

# THE MILITANT

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

## Behind Reagan's rail swindle

### Why we should nationalize railroads



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Camille Bell, mother of murdered Yusef Bell. Answering FBI charge parents killed own children, she said: 'If they think that I killed my child, tell them to come get me.'



## Fight against FBI: in Atlanta, New York

Few events dramatize as starkly what the secret police are capable of doing to Blacks, and other working people, as the performance of the FBI in Atlanta.

For more than a year the mothers of the murdered Black children there have devoted their full energies to putting a stop to the terror wave.

Finally, last fall, they forced the media to report the horrible truth of some dozen Black children slain or kidnapped without a single arrest by the cops.

National solidarity—and outrage—spread quickly.

The FBI stepped in to the Atlanta situation as soon as the mothers began winning support. Reagan gave millions of dollars for more cops and "crime experts."

But the murders didn't stop.

Something new did start happening, however. The capitalist media began featuring articles about how the slain youth had been out "selling their bodies," "hustling," or "running drugs." How their parents "weren't looking out for them." How they came from "broken homes."

These racist, antiworker arguments were echoed by the cops and city hall.

A frame-up was underway, aimed at the parents of the victims and anyone else too outspoken for the government's likes.

Neither the cops nor the FBI publicly charged the parents with murdering their own children. But behind the scenes they insinuated this was the case. The parents were in reality facing secret charges, charges they couldn't adequately answer because they weren't public.

Finally an FBI agent blurted out the secret charges. Mike Twibell, one of FBI Director William Webster's underlings, said April 14 that four of the children were killed by their parents. Webster himself hinted at the same thing the day before when he announced the FBI had almost "solved" several of the cases.

The mothers immediately called Webster's bluff. Arrest us or apologize, they demanded in an open letter to the FBI (see page 7). Webster's had a week now to arrest his "suspects." There have been no arrests. No names of suspects. No apologies.

The FBI's crude slander has revealed another extremely important fact. Instead of investigating the killers of Atlanta's children, the FBI has obviously been investigating someone else—the mothers themselves!

By their courage in standing up to the FBI's

threats and provocations, the mothers have blasted wide open the government's insistence on secrecy in the Atlanta investigation.

As Camille Bell, mother of slain Yusef Bell, put it, a "smokescreen" is being used to cover something up. What's the smokescreen for? "To keep me from knowing," she explains.

Atlanta residents have been kept from knowing for too long. One thing the FBI and local cops want to cover up is what they've actually been doing—spying on the parents and blocking their efforts to get a genuine investigation.

The fight against government secrecy, frame-ups, and FBI disruption is also taking place in New York in the trial of the Socialist Workers Party suit against the FBI and other government agencies.

In this case, the government is once again claiming the socialists are guilty of a crime. Once again, they refuse to say exactly what that crime is or who precisely committed it. The information is "classified"—in a secret affidavit only the judge and government lawyers can see.

It's a secret frame-up similar to the frame-up of the mothers in Atlanta. It's used to justify continued spying on the socialists, denying them protection under the Bill of Rights. It's aimed at trying to intimidate them, to keep them from openly stating their ideas. Just as the threat to arrest the Atlanta mothers is aimed at trying to silence their demands for justice.

The Atlanta mothers are standing up to the FBI. And so are the socialists. Together their efforts are helping to strengthen the ability of everyone, from the Black movement to the unions, to combat the government's secret police.

## Reagan's pardon and socialists' suit

While the FBI was smearing the Atlanta mothers as child-killers, Ronald Reagan demonstratively supported the agency's right to commit crimes in the name of "national security."

He pardoned W. Mark Felt and Edward S. Miller—two former high FBI officials who were convicted of organizing burglaries against radicals. (See story on page 13.)

As Miller put it, the pardon should eliminate reluctance on the part of FBI agents to "do their job 100 percent."

He means the job of framing up Blacks like the Atlanta mothers who stand up for their rights. The job of helping employers try to bust unions, and spying on workers who speak their minds. The job of trying to intimidate opponents of U.S. policy in El Salvador.

Reagan's pardon is intended to give the FBI a free hand to continue the burglaries, spying, violent provocations, and even murder that have been its way of dealing with challenges to government policy.

The pardon highlights the importance of the suit brought by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. The suit is not just a fight for the rights of socialists, but for the rights of everyone who has a stake in the survival and extension of democratic rights.

The resources of the two sides are far from equal. The government has an army of officials ready to move into action to reinforce its case. When the socialists merely mentioned the names of Burlington, Vermont, Mayor Bernard Sanders and Seaside, California, City Councilman Mel Mason as supporters of the 1980 socialist presidential campaign, FBI agents swarmed into those cities within hours.

On the other side are two socialist organizations and their attorneys.

The government has unlimited funds at its disposal—provided by the tax dollars of millions of people whose rights it treats with contempt.

The Political Rights Defense Fund—which is raising funds for the enormous expenses in the socialists' suit—is now asking for help. And it is getting it.

The massive sum of \$125,000 must be raised to meet legal and other costs. Over \$50,000 has been pledged so far.

Despite a virtual media blackout, tens of thousands of workers, Blacks, civil libertarians, and others will be willing to lend a hand—financially and in other ways—once the facts are made known.

They readily see that if socialists can be victimized for no other "crime" than being socialists, others become easier targets.

The point is underlined by the endorsement of the socialists' suit by the NAACP and United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser.

Coworkers can be approached for contributions, as can participants in the fight against racist repression and activists in other movements.

The broad layer of Americans who are concerned with civil liberties include numerous individuals who are in a position to give significant financial support to such a cause. It is essential to seek them out.

All of these, and more, should be involved in the nationwide round of rallies being organized by the PRDF. Friends should be encouraged to organize fund-raising affairs.

"An injury to one is an injury to all." The old union slogan remains true. In this case a victory in the socialists' suit will be a victory for all.

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If You Like This Paper...



### Calif. labor meet: 'no' to nuclear power

Two hundred fifty people, including members of twenty-one unions, gather in Los Angeles and form the Southern California Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment. Page 9.

## The Militant

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**By Stu Singer**

Several unions organizing the demonstrations have suggested calling a

Rallies are planned April 29 for at least twelve cities. More than 120 buses and 1,600 seats on Amtrak trains are reserved to bring rail workers to Washington. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and RLEA Chairman Fred Kroll are scheduled to speak.

The pages of every rail union publication in the United States have been dramatically transformed. They are being used to get out the facts about the attacks against rail workers and to build an effective response.

"The threat to jobs and living standards is so menacing that it cannot be accepted passively by the unions of railroad workers in this country. . . ."

The weekly newspaper of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers headlines the April 10 issue "RLEA fights to save Conrail."

Shop craft unions are also pushing the protests. A letter sent out by Richard Martin, General Vice-president of Railroads for the Sheet Metal Work-

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St. Louis—Noon rally in front of Missouri Pacific Building at

Cities where other rallies are planned include Jacksonville, Florida; Lansing, Michigan; and New Orleans.

-S.S.



**Conrail engine repair shop. Sticker on engine reads 'Why not coal?'**

**By Stu Singer**

A recent indication of the Consolidation connection with the Reagan administration was the appointment of James Harris to head the Office of Surface Mining in the Department of the Interior.

- 2) No probation period for new miners.
- 3) Changes in provisions allowing work to be contracted out to non-UMWA firms.

7) Payment by the companies of the miners' full insurance premiums for

Negotiations between the UMWA and the Association of Bituminous

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**Bellevue Hotel, 15 E Street N.W., Banquet Room, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (after the rally). Refreshments**

# Coal Miners ON STRIKE

If you are a striking coal miner, subscribe now and we'll bill you when the strike is over. Your subscription will be extended as long as the strike lasts.



# Rail crisis: who profits, who loses?

By William Gottlieb

The rail industry in the United States is at the center of an economic crisis that has been building up for a decade. The symptoms have been high inflation, rising interest rates, monetary crises, high unemployment, and increasingly sharp fluctuations of the business cycle.

At bottom this is a crisis of overproduction. More is being produced than the capitalists can sell profitably. From their standpoint, there are too many auto plants, too many steel plants, too many farms—and too many railroads.

The function of economic crises under capitalism is to eliminate this surplus.

Of course, from the standpoint of human needs there are not enough railroads, not enough passenger and freight service. But human needs don't count on the capitalist market unless they are backed by purchasing power.

It is in the northeast and midwestern United States that the effects of this crisis have been especially severe. Many plants—especially older plants with relatively obsolete technology—are being shut down. This "thinning out" of industry means the capitalists see less need for railroad service in this region.

The railroad industry has also been hit hard by the rise of other forms of transportation. Trucking has cut deeply into the railroads' business. The share of railways in intercity freight fell from almost 90 percent in 1947 to just under 60 percent in 1977.

The current rail crisis differs from the crises that periodically hit the industry during the nineteenth century. Those were crises of a growing industry. The current crisis is a crisis of decay.

### Origins of Conrail

In the late nineteenth century, the New York Central railroad formed the heart of the Vanderbilt financial empire. This family was and is among the richest in the world. By the mid-twentieth century, however, the New York Central was no longer the source of golden profits it had once been. In 1968 it was merged with the giant Pennsylvania Railroad to form the Penn Central.

The Penn Central went bankrupt in 1970. As is always the case when a major capitalist enterprise goes under, the crash of the Penn Central was accompanied by massive swindling. *American Railroads: The Case for Nationalization* describes how it was done: "A small, closely held company called Penphil bought real estate cheaply and sold it at high profits to the Penn Central."

"Involved . . . 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 . . . Du Pont family."

The banks took full advantage of the opportunity to do some swindling of their own. According to *American Railroads*, "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 Allegheny Corporation of Baltimore."

Out of the crash and plunder of Penn Central, Conrail and Amtrak emerged. The Consolidated Rail Corporation, created by Congress in the 1973 Regional Rail Reorganization Act, took over the freight and short distance

passenger operations of the Penn Central. Parts of five other bankrupt railroads were included in the new Conrail system. Conrail was to be a "for-profit" corporation.

### Government funding

However, no immediate prospect existed to make the new railroad profitable. As a result, it was impossible to raise private capital to finance it. Only the government could provide the funds.

This logically pointed to a nationalized railroad system, as exists in almost every other country. But the U.S. government was so wedded to "free enterprise" that it was determined to avoid this at practically all costs.

Instead of setting up a nationalized company, Congress created a legal monstrosity. Six bankrupt railroad

USRA chief Stephen Berger puts it bluntly. "Labor is one of the hearts of the craziness. It creates a civil service atmosphere where you can't be ruthless or tough."

Unless the workers have the threat of unemployment and poverty hanging over them at all times, the railroads can't be run in a way that will enrich multimillionaire investors who never work a day in their lives.

### No passenger service

Crane wants to fire 10,000 Conrail workers including 4,600 firemen and brakemen. Currently these jobs can only be eliminated by attrition.

And he wants to get rid of all passenger service.

Reagan has requested that Congress end federal funding of Conrail after the coming year. This would force the breakup and sale of Conrail to private

dules whether they are full or not. Consequently, the cost of transporting passengers, on average, is higher than the cost of transporting freight.

Since rail passenger service has to face the competition of other forms of transportation—bus, airline, and private automobile—it is impossible for the railroad corporations to raise the price of passenger service sufficiently to make it profitable.

Amtrak president Alan S. Boyd says that Reagan's proposal to provide Amtrak with only \$613 million in fiscal year 1982 would force Amtrak to scrap all its service except for the northeast corridor between Washington and Boston.

This carries businessmen to points between the nation's financial center in New York and its political center in Washington.



Early cartoon of railroad barons carving up United States. Latter day baron David Rockefeller (right), whose bank profited from junking of Penn Central.



corporations would own Conrail through a special stock series. Conrail would be financed by the government through the so-called United States Railway Association. The government provides funds to the USRA, which it lends to Conrail.

The idea was to provide the funds to modernize railroads that private owners had allowed to run down. When this modernization was complete it was hoped Conrail would become profitable. The taxpayers were to provide the capital, big stockholders were to reap the profits.

Leslie Wayne, in the April 19 *New York Times*, explains: "Since it began operations with the decrepit equipment of six bankrupt railroads, Conrail, which ranks No. 2 behind Burlington Northern in tons of freight carried and in trackage, has spent nearly 90 percent of its Government funds—about \$2.7 billion—on overhauling its entire rolling stock, buying new cars and repairing its tracks and maintenance yards. Some of this inherited equipment could not be used for speeds higher than 10 M.P.H. Today, Conrail's equipment is considered on a par with the nation's other railroads."

### Attack on Title V

But Conrail is still not profitable. Both the Reagan administration and current Conrail boss L. Stanley Crane agree that the railroad must be made profitable at the expense of railroad labor.

Crane and Reagan both want to eliminate Title V, which gives railroad workers a measure of economic security. Under Title V, railroad workers must be paid the wages of the jobs they held in 1974, whether the railroad bosses provide work or not, until they reach retirement age.

railroads. The private railroad monopolies are saying, however, that they will not buy Conrail unless "excessive" labor costs like Title V are scrapped. Under the Reagan plan, as under Crane's, passenger service would be gutted. The rail corporations are interested in maintaining only high volume freight lines.

The idea of providing financial security to workers whether there is work or not is in complete contradiction to profit-making imperatives. It also eliminates much of the money-saving rationale for doing away with other services to the public.

The rail unions estimate that Reagan's plan could cost 75,000 jobs.

Conrail chief Crane thinks that Reagan's plan goes too far. He says, "The [private] railroads would go into the big volume areas with the big revenues . . . No system wants to go into Connecticut or Vermont."

### Amtrak

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak, was created by Congress in 1970 to take over the nation's long-distance passenger lines. Amtrak, like Conrail, is not a nationalized company. The corporations which previously ran the passenger service were given the Amtrak stock. But Amtrak is government-funded.

The attempt to preserve private ownership in the case of Amtrak was more irrational than the Conrail case. It is conceivable that some of Conrail's freight service could be run on a profit basis. In the case of passenger service, this possibility is excluded under modern conditions.

Unlike freight trains, passenger trains must be run on regular sche-

Reagan's proposal would involve scrapping brand-new equipment. For example, the Superliner fleet of cars, 217 of which have been delivered at a cost of \$1 million each, would go to the scrap heap. An estimated 700 passenger cars would lie idle.

All this because they cannot function as capital; that is, as a means of further enriching some multimillionaire investors. Tens of thousands would be thrown out of work and hundreds of thousands deprived of vital services—all for profit's sake.

### Railroad Retirement Fund

Rail workers are not part of Social Security. A separate Railroad Retirement Fund plays much the same role.

Now, the government and bosses are threatening payments to older workers, saying that because of the growing ratio of retired to active workers the fund is going bankrupt. They will use massive layoffs to try to deal rail pensions a savage blow.

The rail crisis throws the irrationality of capitalism into bold relief. Capitalism denies the worker any security during his or her working life. It threatens to turn old age into a nightmare. And it is the biggest obstacle to rail service.

The world needs more not fewer railroads. We need a greatly expanded and modernized passenger service, not the scrapping of the inadequate service that exists.

But in order to safeguard and expand the railroad system it is necessary to remove the fetters of private ownership and profit. The struggle of railroad workers on April 29 and beyond is a struggle in the interests of all working people. It deserves the support of all who work for a living.



# How unions can fight Conrail, Amtrak cuts

The following interviews are with rail workers who are members of the Socialist Workers Party.

Jim Little, from Los Angeles, was interviewed by the 'Militant' April 18. Victor Nieto and Tory Dunn spoke to the 'Militant' in New York on April 20.

All three have been Socialist Workers Party candidates for public office. Little ran for mayor of Los Angeles in the recent election. Tory Dunn was the SWP candidate for state treasurer of Pennsylvania in 1980. And Victor Nieto is presently the SWP candidate for New York City Council District 6.

The three are active in their unions in building the April 29 protests by rail labor against the attacks on Conrail, Amtrak and the Railroad Retirement Fund.

Tory Dunn is a Conrail engineer. She is a member of United Transportation Union 232 in Trenton, New Jersey, and has worked for Conrail since 1977.

Victor Nieto has been a clerk on Conrail since 1978. He works at Grand Central Terminal in New York City and is a member of Lodge 173 of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks.

*Militant: When did you first hear about the April 29 demonstration?*

**Victor:** BRAC President Fred Kroll sent out a letter dated March 19. It outlined the plans of Reagan and Conrail management to cripple the railroad. The letter called on us to march on Washington April 29.

**Tory:** I went to the March 28 demonstration in Harrisburg against nuclear power and to support the miners. That was the first I heard that April 29 was for all rail workers, not just BRAC. But since then almost every rail union has sent out letters publicizing the action.

**Victor:** A number of things came together at the end of March. The Harrisburg demonstration was supported by a number of rail unions. The rail contracts expired at the end of the month. We got the letter from Fred Kroll. The coal miners contract vote and strike started. And to top it off, L. Stanley Crane, the Chairman of Conrail, had the nerve to send everyone a letter about why we should be happy to sacrifice for Conrail.

**Tory:** But people do not buy the idea of us taking a pay cut. Many say they'd rather not have a job. We talk about Chrysler. The concessions by the autoworkers didn't accomplish anything for the workers. We also have the example of the Florida East Coast Railroad. That nonunion outfit is the model all the other lines want to copy. No work rules, safety or job protection.

Most people on the railroad understand how bad the problem is. Many of the discussions are over how to build a union like the miners have. Everybody talked about how the miners got to read, discuss and vote on their contract and then go on strike. Rail workers cannot do any of those things. In fact it is almost impossible to get a copy of the contract. Rail workers have gone for years, literally, working without a contract. No contract, no work—like the miners stick to—is a revolutionary idea on the railroad.

**Victor:** The March 9 miners demonstration in Washington really got people excited. That example has a lot to do with April 29.

*Militant: Do many workers fall for the propaganda that rail workers are well off?*

**Victor:** One of the Conrail proposals is to cut the pay of clerks to what our "counterparts" in other industries make.



'Rail workers march on Washington April 29, 1981,' reads caption under drawing in April 8 issue of 'Labor,' representing fourteen unions with members in rail. 'Solidarnosc' is name of Poland's independent union.

The main reaction to that is to wonder how anyone can make ends meet on anything less than we make, since none of us gets by decently now.

*Militant: What is the problem with the railroads?*

**Tory:** Yesterday the *New York Times* had an article saying that the wage barrier is the biggest problem for Conrail.

The problem is not our wages. The 7,000 Conrail management people have a total yearly salary three times higher than all the clerks on Conrail put together.

The railroads are run irrationally. There's a standing joke: When you ask why not do something in a more sensible way, someone always answers: "Because that makes too much sense. This is Conrail."

Conrail is funded by tax money, but private railroads are looting it. For example we'll get in new engines that Conrail bought, but which are being leased to some private railroad.

**Victor:** The railroads are a necessary service for society. We need them to move freight for industry and farm products. They are necessary for transporting people. The whole question about whether or how Conrail and Amtrak can be profitable is false. They are needed by society. That's the criteria—not whether some bankers are getting the return they want.

All the railroads should be nationalized. They should be taken out of the hands of private and semi-public corporations and out of the profit system. You don't decide whether to have firehouses on the basis of profits. The same is true for railroads.

*Militant: Is there much discussion at work about nationalizing the railroads?*

**Victor:** There is some. There is also confusion about it. Some people think Conrail is nationalized. They figure Conrail is an example of how nationalization does not work.

But Conrail is run by and for private profit. It differs from other railroads in having easier access to tax dollars for the parasites to siphon off. That's the opposite of nationalization.

**Tory:** To explain the idea of nationalization, there are three basic points I make: first, open the books. The work-

ers and the public have a right to know what the real financial situation is. Who is getting rich off Conrail?

Second, it should be run as a public service, with decisions made by an elected public board. The example of Poland, where meetings are broadcast for everyone to hear, should be a model.

Third, our unions have to get some political power. And that requires a labor party.

Last month, the miners marched on Washington to defend black lung benefits. Now it's railworkers. But we have no political representatives. No party speaking for us. As our protests become more political, directed against political targets, we will see the need for a labor party more.

**Jim Little is a switchman on the Southern Pacific. He lives in Los Angeles and is a member of UTU Local 1770. He has worked on the Southern Pacific for three years, and worked on the Union Pacific before that.**

*Militant: Are these April 29 demonstrations an unusual step for the rail unions?*

**Little:** Since I've worked on the railroads I've never seen the unions lead anything like it. I was out on strike once. But there were no mass meetings organized or public protests.

*Militant: Why do you think this is happening now?*

**Little:** The carriers have been cutting away at basic agreements, rights and working conditions on the railroads for years. The threats against Amtrak and Conrail take it much further.

The attack is coming from the government. Everyone can see that extraordinary steps are needed to fight back.

The attacks on Conrail and Amtrak workers are also intended as a precedent for the contract negotiations rail unions are now involved in with all the carriers.

It's just like the trick pulled by the auto industry in forcing concessions from Chrysler workers. Then Ford and G.M. turn around and demand the same concessions, claiming they can't compete.

*Militant: Rail workers are divided into many unions. How does that affect what is going on now?*

**Little:** Building April 29, you can see how important it is to work together. I went to a meeting of some rail workers last night that was organized by a BRAC leader, Jim Franklin. But there were also people from the UTU there. One of them, Don Richardson, is the legislative director of his local. He said, "what's really new and good here is how the unions are working together for a common cause."

Another thing is that we're seeing more than just cooperation among union officials. It's great to see rank-and-file rail workers getting involved, taking responsibility for distributing leaflets, calling the press, organizing the set-up for the rally.

