officials as Steelworkers President Lloyd McBride, UAW President Douglas Fraser, and AFL-CIO President George Meany, Pulley observed. "Last July Fraser was calling it a 'one-sided class war' against labor.

'One-sided class war'

"It's true that it's a one-sided war in the sense that the situation of workers is worsening and the unions are getting weaker.

"But it's not one-sided in the sense that workers aren't fighting back. They are.

"The coal miners last year held firm, not only against the bosses, but also against the bosses' government. The shipyard workers in Newport News are fighting right now for a union.

"I was down there a couple of weeks ago, and I'll tell you that they are pretty determined workers. And in my twenty-seven years, the first twelve of which I lived in the South, I've never seen such solidarity between Black and white workers. It was amazing.

"Thousands of battles are going on every day in the plants and the mills.

"But our current leaders aren't showing us a road forward," Pulley said. "We can't reverse the employers' offensive by fighting only on the economic level, on the union level, on the plant level, the local level. Nor can we do it by supporting the bosses' political parties.

"Every struggle today is political. They immediately pose the question of what the government will do."

But without a labor party, the SWP candidate explained, workers cannot have any say in government—much less take the government out of the hands of the superrich minority that runs it today.

"Take, for example, the Newport News strike. Out brothers and sisters there are not only up against Tenneco, but the entire governmental apparatus—the police, the courts, the NLRB, the right-to-work laws."

Pulley pointed out that "not one Democratic or Republican politician supports the Newport News strike or is mobilizing support for that strike. Certainly not Jane Byrne."

Byrne, the Democratic candidate for mayor of Chicago, is a longtime member of the Daley machine. Pulley noted that she has the support of the Chicago Federation of Labor and is getting thousands of dollars from the UAW.

"But where does she stand on labor?" Pulley asked. "She says she's for



Pulley (left) campaigns at U.S. Steel South Works. "Time is now" to start running independent labor candidates, he says.

Pulley tells Black radio audience:

Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate Andrew Pulley appeared March 13 for an hour on WVON's Hotline, a popular Black call-in show. The following are excerpts from Pulley's responses to questions by callers and by Hotline's host, Wesley South.

South: Why should the constituency that you're appealing to vote for you rather than your opponents?

Pulley: I think it's very simple. At the polls on April 3 there will be two candidates of the rich, of the bankers and the corporations, candidates representing the status quo. The third candidate, myself, will be representing the interests of working people.

I believe that candidate Jane Byrne represents, as she boastfully says, the continuation of Mayor Daley's policies, which have not served the interests of the Black community, have not served the interests of working people.

Chicago is one of the most segregated cities in the country. Jane Byrne

purports to do nothing to solve the problem of segregated schools.

I think we need equal education opportunities. The way to bring that about is through desegregating the Chicago schools through busing.

South: What do you think about building up the schools within the Black community?

Pulley: I'm totally for that as well. I think one has to discuss where the funding will come from.

I believe there exists much money presently in the hands of the corporations and bankers, and one way of getting the money required to fund qualitatively higher standards in education, in terms of better facilities and smaller classes, will be by taxing the banks and corporations.

South: What would be your program involving unemployment?

Pulley: First of all, it should be the policy of the city that there should be

jobs for all. How would that be implemented? You can take certain direct steps.

One is to have a city policy that reduces the workweek from forty to thirty hours with no reduction in pay. A certain number of jobs would be made available by that act alone.

The city needs to have a policy which is designed to move toward equal employment opportunities for Blacks, *latinos*, and women by having quotas, affirmative-action programs, not only in areas of city employment but for any company that does business in the city.

* * *

Pulley: I think the CTA [Chicago Transit Authority] needs to be expanded. It is my belief that public transportation should be provided as a right. This can also be done by taxing the rich.

Now, someone might say, well, you're always talking about taxing the rich. Isn't this unfair?

No, it's not unfair in the least. One only has to think for a moment how the rich, how the corporations and banks, got their money. They got it from the labor of our ancestors, of previous generations, of the current generations. From labor carried out by average people, by not paying us the true value of our labor.

Thus by demanding that they pay the taxes for city services is simply the beginning of a needed redistribution of the wealth we have produced.

South: If you are constantly increasing the taxes of the rich, what would you do to prevent them from leaving the city?

Pulley: I think the workers in these companies would have to sit down and have a serious discussion about this.

Do they think the owners of these companies desire to make more profits is more important than their jobs or their well-being or the services they provide? And therefore do they think

the company should be allowed to pack up and split? I think most people would vote no to that.

South: They haven't voted no up to this point.

Pulley: That's because they haven't had leadership. The labor movement has acquiesced to the right of companies to throw human beings around.

As mayor, I would operate in a different fashion. I would use my office to mobilize working people to implement their will.

Let the individual owner of an industry split to the South if they want—but the facilities, the machinery remains. And the city under workers' rule begins to produce things on the basis of human needs.

Working people have to begin to seriously think about how we are going to get political power to effect the changes that are long overdue.

A caller: I would like to know Mr. Pulley's qualifications.

Pulley: My main qualification is that for the last ten years, all my adult life, I have been an activist in the struggle for civil rights, in the struggle against the war in Vietnam, and I've been an activist in the labor movement—fighting in the interest of all working people.

A caller: I would like Mr. Pulley to elaborate, if he could, on the socialist party which he represents.

Pulley: In terms of what the Socialist Workers Party stands for: We believe that human needs come before profits. That working people produce everything and keep the city running, so working people should run the city. And we need a political party, a labor party, based on the trade-union movement to do it.

A caller: Mr. Pulley made a statement about the Democrats being for the rich. What is his opinion about the Republicans? I've been a Democrat myself all my life and I've assumed that the Republicans are for the rich

Hear Andrew Pulley

SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN RALLY

April 1: 7 p.m. Blue Gargoyle Gymnasium, 5655 S. University, 2nd floor.

March 29: Pulley debates Democratic and Republican candidates at League of Women Voters event. 8:00-9:30 p.m. WTTW-TV (Channel 11), WIND and WBBM radio.

April 3: Election night victory rally. 6 p.m. Gold Room, Blackstone Hotel.

For more information, call (312) 663-0753.

- Help distribute leaflets and posters.
- Get your union or group to endorse Pulley's candidacy.
- Invite Pulley to speak to your union, school, church, or community group.

FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED

—Collect and send contributions.

- Be a poll-watcher on election day.
- Come to a campaign headquarters and help out:

Chicago city-wide: 407 S. Dearborn #1145. Zip: 60605. Tel: (312) 663-0753 or 939-0737.

South Side: 2251 E. 71st. St. Zip: 60649. Tel: (312) 643-5520.

West Side: 3942 W. Chicago. Zip: 60651. Tel: (312) 384-0606.

workers need a labor party now



Militant/Jerry Hunnicutt
Newport News strikers march: 'Not one Democratic or Republican politician supports them.'

collective bargaining contracts for public employees, but opposes their right to strike. I say to you that Jane Byrne is an antilabor, antistrike candidate, and we're wasting good union money supporting her.

"What will her stand be if your union, the UAW, goes on strike, or my union?" Pulley asked. "Would she support us because we've poured our dues money into her campaign chest?"

"You know what she'll do, just like you know what President Carter will do.

"But the decision of the unions to support Byrne and other Democrats is not made by you and me. No vote was taken in our local. It was decided on the top.

"This is why I'm campaigning for a labor party. We need our own instrument to organize and mobilize against the employers at every level."

Pulley said that a labor party was necessary not only to resist the employers' attacks, but to fight politically for what working people need—jobs, better schools, free health care for all, a safe and clean environment, and other urgent social needs.

"A labor party will be a party of Blacks, of *latinos*, of women fighting for their rights. When the labor party gets off the ground, it will attract to it all the oppressed, all those who are looking for the leadership and power necessary to confront the capitalists.

"It will be an antiwar party against the two war parties.

"Some of you may be thinking," Pulley continued, "that this is a good idea but not a realistic one, that now is not the time. This is wrong.

"It's the *most* realistic thing the labor movement can do. *And it can be done now.*

"I believe that labor party idea is popular among workers. That, right away, gives it an advantage.

"Furthermore, a lot of organizing isn't required. The unions are organized. They have financial structures, offices, newspapers, print shops, or-

ganizers, and so on—all the things necessary to organize a party. All that's required is the decision to do it."

"But we can't wait for it to emerge fully developed as a mass national party. It may well start locally, in a modest way. It will start when some unionists somewhere say, 'Yes, we can do it.'

"That's how the abolitionists began the struggle against chattel slavery in the last century. That's how we'll have to begin against the wage slavery of

our century," the socialist declared.

"It is in this context, then, that I challenge you to take the lead and launch an independent labor candidate in the next election. Our party will help you to the fullest extent possible in such an effort.

"Our party has no interest apart from the working class, and we believe the central task, the next giant step forward for our class, is the formation of a labor party. That's why it is at the center of our election campaign and our educational activity in the unions."

Our party is your party

THE MILITANT is the voice of the Socialist Workers Party.

IF YOU AGREE with what you've read, you should join us in fighting for a world without war, racism, or exploitation—a socialist world.

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'human needs before profits'

people. But, what could he do that the Democrats haven't done for us, when they've had chances to do it?

Pulley: It's true that the Republicans are for the rich. There is no question about that.

But so are the Democrats, despite the fact that the Democrats have much organized labor support and traditionally have gotten—at least in this century—the bulk of the Black vote. Nevertheless, the Democrats have been loyal to the interests of the rich, just as the Republicans have.

This is precisely why the quality of life of Black people has not been improved. It has not altered even whether there has been a white Democrat or a Black Democrat. This is because they are basically beholden to big business.

Working people need their own party. The rich have two parties—the Democrats and Republicans. We have none at this point.

A caller: Yes, I'd like to ask Mr. Pulley, what do you think about this problem you mentioned of police brutality?

Pulley: First of all, I think the policemen who have been responsible for carrying out crimes against the Black community should be brought to justice, including those who have been responsible for the murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

Now, the role of the present police department is to protect the economic interests of the rich that rule Chicago and the country. It's incidental when

they do anything good for the average person, in terms of taking them to the hospital, or directing traffic. This is not their real role.

That role will become clear as more strikes occur, when there are more demonstrations, more rebellions by the victims of racism and the victims of capitalism.

So I'm for replacing the present police department, as I'm for replacing the entire profit system with a system to produce for human needs.

A caller: I'd like to make a comment about the guy who said Mr. Pulley is representing Black people. Mr. Pulley is not representing Black people, he's representing the ideology of socialism. That's two different entities. And

that's what I was trying to say before I was cut off before.

Pulley: I can't understand how anyone can argue that the private profit system is beneficial to Black folks, when it was precisely the private profit system that brought slavery to the shores of the United States. It was in order for them to make the maximum profit that we were slaves.

And in order to continue to maximize their profits the capitalists continue to discriminate against Black people today.

There is no emancipation for Black people, or *latinos*, or women, or working people, as long as you have a society that is based on the exploitation of the majority by a minority.

Around Chicago with the socialist campaign

By Betsey Stone

CHICAGO—In the weeks leading up to election day, April 3, the Pulley For Mayor headquarters downtown has become a hub of activity.

Campaign supporters flow in and out. Campaign manager Bobbie Bagel rushes back and forth, arranging meetings and media interviews for the candidate.

Calls come in from people who have heard about the campaign and want to help.

A postal worker wants to know if Pulley can speak to his union.

A member of a Northside food co-op offers to help organize poll watchers.

A student from the University of Chicago offers to spend his semester break campaigning for Pulley.

Distribution of literature at plant gates and on street corners is being organized out of all three campaign headquarters.

Sales of the *Militant* are a priority, with a gigantic sale planned for the final weekend of the campaign.

A special effort is being made by

campaigners to reach trade unionists through plant-gate sales and rallies, as well as meetings.

A discussion with workers at Danly Machine and Tool is set for March 21 from 1:30 to 4:00 at J&J across from Danly.

Manuel Barrera, Socialist Workers candidate for treasurer, spoke at a union meeting of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen Local 4092.

Barrera says workers at the meeting were especially interested in his description of the dangers posed by the many nuclear plants that ring Chicago. He said there was strong support for the SWP's view that the plants should be shut down.

Barrera, a railroad worker himself, told the workers he thought the only way to stop hazards such as nuclear power was to oppose the Democrats and Republicans who are responsible.

"The rail unions should stop supporting the parties who do the bidding of the employers," he said. "We should use the resources of our unions to start a labor party, which will fight for us."

Pulley supporters campaigned at a meeting of 500 workers held in Gary to oppose the *Weber* anti-affirmative-action suit (see page 11). Pulley issued a statement calling on all workers to oppose *Weber's* suit.

"All workers will be hurt if *Weber* is upheld," he said. "The strength of a union can only be based on equality, on each member knowing that the union will back us up."

Three newspapers, the *Gary Info.*, the *Chicago Metro News*, and the *St. Louis American* carried articles on Pulley's statement.

* * *

Pulley reports that as he goes about his daily routine, many people recognize him as the socialist candidate.

While out jogging, other joggers wished him luck.

When he joined a pro-ERA contingent during the St. Patrick's Day March, people from the crowd shouted,

"Hey, there's Andrew Pulley! Right on!"

Education is a big issue in this campaign. Pulley talked about this with students from four classes at Phillips High, a large, overcrowded school on the South Side. He told the students they are victims of the same kind of racist, inferior education he experienced as a youth.

"We have to uncover the lies that are taught in school," he said. "We have to teach the *real* history of Black people and the *real* history of this society, which is a class society."

He explained that racism exists because the capitalists profit from low wages paid to Blacks. "Everytime any of you go to work at McDonalds, you get a lesson about this," he said.

Pulley told how as a high school student he participated in protests after Martin Luther King was killed. He challenged the students to join the fight to change the system.

By the end of the discussions, twenty students had signed up to work on the campaign.

Imperialist arms buildup in Asia

U.S. 'opium war' against Laotian



Laos, 1975: Mass demonstrations brought down coalition government, ending U.S. domination.

By Fred Feldman

Twenty-seven days after the start of the U.S.-inspired invasion, Peking announced March 15 that it had withdrawn from Vietnam's border regions.

Hanoi denies that Peking's troops have completely withdrawn.

According to the March 16 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the invading forces "intend to hold on to scores of small but strategic positions on the mountainous border. . . ."

Meanwhile, the capitalist regimes in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Indonesia) have not been trying to hide their pleasure over Peking's attack on Vietnam. Like their masters in Washington, they agreed that "Vietnam had it coming," Henry Kamm reported from Bangkok, Thailand, in the March 14 *New York Times*.

"The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia sent shudders through Southeast Asia; the Chinese counterthrust helped to calm the non-Communist countries," Kamm went on.

The "shudders" stem from the specter of the Vietnamese revolution. The semicolonial rulers fear that the overturn of Pol Pot in Kampuchea could lead to the same kinds of mass mobilizations that wiped out capitalism in southern Vietnam last year. And this could inspire mass challenges to their own regimes.

"Thailand, for example, considers itself a front-line country facing Vietnamese forces on its borders with Laos and Cambodia," Kamm said. "This heightens Bangkok's thinly disguised satisfaction over the Chinese thrust without diminishing its deep concern."

The concern expressed by the military dictatorship in Thailand was heightened by Hanoi's capacity to sustain its defense of the new regime in Kampuchea despite Peking's invasion. U.S. imperialism is using the Thai regime as a conduit for arms and supplies to the rightist forces in both Kampuchea and Laos.

The Vietnamese leadership obviously anticipates further imperialist pressure in Laos and Kampuchea and along the Chinese border. On March 4, the Vietnamese Communist Party declared a "war of national resistance

against the reactionary Chinese aggressors."

A general mobilization was decreed the next day, shortly before Peking announced its plan to withdraw. Large-scale movements of Vietnamese troops and supplies have continued.

New strategy?

In a March 14 report from Washington, *New York Times* correspondent Richard Burt placed the Chinese border invasion in the context of a supposedly new "broad strategy for Asia" that the U.S. rulers have developed. The alleged goal is to "limit the impact of Communist fighting on American security interests in the area."

Actually this "quarantine strategy," as Burt's informants term it, is aimed at stepping up U.S. military intervention and attempting to seal off the contagion of socialist revolution in the region. There is nothing new about it.

As Burt admitted, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam is but a convenient cover for announcing the policy decisions already made.

"Even before the recent outbreak of fighting in Indochina," Burt said, "the Administration had decided against any further major cutbacks in the American presence in Asia."

The "new" strategy includes canceling plans to reduce the size of the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet, which patrols Southeast Asian waters; halting the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea; the decision to "help Thailand develop armed forces capable of deterring a Vietnamese attack"; and the readiness to respond sympathetically "to weapon requests from members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. . . ." Meanwhile, "Japan would be encouraged to continue its air and naval buildup."

New pressure on Laos

As part of its drive to contain and roll back the Indochinese revolutions, Washington is signaling Peking that it would not be averse to increased military pressure against Laos as well. The Laotian regime hailed the fall of Pol Pot and supported Vietnam during the border war with China.

The March 11 *Chicago Tribune* quoted a "Western diplomat" in Bangkok as saying, "The Vietnamese may quickly forget what the Chinese have taught them and the Chinese may be back soon."

On March 12 the *Toronto Globe and Mail* reported that the Chinese government had stopped all aid to Laos. At the same time, Peking denounced as "fantastic fabrications" recent Laotian charges that China had massed troops along the border and was providing arms to rightist bands fighting the regime.

On March 15, however, the Laotian government charged that Chinese army battalions penetrated Laos on March 7 and March 10, occupying territory "one to two miles deep and six miles wide inside Laos." The Pathet Lao regime ordered Peking to remove thousands of construction workers who have reportedly been building roads in northern Laos since 1962.

Two days later 10,000 people rallied in the Laotian capital of Vientiane to support the government, according to the official Laotian news service.

Defense from Washington

Chinese officials did not respond immediately to the new charges, but Washington sprang to Peking's defense.

"Administration officials said they had no information to indicate that Chinese troops had crossed into Laos, and they described the reports of such an incursion as a ploy by Moscow to distract attention from China's withdrawal of troops from Vietnam," the March 16 *New York Times* reported.

An invasion of Laos on the scale of the border war with Vietnam would not be a simple rerun, even though Laos is far weaker than Vietnam militarily. It would entail new complications for both Washington and Peking.

American working people remained skeptical of Washington's claims of benevolent neutrality during the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, and an invasion of Laos now would only deepen suspicions of U.S. involvement.

In addition to the diversion of precious scarce resources, Peking faced popular opposition to its invasion of Vietnam, and in the midst of the war

publicly admitted the existence of deep rifts in the bureaucracy. An attack on tiny Laos would risk even greater popular disgust and growing domestic divisions.

Nonetheless, Washington's determination to increase the pressure on Laos is evident. The tension between Laos and Peking coincided with an escalating propaganda campaign against Laos in the U.S. capitalist press, the main theme being that Laos is a Vietnamese "colony" or "puppet."

Peking chimed in March 11, charging that Vietnam is "enslaving the Laotian people" and clamping down "on the Lao people's resistance." The target of this big lie is the Laotian revolution.

Laos is a long strip of landlocked territory bordering on Kampuchea, Thailand, Burma, China, and Vietnam. Subsistence agriculture provides its 3.4 million people with an annual per capita income of \$90. After years of U.S. saturation bombing of the countryside and the subsequent cutoff of U.S. food shipments, the Laotian people live on the edge of starvation.

The country is inhabited by at least forty-two different nationalities and ethnic groupings, speaking at least five languages. Laos has no railroad, few roads, and a primitive communications network.

No Laotian regime independent of imperialism could hope to survive under these conditions without a close alliance with the Vietnamese workers state. U.S. imperialism's use of Peking against the Indochinese revolutions made this more imperative.

Over the last thirty years, the course of the Laotian revolution has been closely intertwined with the Vietnamese. The Pathet Lao (Laotian for "Lao state") is a Stalinist formation with deep indigenous roots in Laos going back to the formation in October 1945 of a nationalist government in Vientiane, marking the opening of the liberation struggle against French imperialism. The Pathet Lao won mass support among rebellious peasants. It has always maintained close ties with the Vietnamese Communist Party.

After American troops were forced to withdraw from Indochina, a capitalist

Sailors refuse to load U.S. arms for Thailand

By George Dolph

RALEIGH, N.C.—The freighter *Kuwait Horizon* left the port of Wilmington March 16—without a cargo of twenty- and forty-millimeter artillery shells it had been hired to deliver.

Two crews refused to load the deadly cargo, destined for the right-wing military dictatorship in Thailand, and for Singapore.

The first crew, Egyptians, were flown back to Cairo March 9 at the shipowners' expense. They had reportedly held the ship's captain on board to make sure their protest was taken seriously.

A second crew was then hired. But it too refused to load the shells.

An attorney for the shipowners tried to paint the crews' objections as stemming from a wage dispute, but finally admitted they were "moral."

The shipowners and the U.S. government conspired to keep the Egyptian crew away from reporters. Washington would prefer to keep the spotlight off its military aid to Southeast Asian dictators at a time when it piously pretends to have a

hands-off policy in the area.

According to the *Wilmington Morning Star*, a Japanese freighter is now on its way to pick up the artillery shells.

The *Kuwait Horizon* left with a load of tobacco.



Egyptian sailor returns to ship after crew's demands were met.

revolution

coalition government including the Pathet Lao and proimperialist forces came to power in September 1973. Popular mobilizations in the towns precipitated the break-up of the coalition, and the Pathet Lao took the reins of government alone in December 1975.

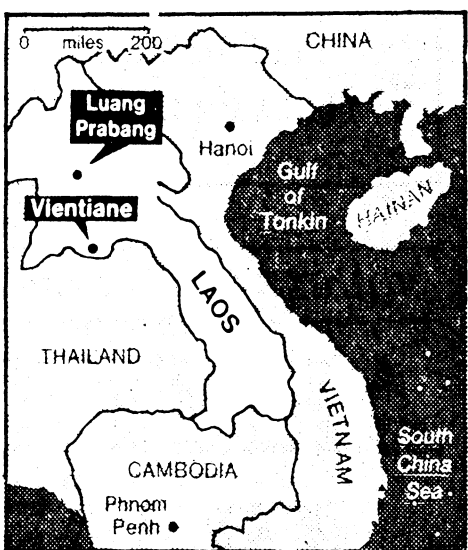
During the subsequent three years, the regime—whose most prominent figures are Kaysone Phoumvihane and ex-Prince Souphanouvong—followed a vacillating but increasingly anticapitalist course.

The royal army was disbanded and the monarchy abolished.

The privileges of the parasitic caste of Buddhist monks were trimmed, although freedom of religion was maintained.

Land was given to many landless peasants and some initial steps were taken to introduce cooperatives in agriculture.

A state-controlled system of ration-



New York Times

ing necessities was introduced, side-by-side with a sizable sector of private trade.

Foreign firms were expropriated, and state or joint state-private ownership was introduced in businesses owned by Laotians.

Public education was vastly expanded.

U.S. imperialism's 'opium war'

At the same time, the regime has had to fight a continual war against the reactionary mercenary armies that French and U.S. imperialism have fostered over the long years of anti-imperialist struggle and civil war in Laos.

The government is also trying to end opium cultivation, which the private armies seek to defend or restore. Opium was formerly Laos's principal export.

The stiffest resistance to the regime is being waged in northwestern Laos, where members of the Meo nationality were organized into a mercenary army by the CIA in the 1960s. Before 1975, this part of Laos was "one of the largest heroin-producing centers in the world," according to Alfred W. McCoy in *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*. Thousands of Meo earned their living by growing, refining, transporting, and selling opium.

Over the decades this trade has linked the Meos tightly to Thai and Burmese capitalists, to Chinese Kuomintang forces operating in northern Burma, and to U.S. imperialism. The opium trade represents the most serious internal threat to the anti-imperialist course now being followed by the Kaysone government.

Meo fleeing across the Mekong river to Thailand are placed in refugee camps near the border, from which mercenary units are organized and raids are launched into Laos. The Meo refugees are watched over by an American, Edgar Buell.

In close collaboration with the CIA

during the 1960s, Buell helped organize the U.S. "secret war" against the Pathet Lao. Buell was also involved in opium growing.

McCoy states in his book: "Buell utilized his agricultural skills to improve Meo techniques for planting and cultivating opium. 'If you're gonna grow it, grow it good,' Buell told the Meo, 'but don't let anybody smoke the stuff.' . . . Thus, more opium than ever was available for the international markets."

According to McCoy, "Buell played the innocent country boy and claimed his work was humanitarian aid for Meo refugees." In a recent segment of the CBS News television program *60 Minutes*, Buell appeared in just that guise—appealing for "humanitarian" help for Meos fleeing Pathet Lao "persecution."

Pact with Hanoi

In line with its progressive social policy—which has wide mass support despite the antidemocratic policies of the Pathet Lao—and because of the need for Vietnamese help in fighting the mercenary armies, the Laotian regime signed a twenty-five-year military and economic pact with Hanoi on July 18, 1977. The agreement pledged both countries to collaborate in constructing "socialism."

The agreement did not make the Laotian regime a "puppet" of Vietnam. It basically extended the anti-imperialist alliance that took shape during three decades of struggle against French and U.S. domination.

Vietnam has provided Laos with skilled workers and technicians. It is building a road linking the city of Savannakhet to the Vietnamese city of Quang Tri, easing dependence on Thai trade and ports, which are often closed to Laos. The Vietnamese are also providing 30,000 crack troops to help Pathet Lao forces fight the U.S.-backed mercenary armies. And they help patrol Laos's borders against imperialist-inspired encroachments.

Fearing that the fall of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea will strengthen the drive of the Lao workers, peasants, and plebeian masses to do away with the remnants of capitalism, U.S. imperialism is seeking to weaken the Laotian revolution.

The U.S. rulers fear that new advances in Laos will deepen unrest in Thailand, where a major peasant insurgency is threatening the dictatorship of Kriangsak Chamanand. Some 8 million Lao people live in northeastern Thailand—five times as many as in Laos itself. They are a major force in the peasant movement.

Smokescreen

Military moves by Peking in Laos would provide U.S. imperialism with a smokescreen behind which to funnel more aid through Thailand to rightist bands, particularly to the Meo army.

The U.S. imperialists know full well, however, that the Meo opium-growers and the Thai rulers cannot stand up in the long run against the spread of the Indochinese revolution. And they have even less confidence in the ability of the bureaucratic caste in Peking to block the course of history.

The imperialists' central goal is to win public toleration for a vastly increased U.S. military presence and activity in Southeast Asia. Along with Black Africa and the Middle East, this area of the world, with its 350 million people and its vast resources, is a prize the imperialists will never abandon.

Our answer is clear:

Stop the imperialist offensive against Indochina!

For massive U.S. aid to reconstruct the countries of Indochina, with no strings attached!

U.S. out of Southeast Asia now!

Washington pushes new military draft

By David Frankel

Forced to abolish the draft in January 1973 due to massive opposition to the war in Vietnam, Washington is making its most aggressive probe yet to see if it can restore conscription.

At least four bills along these lines have already been introduced in the House of Representatives, which is currently debating the issue.

Gen. Bernard Rogers, the army chief of staff, told the Senate Armed Services Committee March 13 that he would like to begin drafting men into the army reserves this year.

Mindful of the political dynamite involved in such statements, Army Secretary Clifford Alexander immediately rebuffed Rogers, saying a draft is currently unnecessary. But Alexander simply proposes to move more cautiously than his subordinate.

Alexander had explained in a January 11 speech: "We need a better system than the one we now have for making the transition from our peacetime volunteer force to a wartime force based on conscriptions. A useful step in that direction would be to provide for the peacetime registration of young people."

Air Force Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has also urged such a course, saying that "a mechanism for peacetime registration is needed now."

There are three main reasons why the capitalist rulers must move toward reinstituting the draft.

- Under the current all-volunteer system, the number of soldiers in the ready reserve has fallen to 255,000—far below the 820,000 the army says would be necessary in wartime to fill the ranks of regular units engaged in battle.

The American ruling class is well aware that it is going to have to fight more counterrevolutionary wars such as the one in Vietnam to maintain its economic empire around the world. But it cannot fight such wars without an adequate supply of cannon fodder.

- A volunteer army is not only too small for the imperialists, it is also too expensive.

"Personnel costs are becoming an ever larger share of a relatively constant defense budget, and so place increasing constraints on other defense programs," complained the *Wall Street Journal* in a March 16 editorial.

