

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Walfredo Moreno: a tireless
partisan of Cuban revolution

— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 10 MARCH 15, 1999

Washington says it will keep bombing Iraq despite protests

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. F-15 fighter jets based in Turkey dropped more than 30 bombs on northern Iraq March 1. The day before, U.S. warplanes demolished the power station of a communications center that operates a pipeline near Mosul. The facility controlled a major oil pipeline into Turkey.

Three people were killed in the attack on the oil station and other bombings that day, including a three-year-old child. While Washington claimed it was attacking military targets, the Iraqi oil ministry's director of planning, Faleh al-Khayat, said no anti-aircraft facilities were anywhere near the control station for the pipeline.

Turkish officials, who allow the U.S. bombing runs to depart from their territory, called the disruption of the oil pipeline to Turkey's Mediterranean coast unacceptable March 3. But the Pentagon said Washington wouldn't back off.

"Absolutely this is an escalation," an unnamed White House official was quoted as saying in the March 2 *Washington Post*, referring to the bombardment. Of the 86 bombs dropped on the Iraqi people since Washington's four-day "Operation Desert Fox" onslaught last December, 66 bombs have been dropped since January 30.

Pentagon officials have claimed that U.S. and British pilots were responding to Iraqi attempts to shoot down the intruding planes. But the U.S. rulers have become more aggressive in their use of military firepower to impose the "no-fly zones" over Iraq, which cover more than 60 percent of the country.

Baghdad has repeatedly stated its oppo-

Continued on Page 5

High court: Bill of Rights doesn't apply to immigrants

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — The First Amendment to the Constitution — freedom of speech, press, and assembly — does not apply to undocumented immigrants, according to the U.S. Supreme Court. Its February 24 decision bars immigrants without papers from challenging deportation orders in the courts, even if their civil rights were violated or they are targeted because of their political views. The ruling upheld key undemocratic provisions of the 1996 Congressional immigration "reform" statute.

The top court's ruling came in the long-fought case of the L.A. Eight. The seven Palestinians and one Kenyan were arrested by federal cops in 1987. The Immigration and Naturalization Service acted to deport them on the ground that they allegedly supported the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which Washington and Tel Aviv brand as "terrorist."

However, deportation was blocked when

Continued on Page 8

'We want our land back'

Hundreds of farmers protest at court hearing

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
AND ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With every seat taken, and the aisles filled to capacity, some 450 farmers and their supporters packed the federal courthouse here March 2 for a day-long hearing on a proposed settlement in a class-action discrimination lawsuit filed against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by farmers who are Black.

At its height some 150 participants had to wait outside the hearing rooms for seats in the court chambers to open up. From the beginning of the hearing to end, farmers put their collective stamp on the deliberations. Their mass presence and repeated applause for those who protested the proposed settlement altered the usual court decorum.

The majority of farmers came to express their opposition to a consent decree negotiated by lawyers for the plaintiffs and government and given preliminary approval by the judge in early January.

Attorneys for the USDA and lawyers for the farmers teamed up to win approval of the settlement, and to defend it from the arguments of farmers who oppose it. Said J.L. Chestnut, one of the lead attorneys for the farmers, "This case represents a watershed for justice for Blacks." It was evident that hundreds of farmers at the hearing did not have the same opinion.

A case in point is Timothy Pigford, one of the six lead plaintiffs and a farmer from North Carolina. Speaking on behalf of the plaintiffs, he urged Judge Paul Friedman not to approve the settlement. "This will only give temporary relief to a farmer in a desperate situation," he said.

Farmers traveled to the capital from many states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

In addition, a busload of supporters traveled 22 hours from Tchula, Mississippi, to be at the hearing. Among those making the



Militant/Brian Williams

Two hundred farmers and others rallied outside court before hearing on settlement in discrimination suit. Inside, there was repeated applause as one farmer after another spoke in opposition to the proposed consent decree and demanded real redress.

trip were nine catfish workers who are fighting unjust firings in Belzoni, Mississippi, and several unionists fighting a three-year lock-out by Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas. Prior to the start of the proceedings, a spirited rally attended by some 200 people took place outside the courthouse entrance.

"USDA, it's real simple. We just want our land back," stated Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), who chaired the event.

"Justice for all or justice for none," chanted the crowd.

Dean Cook, a member of Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Local 4-227 at Crown, told the crowd, "We all have a common enemy. We realize that, so we want to back your fight." He invited the farmers to attend a May 1 solidarity rally

Continued on Page 9

Tobacco farmers hold tractorcade in N. Carolina

Some 500 tobacco farmers from eastern North Carolina participated in a tractorscade blocking traffic in downtown Raleigh March 1. The farmers demanded formal assurances from state officials that they get paid at least half the state's \$4.6 billion settlement with cigarette companies.

"We do not want to see one more tobacco farmer put out of business as the result of this attempt at prohibition of tobacco products by politicians and lawyers," said Jimmie Lee, a farmer from Johnston County who helped organize the protest.

Tosco refused to shut down refinery unit despite danger, operator charges

BY JIM ALTENBERG

MARTINEZ, California — Workers had demanded that the No. 50 crude unit at the Tosco Avon refinery here be shut down to

safely replace a leaking naphtha pipe in the days prior to the massive fire February 23 that killed four maintenance workers. The pipe, which was isolated by closed valves

and believed to be empty, turned out to be full of naphtha, which spilled out onto hot pipes below and ignited.

Oil was being processed through the crude unit at the time.

Five workers on scaffolds alongside the crude distillation tower were engulfed in flames. Ricardo Enriquez, a scaffold builder and member of the Carpenters union, was killed immediately.

Over the following three days, three more workers died from massive burns received in the blast: Ernie Pofahl, a boilermaker and member of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers (PACE); scaffold builder Rollin Blue; and Ironworker Raynold Rodacker. Another PACE member, pipefitter Steve Duncan, remains in the hospital with multiple fractures and burns.

"There's a lot more than meets the eye that you're hearing," Anthony Creggett, a head operator in the unit, told reporters February 26. "We requested [the crude unit] be shut down. I was shot down. The decisions that came for the plant came from the top, and they trickle down. This accident could have been avoided."

Creggett said that after the proposal to

Continued on Page 12

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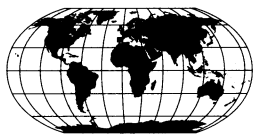
Capitalism's World Disorder
Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

BY JACK BARNES

This may be the only *millennium* title on bookstore shelves today whose purpose is not to mystify and obscure but to reveal and clarify. The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable product of lawful and understandable forces unleashed by capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store for us is not the future that inevitably must be. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. That is what this book has been written to bring closer.

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or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Welfare 'reform' leaves millions without jobs, income — page 8



IN BRIEF

N.Y. cops seize workers' cars, step up 'drug squads'

The New York City administration has put into effect two new "anticrime" measures that are bad news for working people. The new "zero tolerance drinking and driving initiative" that went into effect February 22 gives cops the authority to seize the car of anyone they stop for allegedly driving drunk. The only way to get the vehicle back is to be found innocent in a trial. Even that might not be enough. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said, "Let's say somebody is acquitted, and... there is just not quite enough evidence beyond a reasonable doubt [to prove guilt]. That might be a situation in which the car would still be forfeited." He proposed that a person acquitted on criminal charges could be charged in a civil suit, with a lower burden of proof needed for conviction, a form of double jeopardy. Their car would remain impounded. One of the first people to lose their car was an immigrant from Poland who supposedly had a blood alcohol level of just 0.01 above the legal limit. His job and immigration status may be jeopardized as a result.

Meanwhile, 600 cops around the city are being reassigned to special "war on drugs" squads, patrolling Black, Latino, and other working-class communities from East Harlem to Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Half the police will be on the beat in uniform, while undercover cops try to set people up for drug busts. It was four cops from one of these kinds of squads who killed Amadou Diallo, a young West African worker, in February in a barrage of 41 shots.

U.S. incarceration rates soar

According to a U.S. Justice Department report, there are more than 1.8 million people behind bars in the United States today — a record high within the country and the highest incarceration rate of all the imperialist countries. And the figures continue to rise.



Relatives of political prisoners rally in Seoul, south Korea, demanding their release February 22.

From 1990 to 1998, state prison populations have grown more than 60 percent. Since 1980 the number has more than tripled.

Tougher sentencing regulations adopted over the past half decade have meant longer jail terms, with ever-lessening chances for parole or appeal. The number of paroles granted to eligible prisoners fell from an already low 37 percent in 1990 to 31 percent in 1996. The average inmate spends more time in jail today than a decade ago. Prisoners who are Black, on average, spend 26 months in prison compared with 24 months for whites.

New prisons are being completed at rate of one per week, and prisons are 20 percent over capacity on average. Inmates are being assaulted by guards, such as Thomas Pizzuto in New York who was beaten to death in January while serving 90 days on traffic

violations. Corcoran state prison in California was exposed last summer for staging gladiator-style bouts between prisoners, and then using lethal force to break up the fight.

2,000 students in Lebanon protest Tel Aviv land grab

Chanting, "We are all for our nation!" 2,000 students from universities across Lebanon stormed Arnoun February 26. The southern Lebanese village was seized by Israeli soldiers February 17. Students defied warning signs of mines, posted by Tel Aviv, and marched on Arnoun carrying Lebanese flags and metal cutters to bring down the barbed wire fence Israeli troops had erected. Troops fired shots to try to disperse the students, but they remained for several hours. "Let the whole world know that Arnoun is Lebanese, the whole south is Lebanese," said Ghassan Daou, one of the first students into the village.

The Zionist forces annexed Arnoun, claiming it was a guerrilla stronghold that threatened the "security" of Israel. The land grab was reportedly the first since 1985. Tel Aviv occupies a hunk of southern Lebanon with 1,500 Israeli troops and 2,500 allied Lebanese militiamen.

Seoul releases political prisoners

Woo Yong Gak — a political prisoner in south Korea for 41 years — and 16 others were released February 25 in a publicity maneuver by Kim Dae Jung, the south Korean president. Woo, a partisan of the struggle to unify Korea, was nabbed by Seoul in 1958.

Unbroken by years of solitary confinement, deprivation, and torture during his time behind bars, Woo refused to sign a previously required "law-abiding oath," which would include agreeing to Seoul's laws barring expressions of support for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Woo said he hoped to continue work toward forging a single Korea. About 30 protesters outside the prison where Woo was held demanded the release of all political prisoners. The DPRK government has requested that the prisoners be given the right to return to the north. Kim says Seoul will only consider a prisoners exchange.

E. Timorese demand sovereignty

Thousands of supporters of East Timorese independence marched in a political funeral through the capital, Dili, February 25, carrying the bodies of two activists gunned down the day before by anti-independence, armed paramilitary forces. Some protesters held machetes and other weapons.

Indonesian president B.J. Habibie said in January he was considering granting independence to East Timor, which has been occupied by Indonesian troops since 1975. At the same time, however, the regime has pumped money to the paramilitary units that oppose independence.

Nicaragua: 340 to study in Cuba

Some 340 students from Nicaragua departed for Cuba February 27 to study medicine on scholarships from the Cuban government. All the students come from peasant backgrounds and have promised to return to their towns and villages as doctors. Cuba made the offer last December to the Nicaraguan, Honduran, Guatemalan, and Salvadoran governments as part of a program to combat the effects of Hurricane Mitch.

Inmates in Puerto Rico rebel

Several dozen inmates at the privately run Bayamón Juvenile Detention Center outside San Juan, Puerto Rico, took over two of the four prison buildings at 2:45 a.m. February 23. They demanded an end to overcrowding, better food, and medical care. The youths took seven guards hostage. Later that evening the prisoners surrendered after prison officials promised to move some inmates and hear their demands. Cops tried to claim the prison rebellion was actually started by gang rivalries.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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Ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan announces presidential campaign

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Promising a "new patriotism in America that puts country first [and] a new conservatism of the heart that puts people first," ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan declared his third campaign for U.S. president March 2.

During his Courtyard, New Hampshire, speech, Buchanan outlined themes of economic nationalism, asserting Washington's military supremacy, preparing for war against China, advocating assaults on immigrant rights and attacks on women's right to choose abortion.

Buchanan formally launched his bid in the state where he won the Republican primary in 1996. The New Hampshire victory gave his campaign momentum three years ago, and Buchanan sharpened his populist demagoguery. He spoke of leading peasants with pitchforks "coming over the hills" to overthrow the establishment.

Echoing his 1996 presidential campaign Buchanan called on his supporters once again to "mount up and ride to the sound of the guns." At the website for his presidential campaign the ultrarightist declared the "Buchanan Brigades are gathering across the nation."

The *New York Times* report on Buchanan's campaign announcement said his candidacy is "widely perceived as more of a vanity run or even a mischief run than a serious campaign." But it is deadly serious and dangerous for working people.

As in his previous campaigns, Buchanan is not running primarily to garner votes, but to recruit cadres to his "America First" demagoguery as an organizing center for an incipient fascist movement. While keeping one foot firmly planted in "normal" bourgeois politics, he at the same time appeals to the middle class and sections of the working class to draw them into the politics of resentment, of imposing radical solutions to stop the "degeneracy" and "moral decay" of the "elite."

While most Republican politicians try to change the subject following President William Clinton's impeachment acquittal, Buchanan has been bolstered. Less than two weeks before announcing his candidacy, Buchanan pledged to continue the battle staked out in the impeachment drive against Clinton that was led primarily by ultrarightists. Vowing not to abandon the trenches in this ideological offensive, Buchanan said in a February 20 column, "Politics is the last contested battlefield of our culture war."

The impeachment campaign was an attempt by a section of the U.S. rulers to take away through a "culture war" — the term Buchanan popularized in the early 1990s — what the capitalist class has been unable to wrest in the field of direct class conflict like affirmative action or a woman's right to choose abortion.

Pointing to the Clinton scandal in his campaign speech, Buchanan pledged to "clean up all that pollutes our culture."

He called for ending a woman's right to control her body, describing the right to choose abortion as a "culture of death." Buchanan also pressed for a "moratorium on immigration" and a "national campaign of assimilation" of immigrant workers.

Buchanan and Co. pushed the impeachment drive despite the fact that it weakened the U.S. presidency. This course has highlighted the deep divisions among the U.S. rulers on how to confront what they anticipate will be an explosive social crisis that may get out of their control.

"Now it's official," Buchanan said in a February 24 syndicated column. "The United States is the last great economy firing on all eight cylinders in a global collapse. America is the last domino."

"In 1997, Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea had to be bailed out with \$115 billion in International Monetary Fund loans. Last year, Russia, beneficiary of \$22 billion bailout, devalued its currency and defaulted. In January, Brazil defaulted. Comes now more disquieting news. The European Union is flagging."

Even though the U.S. business cycle has not entered a downturn, this can't last,

Buchanan said, unfurling his American nationalism. "Even if the economic answer is yes, a political question arises: Can the United States remain an importer of only resort for a world in depression in the face of our awesome and exploding trade deficit?" he asked.

"Do we allow imports to destroy our industries and kill American jobs...? Eventually, it comes down to this: Do we give up our independence — in the name of interdependence? Do we sacrifice the U.S. economy to the Global Economy? On this, Davos Republicans and Clintonites concur, but populists, patriots and true conservatives will put America first.

"Those who should pay the price of the foolish investments in Asia, Russia, and Latin America are the foolish investors themselves," he concluded. With his not-too-disguised anti-Semitism, Buchanan often picks obviously Jewish names as examples of these "investors."

Buchanan is often portrayed in the big-business press as an "isolationist" who has opposed some of the military policies of the current administration. His actual perspective is to mobilize the ultrarightist movement he is building to demand that Washington use all of its enormous firepower to back "our boys" — after first winning the war against "traitors" at home.

"It's time for the United States to reduce its commitments and rebuild its power," he declared in New Hampshire. "We alone, not UN councils or European bureaucrats decide when and where Americans go into battle. And when they do, they will fight only under American command."

In a thinly veiled threat against Beijing, Buchanan railed against "missiles now targeted at U.S. troops in South Korea and Okinawa." At his campaign website he admonished the Clinton administration "policy that wastes \$10 billion policing the Balkans, but cannot spare a dime to keep Communist China from encroaching on the Panama Canal."

Over the past two months Buchanan has waged a campaign to prepare for military action against China in his weekly syndicated columns. "Critical U.S. weapons technology go into machines of war that Beijing prepares for use on Americans," he wrote in a January 30 article.

"Is China preparing for a clash with United States over Taiwan?" Buchanan asked two weeks later. He suggested Washington launch air and cruise missiles on the Chinese workers state in the event Beijing moves to retake territory it considers a province of China.