*Militant: What's behind these responses? Is it more than the attacks on Conrail and Amtrak?*

**Little:** Yes. Our standard of living has been going down. Gasoline prices go up, safety standards are cut. The general quality of life is going down. We're taxed too much while they give tax cuts to the highest income brackets.

There is an accumulation of anger that is going into building these April 29 protests. Also some of the workers who are most active in it, have been involved in other things, such as opposition to nuclear power.

At the meeting last night, several workers had been at the recent conference on safe energy and full employment here (see page 9). When they announced the time of the next meeting of that committee, almost all the workers who had not been involved in it before expressed an interest. Jim Franklin, the BRAC regional director, made a big point of praising the labor committee for safe energy and full employment.

*Militant: How widespread is the support for this demonstration at work?*

**Little:** It's catching on. Some of the older workers are cynical about it. They're asking, what good will it do?

Some people here haven't fully grasped the depth of these attacks. We don't work for Conrail or Amtrak. The

*Continued on page 8*



## Rock Island: how labor was ripped off

By Doug Hord

As Reagan and Conrail management gang up to dismember Conrail and Amtrak, the Rock Island looms large as an object lesson for rail labor.

The Railway Labor Executives Association (RLEA) has called national demonstrations April 29 in Washington and other cities to protest attacks on Amtrak and Conrail.

But no such united national actions took place to prevent the defeat suffered on the Rock Island.

The United Transportation Union still seems to entertain hopes of salvaging something from the collapse of the Rock Island. The *UTU News* talks of a second appeal to the Supreme Court to reverse a lower court injunction against payment of \$75 million in protective benefits mandated by Congress for 10,000 Rock Island workers.

The railroad shut down a year and a half ago, and Rock Island workers have yet to see a cent of this money. Most likely they never will.

The only protection they got was a non-binding commitment to hire former Rock Island workers "as vacancies occur" on the railroads that acquired its lines. This means that a person who may have worked for decades on a property that was part of the Rock Island would be at the bottom of the seniority list with no prior job rights.

### Milwaukee Road example

Liquidation of the Rock Island began in the summer of 1979 following a two-week strike by BRAC (Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks) and the UTU. Rock Island management had refused to pay the retroactive wage increase due its workers from the 1978 national wage agreement.

Rock Island management was encouraged by the "success" of their counterparts on the Milwaukee Road in liquidating a large part of their lines. Management provoked the strike on the Rock Island and then used it as an excuse to shut down operations altogether.

Out of this, the rail labor movement lost 10,000 members, and the owners

and creditors of the Rock Island got off scot-free.

Up to 70,000 jobs are threatened by the plans proposed by Reagan and Conrail management. What can be done?

Some might argue from the Rock Island experience that a strike could play into the hands of Conrail and the government.

But the Rock Island strike was only the excuse for the cuts by the carriers. Their plans were already set for "rationalizing" the midwest rail system. The strike was limited to workers on the Rock Island line.

### 'Speaking Polish'

The eighty-day strike on the Norfolk and Western in 1978 looked pretty bad, too, until the rest of rail went out in solidarity with them.

At a meeting near Pittsburgh recently, a BRAC member put it this way. "When they started speaking Polish, N & W workers won their demands in four days."

Another example: In 1973 the Penn Central announced plans to close down. Widespread talk of a system-wide walkout brought action from the government. Just the threat of that strike forced Congress to pass the Title V labor protection provisions. It is these gains that Reagan is now trying to eliminate.

The weakness of the Rock Island strike was not just that other rail workers did not get involved. Many other people had a big stake in the survival of that railroad.

### Open the books

During the strike, Rock Island management offered to show its books to the rail unions. This was a big opportunity. The unions should have taken the open books to the public, especially to Iowa farmers.

Family farmers in Iowa grow 10 percent of the corn grown on this planet. Ten years earlier they suffered financial hardships when the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad was formed on the ruins of Iowa railroads.

Iowa farmers know from their own experience that railroads keep two sets of books. One is for public consumption. The other is for the boardrooms of the giant corporations and banks who

administer railroad property. It is held in blind trusts not open to public inspection.

A public campaign to open and study the books of the Rock Island railroad would have won many allies to the side of rail labor. It would have complicated the owners' liquidation plans.

The demonstrations April 29 are a sign that rail labor doesn't want to

take another defeat like Rock Island lying down.

The April 29 actions point the way toward a movement led by the unions that would fight for job security and a cheap, efficient mass transportation system.

The rail unions are taking their place in the leadership of those who are starting to fight back against Reaganism.



August 1979: BRAC clerks on strike against Rock Island Railroad.

Militant/David McDonald

## Imprisoned IRA leader is near death

By David Frankel

Irish political prisoner Bobby Sands is on the brink of death.

As we go to press, Sands is in the fifty-third day of a hunger strike demanding political status for some 500 republican prisoners held by British authorities in Northern Ireland.

On April 21, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher refused to meet with three members of the Irish Parliament who had visited Sands and hoped to discuss his case with her. Said Thatcher, "it is not my habit or custom to meet M.P.'s from a foreign country about a citizen of the United Kingdom resident in the United Kingdom."

Thatcher also rejected once again the prisoners' demand for political status.

Never has there been a clearer case of people being imprisoned for political reasons.

- Until 1976, the British authorities themselves admitted the political status of republican prisoners, allowing them to wear their own clothes in prison, exempting them from normal prison work, and keeping them in special quarters.

- British authorities are forced in

practice to recognize the difference between Republican prisoners and ordinary prisoners.

Republican suspects, unlike those charged with ordinary crimes, can be held incommunicado for up to seven days.

Republican prisoners, furthermore, are tried in special courts, without benefit of a jury trial, and under special rules of evidence. More than 85 percent of those convicted have been thrown in jail wholly or mainly on the basis of their own "confessions."

What are such confessions worth when the European Commission on Human Rights has found British forces guilty of using torture against republican suspects in Northern Ireland?

- To deny the political status of the republican prisoners in Northern Ireland is only possible if one shuts one's eyes to the entire history of British colonial rule and Irish resistance to that rule. To deny the political status of the Republican prisoners means to deny the beliefs and aspirations of the Irish people as a whole.

This reality was reaffirmed April 10 when Sands was elected to the British Parliament. The spectacle of British



British patrol in Belfast.

authorities stubbornly refusing to concede the political character of the struggle in Northern Ireland and the political status of the republican prisoners after Sands's election victory would be ludicrous if it were not for the desperate plight of this courageous fighter.

If Prime Minister Thatcher stands by and allows Sands to die, it will be one more crime—and not the least—in the centuries-long record of British oppression and inhumanity in Ireland.

Nor will the British rulers be able to stop the struggle of the Irish people by such savage methods. Already other hunger strikers have joined Sands, and protests in the streets of Ireland—both North and South—are gaining momentum.

The response of British authorities has been to cancel police leave and place 10,000 troops on alert in their rebellious colony.

Our sisters and brothers in Ireland need the support of working people around the world. The Irish people need to hear our voices—and so do the imperialist rulers in London.

Save the life of Bobby Sands!

Grant the demands of the Irish prisoners!

From Intercontinental Press



# Atlanta mothers blast FBI's racist slanders

By Carlos Williams

ATLANTA—Mothers of Atlanta's murdered Black children blasted the FBI at a city hall news conference here April 16.

Representing the Committee to Stop Children's Murders, which has called for a May 25 national rally in Washington, D.C., the mothers denounced FBI charges that they had killed their own children.

The news conference came three days after FBI Director William Webster announced that investigators were "heart-breakingly close" to solving

"If they think that I killed my child, tell them to come get me," declared Camille Bell, the founder of the committee.

Venus Taylor, mother of slain Angel Lanier, bitterly described the mutilated body of her child. "How in the hell could I do such a terrible thing like that to my daughter?" she asked.

In the letter, the mothers said to Webster:

"We urge you, based on alleged available evidence, to place under arrest immediately those persons suspected of mercilessly taking their own babies' lives.

"We are forced to seriously question your motivation for catapulting such information throughout the nation.

"We are asking God to reveal to us why the loss of our children is not enough; why we must suffer humiliation of a few misinformed people; why we must constantly endure the frustration of finding out who is killing our children and throwing them away like garbage.

"We believe recent remarks released through members of your staff to be untrue.

"If no arrests are made within the next twenty-four hours, we ask that you personally inform this nation of this error in judgment and miscommunication."

To date, neither Webster nor anyone else in the FBI has made any response.

The mothers' action stands in contrast to what city officials have done here. No one in city hall or at the police department has defended the parents from the FBI's attack. Mayor Maynard

Jackson sent a letter to Webster complaining that "Your statements undermine the public's confidence in our investigation."

Police Commissioner Lee Brown called Agent Twibell's racist remarks "unprofessional."

The bickering between city officials and the FBI reveals that what both are really concerned with is silencing the growing criticism of their failure to stop the killings. They are more concerned with the image of the government than with the lives of Black working people. And they are willing to resort to the most outrageous frame-ups to accomplish their goal.

As Camille Bell put it, "Government agencies arguing with each other smacks of a smokescreen." When asked what she thought the smokescreen was hiding, she replied, "That's the reason for the smokescreen. To keep me from knowing."

The tight lid of secrecy on the cop-FBI investigation continues. So do the killings. In the space of two days, April 19-20, three more Blacks were found murdered here: Joseph Bell, fifteen; Michael McIntosh, twenty-three; and an unidentified man, about thirty-five. And on April 12, a twenty-eight-year-old Black, John Porter, was found stabbed.

The police have released almost no information on any of these killings, much less what they intend to do about them.

It was the mothers who first pierced the wall of secrecy around the murders of Black children, exposing the police

## More actions slated for May

On May 4 the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union is holding rallies in Washington and other cities. The actions will protest attempts to alter cotton dust standards in textile, threatening more workers with brown lung.

On May 4-5, the National Anti-Klan Network will lobby in Washington against government inaction on Klan terror.

On May 7 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Operation PUSH are sponsoring an action in Washington against moves to gut the Voting Rights Act.

On May 19 the National Black Independent Political Party is urging its local chapters to organize activities to commemorate the birthday of Malcolm X.

## Nat'l rally in D.C.

The Committee to Stop Children's Murders is urging everyone to come to a national rally against the killings in Atlanta, to be held at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., May 25. For more information, contact the committee at 859½ Martin Luther King Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30314. Telephone: (404) 525-STOP.

Among the endorsers of the rally are the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, District 65 of the United Auto Workers, and William Lucy of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

twelve of the murders. Webster claimed: "We're satisfied we know the cause and the persons responsible for these killings."

The next day, Mike Twibell, one of Webster's special agents in Macon, Georgia, charged that four of the children had been slain by their parents. He had no evidence. The parents' motive, he said, was that the children were "nuisances."

Twibell also stated that "there is no great crime wave sweeping Atlanta," claiming that about the same number of Black children were killed in previous years in the city.

The mothers responded quickly to this racist outrage. At their news conference, the Committee to Stop Children's Murders released a letter it had sent to Webster, challenging him to prove the FBI charges or make a public apology.



More than 1,500 turned out April 17 in San Francisco to protest Atlanta killings. Camille Bell addressed rally.

## ...rail

Continued from page 3

ers' International Association points out, "Each of our members should be concerned not only with the impact of these cuts on our retired [members] or those who are anticipating retirement and our membership on Amtrak and Conrail, but also the precedent that such wage cuts and work rule changes, etc. would have on our national negotiations now in progress."

### Contract negotiations

This is not idle speculation on Martin's part.

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees *Journal* reports that the carriers' negotiators are "suggesting rules revisions which would make severe inroads into working conditions and fringe benefits presently covering maintenance of way employees of U.S. Carriers. . . ."

The *BMWE Journal* outlines the takebacks the carriers want:

- reduce pay and extend probation for new employees;
- change rules regarding job content, assignments, seniority districts, and qualifications for overtime, holiday, and vacation pay.
- change health and welfare provisions so employees share the costs

with employers;

- allow management suspension of work rules "during any work stoppage in any part of the railroad industry."

"It is, of course, the Brotherhood's position that the counter-proposals are retrogressive and unacceptable," says the *Journal*.

The other rail unions are being hit with the same kind of contract takebacks.

### Proposals from rail unions

The unions have put out fact sheets on Amtrak, Conrail, and the retirement fund and explained their proposals.

Below are some excerpts from these fact sheets:

"Conrail: We favor continued support of Conrail toward the goal of a self-sustaining, healthy rail operation."

"Amtrak: We favor continued support of an improving public transportation system with the potential to expand to meet ever-increasing demand for these services. . . . Passenger rail holds the promise of growing into the most fuel efficient, convenient mode of public intercity travel available."

Railroad retirement benefits "serve 1.8 million active and retired workers and their families." "We support a remedy which would ensure that rail-

road workers continue to receive a pension adequate to meet their needs; continue annual cost of living adjustments. . . ."

The proposals of the rail unions are moderate and reasonable. They can provide a basis for a discussion among workers of how to achieve labor's

goals.

The April 29 demonstrations mark a big step in the right direction.

In the interviews with rail workers that appear on page 5, some suggestions are made for a strategy to preserve the railroads and defend the rail unions.

## What are the government plans for railroad cuts?

What are the proposals the rail unions are fighting?

According to the Railway Labor Executives Association, the government proposals would:

- Wipe out 75,000 railroad jobs.
- Dismantle 75 percent of the Amtrak passenger service. . . .
- Reduce funding so sharply for the important northeast and mid-west Conrail system that its future as a viable transportation system would be most certainly endangered. . . . Conrail employees being expected to take several wage cuts and loss of their employee representation.
- Imperil the Railroad Retirement

ment System" through the loss of premiums from laid-off employees and from lack of plans to avert bankruptcy between 1982 and 1984, when cash flow is virtually certain to be slowed.

One of the Conrail proposals is for the workers to take a \$200 million a year pay cut for each of five years. This would cost each worker an average of \$2,500 a year. There would be drastic work rule changes and elimination or sharp curtailment of present employee protection of all kinds. Vacation days would be given up as well as holidays.

—S.S.



# Militant sales at railyards build April 29

By Nancy Rosenstock

Railworkers are angry. If planned cuts in Conrail and Amtrak funding go through, thousands will lose their jobs and the retirement fund will be threatened with destruction.

Rail unions in all crafts have united to call demonstrations in many cities April 29 to protest these cutbacks. The *Militant* has been doing its part to build these protests. And growing numbers of railworkers want to read the *Militant* and talk with salespeople, many of whom are railworkers themselves.

Meetings to organize for the demonstrations are taking place in many

workers at the Hobart yard where he works now have introductory subscriptions. Ten more bought single copies.

At the Labor Conference on Safe Energy and Full Employment in Los Angeles, April 11, one rail worker bought twelve copies to distribute.

In Chicago, workers at the Amtrak yard were met at the gate by *Militant* sales people with a banner reading, "No Amtrak/Conrail cuts, Save Railroad Retirement, Demonstrate April 29." Nine copies were sold.

Socialists carrying a similar banner sold twenty-two *Militants* at rail yards this past week.

\* \* \*

Initial reports from teams of socialists traveling in the coalfields shows a tremendous response to the *Militant*.

In Price, Utah, a center of the United Mine Workers, a team sold fifty-two subscriptions and forty-six single copies in two days.

In northern Alabama, twenty-eight miners bought subscriptions.

And, in southern West Virginia, twenty-one subscriptions were sold in one day.

The West Virginia team found that in Madison, townspeople had declared a week of solidarity with the children of Atlanta. Green ribbons hung from the trees on the courthouse lawn. A banner draped across the main street read, "Remember the Atlanta Children—April 25." The week of solidarity will culminate in a demonstration April 25. It is working people like those in Madison that we want to reach with the *Militant*.

Despite the success of the teams, the scoreboard shows that we fell short of our overall goal, especially on sales of *Perspectiva Mundial*. When attention is given to organizing PM sales, the results are good.

Both the Dallas and San Antonio branches of the Socialist Workers

Party organize weekly Saturday sales in Latino communities, mainly at grocery stores. In San Antonio twenty copies of *PM* were sold, while Dallas socialists sold thirty-seven.

Sixty-two demonstrators bought copies of *PM* during a rally of several thousand April 18 in Los Angeles.

Only one week remains in the spring circulation drive. But opportunities for expanded sales of the *Militant* and *PM* will continue to open up.

Examples are the May 3 demonstration in Washington, D.C. to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador and the May 25 rally against the Atlanta murders, also in Washington, D.C.

The *Militant* and *PM* will continue to devote many pages to the trial of the SWP-YSA suit against government spying. In the face of a capitalist media blackout, the *Militant* is staying on top of this vitally important battle for democratic rights.

## Volunteers needed May 3

Supporters of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the *Young Socialist* are encouraged to help distribute the revolutionary socialist press at the May 3 demonstration in Washington, D.C., against U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

At the assembly site, supporters can pick up papers at a table set up in Constitution Gardens, near the corner of Constitution Ave. and 23rd St.

At the rally, the table will be in the North Mall of the Pentagon, near the back (opposite the stage).

union halls. At a recent New York meeting attended by hundreds of railworkers, seventy copies of the *Militant* were sold.

In Los Angeles, forty-eight *Militants* were sold to railworkers this past week. Mark Rich, an engineer on the Santa Fe line, reports that it has never been easier to sell the *Militant*. Five



As in 1978 (above), the *Militant* urges support to striking coal miners.

## Sales scoreboard

AREA	MILITANT		PM		TOTAL	TOTAL	%
	GOAL	SOLD	GOAL	SOLD	GOAL	SOLD	
Morgantown	110	220	0	0	110	220	200.0
Pittsburgh	245	299	5	0	250	299	119.6
Salt Lake City	100	111	8	7	108	118	109.2
San Antonio	70	65	20	26	90	91	101.1
Iron Range	45	45	0	0	45	45	100.0
Milwaukee	90	95	10	5	100	100	100.0
Portland	70	70	0	0	70	70	100.0
San Diego	75	72	7	10	82	82	100.0
Piedmont	100	93	0	0	100	93	93.0
Dallas	55	38	35	45	90	83	92.2
St. Louis	85	75	0	0	85	75	88.2
Seattle	125	107	0	3	125	110	88.0
Baltimore	90	78	0	0	90	78	86.6
Detroit	140	123	10	5	150	128	85.3
Birmingham	125	105	0	0	125	105	84.0
Louisville	80	67	0	0	80	67	83.7
San Francisco	120	104	30	17	150	121	80.6
Denver	70	62	10	1	80	63	78.7
Charleston	30	22	0	0	30	22	73.3
Capital District	105	79	5	1	110	80	72.7
Indianapolis	125	87	0	1	125	88	70.4
Gary	70	52	5	0	75	52	69.3
Twin Cities	162	114	3	0	165	114	69.0
Tidewater	80	55	0	0	80	55	68.7
Los Angeles	215	160	60	15	275	175	63.6
Cleveland	100	52	7	16	107	68	63.5
Chicago	175	115	25	11	200	126	63.0
Phoenix	110	60	25	16	135	76	56.2
Miami	60	35	10	4	70	39	55.7
Kansas City	115	62	10	6	125	68	54.4
Newark	125	64	25	16	150	80	53.3
Atlanta	100	50	0	0	100	50	50.0
Washington, D.C.	120	58	30	12	150	70	46.6
Oakland	95	43	5	2	100	45	45.0
Philadelphia	120	53	15	4	135	57	42.2
Brooklyn	220	75	30	2	250	77	30.8
Houston	100	39	50	2	150	41	27.3
New Orleans	85	19	0	1	85	20	23.5
Cincinnati	60	14	0	0	60	14	23.3
San Jose	90	24	35	5	125	29	23.2
Toledo	45	5	0	0	45	5	11.1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,732</b>	<b>3,166</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>5,292</b>	<b>3,399</b>	<b>64.2</b>

Not reporting: Albuquerque, Boston, Manhattan  
Covers issue #14 of the *Militant* and the first week of #7 of *PM*.

## ...miners

Continued from page 3

Contractors (ABC) are also going nowhere. That contract expired March 27, like the BCOA contract, and the UMWA construction workers are on strike.

According to an April 17 news release from UMWA Secretary-Treasurer Willard Esselstyn, negotiations are blocked because of "the ABC's refusal to submit counter-offers to our contract proposals on the grounds that our

entire package is unrealistic."

Provisions in the BCOA proposal rejected by the miners would have threatened the very existence of UMWA construction workers.

### Support UMWA April 30!

The UMWA-organized demonstration April 30 is the most important action to support the miners fight for a decent contract since the March 31 vote. The demonstration deserves the support of the rest of the union movement and all working people.

## ...interview

Continued from page 5

railroads out here have been fairly prosperous, so rail workers take some things for granted. But job protection rules will be wiped out if the cutbacks go through on Conrail.

*Militant: What about the Retirement Fund?*

*Little:* It's just beginning to sink in what will happen. There are only about 500,000 rail workers in the U.S. The Conrail cuts could wipe out 50,000 to 70,000 jobs. The retirement fund is already running about a 4 percent deficit. If that many more people stop paying into it, it will either go bankrupt or cut back the benefits.

*Militant: Do people blame Reagan for these attacks on rail workers?*

*Little:* Yes. But not because Carter is remembered fondly. Reagan got votes because he promised prosperity, that things would go forward. But things are getting worse, they're going backward. People who voted for Reagan don't like it.

*Militant: What effect will these cuts*

*have on affirmative action?*

*Little:* They will be very detrimental. Women, Blacks and Chicanos get cut first. When bumping starts, it goes downhill in seniority. It's only in the last few years that Blacks, Chicanos and women have started getting into the operating crafts in serious numbers. The recession has already cut way down on the work force.