- Mindful of the upsurge in the African liberation struggle, the imperialists are worried about the large proportion of Blacks in the armed forces, especially in combat units that are intended precisely for use against revolutions abroad.

The large percentage of Blacks and *latinos* in the armed forces also makes it more difficult to intervene in Latin America or to use the army against strikes and rebellions in the Black community.

Addressing this problem in a January 2 editorial, the *New York Times* declared:

"Apart from the lack of readiness, no problem confronting the volunteer Army is more worrisome than the shortage of middle-class, college-oriented [that is, white] recruits. . . . Volunteers, offered civilian pay scales, are coming far more heavily from the ranks of the poor, the unemployed and the uneducated than did even the troops in Vietnam. And with unemployment among draft-age blacks at 34 percent, double the nation's youth average, it is not surprising that almost 40 percent of the Army's male recruits this fall were black. . . .

"The proposals to restore the standby draft and to provide incentives for college-oriented youths to join the Army and its reserves are the minimum first steps needed now to face up to the problem."

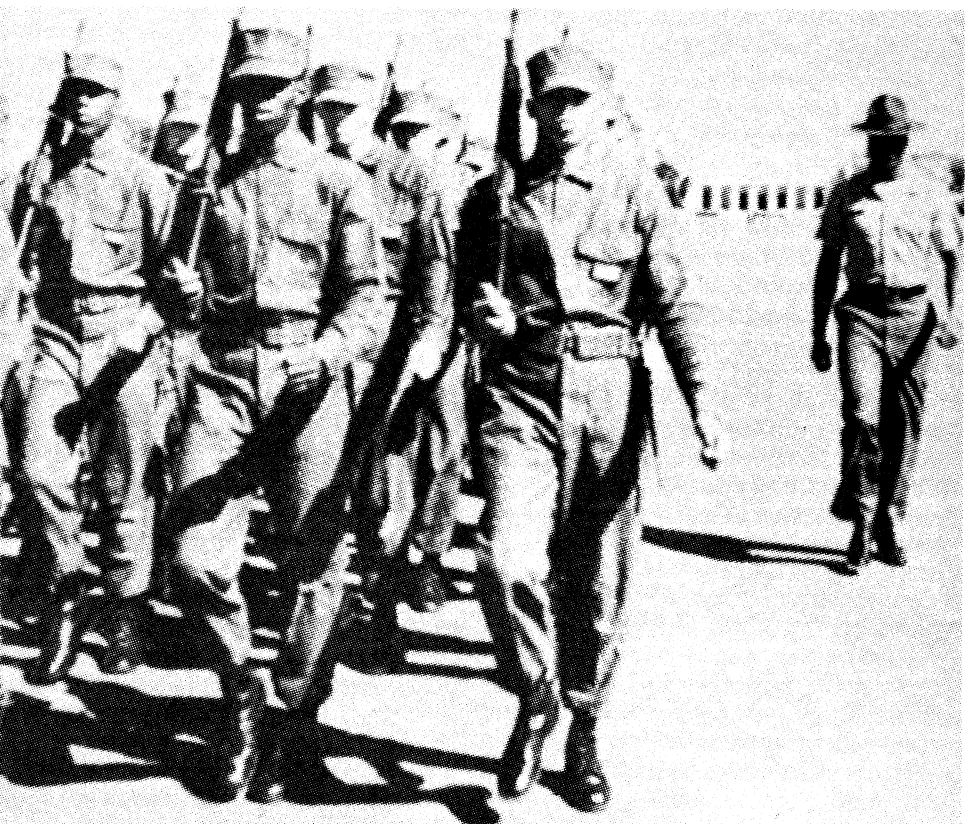
The Socialist Workers Party's 1975 resolution on "Prospects for Socialism in America" pointed out that "modern wars cannot be fought without conscription."

The resolution asserted that "attempts to reintroduce the draft in the future, as the ruling class will be obliged to do in new imperialist aggressions, will inevitably call forth a quicker and greater antidraft sentiment than appeared during the Vietnam War."

A recent study by the Pentagon said of this problem, "Should the registration meet widespread resistance and strict enforcement be ordered, costs could be very high. . . . Major resistance to registration could adversely affect voluntary enlistments. . . . More importantly, signs of public hostility to the U.S. military could seriously degrade the deterrent value of our forces and invite adventurism by potential adversaries."

In its March 16 editorial, the *Wall Street Journal* fumed at those who argue the ruling class must still step softly because of such risks. "In short, even policymakers are afraid that talking about this area of American weakness might end by weakening us still further. This is no good," the *Journal* declared.

Whatever their tactical differences, the imperialist rulers know that they must accelerate their preparations for new wars. And that includes more insistent pushing for a new draft.



Rulers think 'volunteer' army is too small, too Black to be used effectively in crushing revolutions in Africa, Middle East, or elsewhere.

Support grows for Newport News strike

Pittsburgh: 'Send busloads to march with Steelworkers'

By Brett Merkey

PITTSBURGH—Nearly 200 people attended a rally at the University of Pittsburgh March 19 in solidarity with the Newport News shipyard strikers.

The audience included steelworkers, electrical workers, miners, clothing workers, members of the National Organization for Women and NAACP, as well as students.

Labor History Prof. David Montgomery, who chaired the rally, stressed the stake all working people share in a Newport News victory.

"Uppermost in our minds," he said, "is to prevent the use of right-to-work laws to clean out our chances of making a decent living."

The program began with the showing for the first time of a United Steelworkers film on the Newport News strike. Interviews with striking members of USWA Local 8888 were interspersed with picket-line scenes and shots of recent labor solidarity marches and rallies.

USWA International Secretary Lynn Williams described the national and international attention the strike has received, including solidarity messages from unions in Great Britain, Spain, and West Germany.

"The focus of Newport News is that ordinary working people have united around the right to have a union," said Williams. "This gives a message to all



LYNN WILLIAMS

Militant/Nancy Cole



Militant/Eric Simpson

Labor solidarity march in Newport News March 2. Union support can help turn tide against Tenneco and courts.

of us of the need for solidarity."

Gail Skidmore, speaking for University of Pittsburgh NOW, explained that strengthening the union movement—through organizing drives such as Newport News—bolsters the fight for women's equality.

"The union movement is the main force that guarantees further support for women's rights," she said. "The July 9 march for the Equal Rights Amendment in Washington, D.C., of more than 100,000 people is an example of what can happen when women's, labor, Black, and other organizations join together."

Henry Dropkin, international vice-president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers union, pointed to the significance of the Steelworkers' strike. The ACTWU has been seeking for years to unionize J.P. Stevens plants in the South.

"The Newport News workers are being severely put to the test by police, dogs, and the henchmen of Tenneco," he said. "But I view this fight as the beginning of the end of the feudal barriers of the South. The struggle indicates that the battle for a union South is entering a new stage."

The government lets the National Labor Relations Board act as a union-busting agency, Dropkin charged. He presented the USWA with \$1,000.

Robert Pitts, chairperson of the Labor and Industry Committee of the NAACP, told the rally that the labor movement protects the rights of all the

oppressed. "Without unions," he said, "Blacks and women would be catching more hell today."

Daniel Marguriet, president of United Electrical Workers District 6, recounted recent incidents of Pittsburgh-area companies moving south to flee the UE.

"The labor movement has to get back on the right track," Marguriet said. "These struggling workers are further ahead than some of us in the leadership of unions. We have to do more than rally for the strikers—we must give them our physical support. We need to send carloads and busloads to march with our brothers and sisters."

"The labor movement must stop playing with politics and think about the need for serious political action," Marguriet declared it was time to ask politicians who claim to be "friends of labor" to take a stand: "Are you for us or against us?"

He continued, "We must rekindle the crusading spirit of the trade-union movement."

Joe Jurczak, head of United Mine Workers District 5 Committee on Political Action, was the final speaker. He pledged his union's full support to the Newport News strikers.

After their 110-day strike last winter, he said, the miners know better than anyone the meaning of labor solidarity.

No. Carolina: 'Organize south right down to Florida Keys'

By Jon Hillson

AHOSKIE, N.C.—This small town—in the least unionized state in the country—was alive with labor solidarity March 17.

One hundred Steelworkers, their families, and supporters packed the local Elks hall to rally for striking Newport News shipyard workers.

Called by the Roanoke Valley Central Labor Union, AFL-CIO, the rally was designed to show support for United Steelworkers Local 8888 members who live in northeastern North Carolina and work an hour and a half away at the Newport News shipyard.

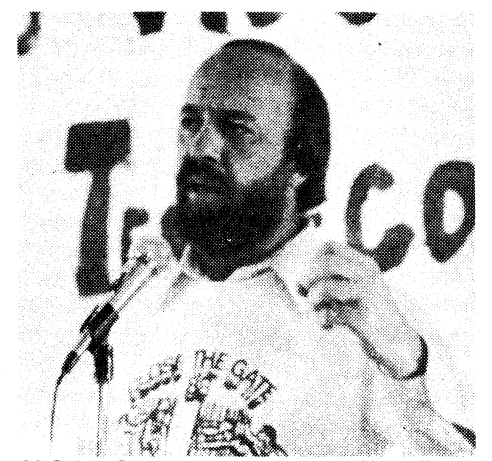
Speeches and songs boomed out of the hall over a powerful sound system, attracting passersby and residents of the predominantly Black community.

"We are the target people," said Ray Grant, a twenty-eight-year shipyard veteran, in opening the rally. "Tenneco is trying to break our backs, along with all of southern industry. We need to fight, because anything worth having is worth fighting for."

Joe Coyne, president of the Roanoke Valley CLU and an official of the United Paperworkers, stressed the impact the Newport News strike will have on organizing efforts throughout the South.

"In North Carolina," Coyne said, "only 6.3 percent of the work force is organized. Workers get paid from \$1.60 to \$2.60 an hour. But if we hang together in Newport News, we can whip the employers anywhere. And after we win, we have to organize the entire South, right down to the Florida keys."

Greetings from North Carolina unions were brought by members and



JACK HOWER

Militant/Jon Hillson

officials of the Operating Engineers, Carpenters, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, and the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

The strike "has brought the shipyard workers together," said Steelworkers organizer Jack Hower, "and most importantly, it brought the American labor movement to life."

"We have shown that Black and white, male and female can come together because we have a common cause—a better standard of living, a safe place to work, and in Newport News we have a union that can get us this."

This kind of solidarity, Hower said, "is why the Steelworkers will win. The South will rise again—and it will rise under a union banner."

Local 8888 President Wayne Crosby used the occasion to announce the formation of a "spouses auxiliary" to the Newport News strike. Initiated by a group of strikers' wives—but also seeking to involve husbands of strikers—the auxiliary is planning meetings and rallies, as well as weekly picket duty.

The determination of the 8888 members came out both in the response to the speeches they heard here and in testimony given by individuals at the end of the rally.

One Black striker explained his feelings about the strike.

It wasn't so much about money, he said, "but dignity on the job, of being able to stand behind what we say and having a union behind us so we can do that."

Without the union in the shipyard, without being able to "tell the supervisor you're right when you know you are right—it's like slavery. I've lived better than any day of my life since I've been a Steelworker, and I am going to stay a Steelworker."

Cleve.: Auto workers spread news of Va. shipyard strike

CLEVELAND—Television, radio and newspapers here are maintaining a virtual oath of silence on the Newport News shipyard strike. But two Cleveland auto workers, Jeff Powers and Glen Arnodo, are doing their best to see that working people in northern Ohio hear the truth about the Steelworkers' fight.

As members of United Auto Workers Local 451's education committee, Powers and Arnodo visited Newport News in February and prepared a slide show of what they saw there.

On March 14 the show was presented to a meeting of the Cuyahoga Medina UAW Community Action Program (CAP) Council, attended by representatives of more than twenty union locals.

After the show, a strike support resolution was unanimously adopted.

"The striking workers of Local 8888 have had to fight the combined power of the giant Tenneco Corporation, courts, police, politicians, and antilabor laws," it said.

The CAP Council resolved to "go

on record in full support of USWA Local 8888 in their struggle for justice, human dignity, and a better life."

"I want to congratulate the brothers from Local 451 for putting on such a fine presentation," said Local 420 President Joe Diamco. "But nobody can eat this resolution. These people need more than words."

Diamco proposed forming a committee to collect donations of money and food and offered a semi-tractor trailer to transport the food to Virginia.

"We organized similar donations for the coal miners during their strike," Arnodo told the Militant. "We'd like to really do this up big with a press conference and then send a whole car caravan down to Newport News."

The slide show has also been presented to the National Organization for Women Labor Task Force and the Elyria UAW Education Council. It is slated to be shown at Parma Chevy Local 1005 and the huge Ford Brook Park Local 1250, as well as the Summit/Portage County CAP Council.

Scabs testify for Tenneco at Va. NLRB hearing

By Jon Hillson

NEWPORT NEWS, Va.—The long arm of the law has a Tenneco shield on its sleeve.

That's the way it looked on March 19 as National Labor Relations Board hearings began on alleged "voting irregularities" in the January 1978 election victory of the United Steelworkers at the Newport News shipyard.

USWA Local 8888 has been on strike since January 31, 1979, to force Tenneco, the giant Houston-based corporation that owns the shipyard, to recognize and bargain with the union.

After the election it took the NLRB nine months to certify the union. Then Tenneco appealed the NLRB's decision to the courts.

Now the NLRB is being used to provide legal cover for yet more stalling.

Under the guise of being "impartial" and administering "the law," both the NLRB and the courts are serving as auxiliary arms of Tenneco's strike-breaking.

They are trampling on the desire of the big majority of shipyard workers—as expressed at the ballot box and on the picket line—to act collectively as a Steelworkers local.

The new NLRB hearings were ordered by a federal appeals court March 2. The court ordered the board to determine whether the USWA was guilty of "chain voting," passing blank ballots outside the polling booth to be marked. If the union is found guilty, the NLRB can order new elections.

More than 15,000 workers voted in the 1978 representation election. The USWA won by a 1,545 vote margin over the Peninsula Shipbuilders Association (PSA), the company union.

The law is loaded against the USWA. You have only to find a "reasonable likelihood that the election was corrupted by chain voting," the court told the NLRB.

Tenneco "does not have to show that something actually occurred," company lawyer Andrew Kramer told Administrative Law Judge Melvin Welles, "but that something *could* have occurred."

Shipyard President Edward Campbell has already announced plans to appeal any decision favorable to the union—all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. So *no matter what the NLRB or the courts decide*, the effect is more stalling for months and even years.

More months and years the workers are denied the right to the union of their choice.

More months and years to wear down the strikers and break the union.

Tenneco's case stands on a parade of scabs' testimony that they saw a few blank ballots in polling places, wastebaskets, or scattered in the shipyard.

The parade begins with Virginia Johnston who "forgot" that the statement she wrote for the PSA more than a year ago didn't contain the information she gave the court on March 19.

She didn't provide her knowledge of "irregularities" to the NLRB during its investigation last year, either. She did know, however, after questioning by union attorneys, that her new job as a truck driver in the yard was not as "mean and dirty" as the job she had before Tenneco discovered her insight into "chain balloting."

Roxanne Davis, a pal of PSA and company officials, also filed a statement just after the union elections. Union attorneys, however, couldn't examine it to compare against her new testimony. It had "disappeared" from PSA files.

Christine Robinson, a Tenneco employee for seventeen months, has been promoted from handyman—the next to lowest category in the shipyard—to third-class mechanic and received a raise just a week before the hearing began. Both are uncommon experiences for production workers, most of whom haven't had a raise in two years or a promotion in up to five. She testified she saw two blank ballots in a voting booth.

R.D. Adams couldn't remember if he gave his information about seeing blank ballots to the PSA before or after he was appointed a PSA steward.

The hearings are "a farce," USWA spokesperson Bill Edwards told the *Militant*. They "give Tenneco the chance to test the resolve of our people by dragging things out. The law is on trial here. This is not where you find justice. The only place we get justice is on the picket line."

"Tenneco bought and paid for those witnesses," a striking steelworker told me outside the hearing. "I worked six years in the shipyard, and I'm still a handyman. I haven't had a raise in two years. The company gets the weak ones and uses them," she said.

Another 8888 member, listening to his co-worker, chimed in, "That's Tenneco's court. The picket line, that's where we need people."

That same day reinforcements arrived at the picket lines. The newly formed 8888 Auxiliary—including spouses and family members of strikers—took up picket duty at noon.

There were up to 125 people at the Fiftieth Street gate alone.



Militant/Jon Hillson
Local 8888 picket lines are bolstered by supportive family members organized in the Spouses Auxiliary.

Gary rally defends job rights against 'Weber'



Militant/ Hattie McCutchen
GARY MAYOR RICHARD HATCHER: 'Only affirmative action can end discrimination.'

By Malik Miah

GARY, Ind.—More than 500 people, most of them Black steelworkers, attended a rally here March 14 to sound the alarm about the *Weber* "reverse discrimination" case.

The meeting was sponsored by Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher and United Steelworkers District 31 Director James Balanoff.

The panelists included Hatcher, Balanoff, and USWA General Counsel Bernard Kleiman.

"Our union has both the moral and legal responsibility to represent the interests of all workers," said Balanoff. "Our union is only as good as the services and protection it can provide the most defenseless member. Where discrimination exists, sooner or later it will affect all of us."

Rutgers University professor Arthur Kinoy pointed out that if *Weber* wins, "it will undermine and destroy the only way unions can represent Blacks, minorities and women."

Mayor Hatcher declared, "If Brian *Weber* wins, much of the struggle of the last two decades—which have seen some minimal advancement toward justice for women, Latinos, and Blacks—will largely be wiped out in the most important areas."

"I do not think affirmative action is a favor given to us by those in power, by those who reap the benefits from racism and sexism."

"Affirmative action is a right. A right that is ours for the same reason the leaders of colonial America demanded certain rights from England."

"The *Weber* case will be decided by the Supreme Court," Hatcher continued, "but the question of continued affirmative action will not be decided there."

"This meeting demonstrates that the ultimate decision about affirmative action will be made by the millions of working men and women who will have their grievances redressed."

"We have marched before, and we can march again," he said.

During the discussion period participants agreed with the need for more action and education on the *Weber* case.

Juanita Holmes, head of the civil rights committee of USWA Local 1010, urged that *Weber* be made the focus of the USWA international civil rights conference March 26-28 in Pittsburgh.

Actions set

Opponents of the *Weber* decision are gearing up their activity to coincide with opening arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court March 28.

The New Orleans Committee to Overturn the *Weber* Decision and Defend Affirmative Action is organizing a picket line at noon on March 24 at the federal building.

In Chicago, the United Steelworkers District 31 Women's Caucus has called a noon picket line for March 31 at the federal building.

In San Diego the Labor/Community Affirmative Action Task Force has called a news conference and informational picket line at noon on March 28 in front of the federal building.

And in Milwaukee, the Committee to Reverse the *Weber* Case is hosting a rally March 30 at the Smith Steel Workers D.A.L.U. Local 19806 hall.

Local 19806 President Paul Blackman will chair. Speakers include a representative of the Milwaukee County Labor Council; Joseph Robison, director of District Council 48 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; and others.

Steel women back job equality

By Linda Nordquist

PITTSBURGH—Seventy women and men, including many steelworkers, attended a meeting here March 18 on the *Weber* case and affirmative action.

The meeting was sponsored by Women of Steel, a newly formed group of steelworkers in western Pennsylvania.

Keynote speaker Floyd Chambers, representing the United Steelworkers international civil rights department, told the audience, "There are a lot of women in steel today and every woman got her job because of affirmative-action programs of some sort."

"At the time of the consent decree the company did not think women would stay. They thought they could close their eyes and women would go away. But women did not leave."

Chambers went on to describe the

legal issues in the case of Brian *Weber*, the white lab technician challenging an affirmative-action plan negotiated by the USWA.

Pam Vingle of the Squirrel Hill National Organization for Women declared, "If *Weber* is not struck down by the Supreme Court, we will be struck down again."

Phil Carter, president of Western Pennsylvania Black Political Assembly, exposed the lies of the "reverse discrimination" argument.

Carter said the *Allan Bakke* case, *Weber*, and now the Sears suit strike at the heart of affirmative-action gains.

"We need to attack these common targets in a coalition with women, minorities and labor together."

Patty McMann, a steelworker at U.S. Chemical, also spoke.

Who is the lawbreaker?

A federal district judge in New Orleans has fined the Tenneco Oil Company \$300,000 for thirty counts of bribing the sheriff of Chalmette, Louisiana.

Soon after a 133-day strike of Tenneco's Chalmette refinery workers in 1969, Sheriff Jack Rowley went onto Tenneco's under-the-table payroll.

Today members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers at the same refinery are on strike against demanding improved job safety.

Rowley is still sheriff.

Steel plan's 5 years are up

Was the consent decree implemented?

By Nancy Cole

On April 12, five years will have passed since a consent decree against job discrimination was signed by the United Steelworkers, nine giant steel corporations, and the federal government.

On paper, the antidiscrimination agreement provided unprecedented opportunities for Black, *latino*, and women workers, who had been locked into the dirtiest and lowest-paying steel jobs—or locked out of any jobs at all.

As long as the consent decree remains in effect, it is part of the contract the nine companies have with the USWA.

Perhaps thinking the clamor for affirmative action would have died down by 1979, U.S. District Judge Sam Pointer wrote into the decree that at the conclusion of five years "any party may move to dissolve this Decree in whole or in part."

Far from receding into the background, however, affirmative action is today at the heart of the battle by working people to strengthen their unions and defend job rights and living standards.

Now that the consent decree threatens to evaporate, many steelworkers are asking: Was it ever really implemented? Will it continue?

Well, that's hard to say. While thousands of Blacks, *latinos*, and women clearly benefited from the agreement, there have been no progress reports to the union membership from any body set up to implement it.

What is apparent is that all parties to the consent decree are looking to the *Weber* "reverse discrimination" case to be heard before the Supreme Court March 28.

In Brian Weber's challenge to an affirmative-action plan at Kaiser Aluminum lies the future of the basic steel consent decree.

According to a law clerk in the office of Judge Pointer, who has jurisdiction over the decree, the parties to the 1974 agreement have informally decided not to challenge it at this time.

"Once the *Weber* case is handed down," the clerk told me, "there may be some further action in that area."

Mad rush to scrap it

That's a polite way of saying, "If Weber wins, there will be a mad rush to scrap the decree."

Several racist lawsuits against the consent decree have been tied up in the courts for some time. Most recently, three white workers at Inland Steel in East Chicago, Indiana, filed suit last month against one aspect of the decree that was made part of the last basic steel contract—plant-wide seniority. Like Weber, they're claiming "reverse discrimination."

The consent decree was mainly designed to head off a flood of anti-discrimination lawsuits against the steel industry by Black and women workers. By 1974, several cases had already been won in the courts and at least eleven were pending.

The attorney general and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had been pressured to bring a complaint against the nine defendants: Allegheny Ludlum Industries, Armco Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Jones and Laughlin Steel, National Steel, Republic Steel, U.S. Steel, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, and Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company.

The government also charged that the United Steelworkers had "engaged in a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of the right to equal employment opportunities. . . ."

Thus was born the consent decree on April 12, 1974—an out-of-court settlement (but with the force of a court order) between the government, the steel companies, and the steel union. It covered 325,000 USWA members at about 250 plants.

Consent Decree I provided for plant-wide seniority. The previous system of department seniority served to lock Blacks into segregated departments with the worst conditions and lowest pay. At the time the decree was signed, there were very few women in steel production jobs at all.

Consent Decree I also instructed the companies and the union to devise timetables and goals for admitting women and minorities into craft apprenticeship programs.

Back pay was to be awarded to some of the victims of past discrimination who had been working in the mills.

Consent Decree II set hiring goals—one in five new hires for production and maintenance jobs were to be women. Other goals were set for women and minorities in clerical and supervisory positions.

The decree mandated plant implementation committees and an overall Audit and Review Commit-

K. Trade and Craft Selections:
Implementing Goal - 50% Minority and/or Female.

TAC Family	W/M	B/M	S/M	W/F	B/F	S/F	Total
1. Electrical Family							
1st Year (1974-75)	1						1
2nd Year (1975-76)	24	5	2	9.68			21
3rd Year							
Journeyman							
Apprentices	15	5	2	13.04			23
	65.28	21.74					
2. Metal Fabrication Family							
1st Year (1974-75)	10	4	3	17.77			17
2nd Year (1975-76)	58.81	23.34					
3rd Year	3	2	1	36.74			6
Journeyman							
Apprentices							
3. Machinist Family							
1st Year (1974-75)	10	1	1	8.33			12
2nd Year (1975-76)	75.04	25.04					4
3rd Year							
Journeyman							
Apprentices							
4. Millwright Family							
1st Year (1974-75)	11	6	1	18.18			19
2nd Year (1975-76)	57.81	31.68	5.34	5.34			
3rd Year	17	9	1	1.44			27
Journeyman							
Apprentices	19	4	1	11.14			24
	70.44	14.08					



Militant/Nancy Cole

Carolyn Jasin shows reports on Republic Steel's failure to meet consent decree quotas. As reports on left show, goal that half of craft hires and trainees be women or minorities fell far short. Women are still virtually excluded. (W/M = white male, S/F = Spanish-surnamed female, and so on.)

tee made up of equal numbers of company and union representatives plus one government person.

So what happened?

The \$31.5 million back pay sounded like a lot, but it averaged out to only \$660 for each of 47,888 workers involved.

Anyone who accepted the award had to sign away his or her rights under Title VII of the civil rights act to sue for more complete redress of past discrimination. Some 2,200 workers refused to sign and didn't get any back pay.

Implementation

As for implementation of the goals and timetables, who knows? Despite the fact that the union participates in the Audit and Review Committee, there has never been an audit or review of the decree made available to the USWA membership.

Audit and Review Committee Secretary E. C. Perkins refused to tell the *Militant* whether a wrap-up report is planned for any time in the future.

The decree has no enforcement teeth, so the companies can easily get away with ignoring its provisions if the facts on implementation are kept secret.

"Compliance status," the decree explains, shall not be judged by whether a company meets its goals and timetables but rather by the "extent of the Company's good-faith efforts."

"I couldn't tell you about other companies, but there's been no 'good-faith efforts' on the part of Republic Steel," says Carolyn Jasin, who works at Republic's South Chicago plant.

Jasin is a member of the women's committee of USWA Local 1033. She and other USWA members at her plant have tried to deal with the loopholes and weakness of the consent decree.

Republic appears to be in compliance with the hiring goals for women, she explains. But then the company turns around and fires a disproportionate number of women before they're off probation.

There is no goal for *retaining* women, you see, only hiring them.

Revolving door

It's what women in the USWA District 31 Women's Caucus call the "revolving door."

The probationary period in basic steel was doubled in the 1974 contract, which just happened to be negotiated at about the time the consent decree went into effect. Probation is 520 hours on the job—about three months.

Although the USWA contract gives the companies leave to fire probationary workers without cause, discrimination on the basis of race or sex is forbidden against any employee at any time. Except for a few local cases, however, the union has yet to challenge these discriminatory firings of women workers on probation.

Last year the women's committee at Republic Steel went on a campaign against the probationary firings of women and won some reinstatements. Since then, Jasin reports, the company has let up some on firing women.

Republic's "good-faith efforts" in opening the doors to its apprenticeship programs don't stand up to scrutiny either.

Jasin and a Black male worker have filed grie-

vances because they were turned down for craft programs on the basis of test scores. These grievances should soon reach the stage where Republic is forced to disclose statistics on who has been rejected for these programs—information that apparently is not available by any other means.

What about a breakdown of those who *have* been accepted into craft programs? Well, that's not easy to find out either.

Jasin started out by asking Republic for implementation figures on the consent decree. The company said no.

The union international representative for the district said he didn't have the authority to release such information.

The Audit and Review Committee refused to provide the facts.

Jasin moved on to the federal government, finally requesting the information under the Freedom of Information Act. The Justice Department said she would have to pay \$2,000 for copying.

In the end, Jasin got free of charge the figures for her plant only.

Half of new craft trainees and hires were supposed to be women or minorities, according to the consent decree. The figures for Republic's South Chicago plant show that out of 156 craft trainees or hires selected from 1974-77, only 53 were Black or *latino* men and 3 were women. That's only 36 percent.

No goal for Blacks, *latinos*, or women in any of the six craft categories had been met at the end of 1977. (The government said 1978 figures weren't available.)