In a dress rehearsal the day before announcing his 2000 presidential campaign, Buchanan toured the Weirton Steel Corp. plant in West Virginia. "To those who call me a protectionist," he declared in his New Hampshire speech, "I will use the trade laws of this country and my authority as president to protect the jobs of our workers...and no global trade authority will keep me from doing my job."

BY TONY LANE

WEIRTON, West Virginia — Patrick Buchanan spent March 1 campaigning in this Ohio Valley steel town with an escort of national and international media. Buchanan began with a tour of Weirton Steel, the local steelmaker that dominates the town. Eight hundred of its over 4,000 employees have been laid off since November.

Buchanan then spoke to a packed audience of more than 600 in the community center in town. The crowd included many steelworkers from Weirton and also students from local schools.

Signs in the area announce the "Stand Up for Steel" campaign, promoted locally by steelmakers Weirton Steel and Wheeling Pitt and the leadership of the two unions — the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and Independent Steelworkers Union (ISU). The ISU is the union at Weirton Steel, a company that was bought out through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan. Activities in the area as part of the Stand Up for Steel

More than 1,000 people protest cop killing of Tyisha Miller in California



Militant/Elizabeth Lariscy

More than 1,000 people marched and rallied in Riverside, California, February 24 to protest the police killing of Tyisha Miller. The march was one of several protest actions that have occurred since Miller was killed December 28. Police shot 24 bullets into Miller's car as she slept, 12 of which hit her.

campaign have included petitions and anti-import protests by steelworkers in Washington, D.C.

Leaders of the ISU accompanied Buchanan on his tour of the plant. The ultrarightist politician spoke in front of a banner reading: "The I.S.U. welcomes Pat Buchanan." Around the hall signs declared "Free traders are traitors," "Pat Buchanan Stands up for Steel," and "Don't Let Clinton 'Steel' Our Jobs." Many in attendance wore caps and T-shirts that said "Stand up for Steel — Stand up for America."

In his presentation, Buchanan railed imports from Brazil, Russia, and Japan and targeted so-called bailouts by the International Monetary Fund to "pay back Wall Street." Buchanan said his message to Clinton was "Keep your word and do your duty. Put quotas across-the-board on foreign steel and steel products."

He continued on the theme of defending the "people" against the "elite." To a steelworker who asked, "Why does the *Wall Street Journal* say that the steel industry is obsolete?" Buchanan replied, "What street's interest do you think the *Wall Street Journal* has?"

Buchanan's anti-Semitism was quite thinly veiled. He singled out for praise a hand-lettered sign that read, "Rubin and Judas, Two of a kind," referring to Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

Buchanan spoke of "work, family, faith, community, and country" as the values of former Republican president Ronald Reagan. "Isn't that what Weirton is all about?" he asked.

At a recent Senate steel caucus hearing in Pittsburgh, Independent Steelworkers president Mark Glyptis said that if Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore "came to Weirton, I would personally throw him out of town." Weirton is heavily Democratic.

One person in praising Buchanan said, "I read all you columns." As *The Intelligencer* of Wheeling, West Virginia, reported, "Buchanan captured the attention of Ohio Valley steelworkers in November when he wrote a column describing the plight of the industry."

Buchanan also spoke of the importance of steel to the war industry asking, "Could we have won World War II if we hadn't had steel?" and pointing to the large percentage of world production of steel that the U.S. was responsible for.

During questions, Buchanan launched an attack on "Chinese communists" who he said have a \$60 billion trade surplus with the U.S. and "target American marines in Okinawa." This surplus was being used to develop missiles, he stated. To applause, Buchanan said the actions by the administration in relation to trade with China were "close to treason."

One questioner who didn't get a full answer was a steelworker who identified himself as being from the Wheeling Pitt plant in Steubenville, Ohio, who spoke of their ten-and-a-half month strike and asked Buchanan whether he supported legislation against replacement workers. Buchanan's response was that "if it's a legitimate strike for legitimate reasons, they deserve their jobs back."

A girl and her father also spoke to Buchanan, the father identifying himself as a professor at the Franciscan University in Steubenville. Large numbers of students from that campus participate in a mass antichoice picket on a regular basis at abortion clinics in downtown Pittsburgh. He presented Buchanan a book on defending "family values" and commented on the importance of discussing the economy and the family. Buchanan invited them up to the stage.

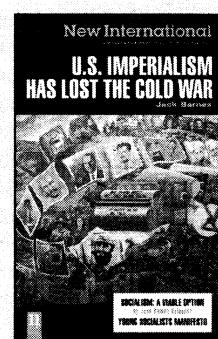
Tony Lane is a member of USWA.

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Jack Barnes

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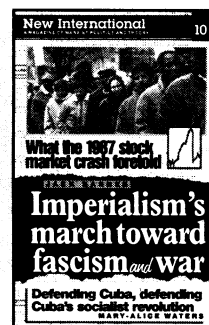
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Workers buy 'Militant' at Illinois plants

Supporters of the socialist press are entering the final week of a month-long campaign to get 275 subscription renewals to the *Militant* and 85 renewals to *Perspectiva Mundial* and sell copies of the two publications. To make the renewal goals we need to sell 100 renewals to the *Militant* and 57 renewals to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Organizing teams like the ones reported below will help ensure the campaign ends in success.

BY LEAH FINGER

CHICAGO — Socialist workers and members of the Young Socialists in Illinois have embarked on a special ten-day campaign to sell hundreds of copies of *Militant* no. 9 and discuss politics with the workers, farmers, miners, and youth across the region.

In addition to coverage on the upturn in working-class resistance and the fight by Black farmers, issue no. 9 features a tribute to Rodney Garman, a member of United Auto Workers Local 974 and a longtime leader of the fight against the Caterpillar bosses' attacks on the union. Garman died February 15.

Many *Militant* supporters were inspired by the example Garman had set as a vanguard fighter and felt his story should be told to as many new combatants as possible.

On February 27 the first Saturday of the campaign, sales teams visited the picket line at Tazewell Machine in Pekin, Illinois, and sold at two Caterpillar plants in Peoria. Workers bought 50 papers during the afternoon shift change. The following day a team sold 18 papers at the Bridgestone/Firestone tire plant in Normal, Illinois, and another team sold 13 papers at LTV steel in Whiting, Indiana. By the end of the weekend, nearly 100 papers had been bought by industrial workers.

Team members used their sales trips to tell other workers about the expanded picket line at Tazewell Machine on March 1. As a result two workers from one of the Cat plants came and joined with the couple of dozen Caterpillar workers who were also there.

Workers at the picket line purchased 13 papers and a subscription.

Beginning that afternoon two *Militant* supporters volunteered to use the week to visit Caterpillar workers and sell this issue at plant gates and mine portals. That night they visited a worker at Caterpillar who had been illegally terminated and is now back to work, and his wife. After a two-and-half-hour discussion they bought a one-year subscription and a half-dozen papers to give to other Caterpillar workers.

On Wednesday morning, March 3, at the Freeman United Crown No. 2 mine in Virden, a sales team sold nine papers, including one to a miner who gave \$10 for the *Militant*. Several of the miners had bought the paper the week before, and wanted the new issue. Later that afternoon the team sold at the Caterpillar plant in Decatur, where workers bought 16 papers in blustery conditions.

Then the team was invited to dinner by a UAW member from the Decatur plant. The socialist activists talked with him and his family about the history of the UAW struggle against Caterpillar from the '70s on, what the children of the strikers did during the strike and what workers face today. He bought extra copies of the papers to give to co-workers. So far, discussions with Caterpillar workers have resulted in the team selling three subscription renewals to the *Militant* and 150 copies of the paper.

BY DAG TIRSÉN

KIRUNA, Sweden — A group of *Militant* supporters traveled to this iron ore mining town in the extreme north of Sweden. In 1969-70 it was the scene of a eight-week-long strike, which also involved mines in Svappavaara and Malmberget. The battle attracted huge publicity and a wave of solidarity swept the country.

For many years the miners union has been in a retreat, and a few years ago it merged with the Metal Workers union. When social-

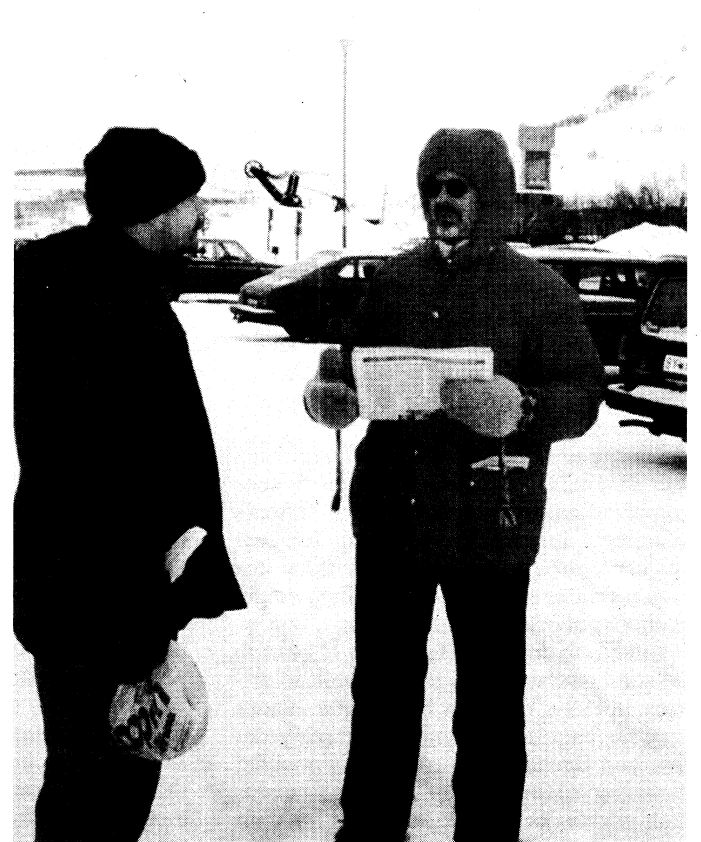
ist workers spoke to the miners at the portal we were told how the union in the Kiruna mine had been involved in a fight with the company over work hours last fall. Miners told us how the union had canceled a program for joint management with the company. In part of the mine the production stopped. The company was forced to retreat on its demands, and the workers gained some confidence in their strength. Asked if that fight meant that the union woke up, one of the miners responded, "Yes, you can say that."

The support for the bus drivers' fight was strong (see article on page 10). One miner who was the first woman to work underground, and participated in the 1969 strike, said, "I really support the bus drivers."

Many of them showed interest in the *Militant* as a newspaper that reports on workers' fights and takes the workers' side. For some of them it was only the language problem that prevented them from buying, as English was their third language after Finnish and Swedish.

In the evening *Militant* supporters went door to door and sold six copies of the paper, after a lot of discussions about the bus drivers strike and what it meant for other workers. One person who worked at the hospital said, "The hospital workers will be next to fight; the budget cuts have made conditions unbearable."

The next day the team went to Svappavaara, a small village built at the Leväniemi mine. The mine is now closed and it is only the mill that makes pellets of the



Selling *Militant* to miners in Kiruna, northern Sweden.

Kiruna iron ore that runs. The village where 1,200 people used to live, today has only 350 inhabitants. We sold three *Militants* and one copy of *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* in Swedish.

A team of *Militant* supporters sold 11 copies of the paper at the Tosco refinery plant gate in Avon, California, where an explosion occurred killing three workers. "This is a cold-blooded outfit," one worker said. A lab worker remarked, "I lost a good friend. The company wants to operate with a hundred less people, working them 18 hours a day." A number of workers who didn't stop raised their fists in solidarity.

Socialist candidate joins labor struggles in Chicago

BY JOHN STUDER

CHICAGO, Illinois — "More and more working people are entering into combat against our employers and the government," said Joshua Carroll, launching his campaign as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Chicago January 30. "A new vanguard of workers and farmers are emerging in these struggles, looking from their own battles to solidarity in action with others, and searching for answers to the broader crisis being created by the death agony of capitalism today."

"We are running to give voice to this vanguard and to offer a fighting action program to advance the interests of our class in the political arena," Carroll added.

Carroll's campaign released a general issues brochure in English and Spanish, and statements supporting the fight of working farmers, discussing how best to defend the jobs and working conditions of steelworkers, and condemning the death penalty.

Carroll, 26, works at the blast furnace at LTV Steel in East Chicago, Indiana. He is a member of United Steelworkers Union Local 1011. His campaign has generated a lot of discussion on the job, where co-workers follow his campaign literature closely.

After announcing his campaign, Carroll took a week leave of absence from work to take the socialist program out to workers and students across Illinois. He took his campaign to the Peabody Marissa Mine in Marissa, the Zeigler 11 Mine in Coulterville, and the Arch Conant Mine in Conant, Illinois. At Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Carroll and supporters set up a campaign booth. One student, Lucky, decided to build a meeting for Carroll to speak on the campus, which is scheduled for after the February 23 election.

On February 3, six members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308, which organizes the subway section of the Chicago public transit system, met with Carroll at the home of one of the workers. Carroll had just come from a downtown rally in solidarity with strikers at Lenc-Smith in Cicero, Illinois, and gave a report on the fight there and the

perspectives of the socialist campaign. In the discussion that followed, Carroll explained how important it was that groups of workers, even if small, got together to talk about these struggles and figure out ways to build solidarity with them.

"I'm not very political, but I agree with what you were saying about solidarity," Cleo Smith, a CTA repairman, said at the end of the meeting. "I came because I thought I would learn something, and I did."

Carroll visited the picket lines at Tool and Engineering in Chicago a number of times during his campaign. The strikers are members of Steelworkers Local 15271 and have been out since last November. Some strikers are recent émigrés from Yugoslavia and were especially interested in Carroll's stand against U.S. troops being sent to intervene there. Someone came to the picket line with a lawn sign for Richard Daley, the incumbent Mayor, and was shooed away by strikers reading Carroll's brochure.

Carroll was invited to address six classes at Kewaskum High School in Kewaskum, Wisconsin, which generated a lively debate.

On the weekend before the election, Carroll attended two rallies in defense of José Solís Jordan, a Puerto Rican professor who is facing frame-up charges of conspiracy and destruction of government property (see article on back page). Carroll is planning to attend as much of the trial as his work schedule permits.

A number of people who heard about the campaign expressed interest in helping spread the political perspectives of the socialist campaign after the election. Chicago-based Radio Guatemala is planning to broadcast an interview with Carroll. Students at DePaul University, who met the socialist campaign at a street table, have set up a meeting for March 4 for Carroll to speak on the campus.

Because of undemocratic election laws in Chicago designed to keep working-class candidates off the ballot, Carroll was a write-in candidate for mayor.

John Studer is a member of USWA Local 1011.

Militant and Perspectiva Mundial										
Renewal/Single Issue Circulation Drive February 6-March 7										
	Sub renewal			Single issues						
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	
Australia	4	5	125%	1	2	20	34			2
Canada										
Montreal	1	2	200%	2	1	22	29	5		2
Vancouver	7	7	100%			40	36			
Toronto	8	7	88%	1	3	50	57	5		5
Canada Total	16	16	100%	3	4	112	122	10		7
Iceland	3	3	100%			4	0			
New Zealand										
Christchurch	3	3	100%			25	18			
Auckland	5	2	40%			25	28			1
N.Z. Total	8	5	63%			50	46			1
United States										
Pittsburgh	8	12	150%	2	0	40	7			
Miami*	15	16	107%	4	1	30	16	5		1
Boston	8	8	100%	3	3	30	30	3		1
Des Moines	8	7	88%	4	0	40		15		
Philadelphia	8	7	88%	2	0	45	33	2		2
Chicago	15	11	73%	5	0	60	133	8		5
Washington, D.C.	15	11	73%	4	3	40	19	3		
Los Angeles	20	14	70%	8	4	80	63	8		0
Seattle	14	9	64%	3	1	40	16	2		10
San Francisco	13	8	62%	8	0	70	53	15		1
Twin Cities, MN	10	6	60%	2	1	45		3		
Atlanta	7	4	57%	3	1	55	18	4		3
Birmingham, AL	14	6	43%	2	1	45	33	1		0
Detroit	10	4	40%	2	1	50	18			1
Houston	8	3	38%	2	1	40	10	5		0
Newark, NJ	25	9	36%	10	1	100		5		
New York	30	8	27%	13	3	115		25		
Cleveland	4	1	25%	1	0	40	32	2		0
U.S. Total	232	144	62%	78	21	965	481	106		24
United Kingdom										
London	10	4	40%	2	0	50	31			
Manchester	3		0%			30				
UK Total	13	4	31%	2	0	80				
Sweden	3	0	0%	1	0	23	20			
Int'l totals	279	177	63%	85	27	1254	703	116		34
Int'l goals/ should be	275	206	75%	85	64	1250		100		

Miami: No to U.S. gov't attack on Cuba's right to communicate

BY BILL KALMAN

MIAMI — On February 25 a joint press conference organized by the Antonio Maceo Brigade (BAM), the Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community (ATC), the cultural group Rescate Cultural Afrocubano, and the Miami Coalition against the Cuban Embargo was held here to protest the decision of U.S. District Judge James King to freeze some \$19 million owed by five U.S. phone companies to Cuba. The judge's decision is yet another violation of Cuba's sovereign rights by Washington, the speakers argued.