And the areas of the railroads that will be hardest hit by the cuts, the northeast corridor and the passenger service, are also where the highest percentage of Black workers are.

*Militant: What do you think will happen after April 29?*

*Little:* There's talk of some rail unions calling a work stoppage or one-day strike. The idea would be to dramatize what it would be like once these cuts go through.

One of the most important things now is to support the coal miners. If the rail unions decided to stop handling nonunion coal, the miners would be in a much stronger position to win the strike.

And a victory for the coal miners would be a great boost for us. It would really be a victory for all working people.



# Labor's plan for safe energy and jobs

By Nora Danielson

LOS ANGELES—"It is time to come together to discuss problems which affect not only the labor movement but the entire country. We're here to demand an energy plan and an economic plan that put the needs of the ordinary people of this country first."

These words of William W. Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), sum up what happened here April 11, when more than 250 trade unionists and antinuclear activists gathered for the first Southern California Labor Conference for Safe Energy and Full Employment.

The conference called for the founding of the Southern California Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment.

Members of twenty-one unions came from all over California to attend, as did members of Mexico's United Nuclear Workers union. Those present included forty-eight IAM members, nine members of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), seven members of the United Transportation Union (UTU), and twenty-eight steelworkers.

The conference opened with a moment of silence in solidarity with the children and working people of Atlanta.

With "Support the UMWA" placards on every wall, the conference unanimously voted to actively aid the United Mine Workers in their strike against the coal bosses and to send a telegram of solidarity. A written message from Terry Fry, Western regional director of the Coal Miners Political Action Committee, thanked those present for their support.

Fry called for the use of coal as the immediate alternative to nuclear power until other non-nuclear sources are developed. "As long as the UMWA exists, we will continue to fight any effort to expand nuclear power. We feel that all nuclear power plants can be shut down now."

Jim Franklin, international representative of BRAC, spoke for a resolution

asking the conference to build the April 29 protest here called by the railroad unions. It will be held at Union Station, beginning at 11 a.m.

"We need to improve and expand rather than reduce railroad service," declared Franklin. "Reagan wants to cut out Conrail and Amtrak. This can't be allowed to happen."

Franklin held up a copy of the *Militant*, pointing to the headline, "Miners and rail workers take on Reaganism." "That's what we want to do," he said.

The resolution passed unanimously. In his keynote speech, Winpisinger gave three reasons for the IAM's support to the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment.

First, the IAM has about 25,000 members directly exposed to radioactive materials in their workplaces and thousands more indirectly exposed. Second, the Machinists union has a responsibility to the community to stop the nuclear waste problem.

Third, he said, "the Machinists union, as a participant in the world community, has a responsibility to promote peace and make the world safe for future generations. Everyone knows nuclear power is a nuclear war link. Wherever there are nuclear power plants there are nuclear weapons."

Following Winpisinger, who received a standing ovation, Thomas Carr of the Bechtel Power Corporation got a chilly reception. Bechtel has invested heavily in nuclear power.

"You're going to get no facts from me, no information," Carr began. He then proceeded to live up to his promise, claiming the use of coal would lead to a new ice age.

David Lumian of the Alliance for Survival answered Carr's wild assertions and pointed to the danger to millions of Southern Californians posed by the San Onofre and Diablo Canyon nuclear reactors, both built near earthquake faults. He invited

everyone to participate in the May 19 demonstration protesting the licensing of the Diablo Canyon plant.

Among the most exciting workshops held at the conference was one on nuclear waste and transportation. More than a dozen rail workers had a lively discussion on the issues involved in the April 29 protest.

Susan Miramontez of BRAC explained that cutbacks in Amtrak and Conrail would mean the loss of tens of thousands of rail jobs and would jeopardize the entire railroad retirement system. BRAC members passed around petitions against the cuts that will be presented to Congress April 29.

"This is not going to stop at Conrail and Amtrak," Jim Little of UTU local 1770 said in the workshop discussion. "This plan will mean thousands of layoffs, paycuts and a total change in work rules. The cutbacks are not just affecting railroad workers. We have a chance to step out and say we care about society as a whole."

Representatives of BRAC urged people to bring their own banners, signs, and leaflets to the April 29 action. UTU members got together after the workshop to set up a committee to build the demonstration in their union.

In closing remarks, Rudy Salinas of Service Employees International Union Local 660 proposed that the conference go on record supporting an end to the arms race.

"I often hear people saying we should pray for peace, but we're paying for war," Salinas declared. "We in the labor movement have to do something about that."

"If we are not for ourselves, who will be? We can't look to the government, we certainly can't look to big business. We need to get the message to brothers and sisters in the labor movement not only here, but in the rest of the world."

"This is the beginning of a new movement in the labor community. This is the most important issue that this country has faced. And if we don't do it, the whole world is going to blow up."

Salinas's proposal was approved.



Rail workers at March 28 demonstration in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for Safe Energy and Full Employment. Militant/Lou Howort

## Thousands join El Salvador solidarity actions

By Nelson González

On April 18, thousands in cities across the nation marched in opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

This day, marking the first anniversary of the founding of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador, was chosen by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) as its April target date for nationally coordinated actions. CISPES saw the actions as a way of educating Americans about the fact that the FDR is supported by the majority of the Salvadoran people.

In New York, the action was sponsored by the April 18 Coalition on El Salvador. Five to seven thousand people participated. Nine feeder marches converged from various parts of the city to form a procession that stretched for many blocks.

The march was greeted with open sympathy by many bystanders.

When a young Black woman walking with her child found out that the march supported money for jobs instead of war, she exclaimed, "I should get right over there and march with them too."

One young high school student said, "I don't understand everything about El Salvador, but it seems to me we could be doing better things with our tax dollars than making bombs and sending them to those people."

The rally at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza near the United Nations was



spirited. New York congressman Ted Weiss pointed to the massive opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador: "Eight members of the House of Representatives endorsed this march. Ten members of the New York City Council also endorsed it. Forty national labor organizations oppose the Reagan policy. Ninety-four percent of the mail in Washington is opposed to the Reagan policy in El Salvador."

Margie Albert from the Coalition of Labor Union Women ridiculed the Reagan administration's claims that it was opposing terrorism in El Salvador. The government, she said, "would have us believe that Cuban and Soviet

troops are getting ready to march down Fifth Avenue at any moment."

"There is real terror, though," she went on. "The 200,000 auto workers laid off are feeling real terror, old people who will lose their benefits are feeling terror, the families of the young unemployed youth who see this for their children's future are in terror, there's terror in Atlanta. Because this is the real terror, the people of the U.S. will not accept intervention in El Salvador."

Mario Valesquez, representing the FDR, and Bella Abzug were among the other speakers.

In Los Angeles, 4000 people marched

to MacArthur Park, where they heard Ed Asner, Mike Farrell (a star of TV's *M\*A\*S\*H*) and other speakers.

Jim Herman sent greetings to that rally on behalf of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union of which he is president. He renewed the ILWU pledge not to handle any military cargo to El Salvador.

Some 4,000 marched in Eugene, Oregon, on April 18.

In Seattle on April 13, more than 3,000 people demonstrated against U.S. intervention.

The march was sponsored by the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

Meanwhile, plans are moving ahead on the next target date—the May 3 march in Washington, D.C.

An April 14 press conference indicated the broad support for May 3. Moe Foner, executive secretary of District 1199 National Union of Health and Hospital Employees, announced, "We reaffirm our commitment to end U.S. military intervention in El Salvador. Our members will be in Washington on May 3 in large numbers."

Rev. Herbert Daughtry from the Black United Front, former Congresswoman Bella Abzug, Bob Ostertag of CISPES, and Laurie Fierstein from the Peoples Anti-War Mobilization also spoke.

For more information about tickets, transportation, etc. contact: PAM/May 3 Coalition, 1470 Irving St., N.W., Washington D.C. 20010. Tel.: (202) 462-1488.



## Nicaraguan small farmers organize

# 'We know the government is on our side'

By Matilde Zimmermann

MANAGUA—"We know that the revolutionary government is on our side, and is going to listen to us and help solve our problems. And from this day on, we are not going to believe the stories about the government taking away our land and our livestock."

The speaker was Isabel Soto, representing small cattle ranchers in the mining area of northeast Nicaragua. The occasion was the fifth regional assembly of the Asociación de Pequeños y Medianos Productores (Association of Small and Medium Farmers), March 22. The assembly drew together farmers and ranchers from the vast, largely undeveloped, and sparsely populated province of Zelaya.

The newest and fastest-growing of the Sandinista mass organizations, the Association of Small and Medium Farmers represents the interests of more than 100,000 Nicaraguan families who work small plots of land. This dynamic new organization is already helping to strengthen the alliance between workers and peasants that forms the central axis of the Sandinista concept of national unity.

In the three months since the farmers first began to be organized, meetings of hundreds of campesinos have taken place in towns and villages all over Nicaragua. A total of about 10,000 have attended five big regional assemblies. A national conference is planned for the end of April, after which the new organization is expected to ask for representation in the Council of State.

Nicaragua is an agricultural country. Half the population lives in the countryside, and fully two-thirds is involved in one way or another in agricultural production or processing.

### A major role in economy

The overwhelming majority of agricultural producers have small or medium-sized holdings. Some of the plots are very small indeed. According to 1971 figures, more than 40 percent of all producers owned or rented less than 10 manzanas each (1 manzana = 1.73 acres). Less than 2 percent, only 200 individuals, fell into the category of big producers, with 500 manzanas or more of land. (The large holdings that belonged to the ex-dictator Somoza and his family have since been nationalized.)

The category of family farmers and small ranchers, represented by the new organization, is responsible for the production of almost all basic foodstuffs in Nicaragua. Small farmers grow 95 to 100 percent of all beans and corn and only slightly less of the rice. In addition they account for a significant amount of the production of two important exports—coffee and beef.

The life of a Nicaraguan farmer has long been one of social and economic deprivation—hunger, poverty, disease, insecurity. At the time of the Nicaraguan revolution twenty months ago, 68 percent of the rural population could not read or write. Ninety-four percent did not have safe drinking water. According to Agrarian Reform Minister Jaime Wheelock, of every thousand babies born in rural areas, 200 died at birth and another 200 before their fifth birthday.

### Somoza policy

The Somoza family, which ruled Nicaragua for half a century, pursued a conscious policy of favoring the big growers (often Somoza's friends or relatives) at the expense of small farmers. Small farmers were robbed of the most productive land in the 1950s to make room for huge cotton plantations. Many became landless agricultural workers. Others retreated to small plots of poor, hilly land, and were forced to pick cotton during the harvest to make ends meet. Everything they did not owe to the big growers, they owed to the banks.

Already eking out only a marginal ex-



Agrarian Reform Minister Jaime Wheelock

Young Socialist/Agnes Chapa

istence, the small farmers and ranchers suffered losses during the civil war of 1978-79. Cattle meant for breeding were slaughtered and seed grain eaten to avoid starvation.

The new revolutionary government that came to power on July 19, 1979, began to try to deal with some of the problems of the poor farmers. A special priority was put on reestablishing the production of basic foodstuffs to deal with severe shortages. Within the limits of the country's tight economic situation, special programs were established to provide credit, technical assistance, and emergency aid. Peasants were encouraged to join together in service, marketing, and credit cooperatives.

The small farmers have been a mainstay of Nicaragua's economic reactivation plan. While many big growers have been dragging their heels, sometimes refusing to invest or plant, campesinos have worked hard to reestablish and even surpass pre-war production levels.

### Problems of farmers

The problems highlighted at dozens of meetings of farmers and the "plans of action" that emerged from the regional assemblies give a picture of the difficult life of Nicaraguan farmers today.

The most common concern was one familiar to land-holding farmers everywhere: credit. Since the revolution, the small farmers have the option of borrowing from the state-owned National Development Bank, instead of falling deeper and deeper into debt—and eventually turning over their land—to the big growers. This of course does not au-

tomatically solve the problem of debt service, especially given the extremely small size and low productivity of most of the farms. But this was one area in which the government was able to provide some immediate relief in terms of loan opportunities and repayment schedules, once the specific problems were outlined in meetings of the farmers' association.

In some parts of northern and eastern Nicaragua, the most critical problem small farmers face is the lack of roads. Under the Somoza dictatorship, roads were built and other types of infrastructure provided only for the big haciendas. Some farmers in the mountains have to transport their produce out by mule or on foot. Crops are lost because they cannot be gotten to market, or producers are forced to deal with speculators and middlemen who pay extremely low prices but provide transportation.

Some improvement has resulted from the construction of cooperative silos where farmers can store their produce until it can be picked up and sold to the state-run marketing agency for a fair price. But road construction is a long-term problem in a relatively large and extremely poor country like Nicaragua. The plans of action of the farmers' assemblies recognize the shortage of money and machinery for roads and emphasize the importance of maximum involvement of the agricultural producers themselves in planning where roads should be built.

Since the revolution some big cattle ranchers have simply walked their property across the border into Honduras, a form of capital flight that cost Ni-

caragua millions of dollars of foreign exchange in 1980. The small ranchers have not participated in this form of economic sabotage, but their cattle have been stolen by bands of rustlers that often include ex-National Guard terrorists based in Honduras.

When the problem of cattle rustling was raised at one of the first meetings of the farmers' association, FSLN leader Victor Tirado immediately proposed the formation of voluntary armed patrols. A stiff new law against cattle theft was passed in early February in direct response to the complaints of the small ranchers. The need to protect their own herds has provided added incentive for small ranchers to join the Sandinista People's Militias. As one owner of thirty-five cows told the FSLN daily *Barricada*, "With a rifle in our hands, we are prepared to raise production."

### Protecting tenant farmers

Another area in which the Sandinista government has responded quickly to the concerns of small farmers is in legal protection for tenant farmers. In 1976 only 58,000 of the 102,000 agricultural producers owned their own land. Twenty-four thousand rented the land they worked—five-sixths of these had tiny plots of less than five manzanas. Most of the remainder worked under other forms of land tenancy such as share-cropping.

The tenant farmers lived with the fear that the big landowners would refuse to rent to them again at the end of each crop cycle. In fact, many were threatened with eviction from their land if they joined the new farmers' association.

On March 17 the Government of National Reconstruction passed a new law that guarantees the right of tenants to renew their leases on all lands they actually have in production. If landowners refuse to comply, the government can step in and rent the land to the tenant.

While clamoring for more technical assistance, for example, the farmers expressed nothing but scorn for technicians who sit at their desks and never go into a field. The plan of action drawn up at the first regional assembly demanded technicians who recognize the value of the practical experience and knowledge of the farmers themselves.

Professionals trained during the time of Somoza learned to attach more importance to prestige and pay than to raising production, and not all have been able to overcome such elitist ideas. As a leader of the farmers' association in Matagalpa told us, "It is very hard to make a Sandinista out of a technician. Sometimes it's quicker to make a technician out of a Sandinista."

### Democracy in action

It is clear from all the meetings that have taken place so far that the Association of Small and Medium Farmers is a real organization that working farmers and ranchers feel belongs to them and represents their interests. The impulse for the organization and its rapid growth have come from the farmers themselves.

In elections at every meeting and assembly, the farmers have begun putting forward their own leaders. This is one of the best examples of the tremendous expansion of democracy in Nicaragua since the revolution. One coffee grower described the Matagalpa regional assembly of 2,000 persons this way:

"What happened in Matagalpa was an open election. The people who were there were not some fat cats who once stole someone's machete so they could pretend to work the land and pass themselves off as our representatives. The people who were there know what it takes to make the land produce, and they are really representing themselves. And we are going to extend this process further."

Continued on next page

## Letelier killers go free

By Janice Lynn

Two Cuban counterrevolutionaries—convicted in 1979 by a U.S. jury for the 1976 murders of Orlando Letelier (former Chilean ambassador in the Allende government) and his associate Ronni Moffitt—were released from a Washington, D.C., jail April 9.

A U.S. court had overturned their convictions last September—just four days after Cuban United Nations diplomat Félix García Rodríguez had been gunned down by Cuban counterrevolutionaries in New York City.

Guillermo Novo Sampol and Alvin Ross Díaz were released after six right-wing Cuban businessmen put up \$400,000 bond. Novo and Ross are scheduled to again stand trial sometime in May.

The release of the two counterrevolutionaries comes in the context of Washington's stepped-up anti-Cuba campaign.

Recent reports have revealed that the CIA has stepped up its cooperation with the anti-Cuban groups. U.S. reporters confirmed the existence of training camps in Florida where Cuban and Nicaraguan exiles are training and practicing for counterrevolutionary invasions of these countries.

Last September, following the example set by the U.S. imperialists in overturning the convictions of Novo and Ross, a Venezuelan military court similarly acquitted four terrorists who in 1976 had blown up a Cuban airliner off Barbados, killing seventy-three people.

While proclaiming that there is no room for "international terrorism," Reagan is making it clear to the peoples of Latin America that in Washington's eyes there is some room after all for dictatorial, procapitalist regimes and counterrevolutionary terrorist groups.

From Intercontinental Press



# San Jose labor says: 'No U.S. intervention'

By Judy Stranahan

SAN JOSE, Calif.—A full-page advertisement (see below) appeared March 24 in the *San Jose Mercury*. Signed by 1,500 Santa Clara County union members, it was organized and paid for by the Labor Committee on El Salvador.

The Labor Committee was initiated in February when 106 union officials and members sent a letter to all local unions inviting members to a meeting for three exiled Salvadoran union leaders. The committee later organized a contingent in the March 24 protest here against U.S. intervention.

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

## No Vietnam in El Salvador

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION EFFORT TO SHARPLY INCREASE U.S. MILITARY AID TO EL SALVADOR IS A PERILOUS STEP TOWARD THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE U.S. IN THE ENDLESS MORASS OF ANOTHER VIETNAM



**ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO ASSASSINATED MARCH 24th, 1980**

This beloved leader of the Catholic Church in El Salvador was shot to death while saying mass after repeated threats on his life by the Salvadoran military.



**MILITARY AID WILL NOT SOLVE EL SALVADOR'S PROBLEMS**

Sending this aid and military advisers to prop up the junta will mean more bloodshed and death for innocent people. It offers no solution for Salvadoran economic and social problems and threatens to turn all of Central America into a battlefield. It also diverts our attention and resources from the pressing needs we have here at home. And we can never forget how dispatching military advisers emboldened our involvement in Vietnam.

**INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE**

International support for their effort grows daily. The United Nations General Assembly denounced the violations of human rights by the junta and urged governments of the world not to supply arms to that regime. 72 nations from all continents supported that resolution.

**BUT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DISAGREES**

In 1980 the U.S. government sent \$86.7 million in economic and military aid to the junta, using our tax dollars to buy nothing more than terror and repression for the Salvadoran people.

**THE MURDERS OF THE FOUR AMERICAN WOMEN**

In December, three U.S. nuns and a lay missionary were murdered in El Salvador. The U.S. State Department says that evidence indicates the involvement of junta security forces in these murders. U.S. military aid was suspended pending an investigation.

**U.S. GOVERNMENT RESTORES AND INCREASES MILITARY AID**

The aid—described as "technical" by the State Department—includes grenades and launchers, M16 rifles, ammunition, heavy troop transport helicopters and military "advisers." The administration's call for a blockade sending patrol boats and many more "military advisers" opens the door to direct armed intervention.

**END ALL FORMS OF U.S. MILITARY AID AND PRESENCE IN EL SALVADOR. NO VIETNAM IN EL SALVADOR!**

In the interests of the people of El Salvador, the people of Central America, and in the interests of the people of the United States—

**U.S. GOVERNMENT RESTORES AND INCREASES MILITARY AID**

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## ...Nicaragua

Continued from preceding page

One of the reasons the new association is so democratic is that it is based on the premise that the small and medium farmers have interests of their own that are different from those of the big capitalist growers.