"The union is half of the Audit and Review Committee," says Jasin. "They have had access to these implementation figures all along. But for five years they've kept them from us, the membership. We have a right to know—it's our jobs that are at stake."

At the District 31 Women's Conference in Chicago February 15, there was considerable discussion about the consent decree, especially on the related topic of probationary firings of women.

The conference passed a resolution calling on District 31 to:

- campaign to extend and strengthen the consent decree;
- compile a report on its implementation;
- fight to eliminate the probationary period in the next basic steel contract which will be negotiated in 1980; and
- fight to include in the next contract quotas for women and minorities to be hired *and retained*.

"The quotas—or goals as they're termed in the decree—are the most vulnerable part of the agreement," says Jasin. "We have to fight now to see that they're not tossed aside in the next contract."

Jasin believes that one way to begin that effort is to push for a full report on implementation of the consent decree.

"Members of the union have a right to know just how far we still have to go toward equality for Blacks and women in steel.

"And we have to fight *Weber*," she adds. "That is the single biggest threat to any gains our union made under the consent decree. We have to make sure that every member of the steel union and the entire labor movement is aware of this threat."

'Reverse discrimination' a myth

Black woman steelworker blasts 'Weber'

By Omari Musa

Cynthia Hawkins is a general repair mechanic trainee at the Kaiser Aluminum plant in Chalmette, Louisiana. She was the first woman enrolled in the skilled-crafts training program negotiated by the United Steelworkers in its 1974 contract with Kaiser.

That makes her a prime target of Brian Weber's "reverse discrimination" lawsuit, which aims to overturn the union plan. The U.S. Supreme Court will hear the case March 28.

A central feature of the program is its affirmative-action provision. It states that 50 percent of the openings are to be filled by Black and women workers. The quotas are to continue until Blacks hold skilled jobs equal to their proportion in the area workforce and until women hold 5 percent.

That's how Hawkins became a trainee in October 1978. And as a member of USWA Local 13000 out to save that affirmative-action plan, she became active in the New Orleans Committee to Overturn the Weber Decision and Defend Affirmative Action.

The committee has the endorsement of a broad range of unions along with Black and women's groups. It aims to mobilize the power of the labor movement against the Weber case. Several members of USWA Local 13000 are leaders of the committee.

On March 8, Hawkins spoke to an International Women's Day forum in New York City sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the New York National Organization for Women. Contributions from seven unions made her trip to New York possible.

Later she was interviewed by the *Militant*.

Hawkins started working at the Chalmette plant in 1976. She was laid off and called back in January 1978.

'I want to be a mechanic'

She was the first Black woman to make the thirty-day probationary period and is now one of five women out

of 2,300 production and maintenance workers at the Chalmette plant.

"I'm interested in being a mechanic," says Hawkins. "I don't want anyone telling me what I can and cannot be."

"They say a woman's place is in the home, being a mother. Well, I'm a mother. I have three children, but that's only the beginning. Before I began at Kaiser, I worked two jobs—what they called 'female factory jobs.' Now I want to be a mechanic."

Brian Weber is a white laboratory technician at Kaiser's Gramercy plant a few miles up the Mississippi from Chalmette.

He filed his suit in 1974, after the first group of trainees entered the program at the Gramercy plant. Weber claims the affirmative-action program is "reverse discrimination." He wants it thrown out.

So far, two lower courts have agreed with Weber's claim.

If the Supreme Court rules in Weber's favor it would be a deadly blow to the fight for equal job rights by Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and women. It would also undermine the right of the unions to negotiate contracts that represent all their members.

Two lower courts upheld Weber's charge of "reverse discrimination" on the basis that Kaiser has never discriminated at its Gramercy plant.

"There is no such thing as 'reverse discrimination,'" declares Hawkins. "How can there be when the discrimination that has always existed has been directed against Blacks, other minorities, and women?"

"We don't decide whether people get hired and fired. We're the ones hired and fired. We're the victims of discrimination."

"Blacks, who are 40 percent of the population around the Gramercy plant, couldn't even get a high school education, much less qualify for skilled jobs," she explained.

"Louisiana is the deep South. How



Militant/Omari Musa

CYNTHIA HAWKINS: 'Working people must unite and demand equal rights for all.'

can anyone say there's no discrimination at the plant? Are they asking us to believe that Kaiser didn't participate in the same discrimination against Blacks that the government and school system used to keep Black people down?"

"I couldn't apply at Kaiser, except as a secretary, even after the civil rights act of 1964 because Kaiser wasn't hiring women. That's discrimination."

In 1974, right before the affirmative-action plan was instituted, Blacks made up less than 2 percent of Kaiser's skilled-crafts work force and there were no women in the crafts.

'We need quotas'

"If this discrimination hadn't been passed down, we wouldn't need quotas," Hawkins remarked. "But because of it we need quotas and affirmative action, especially in training. This is the only way you can end discrimination."

Hawkins explained how the skilled-crafts training program benefited white, male unionists in the plant, as well as Blacks and women.

"Before the training program, Kaiser hired skilled craftspeople from outside the plant. Now with the program everybody has an opportunity to advance themselves."

"That's why the white men should oppose Weber's suit too."

"I don't think all the white, male workers are biased toward minorities and women," she said. "And I don't think Weber represents the majority of them either."

"I know this from my own experience in the plant. Where whites have been biased in the beginning, after working with them some of their hostility seems to leave. Some of them say, there's nothing wrong with these people. They're just Black or they're women, they're human too."

"If I were a white, male worker, I would have to corner Weber and tell him directly, hey, your suit is hurting me."

Hawkins also has some opinions on the role of the courts in Weber's case.

"Weber wants the courts to say that he's a victim of 'reverse discrimination' under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act," she said.

"Now, if I'm not mistaken, this law was passed to protect minorities against discrimination. But here you've got a racist using the law against Black rights!"

The court totally ignored the record of discrimination at Kaiser, Hawkins says.

Government's game

"There seems to be a game being played. One part of the government says discrimination is bad and is forced to pass laws that supposedly aim at correcting it. Then another part of the government says you can't correct it with quotas and affirmative-action programs."

"Then some racist like Weber, with backers nobody knows, comes along and sues. The courts declare the affirmative-action program illegal under laws designed to protect minorities and women."

"Then the companies say we can't do anything about past discrimination because the courts have ruled quotas illegal. The companies are off the hook, and minorities and women are at the back of the bus again."

"This has already begun to happen," she said. "There are a lot of employers that are supposed to have affirmative-action programs, but they refuse to act on them because of the Weber case."

Although Weber claims discrimination against Blacks and women has been wiped out, Hawkins says reality doesn't support that view.

"Doesn't the fact that I'm the first Black woman in the program at Chalmette prove something?" Hawkins asked.

"It shows that the pace of government-enforced job equality has been very slow."

And to top it off, Hawkins says, the government tries to blame this lack of equality on the workers themselves.

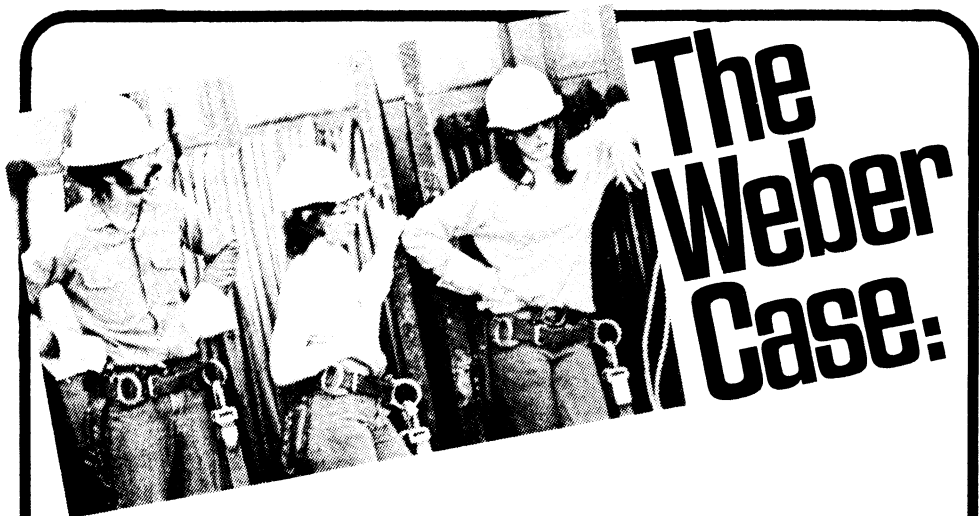
"It's trying to convince Black men that women are the problem. It's trying to convince white men that minorities and women are the problem."

"Working people should be united. It's working people who provide for this country."

"Our committee in New Orleans is trying to educate people about what Weber really means."

"I believe the support is growing. We have to work hard to bring it out. The best way to do that is to have forums, marches, and rallies and provide people with educational material so they know which side Weber stands on."

"A victory for Weber will not only be a defeat for minorities and women, it will hurt all working people," she concluded.



The Weber Case:

HELP GET OUT THE TRUTH

The Weber Case: New Threat to Affirmative Action by Militant staff writer Andy Rose presents the real story behind Weber's assault on job rights. It takes up key issues posed by the case: so-called reverse discrimination against white males, seniority, and how the labor movement can win jobs and better conditions for all. Join the effort to get out the facts to working people.

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Carter to Teamsters: 7 percent or else

By Shelley Kramer

On March 31 the Teamster Master Freight Agreement, covering 350,000 truck drivers and dock workers, expires. Lined up behind the Teamsters for contract negotiations this year are the rubber, electrical, and auto workers.

The Carter administration has made its intentions perfectly clear.

"If you don't get the Teamsters," an administration economist told the March 1 *Wall Street Journal*, "the others will say to hell with the [7 percent wage limit] program."

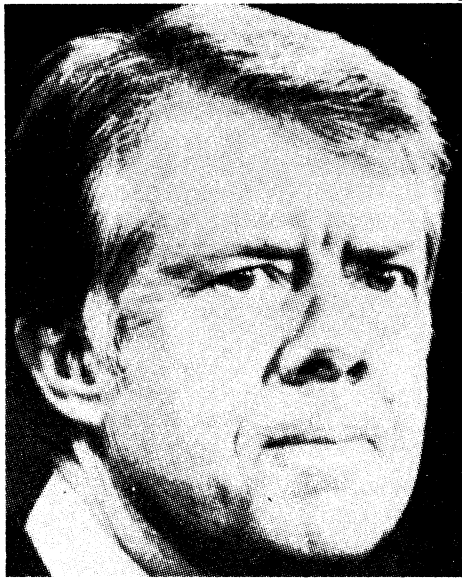
"Getting the Teamsters" is exactly what the government and trucking industry are out to do. If the nation's biggest union can be force-fed Carter's austerity "guidelines," the bosses will have won an important battle in their war to drive down the living standards of all working people.

So the government's big guns are trained on the Teamsters. When word leaked that union negotiators are demanding a three-year wage-and-benefit package somewhere between 35 and 55 percent, the rulers and their press let out a howl.

Carter's wage hatchet man Alfred Kahn warned the Teamsters that if they don't agree to a "reasonable" settlement, the government will speed up efforts to deregulate the trucking industry.

According to the March 16 *Wall Street Journal*, Kahn said the results of deregulation will "diminish the union's control over the work force and increase management's ability to resist large wage demands."

But, he cynically added, "political realities" would produce less pressure for deregulation if the Teamsters abide by the guidelines and voluntarily cut their own living standards.



CARTER: Having trouble convincing workers to take cut in real wages.

Caught between the government-employer attack and the demands of an increasingly militant union membership, Teamsters President Frank Fitzsimmons has appealed to Carter to relax the guidelines. Fitzsimmons offers in return to give political support to Carter's "anti-inflation" program.

But no sooner had Fitzsimmons publicly embraced Carter's "real wage insurance" scheme—a fraud from the start—than the administration announced that the plan would be shelved until after the Teamsters contract was settled.

The costs of maintaining Teamster health insurance programs will be counted against the 7 percent limit, the administration announced, despite Carter's earlier hint—warmly welcomed by Fitzsimmons—that such costs might be excluded.



FITZSIMMONS: Caught between demands of ranks and government-employer offensive.

As a final slap in the face, a fifty-eight-cent-an-hour cost-of-living increase due the Teamsters April 1 under their old contract—for price increases that have already taken place—will be counted against the 7 percent.

Industry negotiators are using the wage guidelines and deregulation threat "as a shield" against union demands, reports the March 14 *Wall Street Journal*.

This Carter-led crusade against the Teamsters is a last-ditch effort to hold the government's lid on wages. To the bosses' chagrin, this clash coincides with a growing realization among working people of exactly what Carter's "anti-inflation" package means.

According to the government's own statistics, prices rose 0.9 percent in January, bringing the annual inflation rate to a whopping 10.8 percent. From

December to January weekly earnings fell another 1 percent.

Kahn admits that workers who comply with the guidelines face "what looks at the moment like a decline in real income."

That is undoubtedly why he felt the need to make a public show recently of lecturing a group of business executives: "How long will labor be willing to demonstrate . . . restraint," Kahn asked, "while prices are rising at a rate several points higher than the one at which we are asking labor to settle, and while—mark this—every indication is that profit reports are going to be extremely high in the months ahead?"

But lectures will not hold down prices—and that is not the Carter administration's intention. Cutting real wages is what the "guidelines" are all about.

"Our members can read, too," said Teamster Vice-president Roy Williams, referring to the government's latest statistics. It's going to be "hard" to settle within the limits, he warned.

Hard because the ranks of the Teamsters know that their union has the power to win their demands for higher wages and cost-of-living protection; for increased job safety; for shorter hours and a halt to the companies' murderous productivity drive.

"By busting the guidelines," says the March 9 *Wall Street Journal*, "the Teamsters would open the floodgates for other unions to bust them as well."

That's right. That's why the bosses and government would like to make an example out of the Teamsters.

Fine. The labor movement should take up their challenge. It can set its own example—by showing that labor will stand behind the Teamsters and every union fighting for a decent contract.

9,000 Militants, PMs sold first week of drive

By Peter Seidman

The results are now in on the first national target week of our spring 1979 circulation campaign.

Altogether our supporters sold 8,076 copies of the *Militant* and 920 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*. The total of 8,996 papers was 132 percent of the regular weekly goal of 6,808.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance plan to sell 100,000 papers during the ten-week campaign.

The purpose of the drive is to bring revolutionary socialist ideas to an increasingly receptive audience among industrial workers.

Not every area gave a detailed breakdown of its sales. But 474 papers were reported sold at plant gates. And 284 were reported sold to co-workers on the job.

This overall reported workplace figure of 758 was larger than the average during our last sales drive.

But we still have a long way to go. Our gains so far barely scratch the surface of what is possible.

Salespeople from Washington, D.C., for example, missed sales one week at the Fruitgrowers Express boxcar where they regularly sell. When they arrived for target week sales, they were reprimanded by workers. "Where was your team?" they were asked. "Where's the *Militant*?"

Many of the workers at this plant have relatives in southern Virginia. They follow the *Militant's* unique coverage of the Newport News steelworkers' strike with real concern.

Jeff Stevenson, a member of UAW Local 1058, organizes *Militant* sales in Toledo, Ohio. He reports a similar reaction. "Auto workers are also battling the bosses' southern strategy." So

a strike for union recognition in the south arouses real support."

Stevenson and other socialists sold twenty papers to co-workers at the Doelger-Jarvis Casting Division plant during the target week.

Increasing the sales of *Perspectiva Mundial* is another goal of this circulation drive. On this, members of the SWP and YSA hit the bulls-eye during the target week. They reported selling 170 percent of the regular weekly goal.

New York City socialists led the way. *Perspectiva Mundial* sales were 26 percent of New York's total for the target week.

Most of these were sold by special *Perspectiva Mundial* sales teams, the majority of whose members could not speak Spanish. Students at Hostos College bought eighty-eight single copies and four subscriptions from such teams during the week.

These are solid achievements.

But overall, we sold fewer papers than we'd hoped during the target week.

Only eleven of forty-four cities sold 150 percent or more of their regular goal. And eighteen areas fell below their regular weekly goal.

But a number of the areas that fell short are already taking steps to improve their sales.

Chicago, for example, has made a dramatic turnaround in sales, as a result of the heightened public interest in the SWP mayoral campaign of Andrew Pulley.

Louisville socialists were petitioning to put candidates of the SWP on the ballot. As in Raleigh, they have made plans to catch up later in the drive.

Other areas that fell behind in the first week will also need to discuss how to catch up on their cumulative goals.

CITY	MILITANT		PM		TOTAL		
	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Percent
Birmingham	50	210		0	50	210	420.0
Newark	130	368	15	34	145	402	277.2
New York City	540	1181	60	417	600	1598	266.3
Albuquerque	115	300	20	50	135	350	259.2
Dallas	125	267	20	56	145	323	222.7
Cincinnati	75	148			75	148	197.3
Toledo	100	182	5	4	105	186	177.1
Los Angeles	320	571	80	116	400	687	171.7
Washington, D.C.	230	404	20	21	250	425	170.0
Salt Lake City	130	220	5	1	135	221	163.7
Miami	100	152	30	50	130	202	155.3
Tacoma	125	176			125	176	140.8
Detroit	175	250	5	0	180	250	138.8
Seattle	145	206	5	0	150	206	137.3
Phoenix	120	161	30	44	150	205	136.6
San Antonio	60	83	20	18	80	101	126.2
Baltimore	100	120			100	120	120.0
St. Louis	125	144			125	144	115.2
Cleveland	115	133	5	1	120	134	111.6
Albany	100	110	5	1	105	111	105.7
Indianapolis	115	121			115	121	105.2
Kansas City	90	98	5	2	95	100	105.2
Gary	75	75		2	75	77	102.6
Morgantown	125	126			125	126	100.8
Philadelphia	225	245	25	7	250	252	100.8
Atlanta	145	151	5	0	150	151	100.6
Raleigh	90	90			90	90	100.0
Boston	200	201	25	9	225	210	93.3
Iron Range	35	32			35	32	91.4
Denver	120	110	20	15	140	125	89.2
Milwaukee	120	104	5	6	125	110	88.0
New Orleans	100	88			100	88	88.0
Houston	200	173	50	30	250	203	81.2
Chicago	310	255	40	20	350	275	78.5
Vermont	18	14			18	14	77.7
San Diego	105	83	20	9	125	92	73.6
Berkeley	145	101	5	0	150	101	67.3
St. Paul	100	64		1	100	65	65.0
Minneapolis	150	97			150	97	64.6
Pittsburgh	200	123		2	200	125	62.5
San Francisco	275	155		3	275	158	57.4
San Jose	105	67	15	1	120	68	56.6
Portland	100	52			100	52	52.0
Louisville	100	15			100	15	15.0
Oakland		50				50	.0
TOTALS	6268	8026	540	920	6808	8996	132.1
Not reporting: Amherst, Ma.; Iowa City							
*Goal not reported							

Railroad bankruptcies

By Dick Roberts

(last of a series)

Throughout the eastern United States, railroads are bankrupt.

This includes the Penn Central, once the biggest of all railroads; ConRail, which is the biggest freight carrier in the United States today; the Boston and Maine; Central of New Jersey; Erie Lackawanna; Lehigh Valley and Reading.

Railroad bankruptcies are spreading to the Midwest. The Rock Island has been bankrupt since 1973; the Milwaukee Road lunged into bankruptcy two years ago.

These bankruptcies are being used as a major propaganda weapon in the national profit drive of the railroad trusts. The companies implore workers to sacrifice in order to keep each individual employer from going under.

Speedup, unsafe working conditions and unsafe traveling conditions, reduced crews, and lower wage increases are justified in the name of "keeping the railroads alive."

Railroads that earn profit on their operations and are not faced with financial problems—that is, the majority of American railroads—of course argue that their employees must make similar sacrifices. If they don't, the bosses say, it will be only a matter of time before the profit-making companies also go into receivership. Then even more layoffs will follow.

The public is being told the same thing, and the bankruptcy-of-the-railroads argument is being used to virtually eliminate long-distance passenger service in this country.

In April 1978 the Milwaukee Road obtained a work-rule settlement with the United Transportation Union giving the company the right to operate systemwide, road and yard, with one-and-one train crews—one conductor and one brakeman, or one foreman and one helper. This reduces the total operating crews from four to three.

Later in the year a Milwaukee Road-type settlement was forced through in ConRail. Other railroads are trying to make it the model for the industry.

The rail union bureaucracies are following suit, warning workers that things will get even worse if they don't make this concession.

Profitable lines

In fighting back against this attack on jobs, it is first of all important to underline that most railroads in the country do make profits.

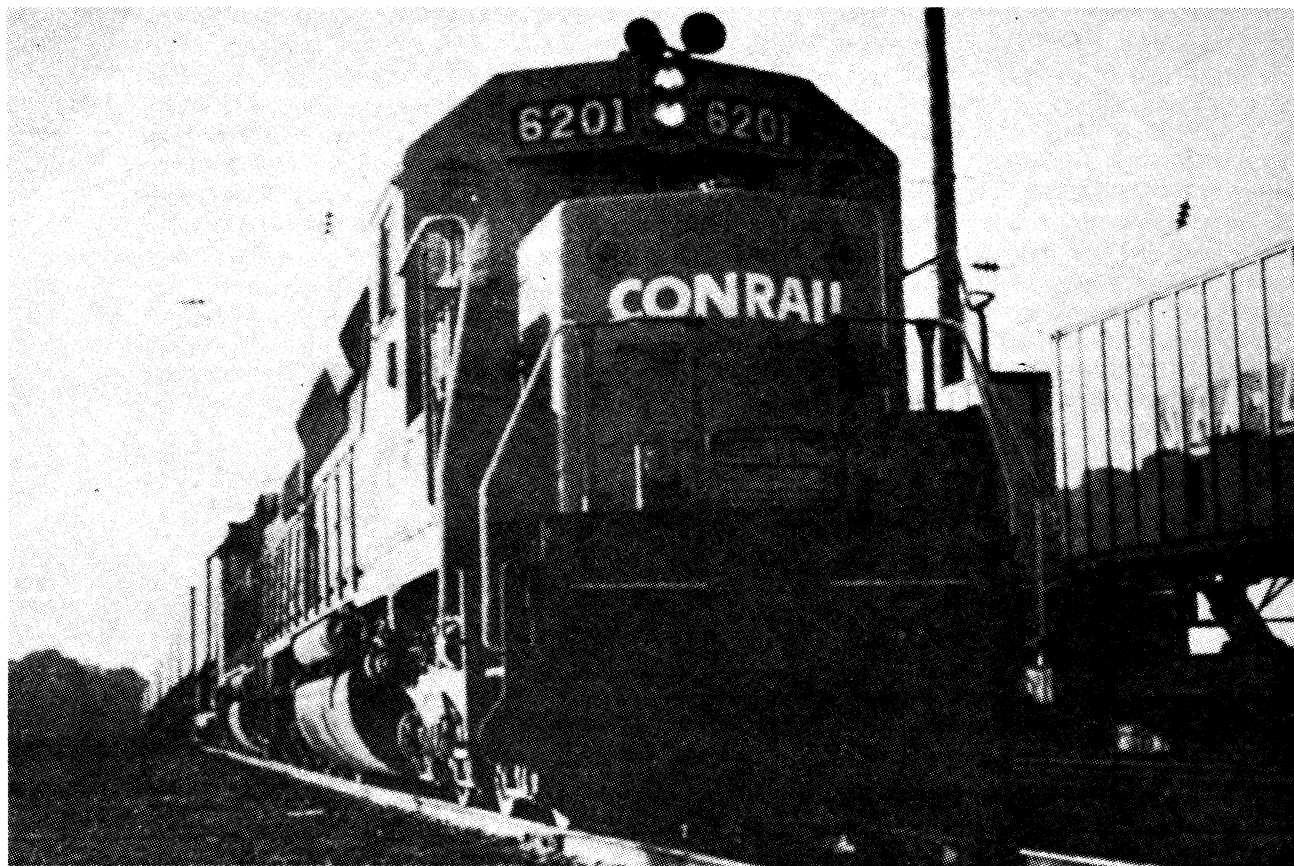
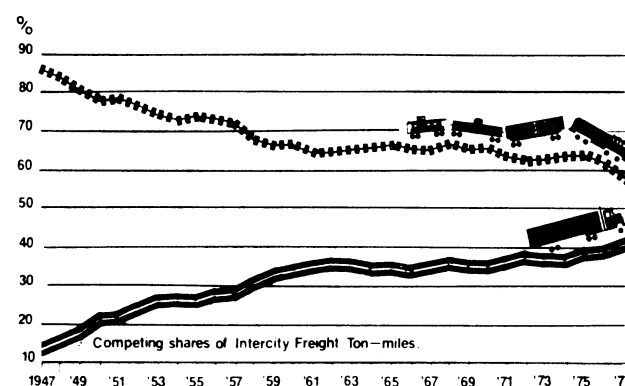
The industry magazine *Railway Age* noted in its January 9, 1978, issue that "roughly 75% of the industry is in reasonably good health. The railroads in the South, the railroads in the West, and many of them that operate in the middle western part of the country have main lines that are in good to excellent shape." By excellent shape they mean high profits—they are not talking about the quality of track, usefulness and safety for the public, or the working conditions of railroad workers.

These companies are not about to go under. In fact they are presently engaged in one of the biggest investment programs in history. Last year's production of more than 70,000 box cars was an all-time record.

The lines actually in bankruptcy are ConRail, accounting for 12-13 percent of U.S. railroad mileage, and the other companies listed above, counting for another 12-13 percent.

Previous articles in this series traced the main reasons for this state of affairs. In their frantic chase for profits, the railroads overbuilt. By 1880, according to financial statistician John Moody, the railroads "had built twice as much railroad as the country could employ, and issued four times the securities it could pay interest on."

TRUCKS GAIN ON TRAINS (Over Three Decades)



Conrail, the biggest U.S. railroad, is bankrupt, subsidized out of taxpayers' money. It remains privately owned.

The overbuilding of railroads and simultaneous watering down of stocks and bonds precipitated the big financial panics of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It also made the lawyers of the railroad trusts the experts *par excellence* on using bankruptcy to the advantage of investors.

According to economic historian August Bolino, there were 80 railroads in bankruptcy in 1876; 192 in 1894; 94 in 1916; and 108 in 1939, on the eve of World War II. Whole sections of the federal government are devoted exclusively to railroad bankruptcies and their consequences.

Which railroad lines to close down without hurting local business too much, which lines to merge



into other corporations without seeming to be too much the benefactors of these corporations, how to reimburse the owners of defunct railroads without attracting too much attention—these questions have cudged the minds of American corporate lawyers, judges, and politicians since the 1840s.

Oil and autos

In the twentieth century two other sectors of U.S. industry displaced the railroads as the main generators of profits: oil, which began large-scale production in the 1870s, and autos, which became a major industry after the First World War.

Statistics for 1977 vividly illustrate the change. In that year General Motors had greater assets than the nine biggest railroads combined (Union Pacific, Burlington Northern, Southern Pacific, Santa Fe Industries, Seaboard Coastline, Missouri Pacific, Chessie System, and Norfolk and Western). The total assets of these nine railroads was \$25.6 billion. GM's assets were \$26.7 billion. Exxon, the biggest oil company, had the staggering asset total of \$38.4 billion.

Profit levels tell the same story. In 1977 the combined profits of the nine biggest railroads were \$985 million; Exxon's profits were \$2.4 billion; and General Motors's profits were \$3.3 billion, more than six times as much as the nine biggest railroads.

Together GM and Ford employ more workers in America than all the railroads combined.

The growth of the auto, trucking, and oil industries has been assisted by massive government investment in the highways and the parallel elimi-

nation of railroad service, particularly in the cities. It is well documented that General Motors, Firestone Tire, and Standard Oil of California conspired to eliminate trolley systems in major cities.

"By 1949," according to a Senate subcommittee, "General Motors had been involved in the replacement of more than 100 electric transit systems with GM buses in 45 cities including New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, St. Louis, Oakland, Salt Lake City, and Los Angeles."

In New York City today, a project to build a new superhighway system, the "Westway," down the west side of Manhattan is under dispute. Comparing this project with PATH, the municipal railroad system that links New Jersey and New York, PATH Vice-president Louis Gambaccini declared, "The total capital investment over fifteen years by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in its rail subsidy is \$250 million—equivalent to but one mile of New York City's proposed Westway."

The end result of this whole historical process favoring motor vehicles has been a decisive shift of freight carrying away from the rails to trucking.