The five carriers — AT&T, MCI, LDDS, IDB, and WILTEL — have withheld payments due since December 1998, pending a final decision by King on whether or not to confiscate the money they owe ETECSA, Cuba's phone company, for long-distance calls from the United States. ETECSA, which stands for Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba S.A., is a joint venture between the Cuban government and an Italian phone company. The seized money would go to relatives of three members of the counter-revolutionary "Brothers to the Rescue" group who were shot down while violating Cuban airspace in 1996. The relatives of these rightist terrorists were awarded \$187 million in damages by the federal court in Miami in 1997, but have not been able to collect a penny from the Cuban government. King is to hear final arguments in the case this week.

With the U.S. threat of not paying ETECSA for calls that have already been placed for the last quarter of last year, the Cuban government had no choice but to shut down phone service from these carriers to the island. At 12:01 am on February 25 all direct dial circuits owned by the five phone companies were cut off. Two carriers, Sprint and TLDI from Puerto Rico, continue to provide service because they have been making payments despite the court case.

The *Miami Herald* reported on a statement from the Cuban Foreign Ministry that "the Cuban government considers this a totally reasonable position." In fact, Cuba had been warning U.S. authorities for weeks that it would cut off phone links if this legal

robbery occurred.

"We protest this move to prevent normal relations between Cuban emigrants in the U.S. and their families in Cuba," said BAM leader Andres Gomez at the press conference. "The decision by Judge King to freeze the money due to Cuba from the telephone companies is an attack against our fundamental right to communicate with our relatives."

'Brothers' provocation

King, who made the original ruling against the Republic of Cuba and the Cuban Air Force, has been intent on finding ways to collect on his judgment. February 24 marks the third anniversary of the Brothers to the Rescue provocation that resulted in the shootdown of two pirate aircraft. The big business press like the *Miami Herald* has tried to use the anniversary to continue its attacks on the Cuban revolution. A *Herald* editorial on February 23 states, "If phones go dead, it's Cuba's fault. Make it pay for shooting down innocent civilians."

Gomez answered these slanders, "Today, we continue to maintain that those who are responsible for the shooting down of the two Brothers to the Rescue planes over Cuban territory are those who organized that operation, participated in it, encouraged it, and permitted it to take place."

The U.S. State Department has opposed the relatives' attempts to garnish Cuban funds, arguing that this would damage the claims of U.S. property owners expropriated by the Cuban government in the 1960s. A 17-page brief filed by the Justice Department states that the U.S. trade embargo prohibits any financial dealings with Cuba, including garnishments. U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright argued, "It is one of those things where we've had to balance the larger national interest against theirs [the relatives]." The U.S. government has only allowed U.S. phone companies to directly pay Cuba for direct-dial services since 1994.

The best answer to the slander that Havana was to blame for the deaths of the Brothers to the Rescue provocateurs was given in a speech by Cuban foreign minister



Tony Savino

Press conference February 25 in Miami denounced U.S. gov't attack on Cuban sovereignty

Roberto Robaina to a special session of the United Nations general assembly on March 6, 1996. The speech was printed in the April 1, 1996, issue of the *Militant*.

After documenting the "long history of aggression" directed against Cuba by the U.S. rulers since 1959, Robaina takes up the incident of Feb. 24, 1996, in great detail. He explained that twice in the month before the shootdown, on January 9 and 13, Brothers to the Rescue pirate aircraft "dropped over the city of Havana tens of thousands of flyers...exhorting the population to carry out actions against the Cuban constitutional

order." The Cuban leader continued, "We actually begged the US government to do all in its power to prevent those flights, which violated not only our laws, but also the laws of the United States."

Robaina declared, "My country has every right not to tolerate the impermissible. We exercise the same sovereign right of all states to defend the territorial integrity of our country, its sovereignty, and the peace of our citizens."

Bill Kalman is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1138.

Frame-up trial opens in Chicago

Continued from Page 16

community and anyone who is active teaching the truth about U.S. colonial occupation of Puerto Rico. Underlining the stakes involved for the entire Puerto Rican community and the democratic rights of all, he urged everyone present to attend the trial and help finance the defense.

Nearly \$2,700 was raised from donations, pledges, and in proceeds from the dinner. Latinos United, a student organization at Columbia University, announced they would be meeting their pledge through fund-raising activities on campus.

Many of the meetings in the last few weeks were organized as lectures focusing on the history of U.S. colonial plebiscites in Puerto Rico up through the most recent one last December and how the U.S. government holds power over every decision to date on Puerto Rico's status. At the meeting at DePaul University, the discussion afterwards lasted more than an hour. The question, "Why won't they let Puerto Rico be free?" came up in every meeting.

Other public meetings centered on what this case is about. In them Solís emphasized, "This case is not about me and they know it. This case is just the next one for this moment in a long chain of people who know that Puerto Rico has a right to self-determination. It will not be done until the U.S. recognizes our right to be free and our right to

have our political prisoners at home where they belong. We will not be silenced."

On March 1 across the street from the trial, "Grand Jury, FBI, U.S. Justice is a lie," was the chant of 40 protesters in front of the Dirksen Federal Building marching to the beat of percussion by supporters of the Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School.

Mervin Méndez of the Committee in Solidarity with José Solís led off the rally tying the current FBI harassment with the experiences of the Puerto Rican community with the city red squads and Cointelpro activities in the 1960s and '70s.

Supporters are urged to attend the trial Mondays through Thursdays 9:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m. at the Dirksen Federal Building at Jackson and Dearborn in Chicago in the courtroom of Blanche Manning Room 2125. It is estimated the trial will run for several weeks.

Contributions to Solís defense fund can be sent to José Solís Jordán Defense Fund, c/o The Law Offices of Jed Stone, 434 W. Ontario, Suite 400 Chicago, IL 60610.

The Committee in Solidarity with José Solís Jordán is at P.O. Box 577826 Chicago, IL 60657-7826 (312) 409-0801. Updates by the committee are available at www.defendsolis.org. E-mail can be directed to solis42566@aol.com.

Pattie Thompson is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Washington bombs Iraq

Continued from front page

sition to the "no-fly zones" imposed by the imperialists. "We reaffirm once again that Iraq never will recognize the so-called no-fly zones imposed on it in an unjust and aggressive manner," said Uday al Tai, head of the official Iraqi news agency. Al Tai's remarks came after U.S. jets fired missiles at two Iraqi defense sites February 25.

On January 26 the Clinton administration announced its military can attack Iraq defense installations whenever its pilots deem necessary regardless of whether Iraqi planes travel into the "no-fly zones" or radar track imperialist intruders. "Our response need simply be against the particular source of the violation," declared Samuel Berger, the president's national security adviser. He said U.S. jets have the prerogative to attack "any [part] of the [Iraqi] air defense system that we think makes us vulnerable."

Now Washington has given its pilots the green light to bomb communication facilities not connected with the country's air defense system, which included four vans loaded with computers. "The pilots have been given greater flexibility to attack those systems which place them in jeopardy," U.S. war secretary William Cohen announced March 1.

Despite its relentless assault on Iraq, Washington remains further away from its aim of overthrowing the government of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. With few other military options short of a full-scale ground invasion, the Clinton administration has been waging a military operation to steadily destroy the country's infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-led sanctions remain in place, strangling the Iraqi people. Paris has proposed lifting the sanctions if Baghdad agrees to a new "international monitoring system" that disintegrated after

Washington's December blitz of bombs and missiles. French oil companies had prominent trade positions in the Gulf region before the embargo was imposed.

In defiance of Washington's Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, Elf Aquitaine of France and Eni of Italy signed a deal worth nearly \$1 billion with Tehran to refurbish a giant crude oil field of Iran's Kharg Island. The protectionist U.S. law threatens sanctions against any country that invests more than \$20 million in Iran or Libya.

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Toronto: worker fights cop frame-up, deportation threat

BY JOHN STALEY

TORONTO — After serving 23 months of a 28-month sentence in Collins Bay penitentiary, 27-year-old Clifton Richards is waiting for three judges to rule on his February 4 appeal to overturn his frame-up conviction of assaulting cops and resisting arrest. Because of his conviction, the Department of Immigration has ordered his deportation back to Jamaica. The deportation order has been stayed pending the court's decision. Richards has been a permanent resident in Canada since he was eight years old.

"They have convicted the whole family. We've been through hell over the past three years," Richards's companion, Angela Chung, told TV reporters on the steps of the court house after the appeal. With her was their five-year-old daughter, Cheyenne.

It was Richards's word against that of Constable Scott Aikman during his trial in February 1997. At that time Judge Paul Pickett of the Ontario Court ruled that Richards "was not ... a credible witness," and found him guilty.

Richards has explained that on the afternoon of Dec. 10, 1996, he was driving the family van accompanied by three friends. Aikman began to tail Richards, who pulled into a gas station. At this point his friends left. Aikman, who was watching from across the street, wrote in his notebook: "Male black driver, 25, wearing dark hat and yellow coat ... front passenger male, black 25 ... with short dreadlocks," and a female with "long dreads."

Aikman accused Richards of driving a stolen van, demanded his ID, and told him

to get into the cruiser. When Richards refused, he was attacked by Aikman, who used his club. Richards tried to run but was quickly cornered. Aikman drew his gun calling out, "Freeze, nigger, or I'll blow your brains out." Richards was pepper sprayed, handcuffed, and beaten. In the hospital after his arrest, the doctor told Angela Chung that Richards may have been badly beaten in the head. He had in fact sustained injuries to his neck, shoulder, and head.

Aikman claims Richards was speeding, that he was stopped legally under the Highway Traffic Act, and the cop was the victim of an unprovoked attack by Richards, whom he thought was armed. Richards was not armed. Witnesses said he was not speeding. He was not driving a stolen vehicle.

Another case of "driving while Black"

Members of the Chung family and representatives of the African-Canadian Legal Clinic, an organization of Black lawyers that is backing Richards's appeal, attended the Ontario Court of Appeal hearing at the court house in downtown Toronto.

Defense lawyer David Tanovich argued that Richard's arrest in 1996 was illegal since the circumstantial evidence showed that it was not based on alleged offenses under the Highway Traffic Act, but was in reality a criminal investigation by the cops based solely on the color of Richard's skin.

A representative of the African-Canadian Legal Clinic told the court that the 1995 Ontario provincial Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System reported that Black men between the

ages of 25 and 40 are much more likely than white or Chinese men to be pulled over by cops. That study showed that nearly 50 percent of young Black men reported being stopped by police two or more times in two years.

In response, the government lawyer argued social context was not relevant, and that with two completely divergent stories and no witnesses to the arrest, it was completely legitimate for the judge to rely on witness credibility, and therefore the word of the cop.

The determination of Richards and the Chung family to fight for justice fits into a pattern of broader resistance to growing cop violence and judicial frame ups against working people. For example, after 18 months in jail for a murder he did not commit, 26-year-old Randy Wilson, who is Black, was recently freed by the Ontario Court after the only alleged witness admitted to fabricating her story. Wilson may take legal action against the cops. "I don't want to leave it like this because it'll just end up happening to somebody else," he said.

These cases represent the tip of an iceberg. This reporter found out about the Richard's case months before it hit the me-



Militant/John Staley
Clifton Richards and Angela Chung protest frame-up and deportation at press conference in Toronto.

dia because one of Angela Chung's relatives is a co-worker at an auto parts plant. Many workers there who are Black have had similar experiences to that of Richards.

After reading an article on the case in the February 2 *Globe and Mail*, a number related their own experiences. Most did not want their names used in the *Militant*, either because they fear retaliation by the cops or because they felt the issues raised were too controversial.

"I would never pull over if a cop told me to unless there were lots of lights and people around," said Donovan Smith, an assembler at the plant for 13 years. "Blacks are scared for their lives when they are stopped. And if you fight the cops, they win. You have to protest, but they win."

"I have been stopped many times. The last time was December 29 driving home from work after a 12-hour shift," said a mechanic who has lived in Canada since he emigrated from Jamaica 30 years ago. "Even before they ask for your car registration they want to know if you really own the car. They assume because you're Black that it's stolen."

"Cops always go after Sri Lankans and other Black people," said another worker. "I know from my own experience."

"It's not the individual cop. It's the system," a worker born in Eritria said. "They are trained to see all Blacks as criminals."

Some co-workers who are white had sharply different views. "You can't judge all cops on the basis of the action of one or two police," argued another assembler. "There are racist cops, but to label all cops as racist is like being racist against the cops."

The African-Canadian Legal Clinic has called for support for Richards. The clinic can be reached at (416) 214-4747.

John Staley is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 2113.

Death row prisoner is exonerated in Illinois

BY JOHN STUDER

CHICAGO — After serving almost 17 years on Illinois death row, Anthony Porter was released February 5 after a professor and students at the Northwestern University department of journalism exposed the fact that he had been railroaded to prison by the Chicago cops and the State Attorney's office. They amassed clear evidence that Porter was innocent — including an affidavit from the state's central witness against Porter that he had been browbeaten for 15 hours by the cops into giving false testimony to frame Porter, and a videotape of a Milwaukee man confessing he had committed the shooting Porter was sentenced to death for.

"We start by blaming the police for the worst kind of railroading I've ever seen," David Protess, the Northwestern professor who led the journalism school group that broke open the case, told reporters after Porter was freed. The evidence showed Anthony Liace, the Chicago cop who pointed at Porter at his trial in 1983 and identified him as running from the scene of the shooting, lied on the stand. Porter was at home playing cards with his nieces and nephews.

Porter's attorney, E. Duke O'Neill, decided to let the trial judge, who had a reputation as a "hanging judge," rather than the

jury rule on whether Porter would be executed or sentenced to life in prison. O'Neill made this decision, according to affidavits collected by the journalism school team, because it required less work on his part and he had not been paid his full fee by the Porter family.

Porter had been scheduled for execution Sept. 23, 1998. Two days before, the Illinois Supreme Court granted Porter's attorneys more time to show that he was not mentally fit to stand trial. When Porter, who is Black, was released from Cook County Jail, he was greeted by Dennis Williams, another former Illinois death row inmate, as well as by family. Others present included Rolando Cruz, who had won freedom after 10 years on death row, David Protess, and Northwestern students.

Porter's case has reignited a debate in Illinois over the death penalty. Since 1977, when the death penalty was reinstated here, 11 people have been put to death and 10 have been freed after their convictions were torn apart. While Blacks make up only 10 percent of the population of Illinois, 102 of the 161 prisoners on death row today are African Americans. Some forces refuse to admit there are any problems in Porter's case. The Chicago cops, for instance, are refusing to review their handling of the case.

Governor George Ryan, who initially reacted by saying that the freeing of Porter showed that "the system worked," now says he will call a "summit meeting" of state officials to "study the system."

Chicago mayor Richard Daley, the former State's Attorney whose office prosecuted Anthony Porter and who has called himself "pro-death," has called for a temporary postponement of executions while the cases of those currently on death row are reviewed. Others have called for a one-year moratorium on executions to allow for review of the process of capital punishment. State Representative Coy Pugh has submitted a bill to this effect.

The Chicago *Sun-Times* ran an op-ed article by Seymour Simon, a former Illinois Supreme Court justice, calling on the governor to stop executions while a committee composed of the state attorney general, the seven members of the Supreme Court, the majority leader of the state Senate, and the speaker of the House studies what has "gone wrong with" the death penalty in Illinois.

Demonstrators disrupted the Chicago City Council meeting February 10, holding up banners reading "Moratorium Now."

"My party, the Socialist Workers Party, supports every step that stops executions," Joshua Carroll, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, said in a statement. "At the same time, we oppose proposals to use a temporary moratorium to set up a 'blue ribbon panel' to clean up the death penalty. The goal of these proposals is to let the public outcry subside and to institute minor reforms in order to win acquiescence to continued use of the death penalty, allowing the state to get back to the business of murder and intimidation."

"The only answer to the anti-working-class horror of the death penalty is to abolish it, today, once and for all," Carroll said. He explained the death penalty "is a weapon of terror wielded by the ruling class and its courts against the working class, especially Blacks and Latinos, in order to keep them cowed." He added that the rulers are "preparing to use it more, not less, as battles over jobs, wages, entitlements, and democratic rights heat up today."