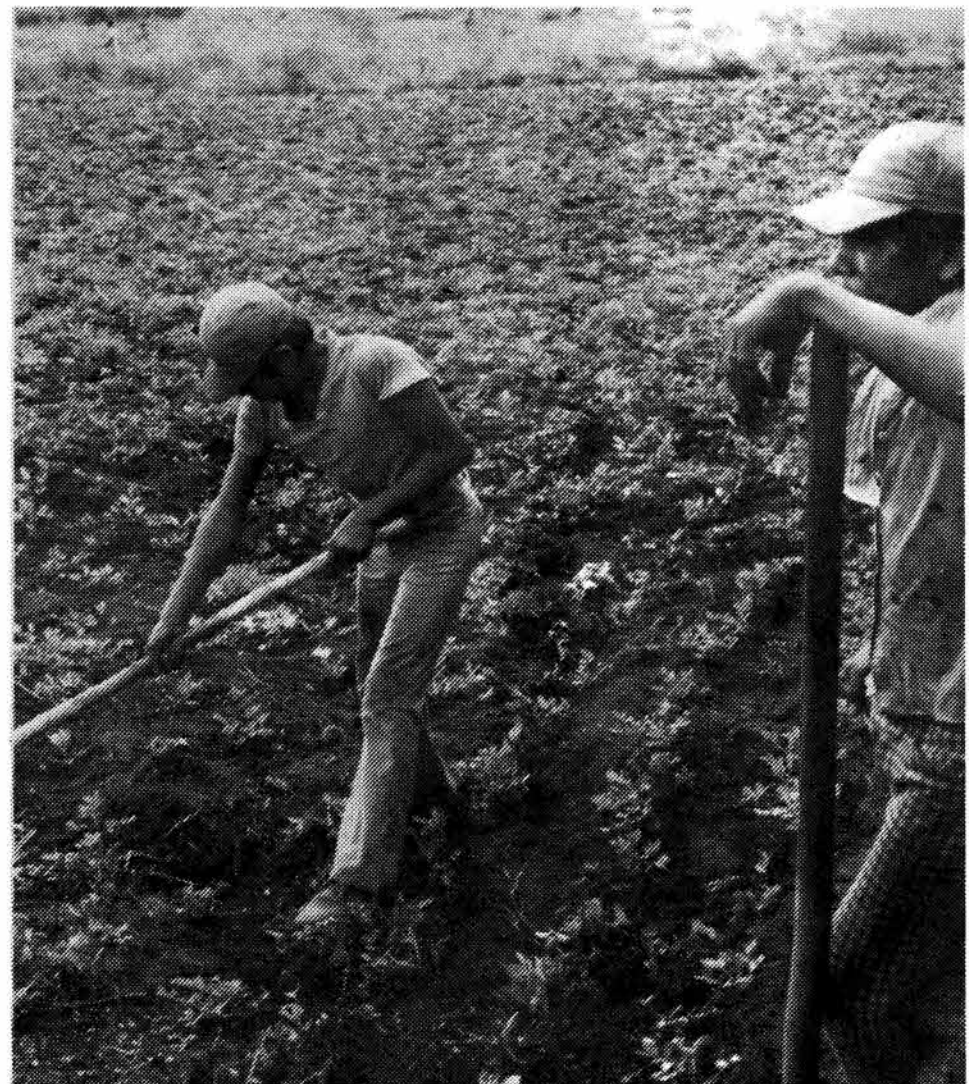
This does not mean that the category of small and medium farmers is completely homogeneous. It ranges from the tenant farmer who scratches out a crop on a couple of manzanas and works for a

wage every harvest, to the farmer or rancher who supplements family labor by hiring a few workers for at least part of the year. There are variations in technological and social development in different parts of the country.

### Farmers vs. agribusiness

But these differences are less important than the line that separates these farmers from the agribusinessmen who own virtual factories in the fields, sometimes employing thousands of workers.

This line implies political differences as well as different standards of living. As government member Sergio Ramirez



Nicaraguan tenant farmers.

Militant/Fred Halstead

# Union miners join in Salt Lake cutbacks fight

By Kay Sedam

SALT LAKE CITY—About 200 people rallied here April 15 to protest proposed federal budget cuts in social services. The rally was sponsored by STOP (Spend Taxes On People), a coalition including the Utah AFL-CIO, United Mine Workers of America, Community Action Program, Senior Citizens Coalition, Utah Welfare Rights Organization, and Utahns Against Hunger.

The guests of honor at the rally were striking coal miners from Price, Utah. They had traveled 125 miles to join in the protest.

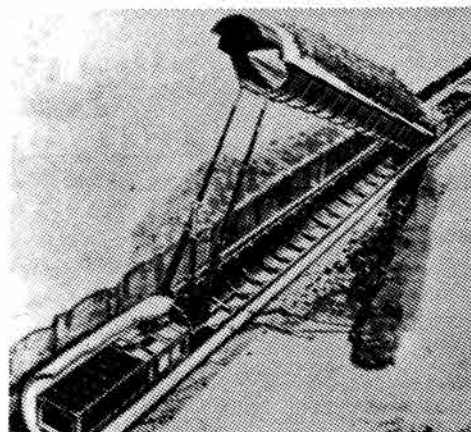
The miners displayed a banner proclaiming, "District 22 UMWA says no more nukes." The banner had been carried by the Utah miners in the March 28 antinuke march on Harrisburg.

"The March 9 demonstration in Washington, D.C., to keep black lung benefits showed our strength," said Richard Cordova, a UMWA spokesperson. The marchers applauded when Cordova called on everyone to support the miners' strike.

"Reagan has no mandate," said Jim Considine, a state legislator and past president of the Utah Central Labor Federation. "The real mandate was to cut inflation, unemployment, and interest rates, not social services."

"The proposed budget amounts to demanding sacrifices from the have-nots to benefit the rich," he added. "We must educate, agitate, and organize."

Tim Rice spoke for the Utah AFL-



Planned MX missile will mean more cutbacks for Utahns. A protest will be held in Salt Lake City on May 2.

CIO. "Organized labor calls for full employment. This is the solution, not cutbacks."

A speaker from the MX Information Center announced the May 2 march here against the MX missile project.

Bill Hoyle, representing the Socialist Workers Party, echoed the call for support to the embattled coal miners.

Marie Tibbet of the Community Action Program chaired the rally. She proudly wore a tee-shirt with the slogan, "Women miners can dig it too."

Other speakers at the rally represented the Welfare Rights Organization, Sioux Indian nation, Migrant Workers Organization, NAACP, Vietnam Veterans, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

told a group of campesino leaders in early March: "None of you go running off to foreign embassies to get your orders. We haven't seen any of you leave the country to slander the revolution. None of you go running around opening bank accounts in Miami."

There is no democracy when the only representation a small farmer has is a capitalist grower. Yet this is the situation that always prevailed in Nicaragua before, as it does in every capitalist country. The big growers set up phony "cooperatives" to try to cover up the differences between themselves and the poor farmers. When a "cooperative" includes some people who produce 500 pounds of coffee beans a year and others who produce 100,000, it is not difficult to guess whose interests that "cooperative" is going to represent.

The political organization of capitalist growers, the Union of Agricultural Producers of Nicaragua (UPANIC), claims to represent all agricultural producers. When UPANIC joined the other institutions of big business in walking out of the Council of State in November 1980, its leaders claimed that the majority of the population was involved in the boycott. That myth has been laid to rest by the emergence of the new farmers' organization. Through their three-month organizing drive, small farmers have acquired a new sense of their own numbers and importance, and confidence in their ability to speak for themselves.

### Blow to counterrevolution

The conscious approach the FSLN has taken to winning the farmers to support for the revolution is something that deserves study by working-class leaders in other countries. The process is not over. But the Sandinistas' success so far, and in particular the growth of the small-farmers' association, has struck a major blow against those who want to turn back the revolution.

When the Reagan administration cut off wheat credits to Nicaragua, it was the small farmers who immediately suggested trying to grow wheat in Nicaragua to reduce the country's dependency.

The farm of Ocotol, near the Honduran border, was one of the places where

there was a large and militant Sandinista demonstration March 14 against a procapitalist rally scheduled for the next day. Ocotol had a reputation for being somewhat conservative and apathetic during the revolutionary war.

The Sandinistas' approach consists first of all in understanding that the small farmers must be won to the revolution, that their support cannot be taken for granted. It is easy to alienate this important social layer, especially where economic scarcity makes it impossible to deliver immediate material improvements. Their isolation, backwardness, and fear of change all make the small farmers susceptible to the propaganda of the big growers and their political parties.

### Land question

The Sandinistas have intelligently taken a sensitive approach to the land question. On the one hand, they have refused to bend to pressures to break up the huge nationalized estates into small unproductive individual landholdings. But on the other, they have made it clear that they do not plan to expropriate the land of anyone who is actually producing.

In fact, they point out, it was the Somoza dictatorship that drove thousands of farmers off their land. Now the credit policy of the national bank in revolutionary Nicaragua is designed to help family farmers hold onto their private property in land.

The Sandinista farmers add a crucial dimension to the concept of national unity to defend the revolution and build a new Nicaragua. They can serve as a pole of attraction for small businessmen and others who might otherwise feel threatened by the revolution.

The Association of Small and Medium Farmers also provides the best answer to the daily complaints of Nicaraguan capitalists that the Sandinista government is pitted against the private sector.

The big majority of the private sector—in numbers, not in wealth—consists of small farmers and ranchers. These oppressed layers increasingly stand with the revolution, not against it.

From Intercontinental Press



By Harry Ring

NEW YORK—Evelyn Sell, a plaintiff in the socialist suit, testified at the trial here April 14-15. A movement veteran, she joined the Socialist Workers Party thirty-three years ago, when she was eighteen.

Since 1973, she has been confined to a wheel chair as the result of an auto accident in which she was permanently disabled.

But neither that accident nor an FBI campaign to drive her from her job as a teacher have stopped her from continuing activity in the fight for socialism.

In 1970, Sell unexpectedly lost her job as a teacher in Austin, Texas. She told the court what had happened to her, first under direct examination by Charles Brennan, a member of the SWP legal team; then under coldly hostile cross-examination by Joseph Sher, a Justice Department lawyer representing the FBI.

Under examination by Brennan, Sell testified she had been employed in the Detroit school system for a number of years, including four years as head teacher in a Head Start program for pre-kindergarten children.

During that entire period, Sell was also active in the SWP. She was a candidate in several elections, held various party offices, and was a frequent contributor to the *Militant*.

In addition, Sell was an active teacher unionist. She helped in organizing a special unit of Head Start teachers into the Detroit Federation of Teachers, and was a delegate to the 1969 convention of the Michigan Federation of Teachers.

### Moved to Texas

That same year, she decided to move to Austin and obtained a job there as a Head Start teacher.

There was no SWP branch in Austin at the time, but when one was later established, she was a leading member.

Meanwhile, her job seemed to be going fine. Her supervisor said she was doing a good job and she received an unsolicited letter of warm praise from the Head Start parent's council.

But when her contract came up for renewal, she received a letter from her principal saying while her work was appreciated, she was not being kept on.

Having to support one of her two sons, then a high school student, Sell moved quickly to obtain a new job. That fall she went to work teaching for a government agency equivalent of the Head Start program outside the Austin school system.

After a period, the head of the program told her the FBI had come to tell him of Sell's beliefs and activities. Fortunately, he felt her political philosophy was irrelevant to her work, which was excellent. He reacted to the FBI visit with indignation.

### Son hassled too

Sell wasn't the only member of the family being hassled. Earlier, her son Eric had been warned by his principal that the FBI had been at the school to inquire about his activity against the Vietnam war.

And that summer, Sell told the court, she had been given an exceptionally bad time when she went to Israel to visit her aged parents who live there.

When she was leaving Israel, airport officials detained her, subjecting her to a physical search and a detailed inspection of her personal effects, including

## Socialist school teacher:

# 'How FBI took away my job'



Evelyn Sell, on witness stand, tells of sudden termination of teaching contract.

her address book and notes for a lecture she was to give in England.

The process was so extensive that she missed her plane and had to stay over another day. The next day she was subjected to another scrutiny. The best explanation she could get was that she was on a "list."

Later, she realized the Israeli cops could have obtained her name from nowhere other than the U.S. government.

Meanwhile, Sell suffered economic consequences of losing her job with the Austin school system. She had earlier obtained a grant for her higher education on which repayment was reduced fifteen percent for each year she taught in the public school system. Loss of the job meant she couldn't continue working off the loan.

It also ended her prospects for teacher's retirement as well as the loss of other benefits.

### Facts come out

In 1975, it has established what had happened to her. Among the voluminous FBI dossiers obtained by the SWP in the pretrial process of its suit was material relating to Sell.

It was disclosed that an Austin school official had made inquiries about her to the local police. They in turn contacted the FBI. The FBI decided this was an excellent opportunity to further its "SWP Disruption Program."

With prior approval from the head office in Washington, the Detroit FBI made material available on Sell's political record, leading to the loss of her job.

On learning this, Sell was added as a plaintiff in the SWP suit.

In a pretrial document responding to the SWP complaint, the government said, "The government does not deny that the FBI furnished the Austin Police Department... with the true, public information that Sell had run for office on the SWP ticket." (Emphasis in original.)

The government did not explain why the Detroit FBI needed approval from its superiors to forward "public" information. And the information forwarded was something less than "true."

### Stool pigeon's story

For example, it included a copy of a leaflet announcing a forum at which Sell spoke. But appended was an informer's derogatory garbled version of what Sell said.

In 1975, when the documents came to light establishing why she lost her teaching job, Sell was in the process of trying to obtain a California teacher's license. She was working with a rehabilitation counselor to get herself in a position where she could teach in a wheel chair.

But, Sell told the court, she then realized that what had happened to her in Austin would be a big problem in California.

"I realized," she said, "that when I filled out an application for a job, I came across great difficulty in explaining why I left my job with the Austin Independent School District. . . . Political information was being passed around. . . . How could I fill out these forms with these clouds hanging over me. . . . Being a teacher you need a good reputation and good references. At this point, I'm fifty-one years old. It becomes more and more difficult for me to obtain employment."

FBI attorney Sher then began his cross-examination. It made you want to take a shower.

Sher looks like a cop. The image is not dispelled when he opens his mouth.

He didn't bother denying that the FBI had been responsible for getting Sell fired. The documentation is too substantial for that. Instead, he tried to establish that Sell had lied on her Austin school application. (She had put down four years Head Start teaching experience in Detroit. But during two of

those years, her working hours were reduced to permit her to pursue her graduate studies.)

Sher also tried to suggest with his questions, but without a shred of evidence, that there was some sinister, "subversive" purpose behind Sell's decision to move to Texas.

At the same time he tried to argue for dismissal of Sell's damage claims on grounds that she didn't complain about losing her job soon enough—within the statute of limitations.

Sher was apparently untroubled by the fact that a government which boasts of its "democratic" practices had been caught red-handed victimizing a competent school teacher on the exclusive grounds of her political beliefs and activities. The fact is, Sell didn't see the files of the FBI campaign against her until 1975, at which point she did file charges.

Despite Sher's provocative cross-examination, Sell's testimony demonstrated that while the government may have succeeded in getting her fired from her job, it never succeeded in breaking her fighting spirit.

## New England rally for suit

By Richard Cahalane

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—"I felt it was important for me to be here, as a labor person, because I know that if it is possible for socialists to have been spied on, that means that all of us are going to be spied on at one time or another."

That was how Mike Schippiani, New England organizing coordinator for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, summed up the sentiment of solidarity evident at the April 11 rally here of eighty sponsors of the Socialist Workers Party suit against government spying.

Guests at the gathering, some of whom came from as far away as Maine and Rhode Island, included members of several of the area's unions, including the Electrical Workers, Auto Workers, and Railway Clerks.

Dick Gregory and Noam Chomsky sent messages of support to the rally, as did author Lee Lockwood, Massachusetts state Representative John Businger and the Boston chapter of the Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador.

Ann Gilmore, legal counsel for United Transportation Union Local 1473 and Boston chairperson of the National Lawyers Guild, told the gathering why both she and the organization she represents are 100 percent behind

the socialists' legal battle.

"As a person who became a lawyer to work for social change," she said, "it's been inspiring to me personally to see the law and the courts, which are usually used as tools of oppression, to see them used as a tool to combat government repression."

"This lawsuit is a very good example, a model, of a creative and aggressive counteroffensive against the government's attempts to erode our democratic rights."

Héctor Marroquín, who is seeking asylum in this country from murderous repression in Mexico, and John Rees, SWP candidate for Boston City Council and member of the International Union of Electrical Workers Local 201, also spoke.

Marroquín had recently attended the trial in New York City's Foley Square courthouse. "It was great to see the CIA, FBI, INS, State Department and their informers on the stand as defendants, testifying on behalf of the U.S. government. On our side, as the accusers, were some of the most combative, best fighters for democratic rights and human progress."

The audience enthusiastically agreed. A request for contributions to the Political Rights Defense Fund, which is coordinating financial support for the suit, drew more than \$550.



FBI attorney Joseph Sher



## Burglars get green light

# Reagan pardons FBI crooks

By Vivian Sahner

"I certainly owe the Gipper one," said Edward Miller when he heard the news.

"I feel very excited and just so pleased that I can hardly contain myself," commented W. Mark Felt.

What was the big news? The two ex-FBI burglars had just heard about their presidential pardons.

Last November jury members, after listening to seven weeks of testimony, found them guilty of authorizing illegal break-ins into the homes of friends and relatives of the Weathermen in the early 1970s.

The two, both former high-ranking officials in the FBI, admitted to the jury that they had authorized the burglaries. They insisted, however, that they were justified on grounds of "national security."

The jury said no. Constitutional rights are constitutional rights. The two were fined \$8,500 for breaking the law.

Ronald Reagan didn't agree and he used his executive privilege to get them off the hook.

According to acting White House press secretary Larry Speakes, Reagan "clearly felt . . . that the decision of the jury and the decision of the court was not correct."

John Nields, the former Justice Department attorney who lead the case against Felt and Miller, said he was shocked by the pardon.

"Whoever is responsible for the pardons," he said, "did not read the record of the trial and did not know the facts of the case."

Nields said the trial was held to establish "the central proposition of democracy: that the government is second to the people and its powers are limited by the Constitution."

"The jury and the court collectively affirmed this proposition," he said.

But "the executive branch pardoning the executive branch for violating the rights of the people strikes at the heart of this proposition."

In his opinion, Nields added, "the

"JERRY FORD WAS A PIKER. REAGAN GIVES SPECIAL CITATIONS WITH HIS PARDONS"



pardons, done in secret, are trivial in comparison with the jury verdict, which was done in a court of law."

He said they "send out a terrible signal—that the government can violate the Constitution and then forgive itself."

Felt and Miller got the signal too.

"This is going to be the biggest shot in the arm for the intelligence community for a long time," crowed Felt.

Miller called the pardons "a very fine thing for the present FBI" because they would erase any reluctance that agents might have to "do their job 100 percent."

Lock up the spoons!

## DAY BY DAY

WHAT HAPPENED IN COURT

DAY 12, TUESDAY, APRIL 21

Following a five-day recess for the holidays, David Prince, national financial director of the SWP, resumes his testimony.

Government attorney Edward Williams questions him at length on SWP policy of destroying each year all financial records not required by law. Prince explains that in view of documented proof of FBI burglaries, the party must take this step to keep records from being routinely turned over to local, state, and federal police agencies.

Attorneys for the SWP introduce into evidence the Church Committee report on government spying. A section of this 1976 Senate report summarizes secret presidential directives—beginning with one issued by Roosevelt in 1936—authorizing FBI investigation of 'subversives.'

DAY 13, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

Fred Halstead, the SWP's presidential candidate in 1968 and a chief organizer of many major demonstrations against the Vietnam war, takes the stand.

After testifying about FBI efforts to disrupt his presidential campaign, the rest of the day is spent on FBI attempts to, in its own words, 'cause disruption' in antiwar movement and 'minimize growing SWP influence' in it.

Six FBI-penned 'anonymous' letters slandering SWP, widely circulated among antiwar activists and organizations of the day, are introduced into evidence.

# Burlington paper hits FBI probe of mayor

The following editorial appeared in the April 16 edition of the Burlington Free Press, published in Burlington, Vermont.

\* \* \*

Less than 24 hours after Mayor Bernard Sanders was sworn in as the city's chief executive, an agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, badge in hand, appeared in the Vermont secretary of state's office to demand data about the mayor's political affiliations.

The information ostensibly was to be used to verify testimony in a multi-million-dollar suit against the government by the Socialist Workers Party which has charged the Justice Department

with illegally harassing its members for years. The case is being heard in a New York Court.

The FBI's tactics conjured up visions of the McCarthy era three decades ago when instances of witchhunts and character assassination were commonplace. By innuendo, the agent branded Sanders as someone to be watched because of his socialist leanings. The action not only was unnecessary but it also was reprehensible for the suspicions it created about the city's new mayor.

That the U.S. attorney general's office simply could have picked up the telephone and called Sanders to ask him about his relationship with the Socialist Workers Party apparently

was too mundane a method of dealing with the situation. Sanders no doubt would have provided the answers the office was seeking.

But such bumbling by the agency that is responsible for law enforcement in the country is bound to raise questions about its credibility and further tarnish its reputation in the eyes of many Americans who believe it takes a cavalier attitude toward the rights of the nation's citizens.

Even Federal Judge Thomas Griesa, who is hearing the civil suit against the government, reprimanded the FBI for the handling of the Sanders inquiry. "If the FBI goes into places, if they go into the secretary of state of Vermont's office and ask about a mayor of Burlington, then that is liable to get ballooned up into something a little more than just checking on the credibility of testimony," he said.

He said the FBI should conduct such investigations "quietly and they better be sensitive to the fact the mere flashing of a badge in connection with some public official . . . could get very badly misinterpreted."

That happened in Vermont last week; it could happen somewhere else next week unless the Justice Department takes steps to dampen the zeal of its agents in such cases.

In the meantime, the department owes an apology to Sanders and the citizens of the city for creating the impression that the new mayor's politi-

cal credentials are flawed and should be viewed with suspicion.



BERNARD SANDERS

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## 'Case of the Legless Veteran'

# An early target of 'loyalty' program

By Harry Ring

April 20 marks an important anniversary in the fight for civil liberties. It was on that day, twenty-five years ago, that the U.S. Court of Appeals ordered James Kutcher reinstated to his job with the Veterans Administration.

The ruling came after a grueling, eight-year fight that challenged the witch-hunt then gripping the country.

In a newspaper column condemning the firing of Kutcher, the noted journalist I.F. Stone called it the "Case of the Legless Veteran." Later Kutcher wrote a fascinating book with that title.

Kutcher, who grew up in Newark, New Jersey, was drafted during World War II. He fought with the infantry in the bloody battles in North Africa. Kutcher survived, and was then assigned to the force that invaded Italy in 1943. During fierce fighting there, he was hit by a shell and seriously wounded. He lost both legs.

After a period of hospitalization, including the painful, protracted process of learning to walk on artificial legs, he returned home.

He obtained a civil service job as a clerk for the Veterans Administration. He worked there for two years and had an excellent record.