Railroad debts

Another statistic shows the financial problems this has caused for the railroads. In 1977, the total debt of the nine biggest U.S. railroads was \$7.8 billion. This compares to GM's total debt of \$1.2 billion. Thus, in 1977 these nine railroads had 6.5 times the debt, but less than a third of the profits, of General Motors.

It is this enormous debt load on the railroads that is the central question involved in railroad bankruptcies. Over the course of decades the railroads have accumulated massive debts in their construction and overconstruction of rails.

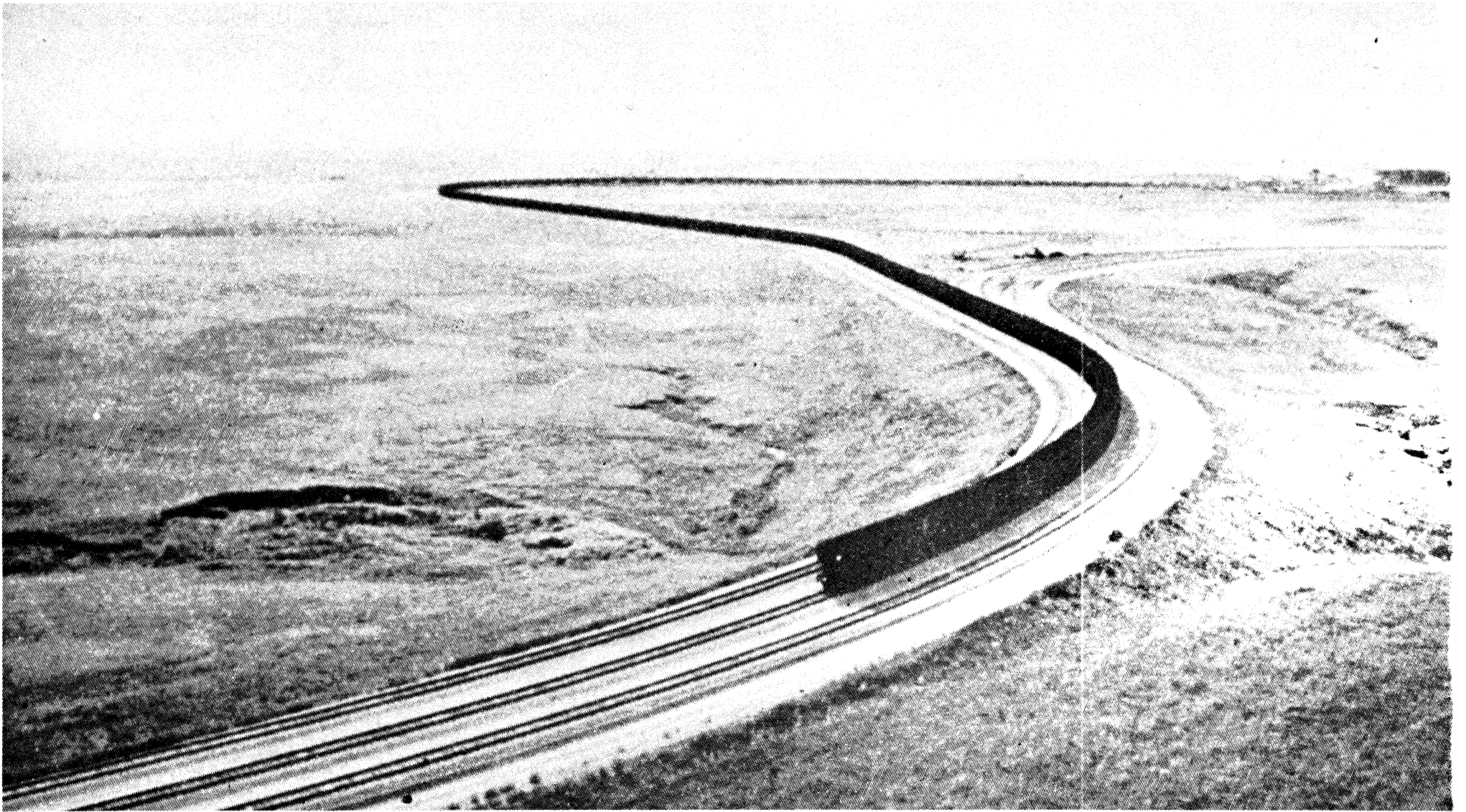
Similar to the financial crisis of many cities, the question in railroad bankruptcies is what can the given railroad do to go on paying off its debts? Or, to turn the question around, what must the ruling class do so that the banks, insurance companies, and other financial institutions that have purchased railroad bonds can continue to receive the interest on the bonds that are not due and be confident of refinancing the bonds that are due?

Railroads that cannot meet these payments are put into receivership; that is, they are managed by the ruling class for a shorter or longer period through its courts. The justices' sole task is to restore the line to solvency—to get it back onto the track of paying off its bondholders.

A rail worker for the Northwestern in Chicago told me, "We see every day the amount of money that is wasted, the neglected plant and equipment. Just a bolt needs to be tightened here. Routine management could save this company a lot of money, especially when you see the cost of these derailments." Similar thoughts are expressed by many railroad workers: "Why don't they just run this damned thing right?"

But day-to-day operations of railroads are far

Continued on next page



Union Pacific coal train. The UP and other big western railroads are highly profitable and own vast real estate and natural resources.

Continued from preceding page

from the minds of the directors in the board rooms. There, one thought is uppermost: *return on investment*.

The railroad directors have a very clear program in mind for rail labor. They want to drastically reduce the number of jobs in order to get more work out of fewer workers.

Railroad management is not concerned with improving working conditions, and they are not interested in public safety or convenience. On the contrary, they want to get the most mileage out of the old and frequently dangerous equipment they already have. Every last cent is being milked from an industry that throughout sectors of the East and Midwest is long on the decline. And the entire population is suffering from this.

The main victims of this decline are rail workers themselves. The essence of the stepped-up national attack on railroad workers is to make them bear the brunt of the financial problems of the weaker companies. This will prolong the profitability of the weaker rails and all the more increase the profitability of the big southern and western carriers.

Penn Central

The collapse of the Penn Central in 1970 illustrated aspects of this process. After a century of wasteful competition between them, the two biggest eastern railroads, the New York Central and the Pennsylvania, merged in 1968.

But the managers of the merged line had little interest in investing in the railroad itself, either to improve its notoriously rotten passenger service or to reach out to new freight customers.

Instead they poured money into more profitable ventures elsewhere. The Penn Central already stood as the largest real-estate holder in the East. In New York alone it owned the Grand Central Terminal, Pan Am Building, Biltmore, Barclay and Waldorf-Astoria hotels, and the ITT, Manufacturers Hanover Trust and Chemical Bank-New York Trust buildings, among others.

Now it picked up such properties as the Great Southwest Corporation, which runs the Six Flags amusement parks and has widespread real-estate interests; and the Buckeye Pipeline Company, which delivers fuel oil from Indiana to the Northeast.

While this was happening, a core of inside owners carried out a con similar to the Credit Mobilier scheme of the previous century. A small, closely held company called Penphil bought real estate cheaply and sold it at high profits to the Penn Central.

Involved in this apparently everyday operation of finance capital were David Bevan, Penphil's president, who was the head of the finance committee of the Pennsylvania Railroad; General Charles Hodge, a former partner of Maurice Stans, President Nixon's commerce secretary; and the F.I. du Pont Company, the securities firm of the du Pont family.

In fact F.I. du Pont was the principal investment advisor to the Penn Central. Stans, it was subsequently disclosed, held 37,955 shares of Great Western.

A second scheme was also operating at the same time. The stock of Penn Central had been bid way up on Wall Street on the ballyhoo that the merged company would "put Eastern railroading back in business."

Its behind-the-scenes real estate operations were not widely known. The financial institutions that had purchased the stock cheap and run it way up then began to sell it off at enormous profits, keeping smaller investors in the dark as bankruptcy loomed.

Former Chairman of the House Banking Committee Wright Patman later disclosed that in the two months before the bankruptcy was declared, nine financial institutions quietly dumped 1,861,000 shares of stock. These included the Chase Manhattan Bank (Penn Central President Stuart Saunders was a director of Chase Manhattan); the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company; the Security Pacific National Bank of Los Angeles; and the Alleghany Corporation of Baltimore.

The unravelling of this biggest bankruptcy in American history—which is by no means complete almost nine years after the event—required creating special courts, setting up the United States Railway Agency, passing two major pieces of congressional legislation, and forming Amtrak and ConRail.

Railroad bonds

At stake are the vast real-estate and railroad properties of the company, its quantities of rolling stock, and the hundreds of millions of dollars of stocks and bonds—that is, claims to income—that have been floated against these properties.

At the time of bankruptcy, the Penn Central listed no less than thirty different series of outstanding bonds issued at one time or another by it or the corporations it and its predecessors had taken over.

For example, the Penn Central owed on a New York Central and Hudson River Railroad "gold" mortgage bond originally issued at 3.5 percent interest. The face value of this series alone is \$75,762,000. It has first lien on 1,145 miles of railroad, lien on two bridges from Albany to East Albany, and a lien on all real estate owned and used in connection with the Grand Central Terminal. (Lien is the claim on the property of a debtor to pay the debt.)

The property concerned here was built decades ago. In fact, this particular bond was originally issued by the Utica and Black River Railroad, one of the lines ultimately subsumed by Vanderbilt's New York Central.

For all these years, bond owners have collected interest on these notes. The central aim of the bankruptcy proceedings is to ensure that the note holders will get the most that can still be extracted now and into the future.

Such paper is far from worthless to finance capitalists. The New York Central and Hudson River "gold" is actively traded in New York bond markets. From a low of \$140 on a \$1,000 bond at the time of bankruptcy in 1970, it has risen to a present value of about \$670. This is a 478 percent increase—showing that immense profits are made not only from the eventual outcome of the bankruptcy proceeding, but even during it.

Reorganization

During a railroad bankruptcy, the operations do not cease for a minute; federal law requires that the railroads continue to operate through the reorganization process. Only two things change: payment on stocks and bonds is postponed, as the trustees attempt to wrest the most possible out of the bankrupt line for its stock and bond holders; and the top management is taken over by the court-appointed trustees whose job it is to oversee the salvaging operation.

But the bankruptcy of the Penn Central involved such vast wealth and was so complex that this type of court receivership was coupled with federal intervention. The long-distance passenger lines were put under Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, created by the government in 1970. The freight and short-distance passenger lines were put under ConRail, created by Congress in the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973.

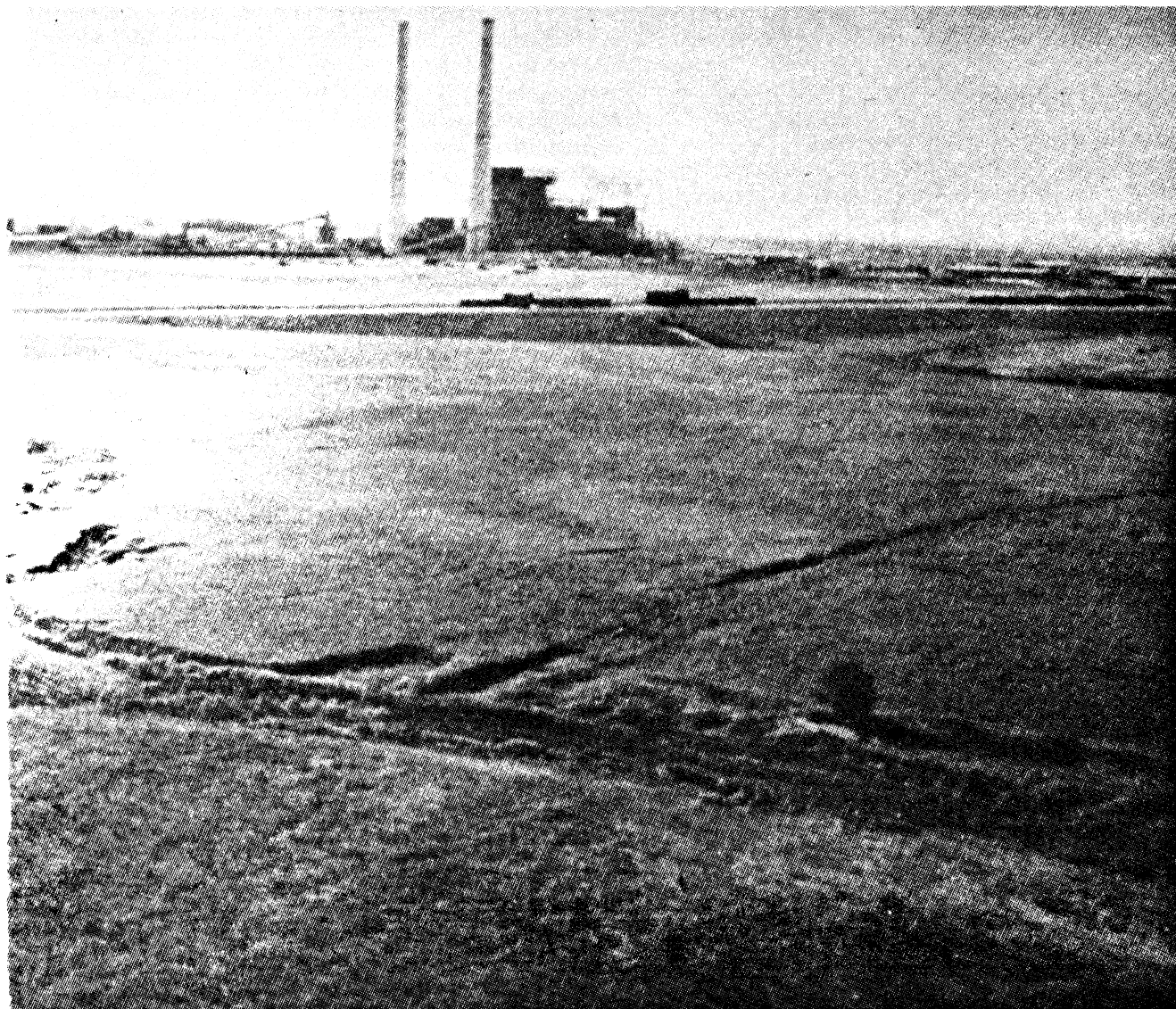
"The corporation shall be a for-profit corporation . . . and shall not be an agency or instrumentality of the federal government," Congress declared about ConRail. Unknown to most, ConRail is a *totally privately owned corporation, which is subsidized by the government through tax revenues*.

The United States Railway Association (USRA) was formed as ConRail's banker in order to act as a buffer between the new corporation and the government. Congress appropriates the funds for the USRA.

ConRail took over most of the Penn Central, Ann Arbor, Reading, Lehigh Valley, Central of New Jersey, and Lehigh and Hudson River railroads, as well as a sizable part of the Erie Lackawanna. In return for their railroad assets, these bankrupt companies received 25 million shares of ConRail common stock, and 31 million shares of junior preferred certificates of value issued by USRA. These securities preserve private ownership of the government-subsidized firm.

Amtrak, on the other hand, is owned by the Penn Central and three other railroad companies: Grand Trunk Western, 2 percent; Milwaukee Road, 6 percent; Burlington Northern 35.6 percent; and Penn Central 55.8 percent.

Thus two bankrupt lines—the Penn Central and the Milwaukee Road—are major owners of the national rail passenger system; and the Penn Central and six other bankrupt lines are owners of ConRail, the nation's biggest freight system. In this



convoluted way, the deteriorating northeastern railroads remain entrapped in the web of private ownership.

Third asset

If ConRail and/or Amtrak ever succeed in putting their operations back on a profitable basis, their management will be returned from the courts and governmental agencies to these private owners.

Meanwhile the Penn Central itself has recently been reorganized. It is this company that still owed on the old Penn Central bonds such as the "gold" mortgage bond. It owned the real-estate properties of the old Penn Central, and it owned the nonrailroad companies that the Penn Central had bought up.

But the reorganized Penn Central has a third asset in addition to its real-estate and other nonrailroad properties. In addition to receiving stock in ConRail, the old railroads also sold their rails and rolling stock to ConRail for cash.

This cash price is still being negotiated in court and may not be settled for another decade. ConRail obtained the rails and rolling stock of the Penn Central and other bankrupt lines in 1976 at scrap prices. Since ConRail is still operating this equipment, it is argued that these properties actually had a much higher value. Compared to the sale price of about \$550 million, Penn Central lawyers claim the actual value was \$7 billion.

If and when this suit is settled, the new Penn Central company will receive the agreed-upon sum. Moreover, it will receive interest on any value it was owed above what it got in the original transaction.

Consequently the bondholders of the bankrupt northeastern lines now stand to gain from ConRail in two ways: they own ConRail in case it is put back on a money-making basis; and they own a huge claim against it, based on the yet-to-be-determined price at which they sold ConRail its rails and rolling stock.

Milwaukee Road

Other railroad bankruptcies are less complex than the Penn Central's, but in every case the essence of the matter is the same: The bankrupt railroads are being operated for the ruling class by its courts and other governmental institutions in order to put them back on a profitable basis for their owners. When this happens, the companies will be returned to the owners.

In fact the present bankruptcy of the Milwaukee Road is its fourth. By abandoning some 1,700 miles of track and selling off parts to such other lines as the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern, the court expects to hone down the Milwaukee to a profitable company.

"The Milwaukee Road has a great many valuable assets. . . . While some of the railroad property

may best be operated by other railroads, it remains possible that most of the system can profitably be operated by a reorganized Milwaukee Road and that such a reorganization will provide the greatest benefits to all of the interests in this proceeding." So said Stanley Hillman, the court-appointed trustee of the Milwaukee.

Hillman's statement is worth underlining because "the interests in this proceeding" *do not include railroad workers or the railroad-riding public*. On the contrary, the attack on workers that the Milwaukee Road is carrying out is part of the attempt to sweeten the pie for the railroad owners during the bankruptcy proceeding.

According to *Business Week* magazine April 10, 1978, the Milwaukee will "be able to reduce its work force through attrition as crewmen retire or die. . . .

Ultimately, says a Milwaukee spokesman, the road will be able to perform 'most freight-train and yard-switching assignments with one-third fewer employees.'"

This is a drastic reduction of the work force. It means fewer jobs; it means less seniority and longer time on the extra boards; and it is more dangerous. The casualty rolls will grow—for railroad workers and for the public.

Labor response

At a union headquarters in west Chicago, I discussed the Milwaukee Road agreement with Robert Groah, UTU general chairman on the Belt Line. Groah said, "Here's what we should have done:

"These guys come to us with all kinds of papers and arguments and explain their difficulties and explain how they will go under if we don't agree to their proposals. After all their explanations, we should say 'Would you mind running that by me again?'"

Groah continued, "If they go over it again and pull out more papers and so on, we say—'Gosh, I still don't get that!'"

Workers have nothing to gain by cooperating with the bosses in these bankruptcies. Just as tens of thousands of municipal workers, hospital workers, and teachers whose wages have been held down or frozen in city after city gained nothing by cooperating with the city government bankruptcies.

Railroad workers are up against precisely the same problem: the demand of bankers and other creditors that all else be sacrificed to the continued profitability of the banks.

In many cases the same banks are involved. The Chase Manhattan Bank, which is New York's largest bondholder, was also one of the major holders of Penn Central stock.

Should city governments be managed for the profits of banks?

Should the railroads be run—or run down—to assure the profits of stock and bond holders?

Both Amtrak and ConRail are playing leading roles in the profit drive of the railroad trusts.

A woman who is a secretary for the Baltimore and Ohio in Washington, D.C., explained to me how the officials of her union (Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks) play into the hands of the railroad companies by going along with the pretense that Amtrak's purpose is to preserve rail passenger service. Since Amtrak was established to save passenger trains, they argue, the union should cooperate with it.

This has built up "godfather-type ties," she said, between the international union and Amtrak. "For example, BRAC International Vice-president A.R. Lowry became Amtrak director of labor relations."

Continued on next page

**For Sale:
History's
Biggest
Real-Estate
Package**

© 1966, Anderson Isometric Maps

In 1971 the bankrupt Penn Central put up for sale valuable New York real estate originally owned by Vanderbilt.

1. Grand Central Terminal
2. Pan Am Building
3. Hotel Commodore
4. Graybar Building
5. Vanderbilt Ave. Building
6. Biltmore Hotel
7. Yale Club
8. Vanderbilt Concourse Bldg.
9. Hotel Roosevelt
10. New York General Bldg.
11. 466 Lexington Ave. Bldg.
12. 383-385 Madison Ave.
13. 250 Park Ave.
14. 245 Park Ave.
15. Union Carbide Bldg.
16. Chemical Bank-New York Trust Co. Bldg.
17. Bankers Trust Co. Bldg.
18. 299 Park Ave.
19. Barclay Hotel
20. Waldorf-Astoria Hotel
21. ITT Building
22. Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co. Bldg.

Continued from preceding page

The truth is that Amtrak and ConRail are in the forefront of the attack on rail workers and the parallel elimination of rail services. Precisely because they have the cover of being quasi-governmental operations, they can more easily come on with the line that *restoring the railroads* is what they are all about.

In fact, what they are all about is *restoring capitalist profits*.

When ConRail was established, dozens of branch lines were closed down and thousands of jobs eliminated.

"ConRail is currently engaged in a labor negotiating strategy aimed at directly linking employee pay raises with increased productivity," the *Wall Street Journal* reported last May. Following this ConRail was the first railroad after the Milwaukee Road to push a similar crew-cutting pattern through its contract with the UTU.

The drastic cuts in passenger-train service that are presently being pushed in Amtrak will also lead to the elimination of jobs and further speedup.

Amtrak's threats to slash passenger service all the more lend credence to the myth that "railroad passenger service is old-fashioned, it just doesn't work, people would rather drive than take trains, etc."

Two weeks after Transportation Secretary Brock Adams said he would cut Amtrak service by 43 percent, it was revealed that Amtrak passenger traffic had risen 7.5 percent in 1978. The most sizable increases were in long-distance passenger service—the very service Adams wants to cut.

The railroad companies find passenger service *unprofitable*. Their dream is to be able to ship only fully loaded freight cars whenever they are loaded at any hour of the day or night.

The idea of having to run passenger cars that might not be filled to the brim, and on schedules convenient to the passengers instead of the companies, is anathema to railroad directors. Amtrak is a front for their drive to eliminate passenger service.

ConRail

ConRail is the largest employer of railroad workers. It also employs members of twenty-four nonrailroad unions. Consequently, it can play a pivotal role in the Carter administration's drive to deregulate industry.

By giving the railroads a freer hand to abandon less profitable lines and to raise their rates untrammelled by time-consuming ICC regulation, the White House hopes to further ease the profits crisis of the railroads.

Since Congress must approve ConRail funding through the USRA, this gives Washington the change to boost branch-line closings, to raise rail freight rates, and to demand tougher working conditions for rail workers as prerequisites for ConRail funding.

The Carter administration has also given the green light to increased railroad mergers. In February 1978, the ICC issued a report outlining ground rules for rail mergers. The report hinted that the ICC would not stand in the way of any job-reduction agreements that would "enhance the merger process."

Mergers, ballyhooed as a way of improving the rails (without any mention of the Penn Central!), thus become a further weapon against railroad workers and their jobs.

Every aspect of the crisis of U.S. railroads highlights the destructive role of the profit drive. This is even noted within the industry.

The November 27 issue of *Railway Age* published an article on railroad financing by bond analyst Isabel Benham. Her article concerned the ten biggest U.S. railroads, ranked in order of after-tax profits on assets (Missouri Pacific, Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Rio Grande, Southern, Norfolk and Western, Seaboard Coast Line, Southern Pacific, Chessie, and Burlington Northern).

She criticizes these companies for paying out so much in dividends to their owners, when capital is needed for investment purposes: "All 10 companies paid higher dividends in 1977 than in 1973," Benham says. "Several roads have increased their dividends annually in the last five years; two roads have had dividend increases greater than their growth in earnings per share [Chessie and Seaboard Coast Line—D.R.] . . .

"In 1977 alone, these 10 companies . . . earned over one billion dollars and paid out in cash dividends \$435 million, a 43% payout ratio. When it is realized that the industry as a whole anticipates annual capital requirements in the next five years of \$3.5 billion and Burlington Northern alone anticipates capital needs of \$500 million annually, the need for the railroads to retain every dollar of earnings is self-evident."

But not to those who own and control the railroads for their own enrichment!

A further point underlines the obstacle to social progress created by the private ownership of the railroads.

Rail electrification

This is the question of rail electrification. Ecological experts have advanced many arguments for the return of rails to electric energy and the massive reintroduction of electrical railroads in the cities. These would be less polluting and much more convenient for millions of people.

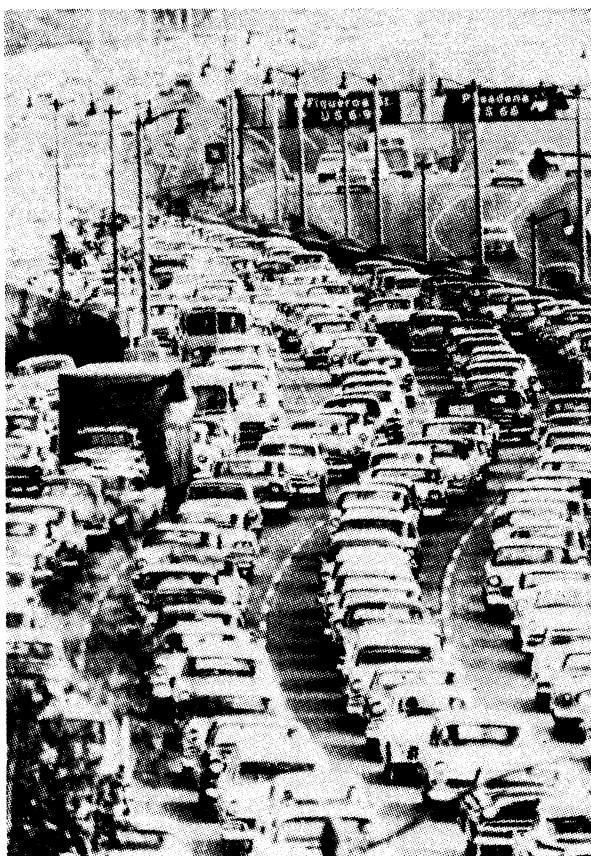
Ironically, rail electrification would also be more economical. It would require lower maintenance costs because each train does not require its own power plant. There would be less possibility of engine failure because many fewer moving parts are involved. The flexible power source (electric power can come from coal, oil, or hydro-energy sources) would reduce energy costs. And these factors would all lead to a longer life expectancy for locomotives, possibly as long as thirty years, compared to the present average of eighteen.

What stands in the way?

For one thing, it would cost a lot of money. The financial institutions that control the railroads do not want to spend money on such improvements when their central concern right now is to collect on loans they have already floated.

On top of this, there is the opposition of the oil and auto trusts, which helped to dismantle electric railroads in the first place.

The result is a passenger service in and between



Electrical rail transportation in Los Angeles was brought up and taken out of existence by General Motors and Socal, in order to promote automobile use.

cities that is old and deteriorating in most cases. Electrical rail services needed in city after city are barely contemplated. Urban mass transportation, which would provide tens of thousands of jobs in construction, is slashed in budget after budget.

The money is there

Is American society actually short of the money needed to rehabilitate and expand railroading in this country? The 1979 capital investment plans of the railroads are presently projected at about \$5 billion.

Suppose the government spent *five times as much* as that—not just in 1979 but every year until the job is done—until quiet and convenient railroads were accessible to everyone and reached everywhere they are needed. The \$25 billion a year that would require is less than one-fifth of the annual U.S. military budget.

In other words, if a fraction of the money that is now squandered on the wasteful and oppressive military budget of the Pentagon were spent on the rails, they could be totally transformed, in a very short time, creating tens of thousands of jobs instead of eliminating them and providing services that are needed by all working people.

It is evident that the capitalist government in Washington will not undertake such a transformation. The purpose of Amtrak and ConRail—often falsely portrayed as a "nationalized" component of the rail system—is just the opposite.

The very institutions of Amtrak and ConRail preserve private ownership. And if Washington can succeed—through its antilabor speedup drive and its slashing of needed services—in returning Am-

trak and ConRail to profitability, the present decals will be taken off. The ones that will be put back on will be the decals of the Penn Central, Erie Lackawanna, and so on; that is, the private corporations that in fact *own* Amtrak and ConRail through mountains of tortuous legal formulations.