Pointing to the fact that the state plans to execute Andrew Kokoraleis on March 17, Carroll urged workers to use the victory in Porter's case to fight to stop this killing.

John Studer is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1011.

Boston rally: no death penalty

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON — "Paul Cellucci, we say no, the death penalty has to go!" chanted 150 people in front of the Massachusetts State House on February 17. The action was in response to Governor Paul Cellucci, who the day before introduced a bill that called for death by lethal injection for 16 different categories of first-degree murder.

"Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal," "Stop Legal Lynching," and "Stop the Racist Death Penalty," read some of the signs at the February 17 rally.

A death penalty bill has been introduced and defeated in the Massachusetts State legislature nine times since 1990. In 1998 the death penalty bill nearly became law when the House voted it up by one vote. A week later one legislator switched his vote in a vote to reconsider, and the bill failed.

On February 6, anticipating Cellucci would introduce a death penalty bill this session of the legislature, more than 250

people, most of them youths, rallied in front of the State House.

At Cellucci's press conference where he announced the new bill, the governor described those convicted of murder as "monsters" who "do not deserve hope." Many speakers at the rally took this up. One speaker called on people to "reject Cellucci's politics of scapegoating and resentment."

Most of the speakers and participants at the rally were students from area colleges and universities. Addressing the rally, Aaron Judge, a student from Wellesley College, described the death penalty as "racist and classist." She also explained the main reason young people and students are against the death penalty is because "we refuse to embrace the cynicism of the legislature, instead we embrace hope for the future."

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

From Pathfinder



FBI on Trial

The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying

EDITED BY

MARGARET

JAYKO

The victory in the case fought from 1973 to 1987 "increases the space for

politics, expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases the confidence of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it's your right to do so and act upon them"—from the introduction.

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Walfrido Moreno: a tireless partisan of Cuban revolution for half a century

BY ERNIE MAILHOT
AND RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI — More than 125 people came together at the Airport Hilton hotel here February 21 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Walfrido Moreno, president of the Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community (ATC) for two decades. Moreno died in Havana, Cuba, January 31. He was 83 years old.

"Moreno will always be present. Down with the blockade!" read a banner behind the speakers' platform, referring to Washington's economic war on Cuba.

Andrés Gómez, head of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a Miami-based organization of Cubans who support the Cuban revolution, chaired the meeting. Daisy Moreno, Walfrido's wife and an activist in the Alliance of Workers in the Cuban Community; Oscar Ochotorena, who represented the leadership of the ATC; and Luis Miranda, president of Casa de las Américas in New York City, joined Gómez on the stage. The gathering was conducted in Spanish with simultaneous translation into English and Creole.

The majority of participants were Cubans. Others who collaborated with Moreno in the last 30 years in organizing opposition to Washington's cold war against the Cuban people came not only from Miami but from as far as Atlanta, Houston, and New York.

In a moving talk, Miranda described Moreno's early years. At a reception after the meeting he gave *Militant* reporters addi-

tional information. Moreno came from a working-class family that immigrated to the United States in the 1940s. He was a barber at a shop near New York's Lincoln Center. That's where Miranda met Moreno in 1949.

group of July 26 Movement supporters, including Moreno, who were on the *Orion*, a ship transporting aid to the Rebel Army. Washington confiscated arms on board and impounded the vessel, even



Militant/Eric Simpson

Above, Casa de las Américas president Luis Miranda gives July 26 Movement flag to Daisy Moreno, Walfrido's wife and activist in ATC, at February 21 meeting in Miami to honor Moreno's life and political contributions.



Tony Savino

Left, ATC president Moreno (right) at Miami rally demanding an end to the U.S. embargo on Cuba, mid-1990s. Speaking is Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade.

Below left, 1959 picket line outside United Nations in New York, demanding Washington not allow former dictator Fulgencio Batista, whose regime Cuban workers and peasants had just overthrown, into the U.S. Walfrido Moreno was among main organizers of action. He had organized earlier protests denouncing U.S. military aid to Batista. Luis Miranda of Casa de las Américas is seen on left with sign: "The dictators fear Cuba's example of freedom."



Granma

though it was intercepted in international waters, 17 miles off the Texas coast, according to Miranda. "We campaigned for the release of the ship and those arrested," the president of Casa de las Américas stated. "But we didn't succeed." Moreno did time in jail for that courageous act.

After the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, Moreno moved back to the island, where he lived for a period of time and worked in the merchant marine. He returned to the United States in the late 1960s, resuming his lifelong activities in the belly of the beast to defend the revolution and to broaden opposition to U.S. government policies towards Cuba.

Founding, leading the ATC

In his remarks, Andrés Gómez focused on this part of Moreno's life.

For a long time after the revolution the Cuban community in the United States was dominated by the counterrevolution, Gómez said, by capitalists and landlords who fled Cuba after workers and peasants took power and begun transforming society and themselves. "The Cuban community was dominated completely by those who opposed our nation's struggle for independence, against U.S. domination." There were few exceptions among Cubans in the U.S. in the decade or two after 1959. One of the most important was Casa de las Américas in New York, which has fought Washington's criminal policies towards Cuba for decades. In Miami, Gómez said, the Antonio Maceo Brigade was the main organization of Cubans defending the socialist revolution.

"But something broader was needed," he added, "an organization that could bring together all those who wanted to act to bring about normalization of relations between the two countries and an end to the U.S. blockade."

That's what the ATC accomplished with its founding in 1978. Moreno was one of its main founders and served as its president through the end of his life. The ATC's work has included helping Cuban-Americans travel to Cuba to visit their families, collecting material aid, and organizing and participating in protests against the U.S. embargo.

Under Moreno's leadership, the ATC succeeded in organizing a larger number of Cuban-Americans to get actively involved in opposing Washington's attempts to strangle the revolution. Many who joined the ATC over the years were primarily interested in questions such as travel to see their families on the island. The ATC not only helped facilitate travel to Cuba for Cuban-Americans but fought to change the U.S. laws that denied or greatly restricted

this democratic right to U.S. residents and citizens. The ATC helped people understand that they should fight not only for their family but for all families in Cuba. "This was an important opening," stated Gómez, "because the major contradiction was not between Cuban-Americans and the revolution. It was between them and the U.S. authorities. It was between them and the counter-revolutionaries in Miami."

After the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries cut off trade with Cuba at the opening of the 1990s, triggering a severe economic crisis that Cubans refer to as the "Special Period," many in Miami and throughout the United States predicted the revolution's quick downfall. "It was in those worst years of the special period, 1992-93, when the ATC's membership jumped to nearly 2,000 members," Gómez said.

"It's also one thing to have members on paper and another to organize people to act," Gómez added. "The ATC often mobilized 300-400 Cubans in public demonstrations demanding an end to the blockade, despite threats and intimidation by the right wing." The ATC's headquarters were firebombed more than once. Gómez also pointed to growing divisions among right-wing Cubans in Miami over the last decade and more openness in winning new layers to pressing for normalization of relations with Cuba.

The ATC under Moreno made a fundamental contribution to facilitating travel to Cuba. Despite Washington's travel ban, including regulations prohibiting Cubans to visit their relatives on the island more than once per year, 80,000 Cuban-Americans went to Cuba in each of the last two years, Gómez said. "The ATC's work contributed to making this possible."

One of the reasons for the success of the ATC was the example Moreno set in leading the group, Gómez noted. Unlike others who tried to personally profit through organizing travel to Cuba, Moreno always took the moral high ground, lived by the principles he preached, and his words matched his deeds.

Many messages honor Moreno's life

Many messages were sent to the meeting. "Walfrido lived the life of a worker, of the men and women of little income, of fast-food and factories, of looking into store windows and convincing the children that their present would come next month; the life which adjusted your personal budget to aid your family on the island," said a message from Roberto Robaina, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Relations. "But he also lived the life

Continued on Page 14

lational information. Moreno came from a working-class family that immigrated to the United States in the 1940s. He was a barber at a shop near New York's Lincoln Center. That's where Miranda met Moreno in 1949.

Leading anti-Batista movement

The shop became known as a place where supporters of the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba assembled and organized to collect aid for the revolutionary movement. When they first met, Miranda said, Moreno was in the New York club of the Cuban People's Party — the Orthodox Party, or *Ortodoxos*, as it became known — which campaigned on a platform of opposition to Yankee domination and rampant government graft.

In 1952 Fidel Castro, a founding member of the *Ortodoxos*, was running as a candidate on the party's ticket for Cuba's house of representatives when Batista and his generals seized power on March 10 and scuttled the scheduled elections. Within weeks of the coup, Castro began putting together an armed movement to overthrow the dictatorship, an underground organization that grew in little more than a year to 1,200 men and women.

After the coup, "Down with Batista" became the main slogan painted on the walls of Moreno's barbershop, Miranda said. "Moreno later recruited me to the July 26 Movement, which he founded in New York City along with Fidel."

The Movement took its name after the July 26, 1953, simultaneous armed assaults on the army garrisons in the eastern Cuban

lated 100,000 copies as part of a popular amnesty campaign in Cuba.

In May 1955, in response to this campaign, Castro and other veterans of the attacks on the Santiago and Bayamo garrisons were released from prison. Together with other groups moving in a revolutionary direction, they founded the July 26 Movement.

That year, Miranda said, Moreno was part of Castro's security team when the Cuban revolutionary leader came to New York. Working with Cuban patriots like Moreno, Castro helped found July 26 Movement groups in a number of cities, including New York, Miami, and Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Later in 1955, Moreno went to Mexico where he participated in the preparations for the *Granma* expedition. The yacht *Granma* transported 82 revolutionaries to Cuba the following year. While more than half were killed or captured and jailed upon the landing, 40 escaped Batista's troops. Most of them subsequently regrouped into the Rebel Army, which, along with the July 26 Movement, led the victorious struggle that overthrew Batista's tyranny three years later.

Moreno was among 23 Cubans who did not make it aboard *Granma*, because the yacht was too overcrowded, Miranda said. Moreno then returned to New York where he began raising funds for medicines and other supplies for the Rebel Army.

After the U.S. government sent arms to Batista to counter the insurgency, Moreno organized a picket line in front of the United Nations in 1958 and went on hunger strike to protest Washington's action, Miranda said.

At one point, U.S. authorities captured a

Clinton's welfare 'reform' leaves millions of workers with no jobs and no income

BY MEGAN ARNEY

The real toll of U.S. president William Jefferson Clinton's vow to "end welfare as we know it" is beginning to be felt. Two and a half years into the implementation of a bipartisan welfare "reform" law, millions of people, in the most vulnerable layers of the working class, are being pushed further away from a standard of living comparable to that of the rest of their class.

The cynically titled Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which Clinton signed in August 1996, formally ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the main federally funded cash relief program. AFDC was part of the Social Security Act of 1935, which also encompasses Social Security, Supplemental Security Insurance, and unemployment insurance.

These programs were a by-product of massive struggles by working people — like the CIO movement that forged the industrial trade unions — against the brutal, grinding conditions that resulted from the world crisis of capitalism. The expansion of social programs, including Medicare and Medicaid for the elderly and poor, in the 1960s was also a product of working-class struggle, the rising Black rights movement.

These minimal entitlement programs, which provide some possibility for workers to make it through a lifetime, buffering the dog-eat-dog competition bred by capitalism, are now under assault. The "ending of welfare as we know it" — is aimed at preparing the way politically for the rulers to cut the much larger social gains of Medicare and Social Security. And it is being implemented at a time when the rulers are bragging of 6 percent economic growth and relatively low unemployment rates — conditions that will not continue in perpetuity.

Under the new law, AFDC is replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), administered by state governments with the stipulation that they organize to slash the number of those receiving aid, supposedly through "welfare to work" programs. It includes a lifetime limit of five years of benefits for most recipients, tightened eligibility criteria, and increased degrading means testing and intrusion into individuals' lives.

Women, for example, are required to identify the father of their children, or see their benefits cut by at least 25 percent. At the time the law was passed, 13 million workers and farmers were receiving AFDC, and 25 million had food stamps. Today the number receiving TANF is less than 8 million — the lowest percentage of the population since 1969. State governments have gone further than the welfare laws require in shoving people off the rolls, spending only a portion of the federal funds available.

In the Senate debate over the welfare law in 1996, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan spoke the clearest — from the standpoint of a representative of U.S. imperialism concerned for the stability of the capitalist state — on what its implications would be. The proposed law "is not 'welfare reform,' it is 'welfare repeal.' It is the first step in dismantling the social contract that has been



Jobless packinghouse workers march in Chicago's stockyard district on "Hunger March" during the 1930s. Social benefits like Social Security and welfare were won through struggles.

in place in the United States since at least the 1930s. Do not doubt that Social Security itself, which is to say insured retirement benefits, will be next.... This legislation breaks the social contract of the 1930s. We would care for the elderly, the unemployed, the dependent children. Drop the latter; watch the others fall."

Referring to the lifetime benefits limit, the New York Democrat said, no one knows what the social impact will be when people fall off the "five-year cliff."

"Welfare to work:" a fraud

In his January 1999 State of the Union address, Clinton boasted about these cuts in workers' entitlements, particularly touting the rulers' "Welfare to Work Partnership."

New York City's system is a good example of this sham. Under the new setup, the welfare offices are now called "Job Centers." Their actual function is to divert people from using the welfare entitlement program altogether. There is a 35-50 day application process before unemployed workers become "eligible" for assistance. The rejection rate for those applying for welfare doubled to 54 percent in 1997 from 27 percent in 1994. Prior to the establishment of these "job centers," the majority of applicants for welfare, food stamps, and Medicaid received some benefits. Now only 25 percent do.

In the last three years, the number of New York City residents receiving welfare dropped by 363,000, or 30 percent. Of these, 29 percent officially found work, but that figure includes anyone who made at least \$100 in the three months after leaving the welfare rolls.

Some people have been forced into the city's "Work Experience Program," which requires 20 hours or more of work at a city-organized job, in return for a welfare check. By 1997-98 New York City alone planned to fill 65,000 workfare positions.

At the same time, the number of regularly employed city workers — with union wages and benefits — has dropped by 20,000. The "pay" welfare-to-work workers receive — in the form of a workfare check, which is below minimum wage; food stamps; and Medicaid — adds up to well under the official poverty level.

In New York State in the first eight months of 1997, about 16 percent of "workfare" participants — or an average of 6,100 people each month — were cut from welfare for such "infractions" as showing up late and turning down a work assignment.

In addition, the "welfare to work" workers often don't qualify for seniority, promotions, family and medical leave, and payroll deductions that make them later eligible for Social Security and unemployment compensation. And they are usually not covered by collective bargaining laws or union contracts.

In Mississippi, those who miss appointments with the snooping "job center" rep-

resentatives or decline to accept a degrading work assignment are forced to give up cash benefits, the family's food stamps, and Medicaid for adults.

An example of the "workfare" options in the region is the Springwater Farms catfish plant in Eudora, Arkansas, an hour-long commute from Greenville, Mississippi. There is 300 percent turnover in the plant. If welfare entitlement recipients leave the cold, wet, gut-filled job, they are denied any benefits. The bosses consciously hire welfare recipients from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi for "state-subsidized" jobs. The company pays just \$1 an hour for the first six months, while the state adds \$4.15 to bring the wage up to minimum wage. The subsidy comes in part from money that would have gone toward welfare and food stamps.

Food relief, medical coverage fall too

Immigrants were a particular target of the 1996 cut in welfare, denied any kind of public assistance in most cases. Facing substantial resistance to the assault on the social wage of workers, Clinton was forced to restore food stamps to some "legal" immigrants two years later.

Overall, though, the number of people receiving Medicaid has dropped along with the welfare rolls, but not because people have gotten jobs with health coverage. According to the Census Bureau, the number of people without health insurance rose by 4 percent in 1997, to 43.4 million people — including 10.5 million children.

Federal officials profess surprise in the dramatic drop in number of those receiving

food stamps over the last four years. Nationally the number has fallen 28 million to fewer than 19 million. In January a federal judge ruled that the rechristened "job centers" in New York were encouraging those eligible for food stamps to seek out food pantries and improperly denied people prompt access to food stamps and health coverage.

As the slash in the social wage sinks in, growing numbers of workers are forced to rely on private and church charities to get by. A study by the New York City Chapter's Task Force on Welfare Reform found an increasing number of people are using food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters.

In New York, there were only three dozen pantries in 1980; 600 in 1992; and about 1,100 today. In Arizona the number of workers receiving meals through a statewide food network rose 50 percent at the same time there was a 50 percent decline in the number of those receiving food stamps.