### Booted out

On August 16, 1948, Kutcher was fired. He was, the VA declared, "disloyal."

The basis for so branding him? His membership in the Socialist Workers Party.

It began with an executive order by President Harry Truman.

On March 21, 1947, less than two years after he dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Truman issued an executive order designed to give momentum to the witch-hunt atmosphere that accompanied the beginnings of the cold war.

The order established a "loyalty" program for government employees.

It instructed all government departments and agencies to establish boards to review each of its employees and applicants for employment. The boards were to weed out those for whom there was "reasonable grounds . . . for belief that the person involved is disloyal to the government of the United States."

What constituted "disloyalty"? It was a mixed bag, including sabotage, espionage, treason, sedition, and "advocacy of revolution or force or violence to alter the constitutional form of the government."

Eight months later, the program went into operation when Attorney General Tom Clark issued a list of "subversive" organizations.

### 'Are you now . . .?'

No one could hold employment in the federal government who was a member of—or in "sympathetic association" with—any group on the list.

This obviously represented a sweeping curb on civil liberties. To begin with, the list was arbitrarily compiled by a single individual, the attorney general. No organization was notified in advance that they were being considered for inclusion on the list. There were no hearings, no opportunity to challenge being so branded.

The Socialist Workers Party was among the many organizations on the list.

The definition of disloyalty was so broad, and so ambiguous, that it could cover just about any political belief the powers-that-be took a dim view of.

What is "sedition"? It probably wouldn't be difficult, for example, to convince a member of the Reagan administration that advocacy of public health care is seditious.

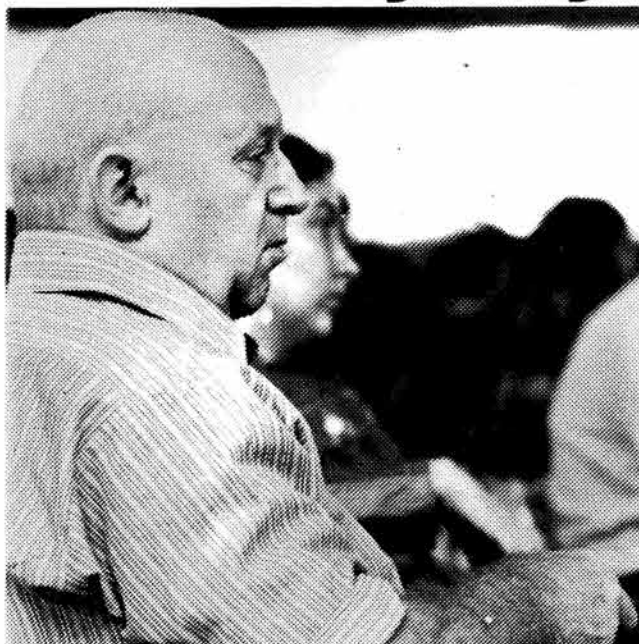
What is "sympathetic association"? Signing a petition to place a party on the ballot? Contributing some clothing to a committee aiding victims of a dictatorial regime?

### Political frame-up

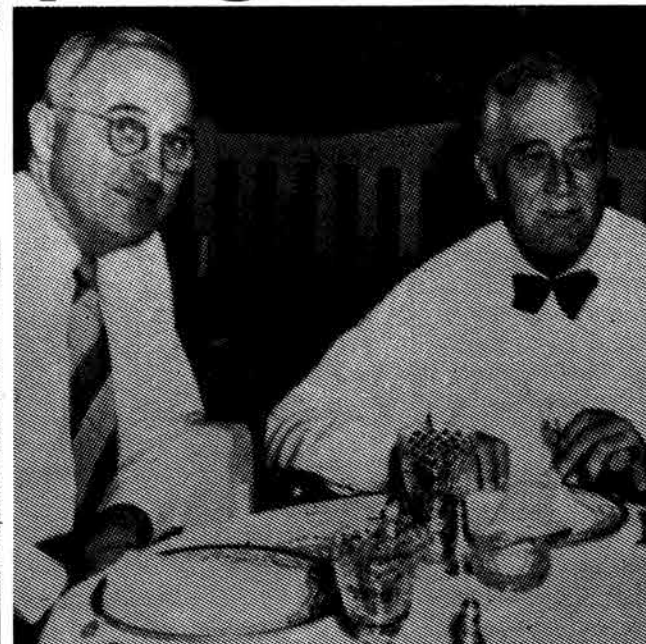
And, of course, it is a deliberate political frame-up to lump together revolution and violence. The SWP, for example, advocates revolution—that is, a fundamental social and political transformation. It also predicts that the ruling minority will not hesitate to use violence to try to thwart the majority's desire for such change. While the SWP favors the right of the majority to defend itself, it neither advocates nor favors violence.

The most important feature of the "loyalty" program is that it is designed to stifle political ideas.

Certainly the Truman order was not needed to



James Kutcher, left, was fired from government job under executive order issued by Truman, based on law enacted under Roosevelt.



deal with spies and saboteurs. They already had plenty of laws on the books for that.

And even the concept of a program to ensure "loyalty" is a fake. Anyone taking a government job is automatically required to take an oath of loyalty to the constitution. If someone is deemed to be in violation of that oath, they can be prosecuted for perjury.

The only problem with that, as far as the government is concerned, is that they have to take the case to court, present evidence, and try to prove the charge.

But with the "loyalty" program, due process is turned on its head. The accused is presumed guilty until proven innocent.

### Contagious infection

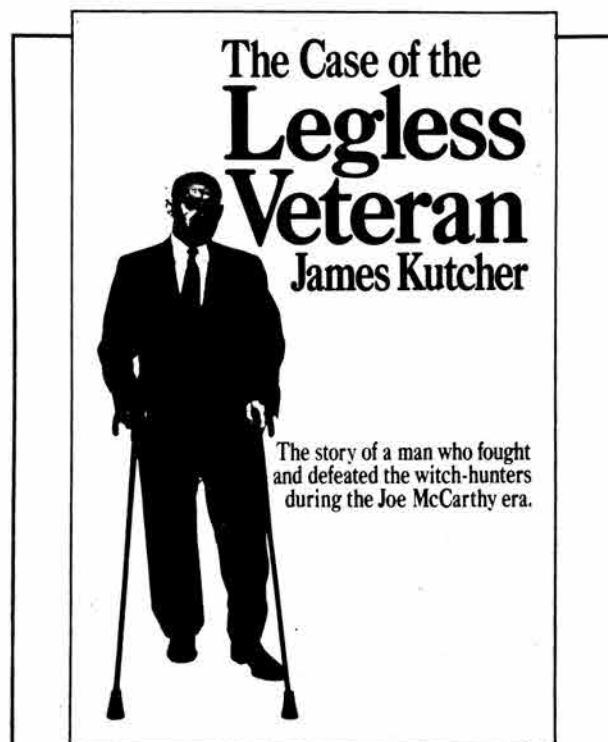
It was bad enough that such a program was established for the several million government employees in this country. But, like most poisons, it spread.

It was extended to include workers in plants involved in producing war matériel for the government.

Soon state and municipal governments, school boards, and others began using the "subversive" list and "loyalty" standard to screen employees.

Private industry began using the list even where it did not have government contracts.

Even though the attorney general's list was officially scrapped in 1974, many government agencies and private employers still use it. Secret documents of the Lockheed Georgia Corporation confirmed that fifteen people there were fired for their real or presumed membership in the SWP, as well as for union activity. It recently came to light that the Boeing company in Seattle still tries to use the list.



**The Case of the Legless Veteran**, by James Kutcher. 225 pp. \$4.45

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From the beginning, the "loyalty" business was tailor-made as a weapon against labor. In order for a union to use the services of National Labor Relations Board, it became necessary for its officers to sign "noncommunist" affidavits.

Was there any basis in law for such a sweeping presidential order? Unfortunately, yes.

### Ban on advocacy

For instance, the Hatch Act, adopted under the Roosevelt administration in 1939, bars federal employment of members of "any political party or organization which advocates the overthrow of our constitutional form of government. . . ."

This and other equally unconstitutional legislation provided the basis for Truman's 1947 executive order establishing the "loyalty" program.

What Truman did was made even worse by President Eisenhower. In 1953, he issued a new order, superseding Truman's. This transformed the "loyalty" program into a "loyalty-security" program. It required that every government employee be subject to investigation. And to protect an undefined "national security," department and agency heads were given even more arbitrary power than under the "loyalty" program.

The Eisenhower order set as its target those in "sympathetic association with a saboteur, spy, traitor, seditionist, anarchist or revolutionist. . . ." Also those employees deemed to be "immoral," guilty of "notoriously disgraceful conduct" or "sexual perversion."

### Kutcher's fight

When Kutcher was fired, he decided to fight back, and do so on a clear-cut basis. He fully acknowledged his membership in the Socialist Workers Party. He denied the frame-up assertion that it was a "subversive" organization. He insisted on his legal right to hold membership in the political party of his choice, and still be entitled to a federal job.

Kutcher had the full support of the SWP in this fight. Sparked by Marxist philosopher George Novack, a Kutcher Civil Rights Defense Committee was established in 1948.

The committee conducted an aggressive campaign to win public support. It published literature, held meetings, and obtained media publicity. In 1949, Kutcher embarked on a national speaking tour.

Despite the chilling witch-hunt atmosphere, he won impressive support. A series of trade union bodies and many local unions endorsed Kutcher's fight for his job. Many contributed to help defray the cost of the case. Veterans organizations, liberal and civil liberties groups, and notables joined in.

The government's vindictive campaign against Kutcher deepened the protest. They went so far as to get an eviction order to put Kutcher and his aged parents out of the low-rent public housing where they lived. A 1952 law had extended the loyalty oath to tenants in federal projects! It caused such an outcry that the government stopped trying to enforce it.

The the government cancelled Kutcher's disability pension. Again, public reaction forced them to back off.

The legal fight was protracted. Kutcher had to first go through the appeals system within the Veterans Administration. From there it went into

*Continued on next page*



# Kutcher's reply to Vets Administration

The following is the text of the letter that James Kutcher wrote to the Veterans Administration, challenging its right to fire him.

In reply to your letter dated August 13, notifying me that I am to be removed from my job as a clerk in the Veterans Administration office in Newark on the grounds of my membership in the Socialist Workers Party, I hereby challenge your right to do so.

I have never denied my membership in the Socialist Workers Party; I do not deny it now; on the contrary, I proudly affirm it. What I do deny is the false accusation that the Socialist Workers Party is "subversive" or advocates the overthrow of the government by force and violence.

The Socialist Workers Party has publicly demanded that it be removed from the "subversive" blacklist compiled by Attorney General Clark; it has publicly requested a hearing for that purpose. Instead of granting such a hearing, the administration has rejected this request and is proceeding to punitive and discriminatory measures against the members of the Socialist Workers Party. This procedure violates my constitutional and civil rights, and smacks of the worst practices employed in police states.

I entered the armed forces in January 1941. My draft board did not ask me about my political views or the party to which I belonged; they drafted me. I became an infantryman, serving in the 9th and 3rd Divisions and participating in the North African, Sicilian and Italian campaigns. When I was at San Pietro, Italy, in November 1943, the German mortar crew on the other side of the lines did not ask me about my political views or the party to which I belonged; they fired at me. The army surgeons did not ask me about my political views or the party to which I belonged; they amputated both my legs, one above the knee, the other just below. The army

did not ask me about my political views or the party to which I belonged when it gave me the Purple Heart.

It took me a long time to learn to use my artificial limbs, but I learned how in order to get a job because I must contribute to the support of my aged and sick parents. You can understand that it is not too easy to get a job when you have no legs. But two years ago this month I went to work for the Veterans Administration, and have filled my job satisfactorily. Now you propose to deprive me of that job, solely because of my political views and the party to which I belong. This is political persecution, and I intend to fight against it with all my vigor—because my job is at stake, because a great principle involving my own rights is affected, and because it concerns thousands of other government employees, many of them veterans, whose rights are similarly threatened by this dictatorial procedure.

I make no secret of my views or those of the Socialist Workers Party, which have been publicly expressed for many years over the radio and in the press. I believe that socialism is the only system that can bring humanity peace and freedom, and in support of that belief I propose next November, whether employed by the government or not, to vote for the Socialist Workers Party national ticket, Farrell Dobbs for president and Dr. Grace Carlson for vice president. I do not advocate force and violence to achieve socialism; the only time in my life I ever practiced force and violence was under the orders given me in the army by the U.S. government. I did not believe that the recent war was a war to eradicate fascism and to establish the "four freedoms," and everything that has happened since the end of the war strengthens me in that belief. Furthermore, I am opposed to the preparations for a new war. I am opposed to restrictive legislation against labor and minority groups. I am opposed to witch-hunts

and attacks on civil rights. And I am in favor of political organization and action by the working people, who represent the great majority of the population, to put an end to these evils.

You have a right to disagree with my views, but not to deprive me of my job for holding them, or for belonging to a party and associating with people who share them, or contributing my money to support of a newspaper that defends them. I contend that I have the same right to a government job as you or any other American, and that not a single shred of real liberty will remain for anyone in this country if I and other political opponents of the administration in Washington are to be hounded out of our jobs because of the principles we believe in. I have already been deprived of both my legs and my freedom of movement. I do not propose to have any government official deprive me of my freedom of thought and expression and my right to earn a living. The methods employed against me are those of totalitarianism and not of democracy.

Please consider this as my written reply to your charges and my written request for the administrative hearing before the Branch Loyalty Board, referred to in Paragraph 2 of your letter, although like many other people I consider the entire procedure involved in these hearings as illegal and unconstitutional. I insist, however, that this hearing be open to the public and the press, since I feel that this issue concerns the American people as a whole. For the same reason, I cannot restrict the defense of my job to these channels alone, and serve notice on you that I will take such measures as I may find suitable.

I affirm that all the statements made above are true, to the best of my information and ability.

James Kutcher  
August 25, 1948

## ...loyalty

Continued from preceding page

the federal courts. They tossed it back to the VA.

Finally, after eight long years of struggle, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in 1956 that Kutcher had been improperly fired. He was reinstated to his job with full seniority. Two years later, he got his back pay. Now retired, he's still an active member of the SWP.

His victory over the witchhunters was a notable one. But it was not unqualified.

The Appeals Court reinstatement ruling was held to the narrowest possible limit, namely that the VA had not followed correct procedures in the firing. The court said nothing about the constitutionality of the "loyalty" program itself.

While the government was weighing whether or not to appeal, the Supreme Court handed down a ruling against it in another "subversion" case.

The victim was Kendrick Cole, an employee of the Food and Drug Administration who was allegedly associated with the Nature Friends of America, a group on the attorney general's list.

Cole had been fired as a "security" risk. The high court decided this was not proper since he did not hold a "sensitive" position. It was careful to indicate its opinion, however, that Cole could have been fired instead under the "loyalty" program.

However, with the Cole decision, the government decided not to appeal Kutcher's reinstatement.

The witch-hunt receded as the government retreated in the face of the civil rights movement and the movement against the Vietnam war. Use of the "subversive" list became more impractical.

In 1974, the Nixon administration ordered the list abolished. For one thing, it had not been updated since 1955. All but thirty of the 300 organizations listed had been out of existence for at least five years.

William Saxbe, then attorney general, opined that it was "now very apparent that it serves no useful purpose."

### Some of his best friends . . .

He added another reason that reeks of anti-Semitism.

Today, Saxbe said, the government was dealing with "terrorism." During the McCarthy era, he continued, there was "a great distrust of the intellectual." One reason things have changed since the 1950s, he added, "is because of the Jewish intellectual, who was in those days very enamored of the Communist Party."

The fact that the "subversive" list had not been updated since 1955 in no way meant the government had stopped keeping track of "Jewish intellectuals" or other "un-American" elements.

In 1976, a special Senate committee headed by

Frank Church of Idaho issued a voluminous report on "intelligence activities and the rights of Americans." The study was made in the aftermath of the scandal that rocked the country with the Watergate revelations.

The committee's report explained:

"After 1955, a substitute for designation on the Attorney General's list was the FBI's 'characterization' or 'thumb-nail sketch' of a group. Thus, if a 'name check' uncovered information about a prospective employee's association with a group which might fall under the categories for the list, the FBI would report the data and attach a 'characterization' of the organization. . . . This procedure made it unnecessary for the Attorney General to add groups to the formal list, since FBI 'characterizations' served the same purpose. . . ." (Emphasis in original.)

Equally important, while the list has been formally abolished, the executive order sanctioning it remains intact. So do the various "antisubversive" laws from which the order derives its authority.

It is these laws, regulations and practices that the present suit of the Socialist Workers Party is challenging.

With his stubborn fight, James Kutcher made an important contribution to the battle against the reactionary, antilabor "loyalty" program. Today, the SWP suit represents a major new advance in that fight.

## Mel Mason: another target of FBI snooping

By Nelson González

Mel Mason is an elected member of the Seaside, California, City Council. Like Bernard Sanders, the newly-elected mayor of Burlington, Vermont, Mason's name came up in testimony April 6 at the trial of the Socialist Workers Party suit against government spying and harassment.

Like Sanders, Mason, who plans to testify for the SWP in the trial, is a target of an FBI "investigation"—the snoopers' word for attempts at harassment and intimidation. Mason's "crime" is being a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Sanders had been an elector for the SWP presiden-

tial ticket in 1980.

The Monterey Peninsula *Herald* reported April 18 that FBI agents had obtained copies of Mason's political party registration from the Monterey Elections Department.

When challenged, the FBI denied it was conducting any investigation. But a spokesman refused to comment on why they had sought Mason's record.

In his successful campaign for city council a year ago, Mason made no secret of his support to the SWP. A red-baiting campaign against him failed to block his election. The latest FBI moves are a continuation of the attempt to smear the outspoken Black

leader.

"This is just another example of harassment," Mason declared, "because if I had violated any laws, I would have been investigated and prosecuted a long time ago. My only crime is that my views differ from the views of the establishment."

Mason comments that FBI harassment is linked to stands he has taken. He visited Grenada as a guest of the revolutionary government there. While participating in a march in Atlanta against the murders of Black children, he denounced the FBI for not investigating the possible connection of the Nazis and the KKK with the crimes.

"I'm sure the FBI picked up my statements.

"I think it is highly significant," Mason said, "that the FBI, at a time when it is on trial, continues to effect acts like the ones for which it is being sued and for which—in the case of the mayor of Burlington, Vermont—it was reprimanded by the presiding judge in the trial.

"It is obvious from the actions of the FBI that the nature of this organization is oriented toward stomping on the rights of citizens through harassment and terror. This is what makes the Socialist Workers Party suit so important."



# WHAT WE BELIEVE

## Farrell Dobbs's testimony at trial of Socialist Workers Party lawsuit against U.S. government police operations

### Part II—Cross-examination

On the following pages is a slightly edited and abridged version of the April 2-3 cross-examination of Farrell Dobbs, former national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, at the trial of the U.S. government.

Conducting the cross-examination was Edward G. Williams, an assistant U.S. attorney, who heads the government defense at the trial. Margaret Winter is chief counsel for the plaintiffs, the socialists.

The testimony is taken from the official court transcript.

(Continued from last week)

#### Lead the masses

Q: Mr. Dobbs, yesterday, in response to a question by Miss Winter, you stated that 'A minority cannot carry through a revolution.'

Do you recall that?

A: Yes, I think I do.

Q: And later, in response to a question by Judge Griesa, you gave your interpretation of the takeover by the Bolsheviks in 1917.

Do you recall that?

A: I spoke on the subject. I didn't give a full exposition.

Q: And, Mr. Dobbs, as a Leninist, and one [who] is generally familiar with the writings of Lenin, are you familiar with Lenin's views whether a revolution could be started by a very small party and brought to a successful conclusion?

A: Lenin, in the concept that he projected, could have said that a small party could generate the process within the working class that would lead to mass acceptance of a program of revolutionary change in society. As I understand Lenin, that would be the basis on which he would project such a concept.

Griesa: Can I hear that answer?  
[Answer read]

Q: Do you recall reading any writings by Lenin in which he stated that he, Lenin, would not altogether deny that a revolution could be started by a very small party and brought to a victorious conclusion and that a small party is quite sufficient to lead the masses?

Do you recall that?

A: I would answer that as I did the other question, that I never read or understood anything about the concept Lenin projected . . . [to be] that of a minority putschist. I am using that expression as in the Hitler putsch in Germany in 1933.

Q: To your knowledge, did Lenin ever write that at certain times there is no necessity for a big organization?

A: No. I can't imagine—

Q: I know that Lenin wrote a lot.

A: I could imagine him saying that

it is not how big an organization is but how correct the program is. And you can't subordinate program to size.

Q: Mr. Dobbs, I'm handing you an excerpt from Volume 3 of the 'Selected Works' of Lenin. Do you see, on page 637, where Lenin writes:

'Quite a small party is sufficient to lead the masses. At certain times there is no necessity for a big organization.'

A: Yes, I see that.

Q: And do you see, on page 636, also underlined:

'In the history of our movement, you will find many examples where several thousand workers in a town were enough to give a clearly massed character to the movement.'

A: Yes, I see that.

Q: And, Mr. Dobbs, is it not true that the takeover by the Bolsheviks, in 1917, did not involve the masses but merely several thousand workers?

A: No, that is not true.

Judge Griesa: I just want to say I raised this question yesterday. I asked you some questions about the Bolshevik takeover in 1917.

Dobbs: Yes.

Griesa: Because you had indicated that you believe that Lenin was an exponent of Marxism in a way you believed.

A: Yes.