What the working people of this country need is not a "nationalization" undertaken by Washington in the interests of the ruling rich, whose only purpose will be to put bankrupt corporations back on a profit-making basis.

We need a nationally owned and planned railroad system that is operated as a public service by and for working people. Continued private ownership of the rails, like continued private ownership of energy, offers nothing for the future but more crises—periodic shortages, steady deterioration of services, spiraling costs, and worse conditions for workers.

Social necessities

Transportation and energy are vital necessities in modern industrial society. Both should be as accessible to working people as air and water. This requires taking them out of the hands of the private owners and putting them at the service of society, under the control of working people.

This perspective can help railroad workers to gain allies. The propaganda of the capitalists is aimed at pitting everyone against railroad workers. The railroads are supposed to be in trouble because of the demands of rail workers. If the rail unions would accept drastic job cuts and "more efficient" working conditions, the railroads would be in better order.

But the real enemy is the profit drive of the railroad trusts. Nor is this productivity drive limited to the rail industry. Everywhere capitalist monopoly is driving to intensify labor, to increase layoffs, and to exact wage concessions from workers.

Railroad workers can thus find allies throughout the working class in the fight against job cuts. To do this, they can make the facts about rail working conditions known far and wide. They can get out the facts about the dangers of railroading, the real conditions of roadbeds, the hazards involved in shipping petrochemicals and other explosive materials.

Open the books!

To the railroads' claims that they can't get by and that they are bankrupt, the railroad workers should respond, "Open the books. Let's see what the real situation is."

The Pennsylvania Railroad, which, through the Penn Central, is the biggest owner of both Amtrak and ConRail, paid dividends every single year from 1856 to 1969. Generations of capitalists have already profited many times over from their ownership of the rails; this private ownership has now become an absolute obstacle to improving the railroads.

Such a class-struggle perspective is alien to the present bureaucratic misleaders of the railroad unions. But it makes a lot of sense to the workers who actually keep the trains running and who face the bosses' attacks every day. Many of these workers are beginning to conclude that their unions must be transformed—put under the democratic control of the ranks so that union power can be used in their interests.

Key to unleashing union power will be breaking from the capitalist two-party system. What have the Democrats and Republicans done for rail workers or rail service? They have politically presided over more than a century of rail profiteering at public expense, capped in the 1970s by creation of Amtrak and ConRail, two of the most elaborate hoaxes in corporate history.

Workers need a labor party—a party based on the unions and representing only working people and their allies. A labor party would make the struggle against the railroad and energy trusts a top priority.

Further, the struggle to build a labor party and the struggle against the railroad bosses will go hand in hand. For a class-struggle rail union leadership will seek support from the masses of working people everywhere who have a deep interest in mass public transportation. It will seek support as well from farmers, from people who live along the rights of way and who are threatened by rail disasters, and from people in the environmental movement who may have other ideas about how to transform the railroad system.

Making the railroads into a real public service—that has been a natural wish of masses of Americans for more than a century, from the inception of railroading. It requires struggling to take the railroads out of the hands of private capital and putting them under the control of the public. It is long overdue.

Urges support to April actions

Socialist condemns U.S. moves in Zimbabwe

The following is a statement by Maceo Dixon, a National Committee member of the Socialist Workers Party. Dixon recently returned from Africa and is currently on a speaking tour in defense of the African revolution.

As the April 20 elections in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) approach, the Democrats and Republicans are moving to safeguard imperialism's political and economic interests in that country.



DIXON

Behind a front of "fairness" and "impartiality," senators George McGovern and S.I. Hayakawa are sponsoring a resolution in Congress to send "professional observers" to watch over the Rhodesian elections.

The Carter administration has admitted that the observers' report will be used to determine whether U.S. sanctions against the white minority

regime—sanctions that have been disregarded in practice—should be lifted altogether.

The elections in Rhodesia, set up under a constitution approved by white voters only, are aimed at *blocking*, not bringing about, Black majority rule.

The constitution guarantees that whites will have 28 of the 100 seats in parliament, even though the whites are only 3 percent of the population.

Whites will also maintain control over the army, courts, and civil service. Is this Black majority rule?

While pushing ahead on this fraudulent election, the Ian Smith government is also continuing its terrorist raids into Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia. Thousands have been killed in these military attacks, which are designed to stave off the growing resistance of Black freedom fighters and demoralize their supporters.

Rhodesia's racist partner, the apartheid regime in South Africa, has likewise stepped up its military campaign. South African troops have invaded Angola and launched attacks in

Zambia and Mozambique in an effort to maintain white dominance over South West Africa (Namibia).

The white racist regimes and their imperialist backers are also probing for ways to deal blows to the revolutionary Cuban troops stationed in Africa. Their propaganda campaign against the "red menace" in Africa aims to legitimize imperialist military action.

Cuba's internationalist support to the African liberation struggle remains a major obstacle to imperialism's goal of maintaining the racist status quo throughout southern Africa.

But the rising militancy of the Black majority, combined with Cuba's unrelenting aid, is making it more and more difficult to hold back the African revolution.

The illegal governments of Rhodesia and South Africa would fall if it were not for the economic, political, and military support they receive from U.S. corporations and their agents in the White House.

The same corporations plundering the resources of southern Africa are the ones that exploit American working people. U.S. workers have no interest in sending one cent of aid or one word of support to the white minority regimes.

Our interests lie in demanding that the United States get out of southern Africa—now!

Students in this country have taken the initiative to expose the U.S. government's real role in Africa. From April 4-11 campus actions will take place against apartheid and for an end to U.S. complicity with the white racist regimes.

The students are demanding that their universities get rid of all their investments in companies doing business in South Africa.

These activities can set an important example. They show the kind of solidarity the American labor movement needs to demonstrate to defend our African sisters and brothers and get the U.S. government off their backs.

Africans: 'Get your country out of our country'

The following is the concluding part of an interview with Maceo Dixon (the first part appeared in the March 2 'Militant'). Dixon, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, made a fact-finding tour of Tanzania, Zambia, Senegal, Botswana, Nigeria, and Kenya during November and December. He is currently on a three-month speaking tour of the United States.

The interview was conducted by 'Militant' staff writer Osborne Hart.

Question. What is the status of women in the countries you visited? Are there active women's organizations?

Answer. Besides the day-to-day oppression that the masses of Africans endure, women face additional oppression as women. Their conditions—social, political, and economic—are worse than men.

Women in Africa deal with problems similar to those their sisters confront in other parts of the world. There is not one country in Africa that I know of with legalized abortion. Yet many women whom I met had had abortions—particularly South African women.

Most women are confined to the home, taking care of children and other domestic tasks. Women who are employed outside the home receive wages far below men in the same jobs.

The international women's move-

ment has had some impact in Africa. For example, in Zambia a small percentage of women in civil-service jobs have won the right to maternity leave pay. And demands for child care are often raised.

Specific women's organizations around women's issues are few. Liberation groups have women in some capacity of leadership.

Among the South African exiles, women in Botswana formed a group known as the Women of Azania [South Africa]. They are organized around issues that women refugees face in the camps.

Q. During the time you were in Africa, what effect was the revolution in Iran having?

A. The South African exiles were very enthusiastic about the Iranian events. Exiles I spoke to identified with and supported the Iranian revolution. Curtailment of oil exports to South Africa was hailed as one of the best examples of solidarity with the African liberation struggle.

They feel that the Iranian revolution is inspiring their revolution and that other oppressed peoples in the world are identifying with the South African struggle.

Q. The number of South African exiles has increased since the 1976 Soweto rebellion. Would you explain some of the problems they face?

A. The majority of exiles are in refugee camps in Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, and Tanzania. There are very few in Nigeria, Kenya, or Senegal. They come from Namibia [South West Africa, under the control of South Africa], Zimbabwe, and, of course, South Africa.

The exiles are young people, primarily students, who were active in the rebellions of the past couple of years. Their general perspective is to return to their countries and participate in the political movements.

Exiles are subjected to political and physical harassment in the host countries. Botswana is an example.

The Botswana and South African governments have a deportation-type agreement. If the South African government wants a particular refugee, and claims he or she has committed a crime, the agreement can be used to force deportation from Botswana. Some exiles have been kidnapped, sent back to South Africa, and tortured.



Militant/Maceo Dixon

Lusaka, Zambia: 'Women in Africa deal with problems similar to those their sisters confront in other parts of the world.'

Q. What is the attitude of Africans toward the Cuban forces in Africa?

A. The opinion of South African exiles is that the Cuban effort has aided their struggle—particularly in Angola. They view the decisive role that the Cuban troops played in turning back the South African invasion as a big plus for the African revolution.

No South Africans I talked with opposed the Cuban presence in Africa. In fact, leaders like Tsietsi Mashinini [student leader of the 1976 Soweto rebellion] told me that more Cuban troops are needed.

But is more than Cuba's internationalism in Africa. It's the inspiration of the Cuban revolution.

I visited a SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organization] training camp in Zambia. There were about 200 young people, some of whom had visited Cuba during the youth festival last summer. They were impressed with the accomplishments of the revolution—the elimination of poverty, unemployment, and racism.

Q. How do Africans respond to Americans, and what role do they think we can play to aid the African revolution?

A. Many Africans are skeptical of Americans. You have to remember, the only evidence of America they see is the multinational corporations or gov-

ernment representatives—many of whom nowadays are Black Americans.

But many politically active Africans separate the American people from the government and its agencies. They identify with Afro-Americans and the Black struggle in the United States.

They feel the American people can play an important role in the African liberation struggle. The South African exiles are impressed with the student divestment movement in this country. They've heard a lot about it!

Information about the divestment movement is reported—at times—in the South African newspapers. Some of the exiles have access to other sources of news about the solidarity movement in other countries.

The NAACP-sponsored demonstration in Nashville against the South African tennis team last year received prominent coverage in South Africa. Obviously, the apartheid regime is feeling pressure from the international solidarity movement.

Some individuals such as Mashinini have endorsed the national week of campus anti-apartheid actions April 4-11.

The main point impressed upon me was the need to build a movement to get "your country out of our country." Many South Africans used the parallel of the anti-Vietnam War movement as the example of how we in the United States can help win African liberation.

Dixon tour

Hear Maceo Dixon speak on "Southern Africa: The Struggle for Liberation; What Americans Can Do to Support It." The next stops on his tour are:

New York/	
New Jersey	Apr. 5-9
Raleigh	10-11
Birmingham	12-14
Louisville	16
Champaign-Urbana	17
St. Louis	18-19
Chicago/Gary	20-23
Milwaukee	24-25
Washington, D.C.	26-27
Baltimore	May 4-5
Detroit	6-8

For more information contact Viewpoint Speakers Bureau, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014, telephone (212) 242-7654.

Communist Party vs. antinuke

By Arnold Weissberg

The emergence of a large protest movement against nuclear power has begun to divide our society into anti-nuke and pronuke camps.

On the antinuke side there are hundreds of local groups that have sprung up in towns and cities from coast to coast, inspired by the example of the Clamshell Alliance in fighting nuclear power. On the same side is a rapidly growing portion of the American people.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in this country—and the parties of the Fourth International around the world—are partisans and participants in this antinuke struggle. Revolutionary Marxists support the demand for immediately shutting down all nuclear plants.

On the pronuke side we find the multi-billion-dollar nuclear industry, the federal government, virtually all Democratic and Republican politicians, and most trade-union bureaucrats.

And there we also find the Communist Party.

In typical Stalinist fashion, the CP has not openly and honestly declared its position, but instead has cloaked its pro-nuclear power views in radical-sounding rhetoric about "democratic control" and "nationalization."

The CP's views are found in the February 1979 issue of *Political Affairs*, a CP monthly magazine, in a document called "On Nuclear Energy." According to *Political Affairs*, the document "was adopted by the Political Bureau of the CPUSA, Nov. 1978."

A virtually identical "partial statement on nuclear energy" appeared in the January 13 *People's World*, the CP's West Coast weekly. The statement has not yet appeared in the party's national paper, the *Daily World*.

The antinuke movement, which has brought tens of thousands of people into the streets against nuclear power, has educated millions more on the



Militant/Susan Ellis

Twenty thousand people gathered at Seabrook, New Hampshire, last June to protest construction of a nuclear power plant. CP says the movement to shut such plants is a 'diversion' and instead should call for 'maximum scientifically feasible' safety measures.

deadly dangers of nuclear energy.

The CP's statement notes these risks. "People are properly concerned about the safety of nuclear installations. . . . Such dangers are caused or aggravated by the drive of private monopolies for profit, leading to skimping and cutting corners on necessary safety measures in construction and operation," it says.

The antinuke movement's response to these dangers is the demand, "No nukes"—don't build any more nuclear-power plants, and shut down the ones that are now operating.

But the CP doesn't mention this slogan.

In fact, the CP doesn't call for halting construction of nuclear-power plants, let alone shutting down the ones that are now operating.

Instead, the pro-Moscow Stalinists propose "mass actions . . . to increase safety to the maximum that is scientifically possible."

Will the CP tell the tens of thousands of antinuke activists who will be demonstrating this spring to put away their "No nukes!" signs and pick up "Safe nukes!" signs instead?

The movement has already given its answer. There's no such thing as a safe nuclear installation.

The CP is so far from admitting the dangers of nuclear power that it declares, "The peaceful uses of atomic energy—X-rays, radioactive isotopes, nuclear power—have already brought great benefits to mankind."

Without minimizing the usefulness of X-rays and radioactive isotopes, it is totally false to claim that nuclear power has brought "great benefits." The only "benefits" from nuclear power are huge profits for the energy monopolies.

Even the CP statement admits that "under present conditions, the great bulk of the benefit of nuclear-power plants accrues to monopoly profits. . . ."

What nuclear power *has* brought is the danger of accidents capable of killing tens of thousands of people. But the CP doesn't mention this possibility that even the federal government has been forced to acknowledge.

Even "maximum scientifically possible" nuclear safety would mean thousands of cancer deaths and uncounted genetic mutations from radiation.

Nuclear wastes

The CP concedes that there is no way to safely and permanently store nuclear waste, and calls for U.S. and Soviet government collaboration "to perfect technologies for permanent storage of nuclear wastes."

But if these technologies haven't already been perfected, shouldn't all the nukes be shut down until there's a way to dispose of the waste?

Perhaps Nobel Prize winner George Wald was closer to the truth when he said "no one in the world knows what to do with nuclear wastes." Wald's statement appeared in the October 24, 1978, *Daily World*.

Along with "mass actions to increase safety to the maximum scientifically possible," the CP proposes "nationalization, under democratic control," of the entire energy complex as a solution to nuclear-safety problems.

"Energy industries should be run . . . with maximum concern for the safety and health of the workers and users, and for the protection of the environment," says the CP.

This scheme assumes that the

Fatal nuclear accident in Czechoslovakia

Reprinted below are excerpts from a document on nuclear power in Czechoslovakia, published by the Czech human rights group Charter 77. The document appeared in the January-February 1979 'Labour Focus on Eastern Europe,' a journal devoted to defense of the dissident movement. It reveals that nuclear power is no safer in the bureaucratized workers states than it is in the capitalist world.

According to 'Labour Focus,' which translated the document, the authors are all experts on nuclear power.

The section excerpted here deals with a nuclear-power station called A.1 at Jaslovské Bohunice.

A.1 works with a heavy-water reactor cooled by carbon dioxide. A.1 is not equipped with containment. Safety in case of accident is ensured by shields over the critical parts of the primary circuit, from where escaping radioactive material can drain into four emergency gas containers.

From here the radioactive materials are to be released through filters into a chimney after they have ceased to be radioactive.

The problem of radioactive waste has not been solved satisfactorily: all waste was stored within a special area inside the perimeter of the power station, where it still is today.

The reactor operator has a crucial position for the operation and safety of the reactor. This work has been evaluated as psychologically one of the most demanding that exist.

In developed countries the working day in similar professions has been reduced to 6 hours or less, while at A.1 16-hour shifts were commonly tolerated.

In addition the reactor operators at A.1 were exposed to further psychological strain because of the preference given to requirements of production over those of safety; for example . . . a reduction in output or stopping the reactor—unless it was absolutely necessary—resulted in moral and financial sanctions.

A similar approach to the radiation regulations was also common. Czechoslovak radiation regulations are some of the strictest in the world; in practice, however, they are some of the least respected.

During the operation of the power station there were two major disasters. The first, on 5 January 1976, was caused by a technical fault. According to the official account a washer got into the charging mechanism, which prevented the safe assimilation of a new fuel element.

The element was expelled from the reactor, and behind it, highly radioactive coolant (carbon dioxide) escaped into the area of the reactor under the same pressure.

The order to leave the site was given. At this two employees who were not at their workplace at the

moment of the accident rushed to the emergency exit which, however, was closed in order to prevent thefts.

Before they could run to the next exit they were asphyxiated by escaping carbon dioxide.

The radioactive gas was sucked up into the emergency gas holders and after a short expiry time was released into the atmosphere through filters.

This accident should be counted as the equivalent of the maximum possible accident, the probability of which is given as small enough to be disregarded (once in 1026 years) for it caused a direct leak of gas from the primary circuit. The capacity of the emergency gas containers and filters was understandably inadequate to cope with a disaster of these proportions and consequently the radioactive gas was partially released into the atmosphere.

Details of the amount of this radioactivity are strictly concealed even from the employees, who have been given only the incredible information that the permitted values were not exceeded.

Since [a second] disaster A.1 has been out of action because of serious damage to the reactor. The question of what to do with it is still unanswered.

The simplest thing would be to demolish the power station. The problem, however, would be to explain the demolition, because the disaster has not so far been officially acknowledged and information about it is concealed.

movement

nuclear-power plants should continue operating. Nowhere does the CP explain how "nationalization" will eliminate the deadly risks of nuclear power or "resolve the serious contradiction between corporate profits and the need to preserve a healthy livable environment," as the CP puts it. Nor does the CP explain how this would solve the problem of storing nuclear wastes.

Semicolonial world

The CP asserts that for the colonial and semicolonial countries nuclear energy is "their principal hope for further rapid industrial development."

The truth, though, is that the so-called underdeveloped world's best hope for rapid industrial development is for the workers and peasants to take power; break from the economic stranglehold of imperialism; expropriate privately owned mines, mills, transportation systems, and factories; and establish democratically planned economies.

Nuclear energy won't help the semicolonial countries any more than will any other form of energy—because *their problem isn't energy*. Their problem is economies dominated by the great imperialist powers and natural resources exploited for the profit of giant corporations.

Nuclear energy won't change any of that.

A 'diversion'?

Since the Stalinists are for nuclear power, it comes as no surprise that they are opposed to the anti-nuclear power movement, which they view as a "diversion."

"Above all, the debate over civilian energy programs must not be permitted to divert attention from the ominous clear and present danger of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in the hands of and controlled by the Pentagon war hawks," the CP warns. This alarm was singled out for special display by the *People's World* editors to make sure no one missed the point.

The "real job," the CP says, is to campaign for an "arms limitation" agreement such as SALT II. SALT II must get "top priority," the CP declares.

But SALT II is *not* an arms limitation agreement. It will not result in the destruction of a single nuclear weapon. In fact, the U.S. will be permitted to build 4,000 *new* strategic nuclear weapons.

The CP seeks to turn the antinuke movement into a movement for a fraudulent "disarmament" treaty—a treaty whose sole purpose is to cover up Washington's war drive.

"Only the USA and USSR, acting together, have the political influence to

prevent [nuclear] proliferation," the CP asserts, beating the drums for SALT II.

The CP is not interested in building a worldwide movement of working people to force the U.S. government to give up its nuclear arsenal. It claims that a deal between the Kremlin bureaucrats and the U.S. ruling class will do the job.

But the worldwide needs of American imperialism will force the U.S. government to continue to act as world cop, as in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. As for treaties—ask the Native Americans if the U.S. government can be trusted to respect treaties.

Far from being a "diversion" from the fight against nuclear weapons, the anti-nuclear power movement is a vital part of it.

Nuclear weapons are every bit as dangerous as nuclear-power plants, even when they're not used. Their manufacture creates the same wastes and exposes working people to the same radiation hazards.

Equally important, the "peaceful" atom provides a cover for the production of nuclear weapons. The two sides of the nuclear issue are inseparable.

Kremlin policy

The CP isn't in favor of nuclear power because of ignorance or error. It adopts this reactionary stance because it puts the interests of the bureaucratic caste in the Kremlin first and foremost.

The interests of American workers, which demand closing the seventy-two nukes in this country; and the interests of Soviet workers and peasants, which demand Soviet nuclear-power plants be shut down—these count for nothing in the CP's world view.

What counts is "stabilizing" the world political situation. And for the Kremlin and its servile Communist Party followers around the world, that means keeping the lid on social struggles everywhere.

Its slavish adherence to the Kremlin forces the CP to justify every action of the bureaucratic caste there, from imprisoning dissidents in psychiatric hospitals to building nuclear-power plants.

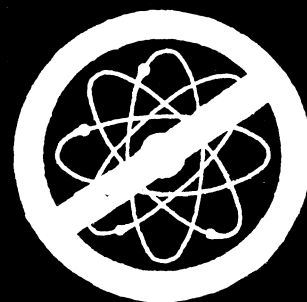
Because the USSR has nuclear-power plants, the CP refuses to condemn nuclear power as an unsafe and unnecessary technology.

A policy truly based on the interests and needs of working people around the world would be clear and simple and wouldn't avoid the central question—nuclear safety.

That policy is: no nukes anywhere! Shut them all down now! No nuclear weapons for the Pentagon!

No nukes!

Notes from the movement against nuclear weapons and nuclear power



Only the beginning?

Five nuclear power plants were ordered closed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission March 13 because their ability to withstand earthquakes could not be guaranteed.

Stone and Webster, the architectural firm that designed the plants, admitted its earthquake analysis had been mistaken.

None of the plants are near active earthquake faults. But their closing raises serious questions about the plants that are on or near active faults, such as California's Diablo Canyon plant, now ready to open and located only a mile or so from the Hoggri fault; and Indian Point II and III, a short sixteen miles from downtown Manhattan, located near the Ramapo fault.

On the lighter side, an atomic industry executive who understandably preferred to remain anonymous was reported by the *New York Times* to have said that the closings proved why nuclear power was so safe. "He said that, under strict regulations and a close watch, errors were caught by utility and industry engineers," *Times* reporter Richard Halloran wrote March 14.

An important victory

On January 29, an Illinois jury found twelve anti-nuclear power protesters innocent of criminal trespass at a nuke plant. The twelve activists admitted they had trespassed but argued that Commonwealth Edison's Zion nuke was such a grave danger that breaking the law to shut it down was justified. The rural Lake County jury agreed.

The activists' defense put nuclear power on trial. And the jury's willingness to accept their arguments shows that antinuke sentiment runs very deep.

Seabrook owner backing out

The Public Service Company of New Hampshire, which owns a half-interest in the planned twin nuclear reactors at Seabrook, announced March 3 it would try to sell 60 percent of its share.

PSC blamed its inability to bill its customers for Seabrook construction costs in advance of the actual construction. This practice, known as "Construction Work in Progress," is in effect a tax on electricity users to finance a project many of them don't want in the first place.

PSC also "threatened"—but think of it as a promise—to completely halt construction of the Seabrook plant if its financial problems are not resolved.

Nuclear protest in Spain

Although you probably didn't read about it in your local paper, 40,000 people marched in Barcelona March 11 against a planned increase in nuclear power plant construction. The march was organized by the Anti-Nuclear Committee of Barcelona.

Conferences: one held, two upcoming

One hundred fifty people took part in an anti-nuclear power conference in Cincinnati March 2-3. The gathering was hosted by Citizens Against a Radioactive Environment.

The featured speaker was Rosalie Bertell, an expert on radiation, who explained the serious effects even small amounts of radiation can have on human health.

The conference voted to hold a protest action at the nearby Zimmer nuclear power plant June 2-3 as part of the International Days of Protest against nuclear power.

The New York City Shad Alliance will hold a weekend conference against nuclear power March 30-31 as a warm-up for its planned June 3 protest at the Shoreham, Long Island, nuclear power plant.

A rally March 30 will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Judson Memorial Church, Washington Square South at Thompson Street. Workshops will be held March 31 at Barnard Hall, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th Street.

For more information, call (212) 533-0796.

The University of New Mexico in Albuquerque will be the site of a no-nukes conference April 6-7, hosted by the Nuclear Alert Coalition. Featured speaker at a kickoff rally Friday night will be Mike Olszanski, a leader of the environmental committee of United Steelworkers Local 1010.

Native Americans fight uranium mining

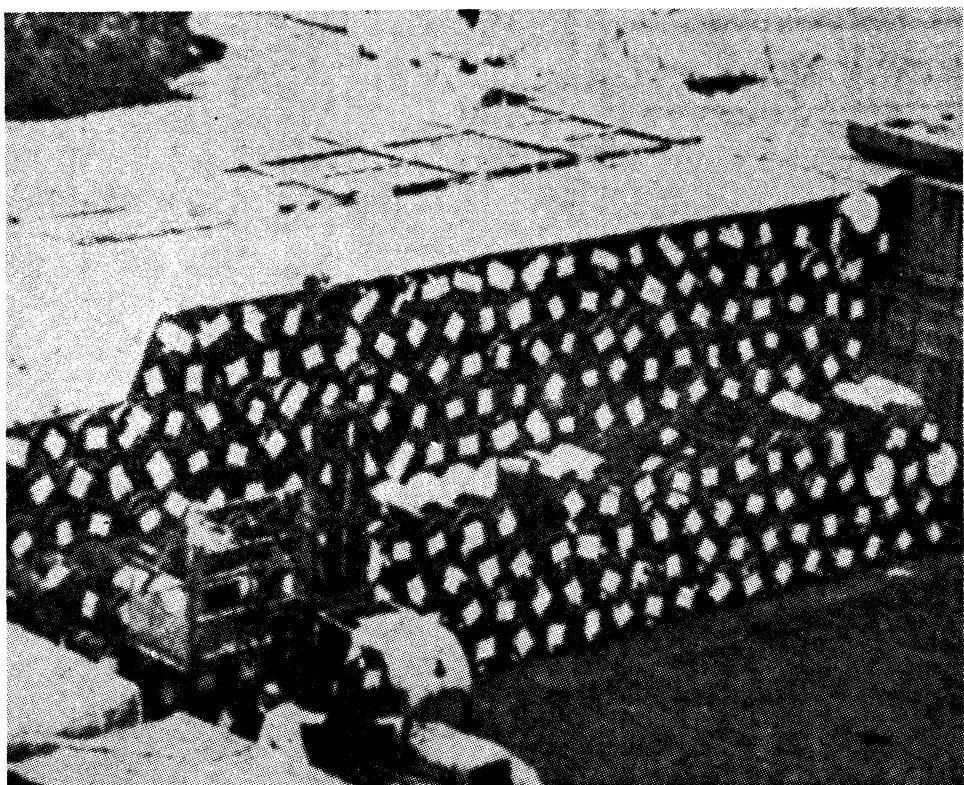
"We of the Black Hills Alliance are pleased to announce a conference on the destruction through uranium mining of the Black Hills of western South Dakota," reads a communication received here.

"The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty between Native (Lakota) people and the United States government guaranteed the Paha Sapa [Black Hills] for Native people 'for as long as the grass is green and the rivers shall flow.' There has been no abrogation of the 1868 treaty. It is still a binding agreement between two sovereign nations. These hills are not for sale or mining.

"The massive uranium mining to begin here in 1979 will be the source of nuclear fuel for many reactors and inevitably provide the material for more nuclear weapons."

The conference will take place March 30-April 1 in Rapid City, South Dakota. For more information contact the Black Hills Alliance, PO Box 2508, Rapid City, South Dakota 57701.

—Arnold Weissberg



Ten million cubic feet of highly radioactive wastes are stored in temporary facilities such as this. Federal government admits it doesn't know what to do with it all. But Stalinists say 'nationalization' will set everything right.

W. Va. coal bosses wage war on safety

By Margaret Reed

MORGANTOWN, W. Va.—West Virginia coal operators are headlong into a drive against mine health and safety.

They were only temporarily set back late last month when a state senate committee tabled Bill 415, which would have repealed the state's mining health and safety law.

The storm of protest that greeted introduction of the bill convinced state lawmakers that such a blatant attack on mine safety could not be smuggled through the legislature this session.

Angry coal miners and officials of the United Mine Workers had packed hearings on the bill February 13. UMWA President Arnold Miller testified, as did Frank Thurman, state director of the union's Committee on Political Action.