Second Harvest, the nation's largest private network of food pantries, conducted a survey and found that 60 percent of 21 million recipients in 1997 sought out the service due to a chronic food shortage, not a temporary crisis. Nearly 40 percent of the households in the survey had at least one person employed. At the same time many of the companies and grocery stores that donated surplus or damaged food, nearly always with a tax write-off, have found other ways to reduce extra stocks.

A greater burden falls on individual workers' families, particularly in terms of child care. Nationally, the Census Bureau reports the number of children in their grandparents' care has risen more than 50 percent in the last decade alone. That's about 1.4 million children.

In Wisconsin, where the state government has led on the assault on welfare, the number of workers receiving welfare dropped from 100,000 to 9,000 in 10 years. Five percent of former entitlement recipients in Wisconsin said they were forced to send their children to live with others because they couldn't afford to care for them.

In addition, homelessness has escalated nationally as the number of available beds in shelters decreases. In New York, those seeking shelter are subjected to the same bureaucratic rules and sanctions as in the welfare program.

In order to have a bed at the shelter — which according to a 1981 court decree the city is suppose to guarantee — people must meet "workfare" standards. Anyone thrown off of public assistance cannot stay at the shelters. And men who apply for emergency shelter are forced to undergo "finger-imaging" by the state computer system used in the welfare offices statewide.

High court: Bill of Rights doesn't cover immigrants

Continued from front page

the eight filed suit in federal court. The Palestinian rights activists charged they had been targeted for deportation because of their political views. Such "selective" prosecution is illegal. The eight were backed by the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), and a host of other organizations.

The present high court ruling overturned a decision by the Ninth Circuit Court, which had ruled that the U.S. Constitution does not allow "guilt by association." That is, in essence, the basis of Washington's case against the L.A. Eight. Among those scoring the Supreme Court decision was Michel Shehadeh, one of the L.A. Eight and, for the past several years, West Coast director of the ADC. In a telephone interview, Shehadeh assailed the ruling as "a great blow to civil liberties and a brutal attack on immigrant rights." According to law, none of the eight face instant deportation. Four have

obtained "green cards" for residency on a renewable basis, or gained permanent residency. Two have residency on the basis of marriages to U.S. citizens. Shehadeh and Khader Hamide are longtime permanent residents, and as such are not deportable. The Justice Department, of which the Immigration Service is a division, has been trying to strip the two of their residency on the grounds of their solidarity with the PFLP. The case has dragged on for several years before an INS judge. The *Los Angeles Times* explained that the INS would not attempt to deport all of the several millions undocumented immigration because such an endeavor is beyond their resources. The number of deportations has sharply increased, however, to 169,072 in 1998 compared to 43,525 in 1992. And, the paper added, the Supreme Court decision will "give immigration officials greater leeway to move against those illegal immigrants who have come to their attention."

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Farmers protest

Continued from front page

for the locked-out workers in Pasadena, Texas.

Joann Hogan, a leader of the Catfish Workers of America, also addressed the rally. "We're not going to give up. Stand by us. We believe in you."

Other speakers included John Boyd, president of the National Black Farmers Association; Quincy Smith, a retired farmer from Windale, North Carolina; James Harris, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party; Rev. Joseph Lowery, convener of the Coordinating Council of Black Farm Groups and former head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and Rep. Eva Clayton from North Carolina.

An inadequate settlement

Under the proposed agreement, a "Track A" option promises farmers who prove "substantial evidence" of discrimination \$50,000, along with relief from USDA debts if farmers can prove past discrimination. Others may seek larger sums of money under "Track B," but would have to submit documents to meet a much higher standard of proof. Track B claims are decided by a mediator whose decision is final, including if he decides that the farmer is ineligible for any relief. Claims rejected under either option cannot be appealed.

Henry Valentine, a farmer from Arkansas who grows soybeans, cotton, and wheat, described how he systematically gets loans late every year so he can't produce a good crop. Some loans aren't provided until the end of July when he should be receiving them in March. Late loans can force you to go out of business and lose your farm.

Vernon Breckenridge from Oklahoma was one of several farmers who submitted written objections to the consent decree and addressed the court at the hearing. He explained that he has been farming full-time since 1964. In 1986, he applied to the USDA for a disaster loan. "This loan has meant disaster for me and my family," he stated. "We don't feel we're getting a fair and just settlement. Track A is not enough. Today \$50,000 won't even buy a medium-sized tractor."

"Most of us work an off-the-farm job just to survive," said Breckenridge, to applause. "We are not asking you to make the plaintiffs

rich, your honor, just fair." Because of USDA discrimination, farmers had to seek other loans on shorter terms and at higher interest rates. Under this settlement there is no relief for loans outside of those made by the USDA.

Breckenridge also criticized the proposed settlement for making no mention about removing any USDA personnel guilty of discrimination. "We have to still deal with the same people who denied us loans in the first place," he stated.

Stephon Bowens, executive director of the Land Loss Prevention Project, pointed out, "We haven't talked about the social ills that have befallen Black farmers. We can show there is harm to farmers in excess of \$50,000." He condemned the proposed settlement as failing to provide adequate relief, for limiting the ability of farmers to get records from the USDA proving discriminatory treatment, and for denying farmers the right to appeal arbitrators' decisions that they feel are unjust.

"There is no talk about farm foreclosures in the consent decree," added Bowens.

"What would you suggest?" said the judge.

"Give the farmers back their land," Bowens replied.

Thomas Burrell, a leader of the farm movement from Tennessee, received one of the warmest responses from those attending the hearing. Burrell introduced himself to the judge by explaining that 18 years ago he led — along with 12 other Black farmers — a 21-day sit-in occupation of the FmHA office in Covington, Tennessee.

"Sir, nothing has changed since then," he said. "Today, there are less than 20,000 Black farmers who own 3 million acres of land, down from 16 million [acres] in 1910," he pointed out. "The real crime committed by the USDA is not discrimination against African Americans but dispossession of the land."

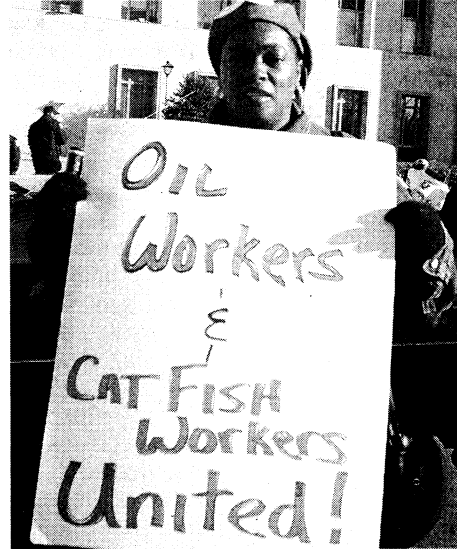
"This tentative settlement is not indicative of the value of the land taken from Black farmers," continued Burrell. "The USDA has defrauded, stolen, and expropriated 16 million acres of land from African-Americans. If this settlement is approved then the crimes of defrauding Blacks of their land would be sanctioned."

Burrell also educated the court on the "county committee system" used by the



Militant photos by Brian Williams

At rally for farmers fighting discrimination in Washington, D.C. March 2, toilers on the land and working-class fighters hooked up and began to plan solidarity activities.



USDA on the local level to this day to deny loans to Black farmers. "It is nothing more than a club or federation made up of members who are the descendants of the 'Sons of the Confederacy'.... The extent to which the county committee was so effective — with, of course, the sanctioning of the USDA — in dispossessing a nation of

people of their land will cause military historians to re-think and re-write military strategy and tactics."

Also speaking at the hearing was Rev. Joseph Lowery, who joined the attorneys in praising the settlement. Referring to the proposed settlement, he said, "Mend it don't end it."

James Morrison, representing the National Black Farmers Association, described the decree in its current form as being inadequate. "Don't look at settling this case," he told the judge, "look at settling a problem." Morrison described the conditions facing farmers "as nothing less than pure hell."

Farmers take the floor

The most interesting part of the hearing came toward the end of the day when the judge permitted any farmers present who hadn't submitted written testimony by the

Continued on Page 14

Farmers, workers plan future solidarity actions on bus back to Mississippi

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — A busload of unionists and farmers from Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama were among the fighters who made the trip to Washington, D.C., March 2, to participate in the farmers' rally protesting the proposed consent decree settlement.

The bus was initiated by Eddie Carthan, president of the Mississippi Family Farmers, from Tchula, a center of farm organizing in the Mississippi Delta. Members of the Catfish Workers of America from nearby Belzoni, Mississippi — several of whom are farmers themselves — got on board as well. They were fired from Freshwater Farms catfish processing plant in November for protesting inhuman working conditions. Part of their ongoing fight has been extending solidarity to other working people in struggle, including going to a rally for striking steelworkers at Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi. That's where they first met the locked-out Crown Central Petroleum workers from Houston, Texas.

The Mississippi farmers welcomed the news that several Crown workers were planning to make the trip to D.C., as well as unionists from Birmingham.

Six Crown workers and supporters drove to Tchula, where they got on the bus with the nine catfish workers and five Delta farmers, who included the two bus drivers. The group then drove to Birmingham and picked up four United Auto

Workers members who work at the PEMCO aerospace plant, and several other unionists.

This was the fourth time this group of workers and farmers had joined together in solidarity activities. Their growing collaboration and confidence in each other took a step forward on the way home.

Dean Cook, a leader of the Crown workers, and Joann Hogan, a leader of the catfish workers, initiated a meeting on the bus — as we barreled down the highway in the dead of night, headed back home. Using the bus sound system and a bullhorn that the Crown workers brought, we spent several hours discussing plans for a rally and other activities to back the catfish workers, to be held on the weekend of April 10, when the Buffalo Fish Festival is set for Belzoni.

We shared experiences and talked through everyone's ideas about how the solidarity that is growing among workers and farmers in the South could be brought to bear on the side of the catfish workers. The experience of the Crown workers, who have kept their fight going for three years, was especially appreciated by the catfish workers. David Howard, a farm leader from Tchula, pledged the support of the Mileston Co-op.

The CWA members will be meeting back in Belzoni to finalize plans.

Susan LaMont is a member of United Steelworkers Local 2122.

California farmers fight gov't discrimination

BY SAMUEL FARLEY

FRESNO, California — A dozen farmers from throughout the state reported to the Ramada Inn Hotel here February 27 to discuss the U.S. government's proposed consent decree for settling discrimination claims by farmers who are Black. These farmers came to the hotel based on the information they had received from law firms involved in the settlement claims.

Similar meetings have been staged throughout the country. At one such meeting held in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, more than 900 farmers showed up, some to file claims under the class action lawsuit and a few to stage a protest picket against the tentative settlement.

After California farmers had called and were told to attend the meeting here to file claims, the Black Farmer's Litigation Information/Poorman Douglas law firm called the farmers back and asked them not to attend. There are some 277 farmers who are Black in California, many in the Fresno area. The dozen or so farmers who came to the law office anyway were told they had to make an appointment.

These farmers who showed up demonstrated they have forged a bond of deep solidarity in their struggle to hold onto their land. An example of this was expressed when the attorney present would look up the name of a farmer from a long list. Farmers in the room would just yell out name after name of others they have gotten to know, wanting to know if they too were on the list.

James McGill, 46, lives in Bakersfield, California. He has farmed for 20 years and his family has farmed for generations. McGill lost his farm in 1986 and again in 1989 to foreclosures. He said once you are foreclosed on, banks will not make any loans. McGill wants to continue farming. "There is a lot of land to be had," he said, "but you need money."

Commenting on the tentative lawsuit settlement, McGill said it could be okay, but expressed doubts if farmers will get anything. "This has been going on for years, I haven't seen anything done for us yet. We have tried to get the help of Jesse Jackson, Maxine Waters, preachers, and some other

folks, and they all let us down. They don't care, they just don't care about farmers."

Lonnie Dillard, 74, has been farming for more than 40 years. His entire family — wife, two daughters, and four sons — work the farm. Dillard said his wife is the backbone of their farm work. They grow almonds on a 50-acre farm in Kern County.

Edward Nolen describes himself as a fourth generation farmer from Arkansas and Mississippi. He farms 20 acres within a farmer's cooperative, which he helps lead. Nolen planted tomatoes, squash, eggplant last year. This year he will grow cantaloupes and watermelon. Nolen, showing intricate graphs and charts with his economic plan, said he doesn't plant anything unless he has a buyer. "If you produce quality crops you can make a profit," he said, expressing the view that poor management on the part of most farmers puts them in a crisis.

Asked about the government's proposed "fairness settlement," Nolen said, "The amount of money they are offering us is nothing. It is nothing compared to what I have lost."

Another meeting will be held in Fresno on March 5.

Samuel Farley is member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Los Angeles.

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Land reform and farm cooperatives in Cuba

Sweden: 16,000 bus drivers launch nationwide strike

BY DANIEL AHL
AND CATHARINA TIRSEN

KIRUNA, Sweden — "When I started to work as a bus driver again in 1996, I looked at the work schedules and said to my co-workers, 'My god, why aren't you on strike?' It was a joke, but it was serious at the same time," said Siw Hellberg, one of close to 16,000 bus drivers on strike in Sweden.

Hellberg, 46, was talking to these reporters at a bus depot in this iron ore mining town in the far north of Sweden. She is one of 15 drivers on strike against the private company Swebus here. All bus drivers and depot workers who are members of the Municipal Workers Union went on strike against the privately owned bus companies in this country at midnight, February 25. The Transport Workers Union (TWU) has called a strike of the 5,000 bus drivers that belong to it, starting at midnight, March 4. On February 24, 15 bus drivers in Malmö affiliated to the TWU joined the Municipal Workers Union so they could strike immediately.

The main union demands are a 10-minute break for every two hours, a 3 percent wage increase comparable to other national contracts, and an increase in overtime pay.

Most strikers also point to their work schedules as a central issue. Many of them work split shifts that can span up to 16 hours a day. The drivers are demanding that a day's work be set within a 12-hour period; the employers want to stick to a more "flexible" schedule. Throughout the 1990s, local governments who used to provide public transportation have contracted it out to private companies, which have pressed for tighter schedules and longer shifts without breaks for the drivers.

Stockholm bus driver Bernt Westerberg described a typical workday in an interview in the paper *Dagens Nyheter*. He gets up at 4:15 a.m. Between 6:00 and 9:30 he drives without getting out of the seat. He waits in the garage for five hours without pay, then gets into the bus once more, and keeps driving until 6:30 p.m.

"You're always late and you don't have any time to take a break," striker Anka Milenovic told *Militant* reporters February 26 in front of the Hornsberg bus depot in Stockholm. "We're demanding a 10-minute break every other hour. An eight-hour working day is the reasonable thing. We don't get paid for the time that we work. We're standing here until our demands are met."

The striking drivers have received massive support from working people across the country, contrary to a hope expressed by the capitalist media that there would be a reaction against "strike chaos."

In Kiruna, Hellberg described the friendly waves she got from a regular passenger as she passed in her bus marked "School bus only." The union has made exceptions from

the strike only for school buses and transporting for the handicapped. "It feels good that we have support in this," Hellberg said. "You didn't expect this kind of support. People have found out other ways to get to work — hitchhiking and all sorts of things."

"It's almost impossible to keep the timetable," said Börje Lindström, 45, who joined Hellberg in talking to these reporters in the coffee room at the garage in Kiruna. "Those making the decisions could try it out for themselves. I think it is going to take several months" to win the strike. The two strikers explained that Swebus drivers have only 10 minutes paid time to check the bus before they have to start driving. "The employers know the drivers get there on time anyway, that we don't want to be late," said Lindström. "If we are, the day gets ruined. That means we work a lot of unpaid hours."

"No wonder accidents happen," Hellberg added.

"That's the thing we're really mad about," Lindström continued. "Then the drivers get the blame." They were commenting on the fact that a Stockholm bus driver was recently convicted for the death of a boy who got stuck in the back door of her bus and run over. "It's about safe traffic as well,"



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Striking bus drivers in Kiruna, northern Sweden. From left are Lena Stålnacke, Börje Lindström, Siw Hellberg, and Egon Mella.

Lindström said. "We should have done this several years ago. We should be more like workers in France. They're tough."

In a February 27 column oozing with contempt for the bus drivers in the conservative daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, editor Marie Söderqvist declared, "The bus drivers' launching of their conflict action as a strike for toilet breaks is an ingenious move." Since people have found other ways of getting to work, Söderqvist concludes, "many bus drivers might be allowed to take a very long toilet break."

Outside the LKAB mine in Kiruna min-

ers expressed their support for the bus drivers. "It's a good thing somebody gets started, so that things can start spreading," said one miner. Workers there also described how the mining company had demanded that every underground miner work night shifts every fifth week. "We put down the shovels one afternoon. They get a bit soft when the shaft is empty," said another miner. The company has withheld its proposal.