Griesa: And I just want to say that last night I read the material in the Encyclopaedia Britannica about the 1917 revolution in Russia, and I don't want to labor this. I mean, as far as I'm concerned, we could spend days on the meaning of all those events and I don't know that it would be productive. But, anyway, I read it and recall it and you can read it or do whatever you want with it.

Williams: I am turning to another subject, your Honor.

Griesa: Okay.

Q: Do you recall attending any meeting of the political committee where there were discussions about the situation in Cuba?

A: I realize there must probably be hundreds, but where it was discussed that it was possible for a few determined individuals to inspire the masses to make a revolution.

A: No, I don't recall that. But I'm sure I participated in discussions about the Cuban revolution in that period.

Q: Well, would it be alien to the Marxist view for a few determined individuals to inspire the masses to make a revolution?

A: That expression could conceivably be used, but the attempt would not be a few individuals to substitute themselves for the masses. It would be the attempt of a political tendency that represented a portion of the working class to project a program of what was necessary to solve the problems of the working class.

#### 'Cuba has done it'

Q: I hand you the minutes of the political meeting for May 3, 1961, which was produced to us by the plaintiff. . . .

Let me ask you this, Mr. Dobbs, with regard to page 5. . . .

Do you agree with that?

A: If you will permit me to make this observation. It says, "Where the capitalist class is weak, lacking in unity, it is possible for a few determined individuals who can inspire the mass to make a revolution," and the connotation there is clearly one of leadership, inspiration to the masses.

Q: And there is a reference to 'Cuba has done it and we have the facts.'

A: Yes. And the facts were a matter of public record. The Cuban revolution started with the actions initiated by the Castro organization and went on from there to a struggle that became a broad mass struggle against the Batista regime and that's when the revolutionary change was brought about.

\* \* \*

Q: Now, Mr. Dobbs, when you talk about abolishing capitalism, you are not referring to any reformist views of how this would take place, are you?

A: No, no. As I said earlier, the essence of the reformist approach is that socialism can be established by reforming capitalism. Mine is a revolutionary approach, that it is necessary to dismantle the capitalist system of social structure and replace it with a socialist social structure.

#### Voorhis Act

Q: Mr. Dobbs, to your knowledge, after the Voorhis Act was passed, did the SWP in its public meetings continue to demonstrate indications that it was still affiliated with the—

Griesa: Now, look. He has said over and over again yesterday and today, he has explained that the SWP maintained a de facto relationship with the Fourth International as close as they could without formally paying dues and literally casting what he calls decisive votes.

I am not sure exactly what that means but, in other words, he has said in every way you can say, it seems to me, that the substance of the relationship, the sympathy, the interest, the sharing of views, all of that continued.

Williams: I understand, your Honor. The question, your Honor—

Griesa: I don't know why we have to repeat it over and over again.

Williams: The question is what was conveyed openly to the public, and I am simply asking Mr. Dobbs whether the SWP openly conveyed to the public an indication that it was continuing to affiliate with the Fourth International, despite the Voorhis Act.

When I say 'public,' I am talking

about the United States public.

A: Well, we did not continue to affiliate. As I told you, we disaffiliated organizationally, but we made no secret of our continued political collaboration with the Fourth International. We made no secret of that.

Q: And you made no attempt to convey to the public in general that there was a disaffiliation, is that true?

A: Oh, I think that was said on more than one occasion, that we had disaffiliated under protest.

#### Smith Act

Q: Mr. Dobbs, referring to your criminal conviction that you testified to briefly yesterday, in 1941, you appealed your conviction, did you not?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: And the Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit affirmed your conviction?

A: They did.

Q: And the title of that case was 'Dunne versus United States'?

A: I believe that is right.

Q: And that conviction was for conspiracy to advocate insubordination in the Armed Forces and to advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence. Is that correct?

A: That is not my understanding. I am not a lawyer. I tried when discussing that just to tell you how I perceived it.

It was my impression that we were all found not guilty of preparing to overthrow the government with force and violence as quickly as we could, that we were all found not guilty of fomenting insubordination in the Armed Forces. We were all found guilty of advocating the overthrow of the government with force and violence.

Q: Do you recall reading that the Court of Appeals found that the action of withdrawing or suspending the Declaration of Principles was merely a subterfuge and a smoke screen?

A: No, I don't. All I recall about the Circuit Court of Appeals thing is that they said we are guilty.

Griesa: All right. He doesn't recall. Next question.

\* \* \*

#### 1973 convention

Q: Do you recall attending a SWP National Convention in the summer of 1973 in Oberlin, Ohio?

A: I think I would have been there if there were a convention there.

Q: This was the convention, was it not, that was prior to the World Congress in 1974?

A: Well, if it was '73, it would have been prior. . . .

Q: Mr. Dobbs, do you recall that there were two meetings in 1973, really quite an unusual circumstance?

Continued on next page



Continued from preceding page

A: Yes. As I told you in the deposition, there were two. I remember that the Chicago gathering was a convention. I was not certain in my recollection whether the previous summer gathering was a convention or an educational conference.

Q: I understand, but there was a second meeting—

A: I recall there were two gatherings.

Q: Do you recall also that the second gathering, the one in Chicago in 1973 in December, was a National Convention?

A: Yes.

Q: For sure that was a National Convention.

A: I am quite sure in my recollection that that was a National Convention. I am not sure about the summer gathering.

Q: Directing your attention to the summer meeting, whether it be a National Convention or an educational, the one in Oberlin, do you recall Livio Maitan speaking at that convention?

A: I am not sure if he spoke at that particular one. I recall Livio Maitan speaking at national gatherings of our Party and it could well have been at that gathering.

Q: Where is Mr. Maitan from?

A: Italy.

Q: Is he a representative of the Italian section of the Fourth International?

A: Yes, he is.

Q: In the summer convention in August of '73, do you recall Peter Peterson attending that convention and giving a speech?

A: Peter Peterson? I don't recall him. Might well have done so. I don't recall him.

Q: Do you know a Peter Peterson from the IMG in England?

A: I believe I did meet him once.

Q: Does the IMG stand for the International Marxist Group?

A: Yes, it does.

Q: And John Riddell, do you know him?

A: Yes, I know John Riddell.

Q: Is he a representative of the Canadian section of the Fourth International?

A: Yes, he is.

Q: Going back to Peter Peterson, you know him as a leader of the English section in the Fourth International, do you not?

A: I know he was a figure in the British organization. I am not sure of what his posts were or anything.

Q: Do you recall any Mexican representative at this other convention?

A: No.

Q: In 1973?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Mr. Dobbs, reflecting back to that convention, and I know it's a long time ago, 1973, do you recall that there was a great controversy over the possibility of another split such as the one that took place in 1953?

A: I recall that in that period there were differences arising that could have led to a split, that there was a possibility. The differences were serious enough in character that there is, always, when political differences become serious in character, there is always the implicit possibility of a split.

Q: And this controversy or this crisis was going on at that time, did it involve a similar analogous situation in 1973 as it did in 1953, in that the SWP was taking a position contrary to the majority view of the Fourth International?

A: Yes, yes, I think that is accurate.

Q: And that involved the matter of the IT, did it not, the Internationalist Tendency?

A: No, not the Internationalist Tendency.

Q: Or the International Majority Tendency?

A: That rings a better bell. International—I think it was called the International Majority Tendency. IMT. I am not quite sure of what the M was in

the term, but I remember an IMT.

Q: And you recognize that as being associated with a majority position of the—

A: The majority.

Q: The Fourth International?

A: That's right.

Q: Do you recall giving a talk at that August convention following Livio Maitan's?

A: I don't recall, but I may well have.

Q: But you have no present recollection of that now?

A: No, I have no distinct recollection of giving a talk there, but, as I say, I may well have. I have made many talks at many Party gatherings.

Q: You drew a distinction, yesterday, did you not, between faction and tendency?

A: Yes.

Q: And that a tendency could be a minority position?

A: As is a faction.

Q: Both are minority positions?

A: Yes.

Q: And did you not testify yesterday that care was always given within the SWP to make sure that the minority received a proportional representation at various meetings?

A: At Party conventions.

Q: At Party conventions.

A: That's what I was addressing myself to.

Q: Because otherwise they might not be heard but the SWP wanted to make sure that, in the traditions of the democratic principles of the organization, the minority view gets a voice?

A: Yes. It is our fundamental position that minorities have a democratic right to speak for themselves in the Party's internal deliberations in full conformity with the weight of their grouping within the Party.

Q: And not only a voice, but a vote.

A: And a vote, yes. It's in that sense that I was referring yesterday to the practice of trying to establish a fair proportional representation where there are differences of views in electing delegates from branches to Party conventions.

## Defend Soviet Union

Williams: Now, turning to another topic, Mr. Dobbs. Yesterday, again in response to a question from Miss Winter, you spoke of the political opposition to an attack on the USSR, the Soviet Union, did you not?

A: Yes.

Q: And is it the view of the Trotskyists that the support of the Soviet Union should take forms other than political?

A: No.

Q: Is it limited to political support?

A: It is the only kind of support that we could give.

Q: Do you recall any writings by Trotsky on this subject, on the defense of the Soviet Union?

A: Well, he wrote much on the question, I know that.

Q: Do you recall Trotsky writing about the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union in 1939?

A: Oh, yes. Yes, I know exactly what he meant by it, too.

What he meant was that we oppose the Stalinist dictatorship in the Soviet Union and advocate that the workers of the Soviet Union overturn it and reestablish workers' democracies. But we would not make the overturn of the Stalinist regime a prior consideration for giving political support to defense of the progressive property forms that have been established.

That's what Trotsky meant. That is what the "unconditional" means: do not make the overturn of the Stalinist regime a precondition for politically defending the preservation of the progressive property systems in the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

Williams: Mr. Dobbs, was this

article written by Leon Trotsky? I refer you to page 1.

A: Yes.

Q: That includes the language in the first paragraph that says, 'We defend the social basis of the USSR if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism'?

A: Yes.

Q: And on the bottom, where it says, 'The fundamental rule.'

A: Yes.

Q: Did Trotsky also write that?

A: It appears to be part of the same article.

Q: And the last sentence that starts on the bottom of page 5, and carrying over to the top of page 6, I would like to read it: 'At the same time the proletariat of the imperialist countries must not lose sight of the interests of the USSR's defense or that of colonial revolutions and, in case of real necessity must resort to the most decisive action, for instance, strikes, acts of sabotage, etc.'

Do you recall ever reading that by Trotsky?

A: I most likely have, yes. He is referring here to action by the working class as a whole, not by revolutionary conspirators.

\* \* \*

Q: Do you see the article headed 'The Defense of the USSR and the Present Imperialist War'?

A: Yes.

Q: By J.R. Johnson?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know a J.R. Johnson?

A: Yes. He was a leader of a minority faction in the Socialist Workers Party at the time.

Q: And do you see under point 3—'Unconditional defense against imperialist attack'?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you see the words 'The policy of the Fourth International calls for unconditional defense of the USSR against imperialist attack'?

A: I see the first part. Here it is, 'The policy of the Fourth International calls for unconditional defense of the USSR against imperialist attack.'

Q: Is this not consistent with the writings of Trotsky which was contained in Exhibit F?

A: Unconditional defense in the sense I expressed it to you.

Q: And Mr. Johnson goes on to write, 'By this we mean taking all possible steps to insure the victory of the Red Army in the field (military sabotage, espionage, etc.).'

A: Yes, that is what it says.

Q: 'Material supplies to the Soviet government and propaganda and agitation on its behalf.'

Judge Griesa: Are you going to ask any questions about what was the state of—there was a war by this time. Germany had invaded Poland. It seems to me—I mean we don't want to get into endless historical discussions, and I am not asking or even suggesting that, but I really think we ought to keep in mind that language has a context.

I think one of the issues here is that it may—I am not making any finding or pronouncement, but it may be that when Mr. Dobbs states his understanding of what revolution means, when he states his idea of revolution in 1981, it may be considerably different from what Lenin meant by revolution in 1917 because he is sitting in a courtroom in the United States of America and Lenin was, you know, going about in a sealed railroad car or, you know, dealing with Petrograd Soviet, etc., and all that complicated set up, all of those complicated circumstances in Russia, so I would be—

Williams: We are not offering this document [as evidence], your Honor—

Griesa: Just a general discussion. Again, I have said this many times, and I don't know that it is the whole story just to recite words.

Williams: We are not offering this document for the truth of the underlying statement.

Griesa: That's not the point.

Williams: But merely as a statement that it was published in the Internal Bulletin.

Griesa: But what did it mean? You are offering it for some reason, as bearing on the view of the SWP, right?

Williams: We are offering it, your Honor, as an example of the language that was used at that time in 1939 and which was read by—

Griesa: What was going on in October of 1939?

Williams: I think that the plaintiffs have an opportunity to bring that out. Your Honor has brought it out. We all know what went on in 1939.

Griesa: I don't. Well, do you recall any—October 1939, Germany had invaded Poland, right?

Dobbs: That is true.

Griesa: Okay. The country this document is about is Russia.

Now, what was Russia's position as of October 1939? Had they joined in the invasion of Poland at that time?

A: As I recall, at the outset of the war, the Stalinist regime did take advantage of the changing situation—

Griesa: I just asked you a question: Had Russia—there came a time when Russia made an alliance with Hitler and invaded Poland from the east, right?

A: Yes. There was a non-aggression treaty between Hitler and Stalin signed in '39.

Griesa: Molotov and Von Ribbentrop signed a treaty.

A: That's right.

Griesa: Wasn't that in '39?

A: That was in '39 on the eve of the war.

Griesa: On the eve of the invasion of Poland by Hitler?

A: That's right.

Griesa: When did Russia invade Poland?

A: At the same time, Russia began to chop off part of the eastern area there, on the immediate borders of the Soviet Union.

Griesa: So this document is in the context, it was written at a time when Russia was allied with Hitler, right?

A: That is true, and there is one other thing—

Griesa: And was either about to or had invaded Poland, right?

A: That is right.

Griesa: And Germany did not invade Russia until 1941, isn't that right?

A: That is right. I think in June.

And there is one other thing I would like to call to your attention, your Honor, and that is that in our internal discussions, as I tried to explain, everybody is free to say everything they wish and what is said by anybody in internal discussion is not binding with respect to party policy.

All that is binding and reflects it is what the decision is at the convention.

Griesa: Okay. Right. But just as far as the context of this particular statement—

A: That was the context, yes.

Griesa: All right. Let me make a note, please.

The next page speaks of the Hitler-Stalin partition of Poland, so I guess if you go by this, that had already been completed.

I guess the war with Poland was extremely short. The Germans took it in—

A: In no time at all. A blitzkrieg, I think it was the term they used then.

Williams: Mr. Dobbs, the theory of the defense of the Soviet Union still continues today, does it not, in the Socialist Workers Party?

A: In the sense that I explained to you.

Q: And also in the sense that if there is a confrontation between an imperialist power and the Soviet Union, the Socialist Workers Party would support the workers' state in the Soviet Union?

A: We would support the workers' state and politically oppose the intervention.



# Why U.S. bankers fear Polish workers

By Suzanne Haig

For weeks—even after Warsaw Pact military maneuvers in and around Poland ended—Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State Alexander Haig issued almost daily declarations that a Soviet invasion of Poland was imminent. Screaming headlines in the press backed them up.

The April 6 *New York Times* quoted one Pole as saying that “the Reagan Administration is crying wolf to buttress the Atlantic alliance and drum up support for placement of nuclear missiles.”

Some went further. “Some informed Poles are asking whether the Reagan administration isn’t secretly hoping the Russians will intervene. That would support arguments in the West that the temperature can only be cold war,” wrote Flora Lewis from Paris in the March 29 *Times*.

On April 8 NATO officials issued a joint warning to Moscow, emphasizing that NATO would “move ahead with its planned schedule of long-range theater nuclear force modernization.”

“Poland should be free to decide her own future,” the NATO ministers stated. As though nuclear missiles aimed at Warsaw and Gdansk were being placed as a favor to the Polish workers!

That the Western capitalist powers care nothing about the needs of Polish workers and farmers can be gathered from the articles on Poland buried in the business sections of leading capitalist papers.

## Banks tighten noose

The major imperialist banks with the blessings of their governments are in the process of tightening an economic noose around Poland.

Poland is \$24 billion in debt, primarily to Western banks and governments, including West Germany, France, Britain, and the United States. Loan repayments due this year amount to \$3.1 billion. Some 92 percent of Poland’s export earnings go to service this debt.

Poland is asking for \$10.9 billion to restructure its loans and to be freed

## Rural Solidarity wins!

By Michael Baumann

Poland’s 3.5 million farmers have won legal recognition of their right to have their own union—Rural Solidarity.

The victory comes after months of struggle that included the occupation of administrative buildings in the northern town of Bydgoszcz and a hunger strike—supported by local workers—in the nearby town of Inowroclaw.

The new union, which already represents more than half of Poland’s working farmers, is to be formally recognized as a legal organization May 10.

In the meantime, the government has been forced to pledge that Rural Solidarity will be allowed to operate as though it were already legal.

The formal agreement, reached April 17, also stipulates that the government will take no reprisals

against farmers involved in the sit-ins.

Only last February Rural Solidarity’s application for recognition as an official union was rejected by the Polish Supreme Court, which claimed that farmers had no right to form a union.

The farmers, however, continued to insist on their right to organize, so as to maintain their land and end government treatment of them as second-class citizens. They were consistently supported in this by Solidarity, the union of 10 million Polish workers.

Because of their crucial role in food production for domestic consumption and for export, the farmers are the most important ally of the Polish workers movement.

Their victory opens a new stage in the struggle for workers’ democracy.

from making any payments on its debts until 1986. It also wants additional aid for food and to preserve Poland’s industrial base.

The banks are dragging their feet. They have no intention of helping Poland’s working people develop and stabilize their economy. Any money that the Polish government receives will be solely to enable it to pay back the banks.

“American officials and bankers,” according to the April 1 *Washington Post*, “are reported by Western European sources to be particularly concerned that further financial assistance to Poland on such a massive scale be conditional on an acceptable plan for economic recovery.”

## Imposed austerity

The March 30 *Wall Street Journal* spells this out. “Western banks prefer to compare the Polish situation to the financial crises that in recent years have affected such nations as Turkey, Zaire, Peru and the Philippines.”

The banks want to be able to force the Polish government to impose brutal austerity measures like the ones they have imposed on these countries and are currently demanding of the American people.

In fact, it was such coercion that helped spark the upsurge in August, as Juan Cameron revealed in the September 22, 1980, *Fortune* magazine.

When Poland asked for more credit last year, the bankers laid down the law. After negotiations, the Polish government received less than what it had asked for and had to pay extortionate interest rates—1.5 percent above the standard European rate.

“Most of the bankers were pleased,” wrote Cameron, “when the Polish government—although without warning—doubled the price of sugar in June and raised the price of meat on July 1. But many were shocked by the ensuing strikes, which they hadn’t foreseen.”

The fact that capitalism has been abolished and a planned economy established in Poland put the workers

in a strong position to resist the banker-instigated crackdown.

The continuation and extension of this movement is worrying Wall Street today. An article in the August 31 *New York Times* noted that “both the Communist authorities and the capitalist bankers recognize a convergence of interest in stability—so much so that one Western banker who asked not to be cited by name said that if the Russians actually did intervene in Poland, the nation’s creditworthiness might actually increase.”

## What workers want

The economic reforms the bankers have in mind for Poland are diametrically opposed to the reforms the Polish workers and farmers are fighting for.

The workers want more say in the economic planning. They want all the problems made public and discussed by the entire population. If austerity measures are needed, they want the hardships to be imposed equally on all.

But there’s more to make the billionaires shudder.

The Polish workers are showing workers around the world how to fight back against the capitalist economic offensive. They are showing what kind of economic system is needed—a rational one where the economy serves the needs of the people who produce the society’s wealth. Such a system necessitates the abolition of capitalism and the socialist restructuring of society.

American workers feel they have a lot in common with their brothers and sisters in Poland.

At the March 28 demonstration in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, against nuclear power and for jobs, Jane Perkins, coordinator of the Greater Harrisburg Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment, declared:

“We thought here in central Pennsylvania that our government would protect us. Well, it’s time to wake up to recognize what our brothers and sisters are learning in Poland right now. Our protection is our solidarity with each other.”

# U.S. farmers collect food for Poland

By Michael Baumann

American farmers are planning to collect and donate one million tons of canned goods to the people of Poland.

The drive is being coordinated by the American Agricultural Movement (AAM), an organization that defends the interests of working farmers in the United States.

Initial plans for the campaign were announced in a front-page article in the April 14 issue of the *American Agriculture News*, weekly newspaper of the AAM.

Printed along with the article was a

statement from the Polish farmers union, Rural Solidarity, expressing its support for the campaign (see box).

A national news conference is scheduled for Washington, D.C., April 23, says AAM official Alvin Jenkins, who is heading the drive from his Springfield, Colorado, office.

American farmers are dealing directly with Polish farmers and trade unionists, Jenkins told the *Militant*.

“We thought that if we could get the independent union over there, Solidarity, and the farmers union over there—which is finally getting organized—to

give the food to the people who need it, that was the way to go. So that’s what we’re doing.”

Tom Benson, AAM delegate from the state of Minnesota, is confident American farmers will dig deep to support the drive, because farmers in both countries “face similar problems.”

“It was not just the drought of last year that harmed our production, or just the floods that harmed theirs,” he told the *Militant*.

The underlying problem is that “the farmers of Poland, just like the farmers of the United States, are underpaid for their production.”