Before the laws were passed, Thurman said, an average of ninety-one West Virginia miners died each year in mine accidents. Today the average is thirty-one a year.

Referring to previous mine disasters, he challenged the legislators in favor of repeal to "tell that to the widows of Farmington, the fatherless children of Blacksville, and the armless and legless men across this state."

West Virginia coal mining safety laws are considered the stiffest in the nation. A three-week strike by more than 40,000 miners and several massive demonstrations in Charleston forced their enactment in 1969. This all followed the 1968 Farmington disaster that killed seventy-eight miners.

The laws were strengthened in 1977. But at the same time, the Coal Mine Health and Safety Board was established to "interpret" them. It consists of three representatives nominated by the UMWA, three coal industry representatives, and a so-called neutral chairman.

All members of the board are approved by millionaire Gov. John D. Rockefeller IV, whose family holds huge financial interests in the coal industry.

The company character of the board was confirmed last summer when it voted, over the objections of the UMWA representatives, to allow the moving of heavy equipment while miners work "inby" (deep inside the mine). Such a practice increases the possibility that miners can be trapped inside the mine by machine-sparked fires.

Sponsors of Bill 415 proposed turning over regulation of West Virginia mines to this company-dominated board.

While this measure is dead for the present, the coal industry is battling on other fronts to roll back the gains miners have won in health and safety since 1969.

The COALition, a band of state coal companies, has sponsored a flood of TV advertisements, picking up on the now-popular theme among all employers in all states: "overregulation."

"This mine was not closed by labor problems," says a supposed miner standing in front of an abandoned mine. "It was closed by overregulation."

The message is clear—if you want jobs, forget about safety regulations.

This message is reinforced by the round of layoffs and mine closings in the state. At the beginning of 1979, the *Charleston Gazette* estimated the number of laid-off coal miners in the state at 4,000.

The operators are also pushing to legalize diesel-powered equipment in the mines. Diesel power pollutes mine ventilation systems.

Walter Miller, state director of mines and head of the state health and safety board, says he has "no objections" to the introduction of diesel power on an "experimental basis."

The industry is thus hoping to chip away at safety standards without provoking a massive response from coal miners.

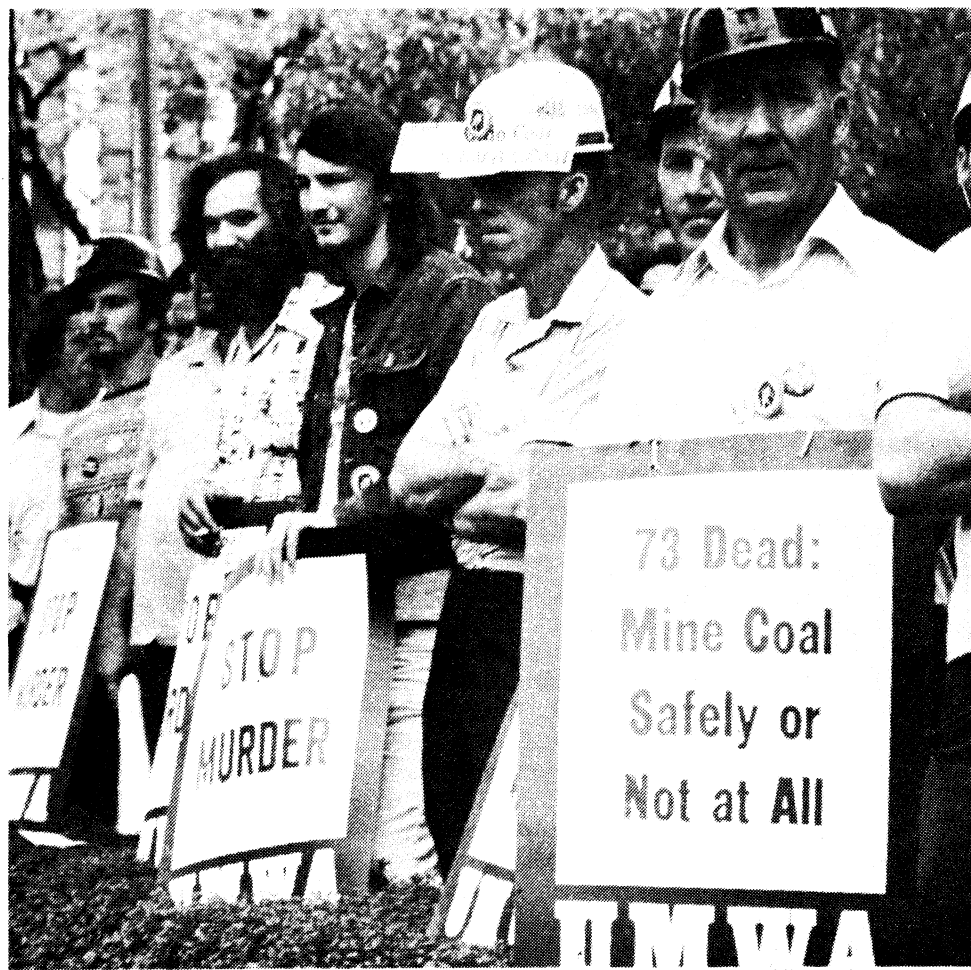
Last winter, the coal bosses set out to curb the power of the union safety committees. These committees, elected by the membership, have the authority to close down mines or mine sections if they pose imminent danger.

With their 110-day strike, the miners succeeded in turning back that and other demands that would have crippled their union power.

They did this without any help—only strike-breaking opposition—from Democratic and Republican officials at every level of government.

Similarly, the coal miners will get no aid from Democratic and Republican politicians in this current industry assault on their safety rights.

Once again, as in 1969 and last winter, coal miners will have to rely on their own power and that of their real allies in the rest of the labor movement.



Industry is chipping away at rights miners fought long and hard to win

National picket line

2,500 march to support D.C. teachers

On March 19, 2,500 teachers and other trade unionists marched on the District of Columbia Board of Education and the mayor's office in support of the Washington Teachers Union, reports *Militant* correspondent Erich Martel. The strike of D.C. teachers began March 6 and remains strong, with more than 70 percent of the teachers honoring picket lines.

As of March 16, the union and its leadership faced more than \$114,000 in fines imposed by D.C. Superior Court Judge Gladys Kessler, a recent Carter appointee. The fines were requested by the board of education after the union refused to be intimidated by an antistrike injunction. The fines are set to double each day of the strike.

The union is demanding reinstatement of the old contract, dues check-off, and a no-reprisals agreement as conditions for halting the strike. The board refuses to agree to the last condition, demanding the right to punish "violent teachers," a catch all category that threatens any militant teacher with victimization.

Phila. transit settlement

The management of the Philadelphia-area transit system (SEPTA) narrowly averted a strike March 15 by backing down on its chief take-away demands.

SEPTA's partial retreat came after a mass rally of 1,500 members of the Transit Workers Union made clear the workers' willingness to strike to defend their rights.

Management wanted to do away with the union's no-layoffs clause and restrictions on the hiring of part-time workers. They failed to achieve these goals.

But union leaders did agree to a clause denying new hires full wages and benefits until they've spent two and a half years on the job. Carter's 7 percent lid was also placed on the new wage package: a 14 percent raise over two years. The contract now goes to the ranks for a mail vote.

Employers are increasingly demanding second-class status for new union members as a way to pit one group of workers against another in contract fights. It's the same old divide-and-conquer strategy.

Machinists reject airlines offer

Members of the International Association of Machinists have rejected a tentative agreement with United Airlines. A March 17 strike deadline was set but then extended when union negotiators agreed to continue talks.

The 18,000 IAM members have been working without a contract since last fall. A strike at that time was blocked by the National Mediation Board.

In early February the board exhausted its stalling devices, and a strike seemed imminent. At the eleventh hour, a tentative settlement was announced, calling for wage increases of roughly 30 percent over three years, plus cost-of-living adjustments.

Because the proposal exceeds Carter's 7 percent limits, it has caused quite a stir.

But IAM members are not deceived. By a big majority, they turned down the tentative pact. They apparently are not convinced that 10 percent yearly wage increases—while prices and profits climb at much higher rates—are the best their union can do.

VW workers vote strike

Auto workers at Volkswagen's assembly plant in New Stanton, Pennsylvania, have overwhelmingly voted to strike the company over speedup and safety violations.

Last October members of United Auto Workers Local 2055 turned down their first contract offer from VW and walked out in a week-long strike.

The local's strike vote earlier this month must now be approved by the UAW's international executive board. This process takes weeks and then, if the strike is authorized, workers must wait an additional five days after giving notice to the company. All the while negotiations continue.

This long detour between strike vote and strike action is a source of frustration within the UAW's ranks. Many union members are anxious to win a genuine right to strike over local issues in their upcoming contract.



VW workers struck over wages last fall. Their slogan: 'No money, no bunny.'

Boilermakers protest firings

Members of Boilermakers Local 104 at Todd Seattle Shipyard are protesting the firing of five of their shop stewards February 26, reports *Militant* correspondent Karl Bermann. The company fired the five for organizing safety meetings on company time that day.

These meetings, held in different parts of the shipyard, were attended by some 400 workers. They were called in response to the firing just hours earlier of four shipfitters who had refused to take on extra jobs as a protest against company speedup.

Management docked the pay of every worker attending the two-and-one-half-hour-long safety meetings.

The Boilermakers' contract bans strikes, work stoppages, or slowdowns. The firings are slated for arbitration.

—Shelley Kramer

World Outlook

News, analysis, and discussion of international political events

Mass upsurge against layoffs

French steelworkers set march on Paris

By Michael Baumann

Following weeks of struggle spearheaded by steelworkers, French workers are planning a march on Paris March 23 to demand a halt to layoffs.

Strikes, demonstrations, and factory occupations have spread across the country, reaching the point of pitched battles with police in the northern steel centers of Longwy and Denain.

French Premier Raymond Barre, chief government spokesman for the hated austerity program, has compared the protests to the insurrectional general strikes of the postwar upsurge of 1947.

In an interview March 9, Barre condemned industrial workers for "returning to the methods of action they used thirty years ago."

French workers are fighting drastic cutbacks scheduled for the steel, chemical, shipbuilding, and textile industries, as well as for the postal, rail, and utility systems.

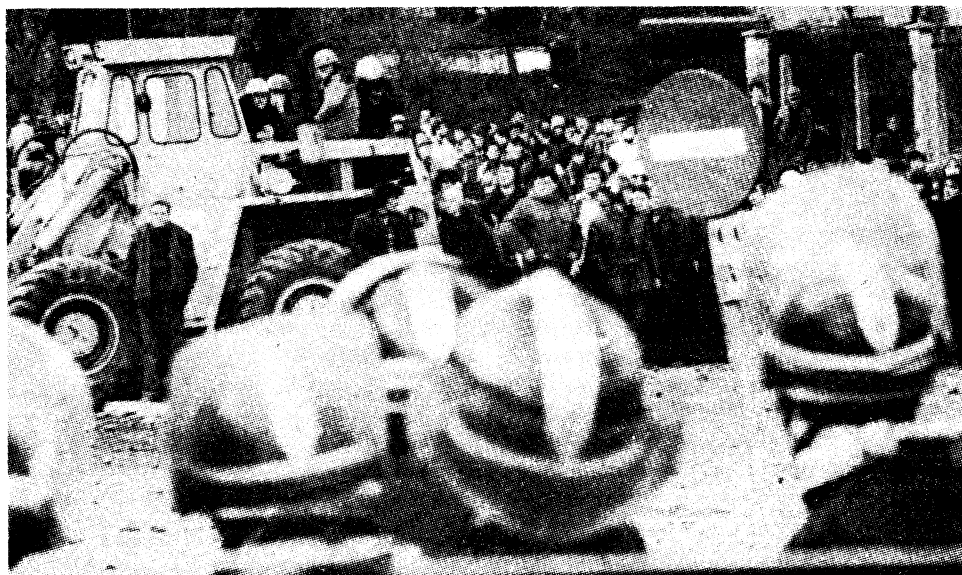
In steel alone, the trusts plan to eliminate more than 21,000 jobs in the next two years, reducing employment in the industry by nearly a quarter.

In short, French capitalists are provoking a massive confrontation with some of the most powerful sectors of the working class. The repercussions of this cold-blooded move are already shaking the country.

General strike

On February 16, French workers gave a clear sign of their readiness to fight the layoffs. On that day 1 million demonstrators, led by striking steelworkers and supported by auto, rail, mine, power, postal, maritime, and municipal workers, paralyzed the heavily industrialized north and east of the country in a one-day general strike.

On February 20, more than 80,000 demonstrated in the Loire region, shutting down all major industry in protest against unemployment. According to the union federations that called the action, it was the region's "biggest demonstration since May 1968," when general strikes across the country nearly toppled French capitalism.



Denain, March 8—Government mobilized riot cops to intimidate protesting steelworkers.

On February 23, steelworkers occupied the Eiffel tower for two hours.

On February 24, in the northern industrial center of Longwy, thousands of steelworkers and their supporters, armed with iron bars, a bulldozer, and paving stones, fought a pitched battle with the CRS riot police sent in to crush demonstrations. At immediate issue was control over the local television station, which steelworkers had taken over to assure that programming supporting their fight against layoffs would be shown.

On February 28, more than 10,000 striking bank, insurance, and television workers demonstrated in Paris against layoffs. To show their solidarity with the steelworkers, a popular chant was "Paris-Longwy; to win we must unite!"

On March 7, a major clash with the national police occurred in the steel center of Denain, a small town near the Belgian border that served as the setting for Emile Zola's novel *Germinal*. The incident, completely provoked by the riot police, sent shock waves through the boardrooms of Paris.

The initial confrontation with the riot police occurred March 6 when steelworkers, returning to Denain in

two chartered buses from a demonstration at the Belgian border, were stopped by the CRS.

Without warning, the police blocked the bus exits, smashed in the windshields with rifle butts, and fired in tear-gas canisters. When the choking and coughing steelworkers were finally allowed to leave the bus, they were heavily roughed up by the CRS thugs.

A meeting of the entire day shift at the Usinor-Denain steel plant was held the next morning to discuss how to respond to the vicious police assault.

A decision was taken to block the main highway north to Brussels. Five hundred workers left the plant with sufficient scrap iron to erect a barricade. Their numbers quickly swelled to more than 5,000.

An immediate confrontation ensued with the riot police, who were now guarding the local police station. In a battle with these club-wielding professional strikebreakers that lasted until past midnight the next day, steelworkers armed with iron bars, a bulldozer, and flaming automobiles tried to batter down the doors and walls of the police station.

Barricades went up in the center of town, an attempt was made to seize the

local armory, and gunfire from an unknown source wounded seven of the riot police.

The owners of the plant, more than 100 miles away in Paris, issued an order by telephone in the middle of the fray, temporarily suspending all scheduled layoffs. Local union officials quickly circulated a leaflet announcing this and asking the workers to return to the plants. The March 9 *Le Monde* reported what happened next:

"The distribution of the leaflet produced astonishing scenes. Demonstrators refused even to look at it. Instead, they crumpled it up and trampled it underfoot, shouting, 'This is not the time to discuss, but to act.'"

The confrontation continued until 1 a.m. March 8, with the unions announcing plans for a demonstration in Denain two days later to protest the continuing provocations by the riot police. More than 20,000 took part in that action.

On March 14 the bosses announced they would not retreat. The Denain steel complex would in fact be shut down.

March on Paris called

All eyes are now on Paris, the political and financial center of the country, where steelworkers and others threatened by layoffs plan to demonstrate on March 23.

The leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties and the two big union federations they control are doing everything in their power to limit the size of the demonstration.

They prefer instead such diversions as the "special session" of Parliament, hurriedly called under pressure of the mounting protests to "discuss" the issue of unemployment. As if it were not the government itself that is driving through the layoffs!

Nevertheless, it is clear that workers throughout the country would welcome the chance for a massive and united response to the bosses' offensive. They have shown this with a steady increase in strikes in recent weeks:

- For the first time since 1953, France

Continued on next page

West German steel strike led the way

By August Nimtz

Not since the days of the May 1968 student-worker uprising has France witnessed as militant a struggle as that now being waged by striking steelworkers.

Just as the 1968 upsurge had its inspiration in the militant West German student struggles earlier that year, the French steel strike today finds similar inspiration in the recent steel strike in the Ruhr Valley in West Germany.

The Ruhr strike, which ended on January 11 after six weeks, was the first major steel walkout in fifty years. It was a strike whose significance goes far beyond the particulars of its ending.

For decades West German capitalists have prided themselves for having a "cooperative" working class, one that "never strikes."

Worker disenchantment with the "model" labor-management system and slow economic growth, however, are the basis for what is now the greatest labor upsurge in West Germany's postwar history. The steel strike followed on the heels of a

number of strikes beginning in early 1978. Its significance was expressed by the former editor-in-chief of the steel union's newspaper, Jacob Moneta: "It shows that the center of the German proletariat, which is in Ruhr, is now beginning to move."

The central demand of the steelworkers was a thirty-five-hour workweek. The demand was adopted by delegates at the last convention of the union, IG-Metall (Metal Industry Union), against the wishes of the union leadership.

For steelworkers, the reduction of the workweek is the sensible way to provide jobs in an industry with high unemployment. The companies have eliminated more than 100,000 steel jobs since 1961.

From the beginning, the strike was quite militant, more militant than the leadership of the union had wanted. The vigorous opposition of the bosses to the thirty-five-hour week, a measure that would certainly cut into their profits, required a strong and concerted effort from the workers.

The union leadership's strategy was to strike plants that employed about a

third of the workers. The bosses responded by locking out about another third.

More than 140,000 workers participated in demonstrations in various Ruhr Valley cities. Steelworkers from other European countries also participated in the actions.

The strikers did not win their central demand, though the contract that was eventually approved had cuts in the workweek for some workers.

The compromise contract, which the union leadership strongly backed, was favored by 49.5 percent of the union members who voted, while 40.9 percent were opposed. A breakdown of the vote by plants, however, is more revealing:

- In the plants on strike from the beginning, the "no" vote ranged from 55 percent to 95 percent.
- In the plants that had gone out on strike in the last three days the "no" vote was still 40 percent to 50 percent.
- Only in the plants that had not been on strike was the "no" vote 25 percent or less.

That large a vote against a leadership-backed contract is unprece-

dented. It signifies that the hold the union bureaucracy has traditionally exercised over the rank and file is beginning to loosen.

The fact that the shorter workweek was raised as a central demand by the most powerful union in the country means that this answer to unemployment is no longer a dream but a demand around which workers are willing to struggle.

This struggle carries a message for U.S. steelworkers as well. It undercuts the charge that foreign steelworkers are to blame for eliminating jobs here.

European and Japanese workers are facing the same problems as their American brothers and sisters—problems that result from the international crisis of capitalism as reflected in the steel industry.

In the United States, union bureaucrats have tried to divert the struggle for jobs into support for the bosses' campaign against imports—in effect, a campaign against other workers. The West German strike points in another direction—an international struggle against the employers for a shorter workweek.

At occupied factory

Peru: police assault kills three workers

By C.D. Castaño

LIMA—At 3:30 in the morning on February 4, police brutally assaulted the Cromotex, S.A. textile factory. Workers had occupied the factory since December 28.

Three workers and one civil guard died as a result of the violent police attack.

Cromotex employs 120 workers. The union is part of the CGTP (Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú—General Confederation of Workers of Peru), the country's major union federation.

Of the 5,000 union leaders fired after the July 19, 1977, general strike, six were leaders at Cromotex. The union's general secretary was jailed.

During the course of 1978, 100 workers were fired. The factory has been almost shut down since October. Every day the workers went to the factory, only to have to return to their homes a short time later because of a lack of materials.

On November 8, Antonio Musiris Chain, the factory owner, announced that he would ask for court approval to close the factory. The workers immediately went on strike. When they found out the boss was going to remove the machinery from the factory, they decided to occupy it.

The occupation

The December 28 factory occupation was peaceful. The workers simply entered the factory, which had been abandoned by its owner.

Later they organized themselves into several teams—for example, to get food for the common kitchen. Every day one or more teams went to the marketplace asking for solidarity. Other teams left to seek economic help, while others cooked or cleaned.

On January 15, Judge Carlos Saponara ordered twenty-eight workers fired, among them several union leaders. These workers were accused of the following crimes: usurpation, disturbing the peace, being against the patrimony, violating individual freedoms, and others.

The judge also ordered police intervention to oust the workers and arrest union leaders singled out by the owners and their lawyers.

The assault

At 3:30 in the morning on February 4, seven tanks and two trucks of assault guards armed with machine guns surrounded the factory.

At 5:00 in the morning, they began the attack. They knocked down the main door to the factory with tanks and threw grenades and tear-gas bombs. The workers defended themselves from the roof of the factory with rocks and sticks.

One captain of the Civil Guard died after falling from the building.

Three workers, Macelino Castro Gamboa, Silvio Jiménez Nañez, and

Inocencio Paco Quispe, were murdered by the cops.

Of the eighty workers inside the factory during the assault, ten were wounded and hospitalized, fifty-seven were arrested and held in the Potao barracks, four have disappeared, and the rest are assumed to have escaped.

The people who live in the neighborhood surrounding Cromotex came out to help the workers. But they were dispersed by tanks and swiftly pursued down the narrow streets of Vitarbe, where the Cromotex factory is located. Several houses were destroyed.

By 7:00 in the morning, the police had smashed all resistance and had taken the majority of the workers as prisoners.

The wife of one of the workers told us that when she passed by Cromotex at 7:00 in the morning she heard terrible noises inside the factory. The police were destroying the machines. They were afraid the workers would return, she said.

Solidarity committee

A few hours later, relatives of the workers went to see Enrique Fernández Chacón, a fired union leader and member of the Constituent Assembly for FOCEP (Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil, y Popular—Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's



Workers occupied Cromotex factory to defend their jobs

Front). He was the first to offer his help and went to the hospital to visit the wounded workers.

On February 5, FOCEP called a meeting of the workers' families, and the Solidarity Committee with the Cromotex Workers was formed.

The committee asked ten Constituent Assembly members to visit those held in the Potao barracks. Three members of the assembly's Human Rights Commission, who have the right to enter all the prisons to investigate the situation of all prisoners, and seven other members of other commissions, went

to Potao. But they were not allowed to enter, which means there is a danger that the prisoners are being tortured.

In the face of the Cromotex events, the Permanent Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights in Peru agreed "to energetically protest and denounce the military government for its method of dealing with labor problems."

It called for "denunciations of the military government before national and international public opinion for constant human rights violations in the country."

From Perspectiva Mundial

Blanco: 'The struggle continues'

In the Peruvian Constituent Assembly session of February 6, the APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana—American People's Revolutionary Alliance, Peru's major capitalist party) and the Popular Christian Party (PPC) again showed themselves to be reactionary bedfellows of the Peruvian military dictatorship.

They rejected a motion presented by workers deputies repudiating the Cromotex massacre; demanding that suspended constitutional guarantees be reestablished; and demanding that magazines suspended by the

government be allowed to resume publication.

Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco, a deputy from FOCEP (Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil, y Popular—Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front), took the floor to answer PPC leader Luis Bedoya (who is also Cromotex's lawyer), in defense of the Cromotex workers. Extracts of his remarks are printed below. They are taken from *Combate Socialista*, newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party, Peruvian sister organization of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

The workers were protecting machinery in their work place which the capitalist was illegally trying to remove, and in that situation, they were attacked by the police with tanks in the middle of the night.

I want to remind Mr. Bedoya that it is precisely now that we are returning to the law of the jungle. Because the atrocity committed against Cromotex workers is the law of the jungle. And it is the law of the jungle also that. . . .

Interruption from a PPC deputy: I would remind the assembly of the bloody events in which Mr. Blanco was the central protagonist in 1962. Mr. Hugo Blanco took part in the

murder of three civil guards.

Hugo Blanco continues: The death of three policemen is being recalled. But the deaths of hundreds of workers and peasants is not remembered.

I am not ashamed of having fought in defense of those peasants, who were being massacred with arms brought directly from the United States in order to kill Peruvian workers in defense of the La Convención landholders.

I have not been the first, nor will I be the last.

I have not been the first because before me there were the armies of Túpac Amaru, of San Martín and Bolívar. There were the APRA masses in Trujillo in '32. And many more. *And today there are the Cromotex workers.*

And the struggle will continue until the exploitation in our land is ended and until Peruvians can finally speak of true sovereignty without serving a Chilean capitalist (as at Cromotex) or a capitalist from any other country.

Mr. president, I ask that you intervene to prevent the legal murder of those comrades who are going to be judged by the same body [the police force] that attacked them.

From Perspectiva Mundial



HUGO BLANCO Militant/Barry Chan

...France

Continued from preceding page

ce's entire rail system was shut down March 6-8 in a thirty-four-hour action jointly called by all seven rail unions. At issue is the government's plan to cut at least 13,000 rail jobs.

• Shipbuilders blockaded the shipyard at La Seyne March 6 to back up their negotiators in talks then under way in Paris. The government pulled back, temporarily suspending planned layoffs.

• A twenty-four-hour dock strike March 5, demanding better working conditions and benefits, shut down virtually all French ports.

Postal strikes

• An average of twenty-five strikes a week on the local level against speed-up and deteriorating working conditions have tied the French postal system in knots for months. Particularly militant have been workers at the bulk-mail centers in the working-class suburbs surrounding Paris, where the

average age of the work force is twenty-two.

• Rotating strikes are under way in the banks, where workers are demanding a thirty-five-hour week to counter unemployment. Their slogan is, "Let the bankers pay!"

• Sixty thousand insurance employees are out on rotating strikes for higher pay. Actions have included occupations of several main offices in Paris.

• The 2,800 employees of the Paris Bourse (stockmarket) have been out on

strike since February 27 to protest a scheduled wage cut.

• The 24,000 employees of the state income tax bureau began ten days of rotating strikes March 12, demanding better pay and shorter hours.

• Production workers in the state-owned television network have been out on strike since February 8, protesting funding cuts and planned layoffs.

Each and every one of these workers has an interest in making the march on Paris a day the bosses will not soon forget.

From Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

Brazil unions call for workers party

By Fatima Oliveira

SAO PAULO—Leaders of the metalworkers unions of the state of São Paulo, representing more than 1 million workers, took a big step toward independent working-class political action at their Ninth Congress, held in the town of Lins January 22-26.

Delegates overwhelmingly approved a proposal calling for formation of a workers party, and called for a national commission to begin preparations for building such a party.

The union representatives declared that they could no longer trust Brazil's two existing legal bourgeois parties—the government-controlled ARENA and the opposition Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB).

"History has shown us," the unions' document says, "that the best instrument the workers can use to carry out their struggle is their own party. Therefore, in organizing this party, which will include the entire proletariat, workers are struggling for effective liberation from exploitation."

Benedito Marcílio, president of the metalworkers union of Santo André—which presented the proposal for a workers party—declared during the congress that the two-party system does not satisfy the interests of the majority of Brazilian society because it props up the arbitrary military dictatorship.

Marcílio—who was himself recently elected to the federal Congress as an MDB deputy—said that the MDB is a front that groups all kinds of people, including the bosses. He said the party of the working class should emerge out of the needs of the rank and file without any interference from the bosses.

Marcílio suggested creating a commission to organize representatives from other states to discuss the new party's statutes and program. He said his opinion was that these should be based on socialist principles.

The union leader also asserted that all segments of the opposition should continue the struggle to win democratization by calling for the convening of a constituent assembly.

The Socialist Convergence, a broad-based movement that has been calling for formation of a socialist party, has given full support to the trade unionists' proposal all along.

In a recent editorial in *Versus*, the leaders of Socialist Convergence hailed the proposal for formation of a workers

party and pointed to the need for a declaration of principles "through which we can struggle not only for democratic demands but for a society that eliminates capitalist exploitation once and for all."

The editorial went on to call for a program that would not only defend the standard of living of the working class, democratic rights, and true national independence, but would also have a clear objective—a workers government.

The call for a workers party marks a new stage in the growing radicalization of the Brazilian working class, and comes in the wake of a gigantic upsurge in trade-union activity. During the Geisel government, and especially in the past two years, the workers organizations have succeeded in breaking a long period of silence and have reappeared as a major force in Brazil.

The past year's actions by various sectors of the working class have had mainly an economic character. However, they have emerged at a moment in which other sectors of Brazilian society have already begun a process of politicization.

There were big student mobilizations in 1977, growing demands for amnesty and democratic rights by various sectors of society, and the growth of the movement against the high cost of living, which has been organized mainly by the Catholic church.