Daniel Ahl is a member of the Young Socialists and Catharina Tirsén is a member of the Metal Workers Union in Stockholm.

Miners in Britain discuss pay fight

BY HUGH ROBERTSON

MANCHESTER, England — Miners in the Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire coalfields are discussing how to resist a pay offer imposed by the bosses at RJB Mining. A team of *Militant* supporters visited six pits February 11–12. Members of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) were in the process of balloting for an industrial action, and miners in the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) were to start voting February 15.

The offer is for a five-year contract with a pay increase 1 percent below the rate of inflation and the consolidation of some bonus payments into the basic pay.

In 1984–85 the NUM waged a yearlong strike over the issue of pit closures that generated mass support among working people. At the time there were 183,000 miners nationwide. Fearing the impact of this growing sentiment, the leaders of the labor movement blocked it from turning into active solidarity. With the strong encouragement of the government of Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher, NUM officials in Nottinghamshire led the majority of miners there to break from the union and form the UDM.

They continued to produce coal throughout the strike, allowing the state-owned British Coal to outlast the miners and defeat the strike. Over the next eight years, the government and bosses decimated the coal industry, despite protests that included a 40,000-strong march in London in 1992. In 1994 the remaining British Coal pits were sold off, the majority of them to RJB Mining, a company owned by Richard Budge. There are now 21 deep mines. Fifteen are owned RJB Mining, employing some 7,100 miners.

We first visited Welbeck, Thoresby, and Harworth in Nottinghamshire. The big majority of miners in these pits are members of the UDM; a miner in Welbeck reported that out of 470 miners there, 80 were members of the NUM. At each pit several workers stopped their cars to talk with the team or put a thumbs up as they went by. Most declined to buy the *Militant* saying they didn't take money to work, but readily took leaflets about the strike by airline catering workers at Skycheffs at the London Heathrow airport.

There is a majority sentiment of anger against Budge in these pits. One UDM miner at Thoresby said it was "about time we gave Budge a run for his money."

An NUM miner took a *Militant* at Welbeck. His jacket, like many other NUM miners, carried several badges commemorating the 1984–85 strike. He pointed to how other workers such as nurses had recently

won pay rises and said, "We need a strike." Obviously pleased, this worker said he thought the UDM miners were ready to fight.

Another NUM miner was less sure, saying he didn't think UDM miners should be trusted.

The next day we visited Rossington in South Yorkshire and Wistow and Stillingfleet in the Selby area farther north. Miners in these pits are almost all in the NUM. At Stillingfleet, despite the pit manager forcing the team to sell almost a mile from the pit head, miners stopped their cars for a discussion and five bought the *Militant*. Most said they were confident of a yes vote when the NUM balloted, but a minority of miners were clearly hostile.

Nigel Pearce, a miner and NUM delegate at Stillingfleet, said that he was excited by the prospect of a positive result for action in the UDM ballot.

"We've taken 14 years of beating," he said, hoping both unions would take a stand. Just prior to the ballot the NUM published an eight-page issue of *The Miner*, the first time it had been issued in two years.

The NUM in Yorkshire organized two meetings at Selby and Knottingley at which 100 and 50 miners, respectively, attended to discuss the ballot. A miner who attended the Knottingley meeting said this was twice as many as in similar meetings held two years ago.

There was no doubt there was a strengthening sentiment that the common enemy was Budge and that the miners from both unions could be part of a fight. However, most miners looked to Budge's reaction to the bal-

lots, and although angry and ready to fight weren't yet preparing for action.

The UDM announced its ballot result February 12. Around 2,500 workers were balloted, and 56 percent of those voting were in favor of taking action. A miner later explained that when he went to work at Stillingfleet for the Friday night shift he found his NUM co-workers excited by the result of the UDM ballot.

The big-business papers reported nervously on the miners' vote. The *Times*, for example, commented, "Mr. Budge should renegotiate with the miners now, before his business loses what little confidence is left."

UDM officials announced February 26 that they would be putting a revised deal before union members in the coming days. The new deal would mean pay raises more or less keeping up with inflation. Meanwhile, the NUM announced March 2 that its members had voted 57 percent in favor of industrial action.

In Yorkshire, the team found out through local papers about a one-day strike of bus workers involving more than 1,700 members of the Transport and General Workers Union in Sheffield, Rotherham, and Doncaster. We visited the bus depot in Doncaster and found a spirited picket line. Strikers reported that this was their first strike in 15 years, and it was 100 percent solid, despite a divided strike vote.

The strike came out of frustration at the fact that they had not had a pay raise for five years, except for profit-related bonuses, and that their boss, First Mainline, had withheld the last profit-related payment as they "hadn't reached their profit targets."

Union Rally and blood give-in to support USWA Local 850 on strike at Continental General Tire

Meet at the picket line for a solidarity rally at 11 a.m. in front of Continental General Tire. The blood give-in will be held from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Steel Creek Baptist Church.

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Ohio Teamsters strike intensifies, unionists fight back

BY TONY PRINCE

RANDOLPH, Ohio — The strike of 400 members of International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 24 at East Manufacturing Co. here has intensified, with the arrest of a picket captain, strikers hit by trucks, and rumors that the company may hire strike-breakers. The workers, who produce truck trailers, have been on strike since January 21.

Police arrested Ricky Patterson, a shop steward and strike captain, February 23 as he was picketing in front of a truck leaving the plant.

"Jim Bishop, the personnel director, pointed at me and told the cops, 'Get him!' The cops rushed me, they threatened to Mace me, they never read me my rights, and they didn't let me make a phone call," said Patterson. "I was in the jail all day. I was charged with disorderly conduct and possessing a criminal tool because I had nails for making picket signs in my pocket. And my bond, \$5,000, is triple the normal bond."

Patterson added, "The cops really surprised me. They used excessive force. They're trying to make an example of me, but they didn't scare me. I did nothing wrong. I've always been involved in the labor movement."

The striker also mentioned that the same truck has hit two pickets as it was entering and leaving the plant.

Other workers on the picket line mentioned they have seen people going into the plant for job interviews, and said the company has advertised for strikebreakers in southern Ohio newspapers. Several of the pickets warned that if the company brings in strikebreakers, "There will be a war."

Tom Sayre, who has 21 years' seniority at the plant, explained the pitfalls in some of the company's proposals. "Their 40-cent

raise offer is really only 15 cents, because the insurance coverage from the union has decreased 25 cents," he pointed out.

He was opposed to taking a signing bonus because "the last time we took a signing bonus they took it out of our profit sharing. Plus, every time we see a signing bonus it means they're going to work us to death with overtime. If we got a wage increase, we'd get more money on overtime too. With a signing bonus we don't."

Sayre explained why he thinks the company has such a high turnover rate — 700 workers hired over the last three years. "It takes seven years to get up to the top rate of pay here. A lot of guys start here, get training, and then go over to Mack Trailer in Alliance, Ohio, for at least \$1 an hour more. There's no job in here you can't learn in six months. But they're holding top pay from us for seven years. That's a concession we're giving them."

Shane Blair, a striker in his twenties, described the attitude of plant manager Chuck Moore. "He told the negotiating committee he's already broken the contract and he'll continue to do it."

Morale on the picket line remains high. Strikers are planning to rent a bus to go to a trailer show in Kentucky in a few weeks where East will be exhibiting.

Most of the cars driving by on State Route 44 honk in support of the strikers. Telephone workers putting up new lines along the road honored the picket line in front of the plant, and as a result the line remains unconnected.

At the same time, two sheriff's cars were parked at the convenience store at the nearest intersection.

Tony Prince is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Cleveland.

Unionists rally for Tazewell strikers



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Strikers and supporters at Tazewell jeer scabs crossing picket line February 5

PEKIN, Illinois — More than 50 strikers and other unionists showed up for an expanded picket line in front of Tazewell Machine Works March 1.

Members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2283, on strike against Tazewell since October 5; members and retirees from UAW Local 974 at Caterpillar in East Peoria; members from several different unions who work at Powerton power plant in Pekin; a representative from the workers on strike at Lenc-Smith in Cicero, Illinois; and others were present at the shift change by the 80 scabs who are working at Tazewell.

The determined and spirited crowd, gathered on each side of the driveway, broke into loud chants of "We are — union" and "Contract, contract, contract!"

After the shift change, as the unionists were beginning to leave, a black utility sports van raced into the driveway from the street and stopped. The chief deputy of the Pekin police jumped out of

the car and confronted Bob West, a member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 145 from the Pekin power plant. Brandishing his badge, the cop said, "You don't yell at me like that. I'll take your ass to jail. You're the one with the mouth."

West said, "Why are singling me out? The only one with skin tone on the picket line." West, who is Black, and the other unionists and strikers present stood their ground against the cop's provocation. Chad Hartley, president of UAW Local 2283 and another member of the local surrounded the cop, and backed him away from West.

Strikers and unionists began chanting "We Are Union." David Lock, a retiree from UAW Local 974, told the *Militant*, "Pekin has got a bad name. Ninety percent of the people in this town are trying to get rid of it, and here comes this idiot." Pekin, a majority white town south of Peoria, Illinois, has a reputation for racist treatment of Blacks by the Ku Klux Klan and local police.

Detroit: Hundreds of Jeep workers protest speed up

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — Hundreds of workers on the Wrangler body shop line refused overtime to protest job cuts and speed up at DaimlerChrysler's sprawling Jeep assembly plant in Toledo, Ohio. In an interview, Alan Epstein, a body shop worker with 15 years in the plant who works on the Cherokee line, described the February 18 and 19 actions as a "spontaneous revolt."

The workers, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 12, refused demands by the company to work an hour overtime each day, a demand that auto bosses regularly make. Earlier in the week these same workers were sent home after less than eight hours because of production bottlenecks. By trying to force overtime management was attempting to avoid paying the workers the

short workweek provision outlined in the contract when workers do not get eight hours a day each day of the week.

The plant workforce has been cut by 150 since January 1, without cutting line speed. "When jobs were assigned line speed was 390 a day. Now they want 408 while they are laying people off," Epstein said. DaimlerChrysler has announced plans to cut the workforce from 5,600 to 4,900 by the year 2001 when the automaker opens a new factory here.

By February 24 workers in the plant reported that it seemed like the bosses had backed off, canceled some overtime, and dropped charges against some union officials relating to the protest. Then Ken Dudley, the acting chairman of the union bargaining committee in the plant, was sus-

pended indefinitely. The company accused Dudley of leading the protests. Company spokesman Davis Barnas told the press from corporate headquarters in Auburn Hills, Michigan, "We reserve the right to implement disciplinary action for unauthorized work stoppages, which are strictly against the collective bargaining agreement."

Dudley told the *Toledo Blade* that plant officials accused him of leading the work stoppage. He denied the allegations and reported that at the time of the walkout he was in a meeting with the present plant manager and a former manager who had been brought in to try and defuse tensions in the factory.

The regularly scheduled union meeting February 26 turned into a protest of company actions and a rally in support of the body shop workers and the victimized union

official. Epstein described it as the largest union meeting since the mid-1980s.

Worker after worker described the worsening conditions in the factory. A Trim Department worker reported seeing co-workers collapsing into cars because of the speed up on that line. Workers feel that since the merger of Chrysler and Mercedes last year, "DaimlerChrysler has been pushing us, now they have pushed too far," declared Epstein.

While most UAW members employed by the U.S. big three — General Motors, Ford and DaimlerChrysler — will negotiate new contracts this year, Jeep workers in Toledo are working under a six-year contract that does not expire until 2003. Jeep was acquired by Chrysler in 1987 as part of its purchase of American Motors, but the Toledo workers have never been covered by the UAW-Chrysler contract.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 in Wayne, Michigan.

Amtrak officials harass civil rights fighter

BY ANDREA MORELL

BOSTON — One of the initiators of a civil rights lawsuit against Amtrak is now facing disciplinary charges by the passenger rail carrier, charging him with allegedly making false statements on a job application nine years ago.

William Regan, who works as a mechanic in the buildings and bridges department at Boston's commuter rail system, is a member and former president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) Local 987. He is accused of omitting one prior employer on his job application and failing to disclose a workmen's compensation claim in a pre-employment medical questionnaire.

Though the disciplinary proceedings against Regan were initiated nearly a decade after his alleged misstatements, they came less than two months after he provided information to attorneys for plaintiffs in a lawsuit against Amtrak charging the passenger railroad nationwide with discrimination in hiring, training, job assignments, pay, promotions, discipline, and discharging of

workers who are Black. The suit also cites racial slurs and abuses by some supervisors.

"Given the nature and timing of this charge, we regard it as a transparent attempt to retaliate against Regan for his role in helping the plaintiffs in this case," wrote Warren Kaplan in a letter to Amtrak attorneys. Kaplan is an attorney for the plaintiffs and a member of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, based in Washington, D.C., which is supporting the lawsuit.

The civil rights lawsuit was filed in federal court in the District of Columbia in April 1998. Ten current and former employees in Boston, Philadelphia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., as well as the BMWE union in Philadelphia, are named plaintiffs. As a class action suit, attorneys say it represents 1,000 Black employees and another 4,000 rejected applicants.

Regan is a longtime advocate of affirmative action and equality on the job. The lawsuit grew in part out of his and other workers' efforts to win affirmative action hiring in the engineering division of the commuter

rail where they worked. They cited the presence of only a handful of Black workers out of a workforce of more than 400.

Workers also protested an on-the-job atmosphere of racial intolerance by some supervisors and attempted intimidation of them. Regan and other workers told their story to an alternative newspaper, the Boston *Phoenix*, in 1997.

Subsequently, there was an acceleration of hiring of workers who are Black and female for jobs as assistant conductors at the commuter rail.

A picket line and rally held outside Boston's South Station the same year drew rail workers and community activists protesting the beating and hospitalization of an Amtrak worker from Eritrea by a co-worker who was white. Demonstrators demanded the carrier provide a workplace safe from racist-inspired violence for all workers.

The discrimination lawsuit against Amtrak is now in pretrial negotiations.

Andrea Morell is a member of United Transportation Union Local 898.

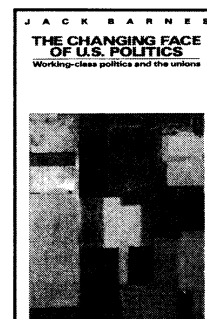
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Refinery blast could have been prevented

Continued from front page

shut the unit was rejected, he worked on a plan to ensure the naphtha line was empty by draining it into a barrel that would be sucked out by a vacuum truck. "I was in the process of doing that when I had someone question me and say 'No, we're going to go a different route.'" Workers then cut into the line. A company report to county health officials stated that 100 gallons of naphtha flowed out of the six-inch diameter line when it was opened.

Tosco: a long, bad safety record

In the wake of the fire, a widespread discussion about the safety of the refinery has broken out across the Bay Area. The refinery's poor safety record is well-known. A huge explosion in the hydrocracker unit killed an operator and injured 46 other people in January 1997.

There were furnace explosions in the No. 3 crude unit last August, and in a naphtha hydrotreater in August 1992. An operator was badly burned with hot heavy oil when an expansion joint failed in a vacuum unit in 1994. A worker was killed in 1989 when static electricity caused an explosion where a vacuum truck was being run, and another died in 1983 when a hot oil pipe broke open, leading to an enormous fire in the catalytic cracking unit.

And these are just the major disasters that become known to the public. Tosco has been cited more often for air pollution violations than any other Bay Area refinery, including those much larger than it.

More than 500 people attended the funerals of Pofahl and Blue February 27, including many workers from Avon.

An important side of the discussion around safety is over the responsibility of workers to shut down process units and unsafe jobs in the face of company pressures to keep production going. Creggett said his efforts to enforce safe procedures were overruled by the company.

Company officials point to a piece of paper all operators sign saying they have the authority to shut down unsafe work in order to pin blame for the disaster back on the operator. "[Creggett] has no excuse for not accepting responsibility for whatever work is under his control," said Tosco public relations spokesperson Linda Saltzman. Some workers in the plant and at a February 27 Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors meeting echoed the company, noting that no work permit can be issued without the unit operator's signature.

Pressing the company campaign to charge one or more workers with causing the fire, Tosco Corporation chief executive officer Thomas O'Malley told a March 2 meeting of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors that the real issue was "personal responsibility. The single most important issue is to get individuals to act in a responsible manner."

Creggett actually spoke out at what began as a routine news conference February 26 in front of the plant featuring company and government officials. After the officials' statements, Creggett simply stepped up to the microphones and cameras and explained what was really taking place. He told reporters that company lawyers had warned him to be careful what he said to California Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigators, who "drilled" him late into the night February 25. "I told them I'm not going to be your fall guy," he said.