“As far as we can find out,” he added, “in the case of the farmers in Poland, the problems are more severe for the independent farmers,” who appear to be “paid less for some of their products than are collective farms.”

What we want to see, he said, “is farmers all over the world—whether collective farmers or individual farmers—receive fair pay for their production.”

More information about the campaign can be obtained by writing to the AAM, P.O. Box 57, Springfield, Colorado 81073.

## Polish farmers say ‘Thanks’

Rural Solidarity greeted the proposed campaign by American farmers with the following message from three of its top officials:

“Our approach to such assistance is one of respect and gratitude, because in the present situation Poland needs such assistance very much and it would serve the entire Polish society.

“It is a sad fact for us farmers that we need to make use of the services of foreign farmers. But we are not at fault for the present situation. The underlying reasons for the present food crisis in our country lie in the mistaken agricultural policy which has been practised for many years. It discriminated against the individual food

producer and was aimed at the replacement of the family-owned farm with ineffective government-run collectives.

“In accepting the emergency aid from abroad, we would like to declare our will that Poland become self-sufficient in agricultural production. In order to attain this, it is necessary that the government puts into effect terms of its agreements which it made with farmers, and that our Union receives full legal registration.”

(Signed)  
For the Presidium  
Jan Kulaj  
Jan Antol  
Gabriel Janowski  
Warsaw, 2 April 1981



U.S. farmers identify with demands of Polish farmers.



# Joe Louis: 1914-1981

Maybe now they'll leave Joe Louis alone. All the fast operators who fleeced him and government agents who chased him—maybe now they'll realize there's nothing left of Joe Louis for them.

Now he just belongs to the thousands of Blacks who filled the streets every time he won a fight. And to anyone else who thinks it worth remembering that he did more than any man of his time to break the grip of racism on professional sports.

That may not seem like much. But this is a country that, like most, takes its sports pretty seriously. So sometimes things happen inside a stadium or in a ring that find their way into the Big Picture.

It was that way with Joe Louis. Chester Higgins of *Ebony* magazine recalls this.

"He gave inspiration to downtrodden and despised people. When Joe Louis fought, blacks in ghettos across the land were indoors glued to their radios and when Louis won, as he nearly always



Louis floors Max Schmeling in first round of their 1938 fight.

"In fact, American racism was much stronger than the American distaste for Adolf Hitler in 1938.

"Even as a boy I knew just how ridiculous it was when the writers persisted in saying that American hopes were riding with Louis because he would be fighting for democracy against an evil system. Like hell. I remember quite well the American hopes. The American hopes were that the white man would whip the black man."

For Louis, the championship years meant not being allowed into some hotels.

They meant fighting exhibitions while in the army, serving in the same segregated unit as Jackie Robinson, who was later to break the race barrier in major league baseball.

They meant protesting to his camp commander that Robinson had been barred from post athletic teams because of his color.

"[Blacks] can't sleep in the same barracks with the white guys," Louis later wrote in his autobiography, "or go to the same movies or hardly get in officers' training."

Things got worse for Louis after his first retirement in 1949. He had earned over \$4.6 million in his career. Much of that he had given to charity. Nobody's sure where the rest went, but most people believe it went into the pockets of the managers and promoters who had attached themselves to Louis. He himself suspected as much:

"I just don't know where the money went. I wish I did. I got 50 percent of each purse and all kinds of expenses came out of my cut."

Financial need forced Louis out of retirement in 1950. It was a sad comeback that ended, a year later, on a canvas in Madison Square Garden with Rocky Marciano standing over him.

From there, he drifted into professional wrestling and refereeing.

Then, in 1956, the government decided it wanted

a piece of Joe Louis too.

Louis, said the Internal Revenue Service, owed them \$1 million in back taxes. They would be willing to settle for \$20,000 a year for the rest of his life.

For the next nine years, IRS agents dogged Louis's tracks. Finally, in 1965, they were satisfied.

"We have gotten all we could possibly get from Mr. Louis," said IRS commissioner Dana Latham, "leaving him with some hope that he can live. His earning days are over."

Four years later, Louis collapsed on the street and was admitted to a hospital for psychiatric treatment. In 1977 he was confined to a wheelchair and spent the last few years of his life as a "greeter" at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

And so, at 10:05 a.m., April 12, 1981, Joe Louis died; and the writers began recycling the garbage.

"The appeal of Joe Louis leapt across the color line," wrote the *Washington Post*.

"All America loved Joe Louis," said Dick Young of the *New York Daily News*.

This is, of course, all a lot of nonsense. What Joe Louis did with his awesome boxing skills was force white people to accept the presence of Blacks in this and, by implication, other sports. It was that simple.

Louis himself was always circumspect in assessing his contribution:

"Sometimes I wish I had the fire of a Jackie Robinson [his personal hero] to speak out and tell the Black man's story. I've never been on a picket line or in jail or anything like that. But I donated money to the NAACP, CORE, the Urban League, and to Martin Luther King, who was my friend."

Fortunately, there were others to say what he wouldn't.

Former basketball star Walt Frazier: "Joe was a pioneer, like Jackie Robinson. He helped the Black man to be proud of himself. . . . We're reaping what he paved the way for. We should have given him a percentage of our pay."

Teddy Brenner, former president of Madison Square Garden Boxing: "He opened up boxing to every Black fighter. He even led the way for guys like Jackie Robinson in other sports. Every Black athlete that followed owes a debt of gratitude to Joe Louis."

In his last years, wrote somebody named Bill Verigan in the *Daily News*, Louis "developed delusions that he was being pursued by gangsters."

Had he been around to read this, Joe Louis would have reminded this guy Verigan, quietly, that people had been pursuing him all his life.

—Steve Bride

## AS I SEE IT

did, they hit the streets whooping and hollering in celebration. For Joe's victory was their victory, a means of striking back at an oppressive and hateful environment."

Joe Louis was born to that environment, the son of an Alabama sharecropper, and never left it. He became famous—even rich for a few years—but there was always the hate.

There was, for instance, the time in 1935 when, with twenty-one years and twenty-six fights under his belt, he arrived in New York for his first press conference. There, he found that what the boys from the sports desk really wanted was a shot of Joe Louis eating a watermelon. Quietly—like he did most everything—Louis told them no.

"If I cut the fool," he later explained, "I'd have let my people down."

Two years later, he knocked out James Braddock to become the second Black man to wear the heavyweight crown. For the next twelve years, he dominated professional boxing and was the central Black figure in world sports.

A lot of garbage has been written about Louis's championship years, much of it having to do with his 1938 knockout of the German, Max Schmeling. It was, said the writers, the victory of a colorblind democracy over Nazism. L.T. Anderson, a columnist for the Charleston, West Virginia, *Gazette*, doesn't remember it that way.

## ...Colorado

Continued from back page

Yet the company has the gall to publish in a brochure that it maintains "an aggressive, comprehensive safety program for all its operations."

### Who's to blame?

To listen only to the company you would think it was either an "Act of God" or the miners' fault.

But the system used in No. 1 mine is a death trap.

The company encourages the miners to take chances with their health and safety. One miner told me how the company creates an atmosphere of intimidation. "The production crew bosses are under pressure to produce. They, in turn, put the miners under intense pressure to meet production quotas."

The company also pays extra money to crews for filling more than their quota of coal.

One miner's wife summed up the company attitude: "A man is expendable, but the equipment is expensive."

The actual cause of the explosion has not been determined.

### Self-rescuers

Could any of the fifteen have survived?

One, John Rhodes, was found dead 2,000 feet from the site of the explosion.

He lived long enough after the eruption to at least put on his self-rescuer.

The self-rescuer is a respirator de-

signed to filter out poisonous carbon monoxide gas, which is produced in a coal mine explosion. But if there is no oxygen to breathe, the respirator serves little purpose.

In Europe miners use self-rescuers that supply oxygen. They give forty minutes of air as well as filter out the noxious gas. This allows a miner to breathe and possibly escape after an explosion.

If John Rhodes had one of the oxygen-supplying self-rescuers he might be alive today.

However, the coal operators fought for years against a law requiring them to provide miners with the oxygen respirator.

Costs too much. The other one's cheaper.

A law requiring companies to issue oxygen-supplying self-rescuers has been steadily delayed by opposition from the coal operators. It may finally go into effect later this year, too late for John Rhodes.

### UMWA solidarity

The Mid-Continent mines are organized by the Redstone Workers Association. The RWA is an independent union.

The union contract expires this May. "Something will have to be done now," one miner from No. 5 mine told me. This expressed everyone's sentiment.

The RWA-organized miners are watching the United Mine Workers strike closely. Some don't understand why they are striking. Others believe the UMWA may be crushed by the coal operators.

But everyone solidarizes with the UMWA's efforts to win a decent contract. And the UMWA solidarizes with them.

Two of the seven rescue teams were composed of striking UMWA miners from the area.

UMWA President Sam Church issued a statement saying, "If this terrible disaster proves one thing it is that every coal miner in this nation deserves better and stronger protection on the job. It is tragic that common

sense safety laws must be built upon the bodies of the miners."

Thousands of miners and their families turned out for a memorial service held for the victims.

A relief fund for the families of the victims has been set up by the UMWA miners in nearby Snowmass mine. Contributions can be sent to Snowmass Coal Relief Fund, in care of the First National Bank of Glenwood Springs, P.O. Box 908, Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81601.

## Company pushes 'productivity'

The *Mid-Continent Miner* is a company newspaper put out by the management of the Dutch Creek No. 1 mine.

The April issue was in the miners' mailboxes the day the disaster happened. It centers on the upcoming negotiation for a new union contract.

It bemoans "low productivity."

The lead article starts out: "The Company's coal operations for the last fifteen months have been the worst since the startup in 1956. If the ratio between production costs does not improve, one answer looms as a large possibility, that is to shut the mines down."

What is the "ratio of production costs"?

Mid-Continent prints two graphs. One claims to show that miners in the independent unions make

higher wages than UMWA miners. The other, that UMWA mines have higher productivity.

Another chart supposedly shows how "coal miners on a national basis have recovered pay increases that have more than kept pace with inflation." The chart also shows those who haven't kept pace. (Owners of coal companies are conspicuously missing from the chart.)

"Chrysler corporation," the article states ominously, "faced with similar problems and trying to get turned around, asked for and was granted a wage reduction for hourly employees. Mid-Continent is not asking for that" . . . yet!

The article concludes, ". . . expectations of a major wage increase under these conditions must be classified as 'pie in the sky.'"

—B.S.



# Ariz. rancher guilty in assault on Mexican

By Nelson González

On April 9 in Tucson, Arizona, a state court jury found a former rancher guilty of unlawful imprisonment and aggravated assault in the chaining of a Mexican farm worker he had employed.

W.M. Burris had accused Manuel Hernández García, twenty, of stealing \$3,000 worth of tools. Hernández denied the charge, but Burris proceeded at gunpoint to chain Hernández by the neck to a tree on his ranch.

At the trial, Burris maintained that he tied Hernández by the neck because "it looked like the most comfortable" place. He claimed that if he had put the chain anywhere else, Hernández might have gotten loose or would have been uncomfortable.

Shortly after the chaining, an acquaintance of Burris admitted taking the tools to settle an old debt. Burris claimed in court that he had "told him [Hernández] I was very sorry, terribly sorry."

Burris's lawyer also complained that his client was the victim of a "political trial" resulting from pressure by Hispanic groups on the Pima County attorney's office. In his closing remarks to the jury, Burris's lawyer said, "If the so-called victim was not a Mexican alien... this trial never would have happened."

Burris has been convicted. But that doesn't mean that justice has been done for Hernández. He still faces deportation to Mexico unless he agrees to a "voluntary return."

# NAACP to hold May women's conf.

By Margaret Jayko

On April 30-May 2, the Second NAACP Women's Conference will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The conference is entitled, "Til Victory is Won"—Decade of the '80s: Challenge to Women.

According to a letter announcing the conference, signed by NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks, "This year's conference is designed to inform women from across the nation on the vital

concerns and issues that affect the family and especially the children. We are planning for over five thousand women to participate in this conference."

The conference will include workshops, plenary sessions, exhibits, recognition of outstanding women of the decade, and entertainment. It's open to all women, and the registration fee is \$45.

For more information on the conference, contact Ms. Bernice Sumlin or Ms. Lynnette Heard at (513) 222-9852.

# 600 picket in S.F.: 'Abortion is priority'

By Ann Menasche

SAN FRANCISCO—In the biggest local abortion rights action in several years, over 600 demonstrators attended an evening picket April 3 of a "right to life" conference featuring U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde and Nellie Gray.

Hyde is notorious for his sponsorship of the Hyde Amendment, which denies low-income women federal funds for abortions. He is a co-sponsor of the Helms-Hyde "Human Life" bill presently before Congress, which defines embryos and fetuses as "persons," outlawing all forms of abortion and some forms of birth control.

Nellie Gray is president of the anti-abortion "March for Life."

Carrying signs proclaiming a woman's right to choose abortion, the spirited picketers chanted "HLA [Human Life Amendment], HLA, how many women have you killed today?" and "Abortion rights are our priority; Fight against the moral majority!"

Some women carried coat-hangers as a reminder of the time prior to the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortions when many women died from self-induced or illegal back-alley abortions.

The picketline was co-sponsored by San Francisco National Organization for Women, the Coalition to Defend Reproductive Rights, the Women's Building, and campus groups.

A speakout and rally against the Helms-Hyde bill are being planned for April 25 from noon to 2 pm at Union Square in San

Francisco. Hearings on the bill are expected to begin in the U.S. Senate on April 23.

By Linda Ray

SAN FRANCISCO—The California Supreme Court recently upheld poor women's right to safe and legal abortions.

Since the Hyde Amendment passed Congress in 1976, cutting off federal aid to poor women seeking abortions, many states have followed suit, denying state monies for abortion while continuing to fund sterilization procedures and childbirth. Only nine states, and the District of Columbia, voluntarily fund Medicaid abortions.

In California, a budget restriction similar to the Hyde Amendment was introduced and passed in 1978 and every year subsequently. The cutoff never took place due to a legal challenge. The Supreme Court ruled against the restriction on March 20.

In 1972, California voters endorsed a measure on the California ballot to increase the right of California citizens to privacy. This initiative is the basis on which the current decision was made.

Judge Mathew Tobriner, in his majority opinion, stated, "The decision whether to bear a child or to have an abortion is so private and so intimate that each woman in this state—rich or poor—is guaranteed the constitutional right to make that decision as an individual, uncoerced by governmental intrusion."

# March for passage of ERA planned in North Carolina

By Meryl Lynn Farber

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.—On May 2 in Raleigh, supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment from across the state will march for passage of the ERA in North Carolina.

This legislative session, and a short one in the summer, will be the last chance for the ERA to be ratified by the North Carolina legislature before the June 1982 deadline. Nationally, three more states are needed to ratify the ERA in order to make it part of the Constitution.

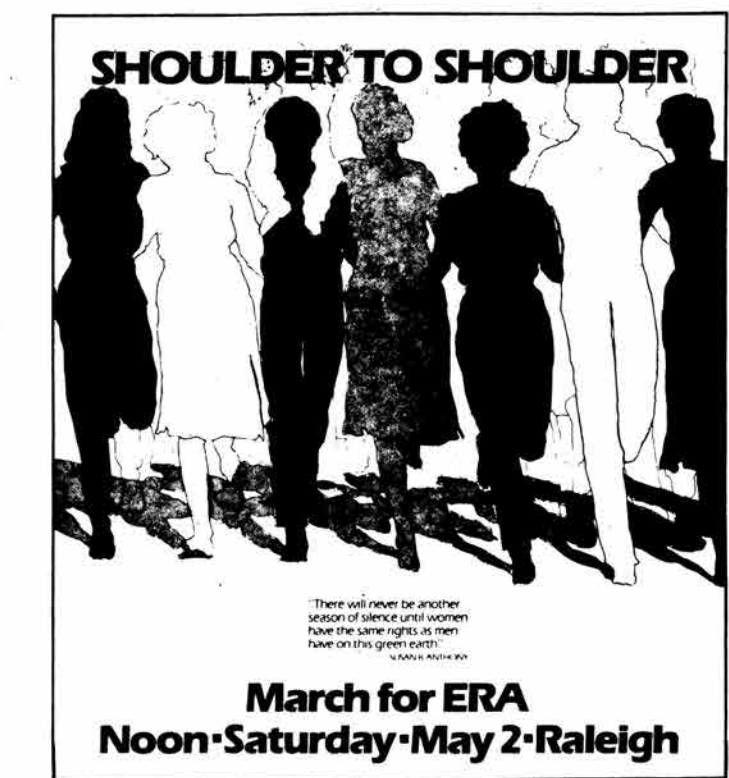
In February, thirteen state legislators arrived at a so-called gentlemen's agreement not to raise the issue of the ERA in this session or the next.

Supporters of the ERA are not sitting idly by. The May "Shoulder-to-Shoulder March for ERA" is being sponsored by North Carolinians United for ERA (NCUERA), a coalition of over fifty organizations with a joint membership of more than one million statewide.

The sponsors include the AFL-CIO, state of North Carolina; Communications Workers of America; North Carolina National Organization for Women; Black Women's Political Caucus, the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union; and a wide range of campus, civic, church, and professional organizations.

Building for May 2 is picking up steam around the state. Buses are coming from Charlotte, Durham, Chapel Hill, Greensboro, and Greenville.

In Winston-Salem, the Cen-



**March for ERA  
Noon-Saturday-May 2-Raleigh**

tral Labor Union, representing all Winston-Salem AFL-CIO-affiliated unions, is sponsoring a labor bus for the march. The Winston-Salem League of Women Voters is also organizing a bus.

A statement released by Betsy Soares, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Winston-Salem, declared, "I wholeheartedly support the May 2 march for the ERA, and I urge all supporters of women's rights to build it and participate in it. The refusal to pass the ERA is part of the bi-partisan drive against the rights and living standards of working people, women and Blacks."

"But we take inspiration from the courage and determination of the striking coal miners, and the rail workers who are organizing against the cut-backs on Conrail."

"And our march here in North Carolina—a powerful united protest of women, labor and Blacks—can be an inspiration for all the working people in our state."

The march will assemble at noon at the corner of Peace and Salisbury, in front of Archdale Building. For more information on transportation or materials, call NCUERA: (919) 828-0568 or (919) 829-1641.

# Charleston: 'Stop the murders'

By Brian Williams

CHARLESTON, W. Va.—Three hundred spirited demonstrators marched through downtown Charleston April 4 to commemorate the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to protest the child murders in Atlanta.

The mostly young, predominantly Black protesters chanted, "Stop the murders right now," and "Save the children." Many downtown shoppers stopped to watch the march, and others joined in.

The demonstration was sponsored by Omega Psi Phi, an all-Black fraternity. The West Virginia State College chapter brought busloads of students to the rally.

Black students from West Virginia University in Morgan-

town, West Virginia Tech in Montgomery, and Marshall University in Huntington also participated. Other supporting organizations included the Black United Front, Southern Student Network - Activists, Equal Rights Council, Panhellenic Society, Women & Employment Inc., and the Socialist Workers Party.

After the march, a rally was held at the First Baptist Church. There, an eleven-year-old Black told the crowd, "If someone doesn't stop these killings, I could easily become a victim myself. If we can put a man on the moon, we can surely stop these killings in Atlanta."

Rev. James Lewis of St. John's Episcopal Church delivered one of the main speeches. "We are told things are better today than in the '60s," he said.

"In the '60s in Mississippi, twenty-six percent of those living in poverty were Black. Today, thirty-four percent are Black. The number of Black children who commit suicide has doubled since the 1960s, and today sixty percent of young Black males and females can't find jobs."

"Millions of dollars are going to kill our brothers and sisters in El Salvador and to justify apartheid in South Africa. As long as this continues, young Blacks will continue to be killed in this country," said Lewis.

Other speakers included Walter McClung, Minority Open Forum; Jane English, National Black United Front; representatives from Omega Psi Phi and Alpha Phi Alpha fraternities; and a former member of SNCC.

# Medical women meet in N.Y.

By Margaret Jayko

Six hundred women doctors and medical students gathered in Manhattan on April 11 and 12 to attend a conference entitled "Women in Medicine: Tomorrow's Goals Today."

It was sponsored by the American Medical Women's Association and several other medical groups. They came together in what was believed to be one of the largest gatherings of women in medicine ever held in this country in order to discuss the problems facing

women who want to become doctors.

The conference endorsed a statement supporting the right of women to obtain "safe, legal abortions."

Their discussions disclosed the following statistics:

- While 25 percent of today's medical students are women, only 10 percent of the nation's 40,000 practicing physicians are women.

- In U.S. medical schools, only 3.5 percent of full professors and 1.5 percent of department heads are women.

- There are no female full deans in any of the 122 medical schools in the United States.

# Woman's Evolution

From Matriarchal Clan To Patriarchal Family

By Evelyn Reed

512 pp. paper \$6.95

Order from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.



# Mexican socialists fight for ballot spot

By Fred Murphy

MEXICO CITY—Nearly 1,400 supporters of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International, rallied here April 5 to demand that the López Portillo government grant the PRT ballot rights for the July 1982 federal elections.

Among the enthusiastic crowd were striking automobile workers, peasants and farm workers who had traveled through the night to arrive in the capital in time for the rally, shantytown dwellers who have been fighting government-ordered evictions, teachers and university workers, and dozens of activists from the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR), founded by young PRT members in 1980.

PRT leaders said afterwards that some two-thirds of those attending were not PRT members but were sympathizers or independent supporters of the party's ballot rights.