In this context, the strike movement ended up taking on a political character.

"The hour has come to say enough to this situation," said Luis Inacio da Silva, or "Lula," as he is commonly called, to 10,000 metalworkers who met in São Bernardo do Campo in April 1978.

"It's time for everyone to assume the responsibility *not* to believe in the politicians who only come to our houses in search of votes, *not* to believe in the authorities who don't leave their offices, and *not* to believe in the bosses of the companies. We have to believe in the courage of each worker and in the power of the struggle of the working class."

Twice president of the metalworkers union of São Bernardo do Campo and Diadema, with a large membership of auto workers, "Lula" is part of a small but growing group of leaders who are trying to rebuild the trade unions. These officials, along with new rank-and-file leaders at the point of produc-

Metalworkers strike



More than 200,000 metal workers in the São Paulo area went on strike March 13-14 demanding a 78 percent wage boost. The strikers shut down the huge auto assembly plants owned by Volkswagen, Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Saab, and Mercedes-Benz; several big steel mills; and dozens of smaller manufacturing plants. Above, 80,000 strikers rally at São Bernardo March 14.

tion, have played a key role in the new mobilizations of the Brazilian working class.

At the end of 1977, several working-class leaders began to openly demand union autonomy and freedom of expression. Along with specific union demands, they joined the struggle for democratic rights. The recent call for an independent workers party is the latest demonstration of this growing radicalization.

The São Paulo Metalworkers Congress, besides calling for a workers party, laid out a plan of action for 1979. This encompassed:

- Unification of the campaign for the yearly wage increases.

- Promotion of a large-scale unionization drive among unorganized workers.

- National distribution of the resolutions adopted at the congress.

- Preparation for a united May Day demonstration with the main demands to focus on the struggle against retaliatory firings and in favor of job security and trade-union unity.

The two principal demands in the current wage-increase campaign by the São Paulo metalworkers are for a 34.4 percent pay hike over and above the standard government increases, and guaranteed job security.

From Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

Cuban forces said to withdraw from Eritrea

By Ernest Harsch

The revolutionary government in Cuba is differentiating itself further from the Ethiopian military junta's offensive against the Eritrean independence struggle.

This comes despite months of pressure on Havana—from both Addis Ababa and Moscow—to pit its troops against the Eritrean freedom fighters.

At a March 2 news conference in Rome, a representative of one of the two major Eritrean independence organizations said that all Cuban forces had been pulled out of Eritrea.

According to a Reuters dispatch, "Amdemichael Kahsai, of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, said at a press conference that the Cubans had been transferred to Ethiopia's Ogaden region, in the southeast, about a month ago after a new upsurge of fighting there."

Previously, representatives of the EPLF and of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) had at times stated that

some Cuban advisers or troops were present in Eritrea. Such claims were widely publicized in the imperialist press. Havana's repeated denials that it had ever permitted its troops to be used against the Eritreans were generally ignored.

After the Dergue's massive military offensive against EPLF-held areas began in mid-November 1978, however, the EPLF dropped virtually all mention of any Cuban involvement in Eritrea, while sharply escalating its condemnation of Moscow's assistance to the Ethiopian drive.

In an article in the March 3 issue of the New York weekly *Nation*, Dan Connell, a journalist who is well-known as a supporter of the EPLF and who recently visited guerrilla-held areas of Eritrea, stated that "it appears that Cuba held back from direct involvement" in the offensive.

Anticipating the EPLF's March 2 announcement (the article was written earlier), Connell continued, "Recent

reports indicate that Cuban military personnel are now withdrawing from Eritrea. . . ."

At the Rome news conference, Kahsai accused Moscow of stationing 2,000 Soviet soldiers and advisers in Eritrea to aid the offensive. He acknowledged that the Ethiopians now held all major towns in the territory, but said that resistance continued.

Whatever the actual extent of Soviet involvement, the Kremlin has made no secret of its enthusiastic support to the Dergue's drive to crush the Eritrean struggle. The Soviet press has hailed the recent Ethiopian military advances as "victories" for the Ethiopian revolution. In contrast, *Granma*, the Cuban Communist Party paper, has been totally silent on the Dergue's military gains.

Other differences have been apparent for some time, despite the Cuban government's mistaken political support for the Dergue and its failure to support the right of Eritrea to self-

determination, including its right to independence.

While the Ethiopian regime pressed for the military crushing of the Eritrean struggle, Cuban officials have repeatedly said that they favor a negotiated "political settlement" to the conflict.

Havana's attitude toward the Eritrean fighters is quite different from the position it adopted toward the imperialist-backed Somali invaders. During the war of 1977-78, the Cuban government openly condemned the Somali invasion as an attack against the Ethiopian revolution. It sent thousands of troops to Ethiopia to help drive the invasion back.

This further confirmation of the Cubans' refusal to bend to Soviet and Ethiopian pressures to send their troops in against the Eritreans should be welcomed by all supporters of the Eritrean struggle for self-determination and of the Cuban revolution.

From Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

Thousands join women's day activities

March 8 was declared International Women's Day in 1910 to honor the battle for women's suffrage in the United States. Since that time, activities around the world on March 8 have paid special tribute to the struggle of women.

Rallies and other activities were held across the United States this year to commemorate International Women's Day. Last week's 'Militant' reported that 300 women attended a meeting in New York City to celebrate working women.

A March 10 rally of 5,000 women's rights supporters in San Francisco was also covered in last week's 'Militant.'

There was also a big turnout for an all-day program of events at San Francisco State University on March 8. About 600 people attended a forum on the future of the women's movement in the morning, and 250 came to hear a panel of minority women in the afternoon.

Below are reports on activities held in other cities.

Morgantown

By Melissa Merchant

MORGANTOWN, W. Va.—On March 10 the West Virginia University Chapter of the National Organization for Women sponsored a debate on abortion rights.

One hundred fifty people turned out to hear Barbara Nailer and Margaret Kelley of NOW take on David Brannigan and Denise Thomas of the local "right to life" group.

"NOW supports the right of women to choose abortion. We will no longer be told by any group that we *must* bear children," Nailer, president of Morgantown NOW, told the audience.

The speakout on abortion was the central event in a whole day of activities. Women artists and musicians

displayed their talents. Workshops on the Equal Rights Amendment, women in coal, and affirmative action were also held.

There were greetings and endorsements from the Central Labor Council of Monongalia and Preston Counties, the NAACP, National Abortion Rights Action League, the WVU Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa.

Also, from Mary Zins of the Coal Mining Women's Conference; Marion Dearnley, coordinator of WVU Affirmative Action; and Rosalinda Flint, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in 1978.

"We are up against powerful enemies," Margaret Kelley summed up in the debate, "We must reach out to all supporters of women's rights, the Black movement, the labor movement, campus and community groups. Together we will keep abortion safe and legal for *all* women."

Miami

MIAMI—A Speak Out for the Equal Rights Amendment was held here on March 10. The program was sponsored by the ERA Task Forces of the Dade County and Miami-Kendall chapters of the National Organization for Women.

Eighty people participated, and three television stations and a major daily paper publicized the event.

Carole Sheahan, representing the national staff of the Communications Workers of America and the Florida Coalition of Labor Union Women, reported that the two organizations were prepared to work with any group on the ERA.

Two panelists spoke to the importance of involving more Black women in the ERA fight.

Francena Thomas, board member of the Greater Miami NAACP and director of Minority Affairs and Women's Concerns on the Florida International University Campus, explained that the women's movement must deal with the issue of racism if it is to be effective.



One hundred fifty people attended abortion rights debate in Morgantown, West Virginia. Militant/Pat Hayes

Joyce Knox, a member of the Dade County School Board, added that the fight for affirmative action and the ERA are struggles that support each others.

Schenectady

By Pat Mayberry

SCHENECTADY, N.Y.—An Evening for Women's Rights was held here on March 8.

About fifty people attended the meeting, which was sponsored by the Schenectady Alliance for Reproductive Freedom.

Endorsers included Albany National Organization for Women, Family Planning Advocates, and the Socialist Workers Party.

Speakers alerted the audience to the threat of a proposed constitutional convention to outlaw abortion and a bill by the Rensselaer County Board that would require parental consent for

all abortions performed on minors in that county.

Those attending the meeting were encouraged to attend the International Day of Abortion Actions on March 31. It was announced that carpools would be organized to send people to New York for the event.

San Diego

SAN DIEGO—Nearly 100 women attended an International Women's Day celebration here honoring working women. The event, sponsored by the local chapters of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the National Organization for Women, was held at the Amalgamated Clothing Workers headquarters. Most of those in attendance were unionists.

Speakers included Dr. Ruth Heifetz, who addressed the issue of health and safety on the job; Tania Winters from the Community Action Energy Network on Karen Silkwood; Lori Adelsouski; a member of the Electrical Workers union; two women strikers from General Dynamics; and Estelle Ricketson from CLUW.

Phoenix

PHOENIX, Ariz.—Eighty people attended a rally for women's rights on March 2 here.

The rally, jointly sponsored by the Campus Feminists United for Action and the Young Socialist Alliance, was called to respond to the recent defeat of the ERA by the Arizona Senate.

Speakers included members of the Campus Feminists United, the YSA, Amnesty International, Nuclear Free State, University of Arizona Student Senate, and Students for Human Rights in Latin America.

Barbara Kingsolver, the YSA spokesperson, was interviewed by several of the local news media. Coverage of the event appeared on the evening news and in the local papers.

March 31 actions to defend abortion rights

March 31 has been designated as an "International Day of Action" in support of a woman's right to control her own body.

On that day actions around the United States will demonstrate support for women's right to safe, federally funded abortion; safe contraception; and for an end to forced sterilization.

In New York City the March 31st Coalition is planning a march and rally. Participants will assemble at noon at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, UN building, Forty-seventh and First Avenue. They will march to Union Square where a 2 p.m. rally will be held.

Speakers at the rally will include Ellen Frankfort, author of *Death of Rosie Jimenez*; Denise Fuge, New York National Organization for

Women; Pauline Haynes, American Indian Movement; and Ruth Messenger, New York City Council member.

A march and rally for abortion rights will be held on Minnesota's Iron Range on March 31. The action is being cosponsored by the National Organization for Women, United Steelworkers Local 1938, Iron Range Committee of American Civil Liberties Union, Friends of Planned Parenthood, Abortion Rights Council, Socialist Workers Party, and the Democratic Farmer Labor Party Feminist Caucus.

Participants will rally at the Virginia Court House at 1 p.m. then march to the Virginia Hospital.

A march and rally for women's right to choose will be held in Boston on March 31. Assembly will be at 11 a.m. at Blackstone Park for a

march to the Boston Common where a 2 p.m. rally will take place. The activity is sponsored by the Northeastern Coalition for Reproductive Rights. For more information call (617) 354-8807.

The Pittsburgh Coalition for Reproductive Rights is sponsoring a rally to defend abortion rights at 12 noon on March 31 at Market Square.

Solidarity actions will also be held in Philadelphia; Hartford; Cincinnati; Columbus; Cleveland; Kansas City; Chicago; Milwaukee; Buffalo; San Francisco; Sacramento; Los Angeles; Austin, Texas; Eugene, Oregon; and Portland Oregon.

Actions are also being coordinated in France, England, Spain, Canada, and Italy.

For more information on March 31 actions call (212) 533-4456.

...Iran

Continued from back page

demands for rehiring fired employees, stopping layoffs, and settling back-pay claims would be met. But when the gathering asked him when, he said, "I don't know. I must consult my aides."

People were not satisfied with his answer. Workers pressed for immediate settlement of their demands. They also raised more questions.

When Farouhar denied that his ministry had issued the memo on worker "troublemakers," the crowd demanded that an official denial be broadcast on television. "Why is the workers' voice never

heard on radio or television," asked another person. Farouhar, stumbling over his words, said "I am not responsible for radio or television. I can't take someone else's responsibilities."

Another worker pointed out, "The labor laws favoring the bosses must be changed. Do you think the workers' committees should be involved in changing them?" he asked Farouhar.

The minister would only say, "The labor laws must be reconsidered and nonspecialists must be represented."

Farouhar said a commission to review the workers' demands might be formed. The workers demanded the right to participate on this commission.

A woman textile worker spoke bitterly about the conditions in her factory. She received vigorous applause from the other workers.

"I work all day running a machine, but they only give me thirty *tomans* [less than \$5]. This is less than the male workers receive, although they are also exploited," she explained.

"We are told that because we are women, we don't have the right to speak or make decisions. We are just good for being exploited as workers."

"We disagree. We are capable. Women must choose our own representatives. We demand equal pay for equal work, child care, paid pregnancy leaves, and a lower retirement age."

'Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang'

Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang. Written and directed by Jack Willis and Paul Landau. Produced by Jack Willis. Public Broadcasting System. Shown on WNET, New York, February 25, 1979.

This one-hour documentary is the story of a journalist who spent twenty years investigating the health effects of low-level atomic radiation. It is highly informative, carefully made, and appropriately angry.

The program begins with residents of southwestern Utah relating their experiences with the clouds of radioactive fallout that passed over the area after atomic bomb tests in the Nevada desert in the 1950s. One woman was out tending her garden when a cloud went over—it made her so faint she

Television

could barely stand. A shepherd describes a March snowfall that was gray, and burned his hands when he touched it. Several residents of St. George, Utah, say that they have cancer or leukemia and that many friends and neighbors have died from the diseases.

We see soldiers who were part of experiments on the battlefield use of nuclear weapons. They were in trenches and foxholes from one to three miles from a nuclear explosion. We see buildings crumble or burst into flame, the giant mushroom cloud, and the soldiers describing the fireball as so bright that they could see the bones in their hands when they covered their faces—even though their eyes were closed.

After the blast, those who weren't bleeding from the eyes, nose or mouth might be marched into the immediate area of the explosion, to demonstrate that troops could function on a "nuclear battlefield." The army used films of these exercises in an attempt to persuade the ranks and the public that

nuclear weapons were safe.

Many of the soldiers now have cancer.

Paul Jacobs, whose investigations serve as the framework of the film, describes a 1957 government report which revealed that public health officials in Nevada and Utah were aware of radiation-related illnesses. Although Jacobs saw and made use of the report at that time, the government kept it secret until 1971.

When the report was made public, one page was omitted—the page that recommended a thorough, long-term study of area residents to determine the health effects of radiation exposure. The page was deleted because no such study was ever made.

The film reports on the accidents and routine plutonium emissions at the Rocky Flats, Colorado, nuclear weapons plant. Doctors and others from the area cite statistics on the high local rate of cancer. Also heard from are the government and industry bureaucrats who insist that the connection between radiation and cancer has not been proven.

They sound like the apologists for the tobacco industry, but even more cynical and manipulative—after all, you can choose not to smoke, but you can't choose not to breathe radiation when it is in the air all around you.

A section of the film on workers in the nuclear industry focuses on the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, naval shipyard, where the leukemia death rate among nuclear workers is four-and-a-half times the "normal" rate. In this part of the film Dr. Helen Caldicott, an authority on radiation effects, points out that even though a whole-body radiation dose may be low, it is likely to be concentrated in a few tiny spots where radioactive particles become lodged, such as in the lungs. The radiation from these particles doesn't travel far, but there is a very high probability that the few body cells which are exposed to this radiation will eventually give rise to cancer.

As Paul Jacobs says near the end of the film, the Atomic Energy Commission and its successor, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, have operated for more than thirty years by keeping the truth from the public. Decisions that affect the health, the



High rates of cancer and leukemia resulted from Nevada atomic bomb tests.

lives, and the future of people all over the world have been made over our heads and behind our backs.

As the film draws to a close, we return to the interviews with the test soldiers and the southern Utah residents. Captions on the screen tell us when each of them died of cancer.

Paul Jacobs, too, fell victim to the conspiracy of silence which he worked so long to expose. While out in the desert tracking down the story the government still tries to hide from us, he walked through many radiation "hot spots." Somewhere, somehow, he probably kicked up and breathed in a microscopic speck of plutonium from a bomb test.

On January 3, 1978, Paul Jacobs died of cancer.

—Dean Denno

'An authentic proletarian novel'

Paul Siegel's review of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (February 16) confirmed what I was told many times by one of our members of the Sailors Union of the Pacific who had, prior to World War II, sailed on British ships.

He said this book was one of the influences in his life that convinced him of socialist ideals, and he often talked about how worker-author Robert Tressell explained the cruel economic contradictions of capitalism and ridiculed the apologists of this system.

The hypocrites of organized religion and the lying publishers of capitalist newspapers were special targets of Tressell, who hated both breeds.

I never fully appreciated the stories I heard about this book and its truly great author until I happened to read it recently, partly from curiosity.

Nothing that is said about this book can match the stories in it, and the descriptions of capitalist-creature types. Two clerics, the Rev. John Starr and the Rev. Mr. Belcher, minister of the Shining Light Chapel, are repulsive parasites. The ingratiating Starr conforms to the image the clergy seeks to project. Belcher is the picture of what it is. This Belcher resembles a big balloon "in consequence of gross overfeeding and lack of natural exercise." He is "afflicted with chronic flatulence . . . frequent belchings . . . and the foul gases generated in the stomach by the decomposition of foods with which it was generally loaded."

Few noticed that Belcher resembled a gas bag because he never removed the long black coat

that draped his rotund figure. "It was not necessary for him to take his coat off: his part in life was not to help produce, but to help to devour the produce of others."

In his preface, Tressell explained the central purpose of his book: "to define the Socialist theory of the causes of poverty, and to explain how Socialists propose to abolish poverty." He does this, and more.

Most of the arguments against capitalism and for socialism are in this book, presented "in the form of an interesting story." It is the story of what happens to a group of building trades workers and their families in the south of England in one year during the first decade of this century. As such it is one of the first (and very few) authentic proletarian novels, and the most successful.

It is a pleasure to read today because the methods the employers use to dupe the workers have not changed fundamentally. Tressell describes the capitalist press—*The Obscure*, a Tory paper; *Daily Chloroform*, generally in support of the Liberal party; *Ananias*, a weekly, thought to be "objective;" *Chronicles of Crime*, a sensational apolitical distraction—as the source of working-class misinformation. It is not hard to find the counterparts of these publications today.

Also the present Republican and Democratic parties are replicas of the Tory and Liberal parties in England before the organization by the workers of the Labor Party.

Here in the United States all the prejudices of workers, fostered by capitalist propaganda in the early years of this century, still survive. Therefore, the way the hero of this novel presents his arguments for socialism at lunchtime discussions with his fellow workers will be of special interest to all socialist-minded workers today.

There is another aspect of this novel that will

attract more attention today than previously. It is the early socialist appreciation of women. In a frank conversation between the hero and one of his fellow workers about a sad family estrangement (in which the socialist family was asked for help and advice) the following exchange occurred:

"I never ill-treated her! I never raised my hand to her—at least only once, and then I didn't hurt her. Does she say I ill-treated her?"

"Oh no: from what my wife tells me she only blames herself, but I'm drawing my own conclusions. You may not have struck her, but you did worse—you treated her with indifference and exposed her to temptation. What has happened is the natural result of your neglect and want of care for her. The responsibility for what has happened is mainly yours, but apparently you wish to pose now as being very generous and to 'forgive her'—you're 'willing' to take her back; but it seems to me that it would be more fitting that you should ask her to forgive you."

I felt better about the way Tressell ended his novel than I would with the "more tragic" edited version published in 1914. Aside from literary merit, the question of suicide (common among working people in those days in England) is a minor theme of the book. Of course that is no solution for the misery of the working class. Those who struggled against their misery and oppression are entitled to some favorable breaks as happened at the end of this novel. Those pioneer socialists were heroic, not tragic figures.

In addition to being enjoyable reading, this book is a good subject for discussion among workers. Workers in this country today should enjoy it as much as British workers several generations ago. It is a reminder how far we are behind the time in social consciousness.

—Frank Lovell

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists. By Robert Tressell. New York. Monthly Review Press. 1978. 633 pages. \$7.50.

In Brief

NOT MORAL ENOUGH TO BE A LAWYER?

A Virginia judge refused to allow Bonnie Cord to take the bar examination and practice law in the state because she lives with a man she isn't married to. Cord has taken the case to the state court of appeals.

Judge Duncan Gibb declared "the living arrangement of the applicant would lower the public's opinion of the bar as a whole"—as if such a thing were possible.

Cord's attorney said he knew of only two similar cases, and both times the rejected applicants were women. "I can't believe that men have been all that pure for so many years," he said. The attorney noted that in 1977, nearly one million couples were living together without "benefit" of clergy.

SEEKS TO BLOCK ALA. EXECUTIONS

An Alabama white man is trying to block the execution of another white who says he wants to die. The white who went to court says he did it to save a Black man also sentenced to death.

William Powell asked a state court to halt the slated April 6 execution of John Evans, who reportedly insists he wants to die.

Among others facing the chair in Alabama is Johnny (Imani) Harris, who was sentenced to death under an 1862 law. The statute calls for the death penalty for a prisoner serving a life term who is convicted of first-degree murder while in prison. Harris, victim of a racist frame-up, was so convicted.

Powell, who is trying to help

the fight to save Harris, says only one other person has been convicted under the statute, and he too was Black.

Powell, who served seventeen years in jail and then won his own freedom, says he saw the execution of the lone Black executed under the 1862 statute.

SUE CHICAGO COPS OVER STRIP SEARCHES

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a class-action suit against the Chicago Police Department demanding a halt to strip searches of women arrested for traffic violations or other misdemeanors.

The rights group estimates that some 10,000 women have been subjected to such searches. A spokesperson said the ACLU had received 175 complaints in a two-week period.

It is demanding \$125,000 in damages to any woman who has been subjected to such a search.

Earlier, after revelations that the searches were sometimes conducted in view of male cops, the police department issued "standards" allegedly governing the searches. The ACLU said the purported guidelines were "vague, overbroad, and discriminatory."

An attorney said that women taken into custody with men were subjected to strip searches but the men were not.

FOOD STAMPS CUT

Fifteen thousand families in

New York State—8,200 of them in New York City—lost food stamp benefits when new federal regulations went into effect March 1. Two-thirds of the 570,000 New York households getting food stamps under the old rules will lose some or all of their benefits.

A typical four-person family on welfare in New York City lost about \$10 a month in food stamp benefits—down from \$103 to \$92.

The cutback is part of the Carter administration's "reform" of social benefits.

Attack on YSAer goes to Newark grand jury

By Rich Ariza

NEWARK—On March 17 a judge here found "probable cause" and turned over to the grand jury the case of Philip West, charged in a February 20 attack on high school activist Leon Grauer.

Grauer, a student at Arts High and a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, has been a prominent leader in the fight against drastic cutbacks engineered by the board of education.

The cutbacks include laying off 1,100 school employees. The board is hand-picked by Democratic Mayor Kenneth Gibson.

Widespread protests have greeted the cuts. Students have boycotted classes, and parents and school employees have picketed and demonstrated.

The protest movement has resulted in a move to recall Gibson.

Leon Grauer has been at the center of the protest activity. He has spoken at board of education meetings and been heard and seen on radio and television.

Grauer's prominence earned him threats before the February 20 attack. Four days earlier, at a meeting sponsored by the Kenneth Gibson Civic Association, Grauer was surrounded by a group of men who cursed and threatened him. Members of the gang were also members of the Gibson Civic Association.

On the night of February 20, Grauer was on his way home, waiting for a bus,



Militant/Joanne Murphy
LEON GRAUER

when a car with two men in it pulled up. The men parked the car and came at Grauer, one wielding an ice pick and shouting, "You're that little commie from that commie group!"

Grauer told police he recognized one of his assailants as part of the gang at the February 16 meeting.

The car used by Grauer's assailants was traced to Irving Davis, an employee in the Department of Public Works.

At a March 9 hearing, Davis denied involvement, and a judge found him not guilty.

The charge against Philip West was made after Grauer recognized him in the court building. West, it turned out, is a court employee.

Silkwood plutonium overdose

Karen Silkwood's body was contaminated by twice the amount of plutonium necessary to cause cancer, attorney Gerry Spence told a federal court jury. Spence is representing Silkwood's estate in a suit against the energy giant Kerr-McGee.

Silkwood was a lab technician at Kerr-McGee's Cimarron, Oklahoma, plant, which manufactured plutonium fuel rods for nuclear power plants. A union activist, Silkwood died in a mysterious auto crash on her way to document health hazards at the plant to a *New York Times* reporter in November 1974.

Silkwood's estate is suing Kerr-McGee for \$11.5 mil-

lion, charging the firm's handling of plutonium was negligent.

Testimony at the trial has borne out the charge. A former plant supervisor testified that forty pounds of the deadly substance disappeared and was never accounted for.

James Smith said plant conditions were like "a pig pen."

Radiation expert Dr. Karl Morgan testified March 14 that Kerr-McGee showed a "callous, almost cruel, hardened disregard" for employee safety.

The Oklahoma City trial is expected to continue into late April.



KAREN SILKWOOD

Seven Days

Quote unquote

"Society moves by the strength of the workers' arms. It was the oil and dock workers who seized the shah by the throat and threw him out."

—Tehran worker demanding full political and economic rights.

What's Going On

ARIZONA

PHOENIX

HOW TO STOP NUCLEAR POWER.

Speaker: Fred Halstead, author of 'Out Now!' Thurs., Mar. 29, 1:30 p.m. ASU Memorial Union, Pinal Room. Ausp: Mobilization for Survival, Young Socialist Alliance, Socialist Workers Party. For more information call (602) 255-0450.

HOW TO STOP NUCLEAR POWER.

Speaker: Fred Halstead, author of 'Out Now!' Fri., Mar. 30, 12:43 McDowell. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Bookstore Forum. For more information call (802) 255-0450.

CALIFORNIA

EAST LOS ANGELES

BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL EDUCATION—IS BUSING THE ANSWER?

Speakers: two candidates for School Board District 5: Raquel Galon Gutierrez, school teacher; Pedro Vázquez, steelworker, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 1, 7 p.m. 2554 Saturn Ave., Huntington Pk. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (213) 582-1975.

SAN FRANCISCO

FARM WORKERS' STRIKE: AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT.

Speaker: Duane Stilwell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 3284 23rd St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (415) 824-1992.

SAN JOSE

WHY NUCLEAR POWER IS A DANGER.

Speakers: Lisa Honig, Karen Silkwood Public Education Fund; John Cohn, People for a Nuclear-Free Future, representative from Livermore Spring Action. Sat, Mar. 31, 3 p.m. 942 E. Santa Clara St. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (408) 295-8342.

GEORGIA

ATLANTA

REPRESSION IN MEXICO—U.S. COMPLICITY.

Defend Héctor Marroquín, a victim of repression. Slide show and discussion. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 509 Peachtree St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (404) 872-7229.

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON

THE INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR ABORTION RIGHTS.

Speakers: Mary Rees, leader of the fight for an abortion clinic in Framingham, Mass. and head of abortion task force of S. Mid-dlesex National Organization for Women; representative of Northeastern Coalition for Reproductive Rights; Jeannette Tracy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th fl. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (617) 262-4621.

NEW JERSEY

NEWARK

IRANIAN WOMEN ON THE MARCH.

Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, associate editor of the *Militant*, just returned from Iran. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 11A Central Ave. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

OREGON

PORTLAND

POLITICAL ASYLUM FOR HECTOR MARROQUIN.

Speaker: Vernon Cope, Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee. Sun., Apr. 1, 7:30 p.m. 711 NW Everett. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Bookstore Forum. For more information call (503) 222-7225.

DIVEST NOW! Speakers: Sandy Morrison and Donovan King, South African Freedom Committee. Sun., Apr. 8, 7:30 p.m. 711 NW Everett. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Bookstore Forum. For more information call (503) 222-7225.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

POLITICAL ASYLUM FOR HECTOR MARROQUIN.

Picket line in front of the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 6th and Market sts. Tues., Mar. 27, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Ausp: Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee. For more information call (215) 848-1767.

PHILADELPHIA'S HOUSING CRISIS.

Speakers: Corliss Haslam, Tenant Action Group; N. Reynolds, Resident Advisory Board; Naomi Berman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council at-large. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 5811 N. Broad St. (2 blocks north of Olney Ave.) Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (215) 927-4747.

PITTSBURGH

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM: AN INTERNATIONAL REPORT.

Speakers: Suzie Beck, Socialist Workers Party; others. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 1210 Carson St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (412) 488-7000

TEXAS

DALLAS

CARTER'S MIDEAST PEACE DEAL. WILL IT BRING PEACE?