Many Tosco operators have been calling Creggett at home to express their solidarity with him and thank him for standing up. They reject the company's long-standing practice of attempting to discipline a worker any time an accident occurs. Most are hesitant to be quoted in the press, due to pressure from the company.

While no one seeks to avoid taking re-

sponsibility for conditions on their units, workers throughout the plant point out that the work load imposed upon operators makes the preparation of maintenance work and detailed review of work conditions very difficult. Understaffing of the units makes mistakes and accidents inevitable.

Smaller workforce, no fire department

The No. 50 crude unit at Avon is run by one person, who is responsible for running the process controls; making sure operating equipment such as pumps, furnaces, compressors and towers are free of leaks or malfunctions; and setting up jobs for maintenance workers to do. There are other one-person units as well.

The company's separate fire and safety department, which is charged with approving hazardous work such as welding or entering confined vessels, has been all but eliminated. These responsibilities now rest with foremen, who have received minimal training and fit the work in along with their other duties.

Until 1988 jobs in this department were part of the union at Avon. A similar fire department, whose workforce was composed of union members, was eliminated at the refinery in Rodeo a few miles away when Tosco bought the plant from the Unocal Corp. two years ago. Many workers have said that the fire would not have occurred had this "second set of eyes" still been there.

Tosco is now demanding that the union at Avon agree to further job combinations and cuts in the number of operators throughout the refinery. Tosco claimed in its preliminary report to the county that there had been no layoffs of company-employed union workers since the 1950s. A large number of the maintenance workers, however, who do the regular daily maintenance at the plant but are employed by other companies under contract with Tosco have been laid off in recent weeks. Very little maintenance work is being done. Operators at the Rodeo plant are being forced to perform maintenance

work while running process units.

Following the fire February 25, the Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Commission recommended by a 6-3 vote that the county Board of Supervisors order the plant closed for a thorough investigation of the plant's safety. Some 100 people, including a few oil workers and workers in the construction trades, attended a special meeting called by the supervisors February 27.

County board urges plant shut down

The meeting received wide coverage in the news media. After hearing reports and testimony from workers, local officials, environmental activists, and people who live in the area, the Board voted to request that Tosco voluntarily close the plant pending an investigation and pay employees during the period of shutdown. County legal advisors are debating whether or not the Board of Supervisors has legal authority to compel Tosco to shut down. The company sent no official representative to the meeting.

Sharon Ruddell, whose husband was killed in the 1983 catalytic cracker fire, told the meeting, "The long list of Tosco widows and bereft families is unacceptable and something must be done."

Denny Larson, of the Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) showed a video of the news conference where Creggett told his story. "That's our report from CBE," he said. He added that he believed that Tosco would continue to conduct maintenance in the same fashion.

Howard Spencer, president of PACE local 326 at the nearby Tosco Rodeo refinery, and an operator in that plant, explained that Tosco had reduced the union work force by 62 people nearly two years ago when the company bought the plant. They forced workers to reapply for their own jobs, and return "to jobs and conditions decided by Tosco."

The fire and safety department was eliminated. Increased work and job responsibilities continue to be piled upon the opera-

tors. Cuts in production at the Avon refinery, Spencer pointed out, will be made up at Rodeo where units will be run beyond their capacity. He said workers should be paid at union wages for any time lost if Avon is closed.

While many pointed to the dangers and unsafe conditions at the Avon plant, others urged the Board of Supervisors to go slow. Pam Aguilar, president of the Contra Costa County Central Labor Council said, "We are not prepared to say, at this point, that the plant should be closed. It should be a consideration if that is the only way to keep our members from dying." Aguilar also expressed the fear that Tosco would simply walk away from the site for good.

Jeff Dodge, local field representative of PACE local 8-5, which organizes workers at the refinery, said conditions were "tragic and intolerable." But he warned against making any "hasty" moves until investigations were finished. "The Chemical Safety Board," a recently created federal agency charged with looking into chemical accidents, "is our only hope." This approach was also advanced by U.S. congressman George Miller, whose district includes the area around the refinery.

When the Board of Supervisors reconvened March 2, Tosco CEO Thomas O'Malley told them that the Avon refinery would be shut down for 30 days to "attempt to determine when and if the refinery can be run safely," O'Malley said. Workers would continue to be paid during this time. O'Malley warned, however, that there was no guarantee that the plant would be restarted. "We're in a market economy," he reminded his audience.

After having sat through company meetings with O'Malley, three different operators told this reporter that they believe the shutdown will provide the opening O'Malley is seeking to close the plant for good.

Jim Altenberg is a member of PACE Local 8-5 and an operator at the Avon refinery.

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LeRougetel, recently returned from Greece and Cyprus. Sat., March 13, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

APEC: Why Workers Should Oppose Economic Nationalism. Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League. Fri., Fri., March 12, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

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CALENDAR

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Celebrating the Role of Blacks in Politics and Culture in Cuba. Special guest speaker: Félix Wilson, first secretary Cuban Interests Section, Washington, D.C.; Kazi Toure, American Friends Service Committee. Sponsored by the July 26 Coalition. Fri., March 26, 7:30 p.m. Reception 7 p.m. *Suggested donation: \$5. High school students: \$3. For more information, call (781) 395-0656.*

Think you've seen every thing? — NEW ZEALAND — One eye is all you need to see, just according to the government's surgery booking system. Elderly pa-



Harry Ring

tients with cataracts in both eyes are being granted just one operation to restore their sight. Afterwards, they are told that as they can see well enough out of one eye they do not

qualify under the booking system for more surgery." — *New Zealand Herald*

Things are tough all over — The drop of the Brazilian *real* is having an impact throughout the region, including Punta del Este, a wealthy seaside resort in neighboring Uruguay. Says the owner of a posh Italian restaurant: "The customers who used to order French wines are now ordering cheaper Uruguayan wines and they are sharing dishes or not ordering appetizers."

Enjoy your red hot — Last summer at least 11 people were killed by the bacterial disease list-

eria in Ball Park franks containing meat from a Michigan plant owned by Sara Lee Corp.

Five women suffered miscarriages and at least 70 other people were sickened. There were two other recalls of meat products found to contain listeria.

See, not to worry — Writing on the Sara Lee and other listeria cases, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter advises: "The outbreak at Sara Lee and other recalls are sure to result in greater government and industry scrutiny of ready-to-eat meats."

Oh — The British Patent Office rejected an application by her family and their memorial fund to copy-

right the image of Diane Spencer. If they had succeeded they could collect royalties from any one who used her image for commercial purposes.

The Patent Office asserted she is an historical figure, not a commercial brand.

Defies comment — Did you notice that Clinton is a nominee for the Nobel peace prize?

Natch — Washington has paid \$20 million for the repair of the Alpine ski lift that crashed when a U.S. Marines plane sliced its cables. But, to be compensated, relatives of the 20 people killed have to file through the Italian courts, a process

that could take up to 10 years.

The Golden Years — In England its estimated that 13 million of those who retire will live in hardship. Three years ago, the figure was 10 million.

That's the full list? — In 1992 an Israeli cargo plane crashed into a city block in Holland. Dutch authorities have now lifted the kid and admit the cargo included toxic gases, explosives, and ammunition.

Thought for the week — "Women 'are fed up with family life.'" — Headline in *The Times*, London.

1979 Grenada revolution: in nobody's backyard

Twenty years ago, on March 13, 1979, the New Jewel Movement under the leadership of Maurice Bishop organized an armed uprising against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Eric Gairy. Thousands of Grenadians responded to a radio appeal by Bishop to come into the streets, ensuring revolutionary victory. The new workers and farmers government organized agrarian reform to benefit small farmers and farm workers, expanded trade union rights, advanced women's equality in the workplace, established literacy programs, and instituted free medical care. Just four and a half years later, Bishop and five other central leaders of the revolutionary government were arrested and murdered by a counterrevolutionary coup led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard.

This led to the invasion of thousands of U.S. Marines and Army Rangers Oct. 25, 1983, under the pretext of "saving" U.S. medical students in Grenada. The

invasion is faced by our country....

For this reason we want the people of Grenada and the Caribbean to realize that if all of a sudden tourists start panicking and leaving the country, or stop coming to our country, then they should note that this came after veiled threats by the United States ambassador with respect to our tourist industry. The ambassador, Mr. Frank Ortiz, on his last visit to Grenada some days ago, went out of his way to emphasize the obvious importance of tourism to our country.... The ambassador went on to advise us that if we continue to speak about what he called "mercenary invasions by phantom armies" we could lose all our tourists....

At the end of our discussion on Tuesday, the ambassador handed me a typed statement of his instructions from his government, to be given to us. The relevant section of that statement reads, and I quote: "Although my government recognizes your concerns over allegations of a possible counter-coup, it also believes that it would not be in Grenada's best interest to seek assistance from a country such as Cuba to forestall such an attack. We would view with displeasure any tendency on the part of Grenada to develop closer ties with Cuba."

It is well established internationally that all independent countries have a full, free, and unhampered right to conduct their own internal affairs. We do not therefore recognize any right of the United States of America to instruct us on who we may develop relations with and who we may not.

From day one of the revolution we have always striven to have and develop the closest and friendliest relations with the United States, as well as with Canada, Britain, and all our Caribbean neighbors—English, French, Dutch, and Spanish speaking, and we intend to continue to strive for these relations. But no one must misunderstand our friendliness as an excuse for rudeness and meddling in our affairs, and no one, no matter how mighty and powerful they are, will be permitted to dictate to the government and people of Grenada who we can have friendly relations with and what kind of relations we must have with other countries. We haven't gone through twenty-eight years of fighting Gairyism, and especially the last six years of terror, to gain our freedom, only to throw it away and become a slave or lackey to any other country, no matter how big and powerful....

[W]e reject *entirely* the argument of the American ambassador that we would only be entitled to call upon the Cubans to come to our assistance after mercenaries have landed and commenced the attack. Quite frankly, and with the greatest respect, a more ridiculous argument can hardly be imagined. It is like asking a man to wait until his house is burning down before he leaves to buy a fire extinguisher. No, we intend if possible to provide ourselves with the fire extinguisher before the fire starts! And if the government of Cuba is willing to offer us assistance, we would be more than happy to receive it. Sisters and brothers, what we led was an *independent process*. Our revolution was definitely a popular revolution, not a coup d'état, and was and is in no way a minority movement....

We are a small country, we are a poor country, with a population of largely African descent, we are a part of the exploited Third World, and we definitely have a stake in seeking the creation of a new international economic order which would assist in ensuring economic justice for the oppressed



Grenadians protest threats from Washington at rally in 1980. The workers and farmers government was shining example of resistance to U.S. imperialist domination.

and exploited peoples of the world, and in ensuring that the resources of the sea are used for the benefit of all the people of the world and not for a tiny minority of profiteers. Our aim, therefore, is to join all organizations and work with all countries that will help us to become more independent and more in control of our own resources. In this regard, nobody who understands present-day realities can seriously challenge our right to develop working relations with a variety of countries.

Grenada is a sovereign and independent country, although a tiny speck on the world map, and we expect all countries to strictly respect our independence just as we will respect theirs. No country has the right to tell us what to do or how to run our country

or who to be friendly with. We certainly would not attempt to tell any other country what to do. We are not in anybody's backyard, and we are definitely not for sale. Anybody who thinks they can bully us or threaten us clearly has no understanding, idea, or clue as to what material we are made of. They clearly have no idea of the tremendous struggles which our people have fought over the past seven years. Though small and poor, we are proud and determined. We would sooner give up our lives before we compromise, sell out, or betray our sovereignty, our independence, our integrity, our manhood, and the right of our people to national self-determination and social progress.

Long live the revolution!
Long live free Grenada!

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March 15, 1974

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Support for the Wounded Knee defendants is growing despite the attempts of the federal government to isolate the American Indian Movement (AIM) through the fame-up trial now in progress here. Some 1,500 people jammed a meeting hall at the University of Minnesota Feb. 27 in a rally for Wounded Knee defendants Dennis Banks and Russell Means. Enthusiasm ran high. The theme of the rally was "Drop the Charges" against all Wounded Knee defendants.

Banks and Means are on trial for their leadership role in the seizure of Wounded Knee. Banks told the rally that while he and Means are charged with burglary, "The real burglars are in Washington." He likened the AIM cause to the fight being waged by the Attica defendants. Dennis Banks told *The Militant* the rally was "tremendous."

"It shows that there's an incredible amount of unity among a lot of people — Blacks, whites, Chicanos, and Indians — pulling together against corruption," Banks said. "I think that the Watergate indictments that came down last week were because of rallies like this."

March 14, 1949

An event of great revolutionary significance, with an extremely ominous culmination, took place in China during the week ended Feb. 19 when railroad and bus transportation workers at Shanghai — the country's greatest industrial city and port — went out on strike and suffered brutal repression by troops of the local garrison commander, Gen. Tang En-po, one of Chiang Kai-shek's henchmen. Though hemmed in by martial law, and an edict against strikes which carries the penalty of death for disobedience, these workers nevertheless walked off the job demonstrating once again the fighting courage of the proletariat and its tremendous power as a revolutionary striking force. But the Communist Party, the only supposedly revolutionary party widely known to the masses, holds the workers in check, tells them to preserve order (which means submission to Kuomintang-military rule and to maintain production) which is for the benefit of the capitalist exploiters). The Stalinists have made themselves the protectors of bourgeois property. Thus the proletariat, for the time being, is politically disarmed in the face of its mortal foes.

Pathfinder

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Farmers point the way forward

A U.S. court house is not a friendly arena for working people, especially in Washington, D.C. But on March 2 farmers had their say in front of a battery of lawyers and a federal district court judge. The reason was that the courtroom was filled with hundreds of farmers and a significant layer of workers. The attorneys for the farmers and the government spoke first. They claimed the settlement was "fair," the best deal farmers would get, a "watershed for justice for Blacks."

In response, one farmer after another spoke against the proposed consent decree and for a fair and complete redress of their grievances. Some criticized the decree, others condemned it outright. By their dignified presence, the farmers shifted the normal rules that prevail in a U.S. courtroom. Normally, you don't clap in the courtroom. Farmers clapped. Normally, you don't speak your mind. The farmers spoke their mind, often going over the prescribed time limit. The desperate conditions they face on the land came through loud and clear.

"This is the biggest cover-up in the history of this country," declared Eddie Slaughter, a farmer from Georgia and a leader of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association. "Let the farmers be free," said Mattie Mack, a leader of the Minority Farmers of Meade County. Their statements echoed the feelings of the majority of the farmers present and were not lost on anyone, including the well-paid lawyers and the judge.

J.L. Chestnut, who supports the consent decree and has traveled across the country speaking in support of the settlement, recently called farmers who oppose the deal "fools." In his final statements he said the lawyers had "carried the farmers on their backs," once again showing his utter contempt for the farmers.

Chestnut criticized the farmers for putting forward "political" not "legal" arguments. Throughout the proceedings Judge Friedman made similar points, saying that what the farmers were demanding was beyond the scope of the court. "All I can do is approve the settlement of the lawsuit or not approve the settlement. Systemic solutions" are beyond the authority of the court, said the judge.

The farmers want real changes. They want to root out

racism in the USDA. They want to see action taken against the good ol' boys of the notorious "county committees." They want more than \$50,000, "a drop in the bucket" as one farmer put it, and not enough to buy one tractor. They want a moratorium on their debts. They want land. They want to be farmers. Above all, they want to be treated with honor and dignity. Their demands call for changes in the "system"; their demands speak to the interests of all exploited producers on the land.

Farmers who are Black face devastating conditions and are being driven off the land at a faster rate than other farmers. This is the product of how capitalism works in a society with a legacy of racial discrimination.

Perhaps the most important fact reflected at the March 2 hearing is that Black farmers are pointing the way forward for all farmers who are struggling to stay on the land. Working farmers across the United States are facing their worst crisis in decades. Real incomes plummet as they are caught in a financial squeeze between falling commodity prices and monopoly costs of seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and farm machinery. This crisis carries over into all aspects of the social and psychological life of rural communities. It does not stop at U.S. borders; in fact, conditions for rural producers are even worse in the semicolonial world and many other imperialist countries.

A new leadership of farmers is coming forward. It is being led in large part by farmers who are Black. The mobilization on March 2 pointed to the collective, political struggle needed to defend the livelihoods of working farmers and workers in the coming years.

The farmers who have led this struggle against the USDA are hungry to link up with farmers across the country, thereby broadening their vision. Meetings being held across the United States over the next month to discuss the tentative settlement provide one opportunity to meet each other. These farmers are also linking up with workers resisting the consequences of the ruler's brutal assault on their human dignity. In the period ahead, vanguard workers, unionists, all fighters for social justice, and rebel youth should join the continuing fight of Black farmers and all toilers on the land.