In addition to leaders of the PRT, the rally was addressed by Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, leader of the National Front Against Repression (FNCR) and a central figure in the movement against government repression in Mexico (see box).

The PRT has announced that if it gains ballot status, it will present Ibarra de Piedra as its candidate for president in 1982. The party has proposed to other parties and organizations on the left that an electoral bloc be formed in support of an Ibarra de Piedra candidacy.

International solidarity with the PRT's fight for legalization and ballot rights was voiced at the rally by striking coal miner David Ferguson, who represented the Socialist Workers Party of the United States; and by the well-known Peruvian revolutionist Hugo Blanco, who was elected last May to the Chamber of Deputies of the Peruvian Congress as a candidate of his party, also called the PRT.

## Fight began in 1977

The Mexican PRT has been fighting for full legalization and the right to present candidates in elections since 1977. At that time the López Portillo regime promulgated its Law on Political Organizations and Electoral Processes.

The new law made it somewhat easier for opposition political parties to become registered and gain ballot status. López Portillo wanted to open a safety valve for the mounting discontent among workers, peasants, and students, and channel it into parliamentary activity—without, of course, weakening the longstanding monopoly on political power held by the government's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Taking advantage of the new law, the Revolutionary Workers Party collected the required 65,000 signatures of supporters in early 1978 and presented its request for legalization to the Federal Electoral Commission.

The commission acted favorably on similar requests from the Communist Party and other groups, but it refused to certify the PRT for ballot status in the July 1979 congressional elections. It did, however, recognize the PRT's legality as a "political association." The commission indicated that the question of ballot rights could be reconsidered if the PRT carried out activity for one year as a "political association."

After that 1978 ruling, the government continually stalled by simply refusing to reconvene the Federal Election Commission.

The PRT stepped up its efforts to gain ballot rights on March 12 of this



Mexico City rally to support Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) ballot rights heard, from left, striking coal miner Dave Ferguson, representing Socialist Workers Party; Peruvian revolutionist Hugo Blanco; Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, Mexico's leading human rights fighter; and PRT leader Manuel Aguilar Mora.

## A fighter for political prisoners

MEXICO CITY—The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) has declared that if it gains ballot status for the 1982 federal elections here it will present Rosario Ibarra de Piedra as its candidate for president.

Ibarra de Piedra heads the National Front Against Repression (FNCR), a coalition that includes some thirty trade-union, peasant, community, and student organizations, as well as political parties such as the PRT and the Mexican Communist Party.

Ibarra de Piedra first became active in the fight for human rights in Mexico after the April 1975 police kidnapping and subsequent "disappearance" of her son, Jesús Piedra Ibarra. In April 1977 she joined with other relatives of re-

pression victims to found the National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared," and Exiled.

As a result of the committee's protests and its efforts to publicize repression in Mexico internationally, the López Portillo government was forced to grant a partial amnesty in 1978, releasing dozens of political prisoners and allowing some exiles to return.

Despite such victories, Ibarra de Piedra said, "the torture and kidnapping of dissidents continues." Forty former guerrillas are still being held by the government, despite testimony by the government's own investigators that "none of these compañeros present any danger to anyone."

—F.M.

year, joining with other groups in a rally outside the Ministry of the Interior. The demonstration demanded that the electoral commission be convened.

News conferences, statements, and further protests finally forced the government to call the commission into session on March 31. It formally reopened the registration process for both "political associations" and new groups seeking legalization for the first time.

The government has been put into a situation in which it will be difficult for it to justify the continued denial of ballot rights to the PRT. The party has clearly fulfilled the electoral law's requirements: submission of 65,000 signatures, activity as a "political association" for well over a year, and representation of a distinct position in the country's political spectrum.

"Interior Minister Olivares claims that holding rallies and demonstrations like this one is a waste of time," PRT leader Edgard Sánchez told the crowd at the April 5 rally. "He says that the government will respect our rights and grant registration to all parties that meet its requirements. But we don't place any confidence in such statements—we have no confidence that they will respect their own laws."

The PRT has already announced that if it is not granted ballot rights it will file suit in the Mexican courts to demand that the regime obey the provisions of its own electoral law.

The PRT is preparing for the 1982 elections at a time when struggles by the workers and peasants are on the rise in Mexico.

During the first ten months of 1980, the country experienced seventy-five

strikes involving some 150,000 workers, the majority in basic industry. Automobile, steel, rubber, textile, telephone, paper, and beverage workers; machinists; miners; and teachers have all conducted militant struggles to resist the López Portillo regime's austerity policies and to fight for trade-union democracy against the PRI-dominated bureaucracy atop the workers movement.

In the countryside, small farmers, Indian communities, and landless laborers are resisting the government's moves to turn more and more land over to big capitalist agriculture.

The rising class struggle was reflected at the April 5 rally.

Seated on the platform were a number of trade-union representatives, from the Oaxaca meat workers, the Copalillo henequen (sisal) workers, the university workers of Nuevo León, and the workers of CONASUPO, a state food-distribution enterprise.

Messages of solidarity with the PRT's ballot fight and in support of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra's candidacy for president were received from the textile workers union at the Textlamex factory, from the executive committee of the auto workers union at the big Nissan (Datsun) plant in Cuernavaca (currently on strike against arbitrary firings), from the Goodyear rubber workers (who had just participated in a victorious nationwide strike) and from other unions.

The first speaker of the day was Margarito Montes Parra, a PRT leader who is also general secretary of the Independent Revolutionary Peasants Coordinating Committee (CCRI), one of the principal forces in the CNPA.

Representatives of Indian communi-

ties from the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero were seated on the platform.

Delegations that traveled from outside the capital to attend the rally included textile, auto, and watch-factory workers from Toluca; shantytown dwellers, peasants and farm workers, and silver artisans from the state of Guerrero; university trade-union leaders and members of Indian communities from the state of Oaxaca; oil workers and peasants from the state of Veracruz; rail workers from Monterrey; and auto, textile, and university workers from Cuernavaca.

Several women's-rights organizations, such as the Feminist Current of the electrical workers union, sent greetings or delegations, as did two homosexual-rights groups.

Other tendencies on the Mexican left sent representatives to the rally.

## International solidarity

David Ferguson, a striking member of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) from Morgantown, West Virginia, brought greetings to the rally from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

"We are inspired by your fight for full legalization and ballot rights," Ferguson said, "because we have for years been conducting the same fight in the United States. Despite all their talk about democracy, the rulers in Washington are the worst enemies of genuine democracy for the working class. This is shown by their support to tyrants like Somoza, the shah, and many others throughout the world."

Ferguson pointed out how the SWP was putting the U.S. rulers on trial through its lawsuit against government spying and harassment. He explained how the current strike by coal miners shows that "American workers are beginning to fight back." And he was interrupted several times by applause when he described "the mounting opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America and growing solidarity with the revolution in El Salvador."

Hugo Blanco of the Peruvian PRT spoke of the gains in democratic rights achieved through the struggles of the workers and their allies in his country. "It has been the Peruvian masses, through five nationwide general strikes," Blanco said, "who have triumphed through the defeat of the military dictatorship, the liberation of most of the political prisoners, the legality of many parties of the left. They have triumphed by winning the right of the workers parties to have public headquarters and to demonstrate publicly."

Such gains in Peru, Blanco continued, "are one more demonstration of what is happening in Latin America. . . . Our countries are being shaken by a great revolutionary process in Central America: Cuba is no longer alone—there is Nicaragua, there is Grenada, and El Salvador is being shaken as well."

## Cause for optimism

On April 10 the PRT submitted to the Federal Electoral Commission voluminous documentation of its activity as a "political association" during the past year. The next day, commission official Luis Dantón Rodríguez was widely quoted in the press as saying that the "political reform" would continue and that of all the parties seeking ballot status, the PRT most clearly represented a "distinct political position."

The official's remarks gave the PRT cause for optimism, but the party vowed to redouble its campaign—both to assure ballot status for itself and to extend solidarity to other parties and groups that are waging a similar fight for legalization.

From Intercontinental Press





**Mustn't get too civilized**—Washington declined to sign a rules-of-war treaty agreed to by thirty-five nations. The treaty is intended to protect civilians from napalm, land mines, and booby traps. A State Department spokesperson said this should not be taken "as an indication of an attitude on our part."

**Did he ride in front or back?**—Zimbabwe apparently takes a dim view of the Reagan

administration's chumminess with the racist South African regime. When a State Department emissary arrived in Zimbabwe he was met by an under-secretary of foreign affairs, in a pickup truck.

**For the truly needy**—Reagan favors private charities, not government, helping the needy. Last year, with an income of more than a quarter of a million, he claimed for tax purposes charitable contribu-

tions of about \$3,000.

**Wrong trade**—We were struck by the juxtaposition of two April 16 news stories. One was about Reagan pardoning, and saluting, two convicted FBI burglars. The other about a *Washington Post* reporter who assertedly faked a Pulitzer prize-winning story about an eight-year-old heroin addict. If that story had been done as an FBI dossier, instead of losing her job, she probably would

have gotten a raise.

**The American Way**—New York City Councilman Vincent Riccio did not contest charges that he put phantoms on the state payroll and collected part of their checks to support his mistress. His attorney advised this was "stupid and indiscreet, but not illegal."

**Hard pressed**—Danny Darch of Owendale, Michigan, received a call from an Army

recruiter enquiring if he was interested in enlisting. His mother responded that she'd be glad to let them have Danny, sixteen months, if they would agree to potty-train him.

**Probably less**—A recent survey indicated that those who take college courses in international affairs are no more likely to have a grasp of world issues than other students.

## What's Going On

### CALIFORNIA BAY AREA

**MAY DAY WEEKEND, RAIL AND MINE WORKERS TAKE ON REAGANOMICS. A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF REAGAN'S CUTBACKS.** Speaker: Dick Roberts, author of *American Railroads: The case for Nationalization*, member, Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Local 1227 and member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Fri., May 1, 8 p.m., 3284 23rd St., San Francisco. Two classes, Sat., May 2, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at 2864 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. Donation: \$3 for weekend or \$2 per day. Barbecue and refreshments will follow Saturday classes. For more information call (415) 824-1992 or 763-3792.

### LOS ANGELES

**NOW IS THE TIME TO BUILD AN INDEPENDENT BLACK PARTY.** Speakers: Rev. Ben Chavis, leader of Wilmington Ten; Geraldine Gregory and Mel Mason, co-coordinators of California State National Black Independent Political Party. Sat., May 2, 7:30 p.m. First A.M.E. Church, 2270 S. Harvard Blvd. (near Western and Adams). Admission free. Ausp: NBIPP. For more information call (213) 931-3033.

### SAN DIEGO

**CENTRAL AMERICA—THE FIRE THIS TIME.** A panel discussion. Sat., May 2, 7:30 p.m. 1053 15th St., across from City College. Ausp: Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Forum. For more information call (714) 234-4630.

### GEORGIA ATLANTA

**COAL MINERS, RAIL UNIONS FIGHT BACK.** Speakers: Diane Connor, striking mine worker; Garrett Brown, Socialist Workers Party and member Teamster Local 528. Sat., April 25, 7:30 p.m. 509 Peachtree St. N.E. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 872-7229.

### INDIANA GARY

**COAL STRIKE: ITS MEANING FOR ALL WORKING PEOPLE.** Speaker: Mitchel Rosenberg, Young Socialist Alliance and United Steelworkers Local 1014. Fri., May 1, 7:30 p.m. Pathfinder Bookstore, 3883 Broadway. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (219) 884-9509.

### MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

**FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM: FROM BELFAST TO BOSTON.** A conference sponsored by the Irish Solidarity Committee and the Irish Prisoners of War Committee. Sat., April 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Grover Cleveland School, 11 Charles St., Dorchester, near Fields Corner transit stop. Donation: \$2. For more information call (617) 427-1309 or 522-0760.

**CRISIS IN RAIL: AMTRAK, CONRAIL, MBTA. RAIL WORKERS SPEAK OUT.** Speakers: David Walsh, Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Local 1089 and participant in April 29 rail workers demonstration in Washington, D.C.; other speakers to be announced. Sun., May 3, 7:30 p.m. 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th floor. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (617) 262-4621.

### MICHIGAN DETROIT

**RAIL WORKERS FIGHT REAGAN'S CUTBACKS.** Speakers: Susan Apstein, Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks and Socialist Workers Party; others to be announced. Fri., May 1, 7 p.m. 6404 Woodward. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 875-5322.

### MINNESOTA IRON RANGE

**IN DEFENSE OF EVOLUTION.** Speaker: John Stiller, socialist lecturer. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. Solidarity Bookstore, 1012 Second Ave. South, Virginia. Ausp: Solidarity Bookstore Forum Series. For more information call (218) 749-6327.

### TWIN CITIES

**EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT: FIRST TWO YEARS OF IRANIAN REVOLUTION.** Speaker: Fatima Fallahi, Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party. Sun., May 3, 4 p.m. 508 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Twin Cities Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

### NEW YORK MANHATTAN

**CAN WE SAVE CONRAIL AND AMTRAK? RAIL WORKERS SPEAK OUT.** Speakers include members

of Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, United Transportation Union, and shop crafts. Mon., April 27, 6:30 p.m. 108 E. 16th St. Refreshments. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (212) 260-6400.

### OHIO CINCINNATI

**IRELAND: SAVE THE LIVES OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS!** Speakers: John McLean, Irish National Caucus; Barney McClelland, Young Socialist Alliance; Patrick Mallory, Irish Northern Aid. Sun., May 3, 7 p.m. 2531 Gilbert Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (513) 751-2636.

### TOLEDO

**MINERS FIGHT FOR UNION RIGHTS.** Report from a striking coal miner. Speaker: Nancy Mackler, United Mine Workers Local 1702 and member Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 26, 7:30 p.m. 2120 Dorr St. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (419) 536-0383.

### OREGON PORTLAND

**EUGENE V. DEBS: NEW VIDEOTAPE OF EARLY SOCIALIST AND TRADE UNIONIST'S LIFE.** Sun., May 3, 7:30 p.m. 711 N.W. Everett. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (503) 222-7225.

### PENNSYLVANIA PHILADELPHIA

**CRISIS IN THE SCHOOLS.** Speakers: John Murray, president, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; striking teacher from Community College; Haskell Berman, member, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and Socialist Workers Party; others. Sun., April 26, 7 p.m. 5811 N. Broad St. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (215) 927-4747.

### UTAH SALT LAKE CITY

**CITIZENS MARCH AGAINST MX.** Sat., May 2, meet 12 noon, Utah State Capitol Building steps. March to Federal Plaza for 1 p.m. rally. Speakers: Sen. Frances Farley; Cecil Garland, farmer; Rev. Steve Sidorak; Gloria Firmage; Dr. Tom Gates, Physicians for Social Re-

sponsibility; others. Ausp: MX Information Center. For more information call (801) 581-9027.

### WASHINGTON SEATTLE

**THE STATE LEGISLATURE'S ATTACK ON LABOR, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES.** A panel of activists speak out. Speakers will represent Inland Boatmen's Union, Seattle Teachers Association, University of Washington Student Association, American Medical Students Association, Socialist Workers Party, others. Sun., April 26, 7 p.m. 4868 Rainier Ave. S. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**AN EVENING FOR THE BILL OF RIGHTS.** Buffet and reception for Kathryn Crowder, national organizational secretary, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., April 25, 7:15 p.m. Washington Ethical Society, 7750 16th St. N.W. Ausp: Political Rights Defense Fund. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

### WISCONSIN MADISON

**SUPPORT THE COAL MINERS.** Speaker: Marian Bustin, member United Mine Workers Local 2095 and Socialist Workers Party. Tues., April 28, 7:30 p.m. University of Wisconsin (check Student Union directory for room number). Ausp: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

### MILWAUKEE

**IRAN: FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE REVOLUTION.** Speaker: Fatima Fallahi, Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party. Thurs., April 30, 12:30 p.m. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Room E-240, UMW Union. Ausp: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

**IRAN: FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE REVOLUTION.** Speaker: Fatima Fallahi, Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party. Sat., May 2, 8 p.m. 4707 W. Lisbon, Militant Bookstore. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

**ZIONISM AND THE ARAB REVOLUTION.** A class. Sat., May 2, 3 p.m. Militant Bookstore, 4707 W. Lisbon. Ausp: Socialist Workers Party. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

### Eyewitness account

**Iranian Socialist on Tour  
April 10-May 8  
Hear Fatima Fallahi:  
The First Two Years of  
the Iranian Revolution**



- What benefits has revolution brought?
- What has fall of shah meant for women?
- What is behind Iran-Iraq war?
- What is road forward for Iranian workers and farmers?

Fatima Fallahi has lived through the explosive two years of Iran's ongoing revolution. As a member of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), she is a socialist, feminist, and fighter for the rights of Iran's oppressed nationalities. She is a staunch supporter of the gains of the Iranian revolution.

Fallahi, 27, began her political activity as an anti-shah activist while in exile in the United States. She was active in the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), which helped win the release of political prisoners from the shah's torturers.

For more information or to arrange a meeting contact: Socialist Workers Party, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014. (212) 242-5530.

She returned to Iran just before the overthrow of the shah and participated in the February 1979 mass insurrection that overthrew the brutal dictatorship.

In June 1979, Fallahi and thirteen other socialists were jailed for their political views. Fallahi was sentenced to life imprisonment. As a result of an international defense campaign all the socialists were released. Fallahi won her freedom on April 14, 1980. Since then she has worked as a writer for the socialist newspaper *Kargar* and made a speaking tour of Australia and New Zealand.



# Letters

## The 'Militant' on shortwave radio

I have been a regional member of the YSA from Connecticut for some time.

This letter is to congratulate you on the April 17 issue of the *Militant*. I hope to visit the YSA headquarters in Manhattan while I am in New York, and I intend to pick up a supply of these to distribute to friends at work.

Also, I am writing to let you know that the *Militant* was quoted in the *Review of International Broadcasting*, a shortwave radio hobby publication. I submitted the *Militant* article concerning the possible beginning of English-language programs from the "Voice of Nicaragua."

The *Militant* was described as a "reliable source of information in the socialist press" by Glenn Hauser, who edits and publishes the *Review of International Broadcasting*. Glenn also broadcasts over "Radio Canada International" once a week concerning shortwave programming.

The *Militant* was quoted on several "Radio Canada" broadcasts beamed not only to the USA, but to other parts of the world as well.

I think it would be a good idea to continue the recent trend of commenting on international broadcasts.

An article on the programming from Nicaragua, in interview style, which details more fully the operations from Nicaraguan radio would be perfect and, no doubt, would easily find its

way into the shortwave press as well.

Keep up the good work.  
*Joe DiLeo*  
Waterbury, Connecticut

## Keep it up

Keep up that great coverage on Atlanta, the historic suit against the government, and the antinuclear movement. And please keep all the readers up-to-date on the character of the May 3 demonstration against the draft and El Salvador intervention, now that the May 9 one had to be called off.

*Amy Lowenstein*  
Yardley, Pennsylvania

## Workers' unity

With the approach of May Day we, the North American workers, must begin to prepare for what could be a good and effective demonstration for our rights, for our welfare threatened by the Reagan administration, and for peace in the world—which is the number-one duty of all those who adhere to the principle of proletarian internationalism.

This year we must add to our list of priorities the campaign to fight against the efforts of the Reagan administration to bring back the committee of so-called un-American activities which is nothing but a way to try to suppress the struggle of the poor, the minorities, and all the downtrodden against oppression and injustice.

This year May Day must

also see us standing for the rights of the Salvadoran people; for all those who, across the whole world, are fighting for a better society; for the principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other nations, which the Reagan administration seems ready to violate; for peaceful coexistence and against those who are scheming their evil plans to hurt the Cuban, Grenadian, and Nicaraguan revolutions.

The main slogan this year must be the one that Marx and Engels gave us in 1848:

# Reach out... Reach out And touch someone



"Working men of all countries unite!"

*Adrian J. Alpendre*  
Fairview, New Jersey

## Trial coverage

The *Militant's* coverage of the trial in the Socialist Workers Party suit is just great. The government lawyers missed their calling. They should have been working for Nixon during Watergate.

*Seth Wigderson*  
Detroit, Michigan

## Nuclear threat to steelworkers

The hazards of the nuclear industry are far-reaching and often unexpected. This is what maintenance workers discovered at Eveleth Taconite Company, one of the nation's largest producers of iron pellets.

Several crews of maintenance mechanics and contractors were exposed to unexpected radiation levels due to a defective shielding device in a nuclear probe in the pellet cooling area.

The cooler and the rest of the pellet plant had been shut down for routine maintenance repairs. Before entering the cooler, employees were told that the nuclear probe had

been shut off and locked out. The radiation level was taken in the area and the "all clear" was given.

The beam of radiation that was escaping from the probe as a result of the defective shield was not discovered for several shifts, until many contractors, mechanics, and others had worked in the area.

The exposed crews were immediately scheduled for lab tests. A lead shield was dropped over the nuclear source and it was removed.

The manufacturer of the nuclear equipment made assurances that exposure would have no more harmful effects than a day of intensive X-ray testing.

From now on, members of Steelworkers Local 6860 at Eveleth Taconite will think twice about safety assurances given out by the nuclear industry. A nuclear power plant contains enough nuclear material to kill the surrounding population many times over. But the same industry that designs these gigantic facilities can't even produce a relatively tiny nuclear device that can withstand industrial heat levels without malfunction.

The message is clear: "NO NUKES ARE SAFE."

*David Salner*  
USWA Local 6860,  
Eveleth Taconite Company  
Virginia, Minnesota

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