Speakers: representative of Organization of Arab Students; representative of Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 5442 E. Grand Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (214) 826-4711.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MIDDLE EAST: NEW U.S. WAR DRIVE.

Speakers to be announced. Fri., Mar. 30, 8 p.m. 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

WASHINGTON

TACOMA

THE LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM FOR HECTOR MARROQUIN.

Film and panel discussion. Sun., Apr. 1, 7:30 p.m. Regency Room, University Center Bldg., Pacific Lutheran University. Ausp: Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee. For more information call (206) 627-0432.

WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE

RALLY TO DEFEND LABOR AND CIVIL RIGHTS: IF WEBER WINS WE LOSE.

Speakers: Representatives of Milwaukee Central Labor Council; Paul Blackmun, president, Smith Steelworkers Local 19806, AFL-CIO; Joseph Robison, director, District Council 48, AFSCME; Howard Fuller, Educational Opportunities Program, Marquette University; Pattie Yunk, president, Milwaukee Coalition of Labor Union Women; Art Heitzer, National Lawyers Guild; Mary Elgin, treasurer, District 31 Women's Caucus, USWA; Scott Marshall, Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy. Fri., Mar. 30, 7:30 p.m. Smith Steelworkers Memorial Hall, 3651 N. 27th St. Ausp: Committee to Reverse the Weber Case. For more information call (414) 264-9512.



ABORTION CLINIC WINS APPROVAL

The Framingham, Massachusetts, town meeting voted February 27 to allow an abortion clinic to open despite an organized campaign by members of a local "right to life" group to stop it.

The anti-abortionists sought to require all medical facilities to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals, one member of which had already said he would never vote in favor of an abortion clinic.

The South Middlesex chapter of the National Organization for Women and other local groups campaigned to get the truth out.

At the town meeting, the clinic's lawyer noted that the planning board had already approved the lot plan and could not prevent the clinic's opening. The "right to lifers" demanded a vote anyway, hoping to show local opposition to the clinic. They lost by a substantial margin.

'NATIONAL SECURITY' GETS ITT OFF HOOK

The federal government has dropped perjury charges

DUTCH TV TO FILM CAMEJO, OTHERS

Socialist Workers Party leader Pedro Camejo will participate with other left-wing political figures in a panel discussion on the American socialist movement. The occasion is a program to be filmed before a New York audience by a Dutch public television network.

The producers said that others slated to participate are Gus Hall, general secretary of the Communist Party, Michael Harrington, head of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, journalist I.F. Stone, critic Susan Sontag, and trade unionist Henry Foner. Historian Henry Steele Commager will moderate.

The public is invited to the meeting, to be held Saturday evening, March 31, at Cooper Union Hall in New York.

The program will conclude a series now being presented in Holland on the history of labor in the United States. It will also be aired in Norway, Sweden, and elsewhere.

Asylum demanded for Haitians

By Hal Leyshon

MIAMI, Fla.—Some 600 supporters of the rights of Haitian refugees demonstrated here March 10. They marched through downtown Miami and picketed the Immigration Service offices.

The action was triggered by the increasingly inhuman treatment of those seeking to escape the political and economic hardship of life under the murderous Duvalier regime.

Eighteen Haitian refugees who went on a hunger strike to protest their treatment and threatened deportation came under even more cruel attack last month. They were beaten with sticks by prison guards and an immigration official. They were then transferred to another prison where they were tear-gassed. Four had to be hospitalized.

The demonstration here was initiated by the Miami-based Haitian Refugee Center and the Ad Hoc Committee for Haitian Refugees.

A representative of the Haitian Fathers in New York came down to partici-

pate in the action, which had the support of a broad range of church, community, and political groups.

Among the demonstrators were people from two organizations in Miami's Cuban community: the Antonio Maceo Brigade and Abdala.

The demonstrators demanded political asylum for Haitians and work permits, not jail, for all refugees.

There are currently some 8,000 Haitian refugees in Miami, and more in other cities, seeking political asylum here.

While the big-business media express a lot of concern for the Vietnamese "boat people," they remain silent about the Haitian boat people who continue to suffer and sometimes die trying to make the 800-mile trip from Duvalier's repression to the Florida shores.

On March 12, two days after the demonstration here, twenty-six more Haitians were found off the Florida coast suffering from exposure, dehydration, and hunger.

After being hospitalized, they were jailed.

BLACK YOUTH SLAIN BY OAKLAND COPS

Eva Lynn Masterson and Margaret Sheffield, Socialist Workers Party candidates for the city council in Oakland, California, called for a commission of inquiry into the March 17 police killing of a Black youth.

Melvin Black, fifteen, was gunned down by two cops. He was hit by five bullets, including one in the back of the neck.

The cops claim Black pulled a gun on them. But witnesses say the youth dropped the pellet gun he was carrying before the cops started shooting. They continued to fire at him, the witnesses said, as he staggered toward his home.

against an official of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company on the grounds that his trial might reveal "national security" information.

Edward Gerrity, Jr., an ITT senior vice-president, had been charged with lying to a Senate committee in 1973. Gerrity had denied before the committee that the ITT and CIA had secretly tried to overthrow the elected Chilean government of Salvadore Allende three years earlier.

The Justice Department has already permitted former CIA Director Richard Helms to plead guilty to a misdemeanor for the same offense. Charges against two others accused of lying have been dropped.

Think you've heard everything?—A copy of the tape of the mass death scene at Jonestown, complete with moans, screams, and background organ music has been obtained by the International Home Video Club, which will market tapes and cassettes at \$9.95. Maybe Kool-Aid will cosponsor the commercials.

The great modernizer—When he split from the country, the shah of Iran was building himself a \$1.4 billion underground tomb. Located next to that of Cyrus the Great, the three-story underground monument was to be built of granite with electronically controlled doors leading to exhibition halls, a museum, library, and theater. It would have been the size of fifteen football fields.

Arithmetic progression—One-time civil rights activist Andrew Young is doing nicely as UN ambassador. With a salary of \$50,000-plus, he's now residing in a four-bedroom apartment in New York's plush Waldorf Towers. "Simplistically," explains an aide, "he sees himself as a minister who has enlarged his parish."

Finger in the crack?—"NORTHAMPTON, Mass., (AP)—City officials expressed confidence today that the Leeds Reservoir Dam was in no danger of bursting, despite two massive horizontal cracks and some smaller fissures. An around-the-clock watch was being kept over the eighty-five-year-old granite and concrete dam, which began to show cracks last week. One of the huge stone blocks had fallen out, and thousands of gallons of water a minute were shooting through most of the stones."

Could make 'em think—After a mock trial, ninth graders in Harry Truman's home town, Independence, Missouri, voted that he was not guilty of war crimes in dropping the A-bombs on Japan. Nevertheless, officials of the Truman Library were sharply critical. The library director labeled the idea of the trial as "screwball." He said it couldn't provide students with "valid educational value."

Thought for the week—"I love cigarettes. It's one of the things that make life worth living."—Ross Millhiser, vice-president of Philip Morris.

Union Talk

Georgia teachers rally

This week's column is by Doug Parker, a member of the Georgia Association of Educators.

ATLANTA—Earlier this year, Georgia Gov. George Busbee commented in an interview, "Georgia teachers don't really care if they receive only a 5 percent pay raise. After all, I've never heard any of them complain."

On March 3, 3,000 of these "uncaring" teachers answered the governor with an angry demonstration at the state capitol here, demanding a 13 percent pay increase.

The demonstration was called by the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE), the largest teachers organization in the state and an affiliate of the National Education Association.

The marchers were greeted by applause and shouts of support from people along the sidewalks as they waved signs with slogans such as, "Commitment is hard to serve for dinner."

Despite intermittent rain, the rally was a spirited one. Teachers cheered loudly as speakers denounced the governor's paltry offer and compared their protest to the civil rights marches of the 1960s.

GAE President Barbara Muntean blasted Busbee and the previous governor, Jimmy Carter, for their lack of concern over the welfare of the state's teachers.

"Teachers are having trouble paying our basic bills," declared Muntean. "Don't talk to me about basic skills, when I can't pay my basic bills."

Later in her speech she promised, "We don't want to have to come to the state capitol again to get our raise. But we will." The crowd responded with chants of "Thirteen percent" and "Strike."

The demand for a 13 percent pay increase came out of the GAE convention last fall, when delegates voted overwhelmingly to ignore Carter's 7 percent "anti-inflation" guidelines.

Governor Busbee provoked the confrontation with the teachers earlier this year with his patronizing offer of a 5 percent increase and his insulting remarks that the teachers "don't complain."

After receiving an estimated 1,500 letters from teachers who *did* complain, Busbee upped his offer to 6.5 percent but announced that this was the highest raise

Georgia teachers could expect this year because of Carter's guidelines.

Three days after the march, the Georgia House of Representatives increased the pay hike for 1979-80 to 9 percent. The vote was 172-2. The House action clearly showed the impact of the teachers' action.

But Georgia teachers still have a difficult struggle ahead. A 9 percent pay increase will not substantially help teachers, whose starting salaries are only \$8,590 (forty-ninth in the nation) and whose average salary of \$12,170 is \$2,000 below the national average.

Teachers are forced by a lack of collective-bargaining rights to beg for crumbs from the antilabor, anti-education Democratic legislature. Yet this small victory is sweet. The march and its results are being excitedly discussed around Atlanta-area schools.

Even the clearly inadequate 9 percent increase is not assured of approval. The Senate has yet to act on the appropriations bill. Governor Busbee has indicated he may veto the measure.

The Carter administration has wasted no time in indicating where its sympathies lie. Alfred Kahn, President Carter's "inflation adviser," has already urged Busbee to veto the pay raises, should they pass the Senate.

In a letter published in the March 11 *Atlanta Constitution*, Kahn made no attempt to conceal his fears that a victory for the teachers would inspire other workers to defy Carter's attacks on their living standards.

"Already," Kahn wrote, "the merit employees of the state, some 44,000 persons, and the employees of the thirty-two branches of the state college system have asked for a reconsideration of their pay increases in order to obtain equal treatment with the teachers should their non-complying raise become law; and this would be only the beginning."

The new aggressiveness exerted by many teachers has already scored a victory for Georgia working people by demonstrating that teachers have no interest in allowing Carter's "war on inflation" to lower their standard of living. More and more, teachers are realizing that only united actions, possibly including a strike, will allow them to receive a fair wage.

Our Revolutionary Heritage

Against the capitalist draft

With the American ruling class sending up trial balloons on the reimp-osition of conscription, the following discussion of the Socialist Workers Party's military policy is particularly timely. It is excerpted from the resolution on the fight against the Vietnam War that was adopted by the September 1969 convention of the SWP.

In 1940, on the eve of the impending World War II, the SWP set forth its revolutionary socialist antiwar program in the form of the proletarian military policy.

The military policy adopted in 1940 was a revolutionary line designed to promote the anticapitalist struggles of the workers under the given wartime conditions.

It was anticipated that proletarian revolutions would emerge in the advanced capitalist countries directly out of the consequences of World War II and that the worker masses in the giant conscript armies would play the decisive role in them.

The transitional measures proposed in the program were to be a bridge from the revolutionary vanguard to the young worker-soldiers drafted into the U.S. armed forces. They aimed to develop an assertion of their class independence within the capitalist military machine so that it would be possible to proceed step by step toward winning ideological and political hegemony among them in preparation for the anticipated revolutionary upsurge.

This undertaking was politically prepared and reinforced by the party's public opposition to the imperialist war dramatized by the 1941 Smith Act trial and its documentation.

As part of its program, the party continued its unconditional opposition to capitalist conscription. At the same time, it took cognizance of the fact that the anti-fascist and patriotic sentiments of the workers led them to favor compulsory military service.

It therefore counterposed the concept of conscription by the workers' organizations to the capitalist military draft. It advocated military training under trade-union control, financed by the capitalist government.

These proposals aimed to build class-conscious workers' military formations capable of defending labor's interests under conditions of capitalist militarism, imperialist war and the threat of fascist counterrevolution.

Party members called up for military service submitted, as individuals, to capitalist conscription. In the armed forces, they lent themselves to learning military skills and sought to win the political confidence of their fellow soldiers. Their participation as socialists in the military machine was viewed as a prerequisite for revolutionary action if a favorable turn of events made it possible to gain a majority to the idea of transforming the imperialist war into a struggle for workers power and socialism.

This set of measures, presented in propaganda form at the outset of the war, did not become the basis for any substantial action during the conflict because the actual pattern of events took a different turn.

Although revolutionary situations erupted in Western Europe, no victorious revolutions occurred in the advanced capitalist countries. The axis of the world revolution shifted to the colonial world.

* * *

Vietnam has brought about a decisive shift in popular attitudes toward imperialist war. An unprecedented antiwar movement has emerged which continues to win more and more supporters in the midst of a shooting war.

This country's ruling class is having to



Militant/Brian Shannon

pay the toll of its function as the chief guardian of world capitalism. Washington is obliged to finance and provide the main military means required for increasingly massive measures to stem the tide of the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist mass struggles throughout the world.

The pacifist sentiments of the masses have a different significance than the ideology and policies of the professional pacifists. They grow out of distrust of the foreign policy imposed by the monopolists and militarists and revulsion against their aggression.

The task of our party is to direct this antiwar protest into class-struggle channels. To make its military policy fit the new international and domestic conditions, the party has introduced the following changes in its tactics.

The slogan of military training under trade-union control has been laid aside along with the advocacy of conscription into workers' military organizations.

More emphasis is placed on opposing capitalist conscription, which is becoming increasingly unpopular.

As in the past, party members called up for military service submit to the draft.

In doing so, they refuse to sign the unconstitutional loyalty oath now made part of the conscription procedure.

Although the main weight of the antiwar movement continues to center in the civilian population, the opposition to the war which has developed within the present conscript army has added a new and extremely important political dimension to the forces involved in the fight against the imperialist warmakers.

Revolutionary socialists within the armed forces focus their political activity on the assertion and defense of their constitutional right to express their views as citizens upon the war and other issues of government policy, using sound tactical judgment in exercising that right and avoiding disciplinary hangups and penalties over routine military matters and orders.

The basic aim of our current transitional approach is the same as its predecessor. It seeks to promote a struggle for power and socialism by the workers and their allies and to build a strong, democratically disciplined combat party capable of leading that struggle to the end.

Letters

'Militant' in Japan

I'm very grateful for having been able to read the *Militant* regularly until now way out here [in Japan], as have been the various other foreigners living here to whom I have circulated the copies after reading them. Although it nowhere near compensates for the privilege and opportunity, I (we) am enclosing a small contribution.

I've enjoyed your articles on Mideast and west Asian events even though I disagree with your 100 percent anti-Zionist premise. However, I don't disagree with it 100 percent.

Keep up the good work.

Larry Taub
Tokyo, Japan

Series on Marxism

I have just finished reading the resolution "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The resolution is published in booklet form entitled, "Socialist Democracy."

This brilliant work deserves the widest possible circulation, and I suggest that the *Militant* publish it in serial form for the education of your readers.

Have you considered publishing in serial form the many great classical works of Marxism?

I believe many of your readers would find such a series invaluable and highly educational.

M.R.
New York, New York

Covers the truth

Being a journalism graduate, I feel proud reading the *Militant* on a weekly basis. It

brings some fresh air to a polluted media.

Being from the occupied territory of Palestine, I can read the truth in the *Militant*. Let those big newspapers cover [Egyptian President] Sadat and [Israeli Prime Minister] Begin and their lies and support them. Let the *Militant* cover the people and the truth.

V.A.
Dallas, Texas

In Hansen tradition

I have just read the March 9 edition of the *Militant*. The articles by Leslie Evans and Cindy Jaquith, among others, are equal in journalistic quality and theoretical insight to anything I've seen in the *Militant* since 1935.

Joe Hansen may be gone but there are many more "Joe Hansens" continuing the Marxist tradition in journalism, which he so thoroughly exemplified. That's a very important part of his contribution, the training of new cadres for the education of a vanguard party.

Nat Simon
Miami, Florida

Death penalty

I read the analysis of Bhutto's death sentence with interest (World Outlook, March 9). The piece might've mentioned that Brezhnev also called on Zia for clemency—only a few weeks on the heels of executions of the people convicted in the Moscow subway bombing.

As a former death-row prisoner I'm active in the fight against the death penalty, for the universal abolition of the death penalty.

While Brezhnev's call for clemency is hypocritical—so is Carter's in his failure to

You can bank on sales in Pittsburgh

It was a normal day in Braddock, a suburb of Pittsburgh. Said a Black worker: "Did you say it has a two-page article on Malcolm X? Give me a copy!"

Horns were honking at the women steelworkers who stopped their cars to buy the *Militant*, excited about the coverage of Newport News and the District 31 Women's Caucus.

Management at U.S. Steel's Edgar Thompson Works was excited, too. So excited, that company officials had a security guard buy four papers and rush them off to the executive suites.

On payday, these scenes are repeated outside the banks in Braddock. Salesperson Mike Kocak explains: "We've found that

selling at the banks around shift change lets us reach not only the steelworkers, but also the United Electrical union members at Westinghouse Airbrake, plus people living in the largely Black community. During the weeks between paydays we go to the plant gates.

"Sales have consistently risen since we've been coming here, and we've sparked a lot of discussion among the workers." Supporters sold thirteen *Militants* recently in less than an hour.

"Solidarity grows for Newport News strikers," one steelworker said: "Damn right it is." And the *Militant* is an important weapon in helping that to happen.

D.W.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Learning About Socialism

Is Stalinism inevitable?

A reader asks, "What guarantee can you give me that the American socialist revolution, even led by a revolutionary party such as the Socialist Workers Party, won't end in a repressive bureaucracy like the one in the Soviet Union?"

Your high school social science teacher would probably have answered this question by talking about "the corrupting influence of power" and the "bad side of human nature."

The capitalist press would add that "socialism always leads to totalitarianism."

But socialists look at the question from the viewpoint of historical materialism. They ask, what was the material basis for the rise of a bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union and in other workers states? What material interests does the caste defend and perpetuate? Is this history doomed to be repeated?

The Russian revolution of 1917 took place in an economically underdeveloped country—a country with a level of production incapable at that time of ensuring a standard of living for its people comparable to that of more advanced capitalist countries such as the United States.

The newly formed workers state was surrounded by a sea of imperialist enemies. They banded together against the young revolution, battering it in a long civil war. Although the working people won the war, it cost the young workers state dearly in resources and lives.

The leaders of the Russian revolution explained that the Soviet state could survive only if the revolution were extended to the advanced capitalist countries. Once the workers took power there, they argued, the pressure of imperialism on the first workers state would be alleviated and its desperate poverty could be quickly overcome.

But the revolutionary wave of the early 1920s receded. A privileged bureaucratic caste arose in the Soviet Union, destroyed the Bolshevik Party, and consolidated an oppressive grip on the country.

James P. Cannon, a founder of American Trotskyism, often addressed the same question our reader poses. In a major resolution prepared for the 1946 convention of the SWP—the "American Theses"—he wrote:

"The dangers of internal counterrevolution, foreign intervention, imperialist blockade, and bureaucratic degeneration of a privileged labor caste—in Russia all of these dangers stemmed from the numerical weakness of the proletariat, the age-long poverty and backwardness inherited from tsarism, and the isolation of the Russian revolution. These dangers were in the final analysis unavoidable there."

The workers state preserved the economic foundations established by the October 1917 revolution, which made possible immense social progress unthinkable in a capitalist country. But the rise of a privileged bureaucracy was a grave setback to the workers of the world in their war with imperialism.

The bureaucrats sought to maintain "stability" in their relations with the capitalist world. If the imperialists left them alone, they reasoned, they could continue to hold onto their parasitic position.

They propagated the theory of "socialism in one country"—meaning that they sought to block the extension of socialist revolutions to any other countries. This remains their policy to the present day.

Despite the victory of revolutions in thirteen other countries, the majority of the world's people and wealth remain under imperialist domination. *The imperialist pressure on the workers states is primarily responsible for the continued existence of Stalinism.*

Until this problem is solved, poverty and inequality will continue throughout the world.

The socialist revolution in the United States will break this situation wide open.

The workers and their allies in the United States will take the wealth of the richest country on earth and place it at the disposal of all humankind. This will make possible the construction of a planned economy on a world scale.

The American revolution will also destroy the source of world imperialism's power. The working class and its allies will replace the capitalists as the dominant force on this planet. Thus, the struggles of workers in the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe to throw off the rule of the bureaucratic castes and achieve socialist democracy will become irresistible.

In the United States, Cannon explained in the 1946 resolution, "the danger of bureaucratic degeneration . . . can only arise from privileges which are in turn based on backwardness, poverty, and universal scarcities. Such a danger could have no material foundation within the U.S."

"Here the triumphant workers' and farmers' government would from the very beginning be able to organize socialist production on far higher levels than under capitalism, and virtually overnight assure such a high standard of living for the masses as would strip privileges in the material sense of the word of any serious meaning whatever."

Social pseudoscientists and the capitalist media notwithstanding, "human nature" does not stand as a barrier to progress.

Just the opposite. It is the basic human traits of solidarity and cooperation that have made possible all the steps forward taken by humanity.

The prospect of greatly expanded economic and cultural well-being awaits the American working-class—and indeed the people of the whole world—when they take the vast resources of the United States, which they have toiled to produce, into their own hands.

The "American Theses" can be found in *The Struggle for Socialism in the "American Century"* by James P. Cannon (\$4.95). Order from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014.

—Peter Archer

address the fate of the nearly 500 men and women under death sentence in the U.S.

I've helped form a group called Prisoners' Ad Hoc Committee to Stop Executions. Our first initiative is to petition Carter and Congress to prevent any more executions in the U.S.

A guy in Alabama has just asked to be executed—like Gilmore, I think he doesn't realize that his actions only make it easier for the state to kill others.

The article on Kampuchea in a recent edition was excellent and informative.

A prisoner
New York

From a prisoner

Thank you for sending me a free copy of the *Militant*.

As of right now, my financial status won't allow me to donate generously so that other prisoners may also be able to receive free copies, but I can donate a couple of dollars, which I know will be appreciated. Please apply this towards the *Militant's* prisoner fund or use it as you may see fit in the struggle.

A prisoner
New York

Struggle not forgotten

I'm writing this letter in behalf of myself and the rest of the brothers and sisters here. We haven't forgotten about the struggle, but we are incarcerated and have very little contact with the outside world.

I read my *Militant* every week. It really gives me a lot of insight on what's happening in the U.S.A. and abroad.

Please keep up the good work.

A prisoner
Kentucky

The 'Militant' special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help out, send your contribution to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

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THE MILITANT

Iranian workers speak out:

'We made revolution; we want our rights!'

The following firsthand account of what workers are fighting for in Iran comes from the February 27 issue of 'Kargar' (Worker). Thousands of copies of this first issue have been sold in Iran by supporters of the Hezb-e Kargaran-e Sosialist (Socialist Workers Party), the Iranian section of the Fourth International.

By Karim Suleiman and Mariam Danna

TEHRAN—Workers and their friends were invited to meet with Darioush Farouhar, Minister of Labor, on February 23 to discuss their demands. The three central demands were: 1) rehire the workers fired under the old regime; 2) stop the layoffs caused by factory closings; 3) give the workers their back pay.

At 9 a.m., as workers began to gather across from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, two representatives of Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Committee asked them to disperse.

Several workers responded that the government was demanding they pay their water and electricity bills, but they'd been fired and couldn't pay. "We've assembled here and we're staying until Mr. Farouhar talks with us," they insisted.

Eventually the crowd grew to 1,500 workers. They gathered in the ministry chamber. Farouhar attended the session.

Spokespeople for the workers made speeches in which they articulated three main slogans:

- "We want control over production and distribution."
- "We workers want the right to strike, and freedom of speech and press."
- "We want new labor laws drawn up with input from real workers' representatives."

The first speaker talked about the important role workers play in society.

"Society moves by the strength of the workers' arms," he explained. "In the Iranian revolution a fundamental role was played by the workers. Through their strike, the oil and dock workers' powerful hands seized the shah by the throat and threw him out."

'Workers threw out shah'

"The workers hurried to the aid of the *homafars* [the workers in the Air Force who started the February insurrection]. We fought in the barracks and drove the revolution to its conclusion. You didn't see any minister, businessman, or boss disarm any barracks or get martyred."

Another delegate said, "The bosses want a clean record before they will rehire me. A clean record means having no political file, it means you're not a 'troublemaker.' But is wanting to elect a real trade union being a troublemaker?"

The third speaker for the workers outlined their other demands. These included control of rules in the plant; a forty-hour workweek; increases in wages as prices go up; and workers' right to be paid their wages when they are forced on strike.

The workers also called for equal rights for women; freedom of assembly; an end to foreign interference in industry; and abolition of taxes.

They demanded a workers' newspaper and representation of workers in a constituent assembly.

In the discussion that followed, one worker declared, "The government must not crush us. A memo from the Ministry of Labor said that we must work as hard as we can and raise production. It said we must pay taxes. It warned if anyone causes trouble, they must be reported to the proper authorities. If this memo is not from the ministry, the government should say so."

This worker reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Committee was arresting those in the factories who objected to its decisions or put out their own statements.

"We don't want political prisoners," he explained. "The revolution was accomplished by the workers. We are not weak. We want to be involved in politics. We want to break our chains."

Need trade union

Many workers talked about the need to elect representatives to a trade union. "The most honest and vigorous of the workers must be elected to represent us," said one. "We don't want the boss choosing our delegates."

"But whenever we pass out a statement on our demands in the factories, the Islamic Revolutionary Committee tells us we're communists. If we are communists because we stand up for our rights, then all of Iran is communist!"

"We want freedom—freedom to strike, to organize. We want bookstores. The book is the worker's weapon. We are looking for a human existence, not slavery."

After hearing the workers, Farouhar said the

Continued on page 26

'Defend Iranian women, defend Iranian revolution'

By Elaine Mitchell

NEW YORK—Inspired by the demonstrations of Iranian women for equal rights, more than 400 women gathered here March 15 to show their solidarity. Rallying outside the Iranian consulate, the women called on the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan to meet the demands of Iranian women for full political, social, and economic equality and the right to choose their own style of dress. They also urged the government to defend the women's right to organize and demonstrate, free from attack.

The noontime action—one of several around the country—had been called on twenty-four hours' notice.

An Iranian woman student, Rowshanak Farjam, spoke to the crowd about the need for solidarity with the women in Iran and the revolution they are helping lead. "We hope that our revolution will be a model for attaining civil rights in all societies," she said.

Ms. editor Gloria Steinem, whose magazine initiated the rally, stated that Iranian women had fought courageously to overthrow the shah and must now be supported in their efforts to win full equality.

"This is an anti-shah rally," Steinem said. "There was no freedom for women under the shah. There were only prisons and police-state measures."

Some of those who attended the rally came with the purpose of turning feminists against the Iranian revolution. Author Betty Friedan, long associated with the shah's sister, Princess Ashraf, claimed in her speech that Iranian women had gained equal rights under the monarchy. She implied that the revolution had been a defeat for women.

The New York Radical Feminists, led by Susan Brownmiller, author of *Against Our Will*, distributed a leaflet calling the new government in Iran "a



Tehran equal rights demonstration. By overthrowing shah, women have advanced their fight against oppression.

throwback regime" where "women would lose whatever civil rights they had."

Militant associate editor Cindy Jaquith, who had just returned from Tehran, also spoke. "This International Women's Day, for the first time, Iranian women were able to celebrate the fight for their rights because they had overthrown the shah," she said.

"The shah brought no freedom to women. His regime, backed to the hilt by the U.S. government, brought them some cosmetic reforms designed to cover up the torture chambers, the political prisoners, the economic and social misery of the Iranian masses."

"That's why women faced the shah's tanks and bullets. That's why they died by the thousands in the fight for freedom."

"Today women in Iran are fighting to extend the

revolution they helped begin," Jaquith explained. "They are joined by the workers demanding the right to run their factories; by the peasants who want land; by the oppressed nationalities who want the right to rule their own provinces."

Jaquith said the U.S. women's movement has an obligation to defend Iranian women and the Iranian revolution. "Our first job is to tell the truth—to explain that these sisters are not demanding a return to the shah but the equality the shah denied them."

"We must also tell the truth about the U.S. government," she said, to the applause of many in the audience.

"We must point out the criminal role of our government in helping to keep women and all the Iranian people in chains. We must demand: U.S. hands off the Iranian revolution!"