Farmers protest at D.C. hearing

Continued from Page 9

February 15 deadline to briefly address the court. "No farmer should be left out of this settlement," stated Mattie Mack, a tobacco farmer from Brandenburg, Kentucky, and leader of the Minority Farmers of Meade County. "I don't agree with [Track] A and I don't agree with [Track] B. They both should be out," she said. "This is my fourth time in your courtroom. I made three other trips here. And it's always the same old thing," said Mack.

Turning to the government's attorneys, Willie Head, a leader of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, said, "Here's my solution — raise the [\$50,000] cap."

Turning to his own lawyers, Head asked, "Would you send your sons off to war with one bullet?" referring to the no-appeals side of the consent decree.

To the judge he said, "You were a man before you were a judge. What if your home and car were taken? Would

\$50,000 be enough for you?"

"I came 1,300 miles to this hearing," stated George Hildebrand, a farmer from Leavenworth, Kansas. "The FSA [Farm Services Agency] refused to give us loans. They have humiliated me and my family since 1989, threatening to foreclose on our farm. We lost our home and possessions in the flood of 1993. Stop those agents from harassing us all these years."

Several farmers, like L.C. Cooper, from Warren county, North Carolina, demanded "Let's go to trial. You cannot mediate institutionalized racism."

Eddie Slaughter, vice president of BFSA and a farmer from Georgia agreed. "If I were guilty of these crimes, I would be serving time. I want to have my day in court. I think this is one of the biggest cover-ups in the history of this country," said Slaughter.

One of the final speakers of the day was John Bender, who has a small vegetable farm and greenhouse in Johnstown, New York. Bender, who is white, drove from upstate New York to show his support for farmers involved in this important class-action lawsuit. "We have a government that admitted it did wrong in discriminating against these farmers, yet they fight out this case as long as they can." Bender called for ending this discriminatory treatment and also pointed to the police killing of Amadou Diallo, who was shot at 41 times in New York City, and the dragging death of James Byrd in Jaspers, Texas.

At the end of the testimony, the attorneys for the farmers tried to put forward their best arguments for settling the class-action suit. "This is the best deal you will get," said attorney J.L. Chestnut. "We've suffered too, spending \$3 million of our own money," he added. "Where would we get \$3 million to continue? The farmers don't have the money. We've carried them on our backs." Although most farmers wouldn't agree with that statement, Chestnut did make one accurate point. He said farmers were becoming more volatile.

After listening to the entire hearing, Linn Hamilton, a retired dairy farmer from Washington, Pennsylvania, said he supported the Black farmers' call for a complete redress of their long oppressive and unjust treatment by federal agencies. "The Black farmers are the most focused on what they want. They can set an example for the rest of us farmers who are white." After hearing a final plea from the attorneys for the plaintiffs on why this consent decree should be accepted, the judge said he will consider all of the objections. He will then issue his ruling on whether to accept or reject the proposed settlement.

Arlene Rubinstein is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Brian Williams is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

Moreno: lifelong partisan of the Cuban revolution

Continued from Page 7

of human solidarity, of the friendly hand, of the door to his home constantly open. For this Walfrido lived with honor and he died 'with his face to the sun.' "

Sergio Corrieri, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the People (ICAP), and Fernando Ramirez, ambassador to Cuba's Interests Section in Washington, D.C., also sent greetings.

Messages of solidarity were also read from Raúl Alzaga of the Antonio Maceo Brigade in Puerto Rico; José Estévez, president of Amerindia in Los Angeles; Lucius Walker of Pastors for Peace; Cuba Vive from Tampa; the coordinators of the National Network on Cuba, and Workers World Party.

A number of Cuban Americans addressed the meeting, including Cachita Moré from Rescate Cultural Afro-Cubano.

Xiomara Almaguer, a leader of the Cuban-American Defense League, spoke of the ultraright in Miami who try to cow those who disagree with them. She pointed to how Moreno refused to be silenced, remembering his intransigence at protest actions and his tireless efforts to organize other defenders of the Cuban revolution.

One of best working class has produced

Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters sent a message on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. It was read at the meeting by Argiris Malapanis, who attended the event on behalf of the party's Political Committee.

"The importance of the example Moreno set — from the time he helped found the July 26 Movement in New York City in the 1950s, to his intransigent efforts as president of the ATC, working to his very last days to draw thousands of others into active opposition to Washington's economic war on Cuba — extends well beyond Florida and the United States," the message said.

"Above all, Moreno was one of the best examples of the kind of courageous men and women the working class, both here and in Cuba, has produced. We are confident that what he did so well will be continued by his fellow fighters and the organization he helped lead for decades."

Oscar Ochotorena from the leadership of the ATC read a poem dedicated to Moreno. "Like Martí, he gave himself to our land and never backed off," he said, referring to Cuba's national hero José Martí.

Other speakers at the meeting included Alberto Jones, an Afro-Cuban activist in northern Florida, Vivian Manerud of ABC Charters, Orlando Collado of the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, Jack Lieberman, a representative of the Communist Party USA, and Barbara Collins of Miami's Jewish Cultural Center.

Ernie Mailhot, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in Miami who worked with Moreno for many years also addressed the gathering. He drew attention to Moreno's support for and identification with struggles of working people and youth inside the United States. He recalled Moreno's excitement after inviting striking coal miners from Indiana to speak before the ATC in 1994, for example.

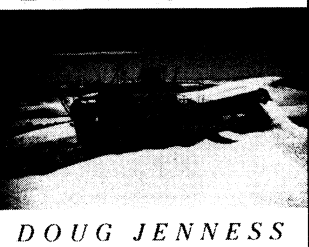
"Moreno died before seeing the end of the blockade but with his attitude and work he planted seeds that showed how we can fight," stated Miranda in his closing remarks. "The big corporations and other interests are for the blockade but the U.S. people and many in Miami are against it. I believe the same exiles here in Florida will one day be an important factor in defeating the U.S. economic war on Cuba."

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Steelworkers in Chicago strike against takebacks

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

picket line has increased.

"This isn't a 'racial matter'," Nathaniel, who is Black, told the *Militant*. "The company forced us all on strike here. And we're all to-

the port by the International Transport Workers Federation. The ship, now in Chile, features exhibits highlighting labor struggles on the seas and in ports all over the world.

ON THE PICKET LINE

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

CHICAGO — Some 120 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 15271-02 have been on strike here at Tool and Engineering Co. since November 30. The company is demanding major concessions from the workers, including elimination of the current pension plan, establishment of a new series of labor grades and a system that would force workers to requalify for their job every year or be downgraded, cuts the union estimates would slash an average of \$14,000 from a worker's pay and benefits each year, and a scheme that would cut vacation time.

The company does not claim to be suffering losses, but says concessions are necessary to defend its "competitive position." It has refused union demands to open its books for inspection.

Over December and January, the bosses told workers if the local did not accept the concessions, the plant would be closed, and demanded the membership vote on the contract and accept it by February 1. The strikers met January 31 and more than 100 of them voted to reject the blackmail offer. More than 40 picketed the plant the next morning to let the company know they were determined to continue to fight.

The strikers are a mix of Blacks, Latinos, and recent Eastern European immigrants. Workers say that before the strike, management made a concerted effort to divide the workforce by nationality and race. "Foremen would go to a group of Black workers and ask if they weren't mad that the new Eastern European immigrants were taking jobs," one striker said on the picket line. "Then they would go to the Eastern Europeans and ask them if they thought the Blacks were lazy."

Most of the dozen strikebreakers crossing the picket line each morning are Black, and the company has attempted to tell workers that the strike is a "racial matter." Since the company began pushing this line, the number of Black workers on the

gether until we either get what we want or [owner William] Farley closes his plant down."

When the strike began, the company posted lights and security cameras on the plant roof, and they hired security cops.

The company called the city and the police to force the union to take down its picket shanty, claiming it blocked their view of the parking lot and was an obstacle to security. After wrangling back and forth, the union agreed to move its shanty 20 feet down the block.

In recent weeks the security forces have stepped up harassment of the strikers, including arresting pickets. Dozens of strikers turn out each day, especially at shift change times. The union has established a strike fund to help meet the workers' needs while the strike continues. Contributions can be made to USWA Local 15271-02 Strike & Defense Fund, 7218 W. 91st Street, Bridgeview, Illinois 60455.

Washington State ports: truckers seek to unionize

SEATTLE — A convoy of truckers and their supporters, blaring horns and waving signs, snaked through the Seattle waterfront February 16 in support of the Teamsters Local 174 drive to organize thousands of independent truck drivers who service the ports of Seattle and Tacoma. The drivers, most of whom are owner-operators of their trucks, have faced deteriorating wages and working conditions over the years. Web Beste, a leader of the organizing drive, explained that while piece rates per load have remained frozen for decades, "the costs of operating and maintaining a truck have soared over 300 percent. I work 12 to 14 hours a day and make between \$6 and \$8 an hour."

Another problem facing drivers is the long wait in the terminals for loads. Because the shipping bosses keep the piers understaffed, the drivers may wait four hours for a container. Many drivers also complain of insurance fee scams perpetrated by the trucking firms they drive for. For instance, some companies will add 10 or 20 percent to the fee they charge drivers over what they pay the insurance companies, and pocket the difference.

Upcoming events in the organizing drive include a joint march of Teamsters and Longshoremen in early April to greet a ship brought

Paperworkers push back layoff threat in Sweden

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Workers at ASSI Kraftliner in Piteå, northern Sweden, were informed in October 1998 that 154 jobs would be cut at the factory, which today employs 600. The four unions at the factory all declared the cut unacceptable. A joint union meeting of 500 workers January 11 supported this position.

The company persisted, and on February 11 announced its "final offer" — 110 would lose their jobs within a year. "They must not cut one single job. We are already short of people. We cannot keep production going if they cut more," paperworker Niclas Lundqvist told the press. The following day 30 workers called in sick, enough to stop production entirely. Paper production is very mechanized and depends on continuous production.

The company demanded a doctor's notice from the first day of a sick leave, hoping to force workers back. In Sweden you generally don't need a doctor's notice until the seventh day of an illness. Their tactic backfired. Many of those who visited the doctor got instructions to stay off work longer — five of them for three or four weeks. "The demand from the company had one good side to it, people were forced to go to the doctor," said union steward Ingvar Lundström. "In many cases it proved long overdue. The company withdrew the demand for a doctor's note, and on February 17 agreed to resume negotiations with the unions. It still maintains that 110 people have to be laid off, but over three years, not one. The unions oppose any layoffs."

One union signs contract with Detroit newspapers

DETROIT — "Under the circumstances, it is the best we could hope for, I guess," is how Glen Libby, a member of Detroit Typographical Union (DTU) Local 18, described the contract accepted by his union on February 14. "But," he continued, "we shouldn't have accepted it with the other locals out."

DTU Local 18, now part of the Communication Workers of America, is the only one of the six unions that struck this city's two daily newspapers in July 1995 to

Vancouver: projectionists keep up fight against wage cuts



Militant/Monica Jones

Supporters of locked-out projectionists picket February 6 in Vancouver. The movie houses are trying to cut their pay by 60 percent.

reach an agreement. According to local president Sam Attard, the local represents nearly 100 of 2,400 workers who walked out at the *News, Free Press*, and their joint management, Detroit Newspapers. The six unions — including the Newspaper Guild (also now part of the CWA), two Teamster locals, and two locals of the Graphics and Communication International Union — made an unconditional offer to return to work in February 1997, ending the strike.

The 10-year DTU contract includes an annual 2 percent pay increase, starting next year, with a "me too" clause promising if the other unions settle for higher raises the printers will receive that amount. It also includes a \$70,000 voluntary buyout, to be paid over 3, 5, or 10 years, for workers with "lifetime jobs." Health benefits for those who accept the buyouts will continue for five years or until the age of 70, whichever comes first.

About 90 printers have guaranteed lifetime jobs, stemming from a 1974 contract. The newspapers want to get rid of these workers. Hoping to demoralize them and force many to retire, printers under age 65 who were covered under the 1974 agreement were taken back into work in groups when the union officials ended the strike, but given nothing to do. Libby, who has worked at the *Free Press* since 1971, said they were "sitting in the building doing nothing for six or eight months."

Local members expressed varying opinions on the contract settlement, which was approved by a vote of 62 to 18. Barbara Ingalls, one of the seven local members who worked part-time before the strike and who are not covered under this agreement, said it was approved "because it included the fired and retired workers, as well as the workers inside the building."

Gary Rusnell, a fired printer, declared, "I want justice and this isn't justice." He pointed out that the buyout isn't "offering me much. I would have to sign a waiver giving up any claims to back pay." He estimates that if the courts find in favor of the striking unions, he would be owed over \$50,000 and payments into the union retirement fund. "The only good thing to come out of it is a 10-year contract. They can't decertify the union as long as we have a contract."

There are few signs that the other five unions are close to contract settlements. The company continues to ignore National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) orders to reinstate members of the unions who went on strike. The company admits that almost 580 workers have not been called back to work in the two

years since the strike ended.

Locked-out newspaper workers continue protests at the newspaper offices. Forty locked-out workers and supporters staged a "scab shout" outside the Detroit Newspapers building February 10. Ingalls reports that newspaper unionists are organizing a rush hour protest March 2. "We're showing them that we don't plan to go away until all the locked-out workers are back to work with union contracts."

Canada gold miners stand firm against bosses

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "The Con Mine bosses wanted to control the hours of work in a seven-day schedule. That means getting rid of overtime for weekends, getting rid of free weekends to spend time with our families. Our membership mandated the negotiating committee to accept no concessions," Cliff Moroz, president of United Steelworkers of America Local 802, said in a phone interview. The USWA local represents 160 gold miners who have been on strike since May 15, 1998, against Miramar Corp., which owns the Con Gold mine in Yellowknife, North West Territories. Picket lines are up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The mine bosses are not attempting to run the mine.

The company is using the pretext of low gold prices to demand concessions from union miners. They had tried to take away the northern allowance, the energy package of \$25 per month and 800 gallons of fuel that each miner is entitled to. At the last minute the company withdrew this concession. The USWA strikers have not had a pay raise in seven years, Moroz added.

The gold miners at the Con mine have a history of support for the struggle of the gold miners at the nearby Giant Mine owned by Royal Oak Mines, who waged an 18-month strike in 1992-93. Strike support has been great according to the USWA. Small businesses bring donuts, coffee, and pizza to the picket. Support and financial contributions have come from CAW, PSAC, CUPE, other USWA locals.

Letters of support and financial contributions can be sent USWA local 802, Box 802, Yellowknife, NWT, X1A 2N3.

John Studer, a USWA member in Chicago; Jeff Ford, a member of the United Transportation Union in Seattle; Anita Östling in Stockholm; John Sarge, a member of the United Auto Workers in Detroit; and Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Vancouver, contributed to this column.

— LETTERS —

On rail union merger

The article by Greg McCartan entitled "Socialist Workers in New York and New Jersey chart next steps in building branches and union fractions" in the February 15 *Militant* had a good assessment of the upcoming merger of two rail unions, the UTU and the BLE. However, several inaccuracies should be pointed out.

The article states that "since the mid-1980s in freight new workers are hired for the position of conductor/engineer." Railroads in freight today hire "conductor trainee" or conductor/brakemen but not "conductor/engineers." They do tell you right from the start that they have the right to force you to be an engi-

neer later on if they deem it necessary. On some railroads workers still become engineers by volunteering for it.

On the railroad I work on, the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe, conductors and brakemen hired after 1985 began being forced into engine service in 1992 because the railroad couldn't get enough people to volunteer to meet their needs. Failure to pass the tests required for certifying as an engineer resulted in your being fired from the railroad.

In the last several months the BNSF switched back to letting people become engineers on a voluntary basis, though they still reserve the right to make it mandatory if they feel it necessary. At this

time, once they've made you an engineer your not allowed to flow back to being a conductor.

Also, the article refers to "two-tier" wage structures, which have actually become "multi-tier" wage structures with a whole number of new divisions introduced since the 1985 contract.

Craig Honts
Los Angeles, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Frame-up trial of Puerto Rican nationalist opens in Chicago

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

CHICAGO — The case of the *United States v. José Solís Jordán* opened here March 2. The FBI is trying to frame Solís, a longtime supporter of the fight for Puerto Rican independence, for a 1992 bombing outside a military recruitment facility in Chicago. He is being charged with conspiracy to destroy government property, destruction of government property by means of explosives and arson, attempted destruction of government property by explosive devices and illegal possession of explosives.

The lead witness for the government against Solís is Rafael Marrero, who at one time functioned in the Puerto Rican independence movement in Chicago. He claims to have planted the alleged bombs, and has been given immunity to testify against Solís. On the witness stand, Marrero itemized having been paid \$119,000 by the FBI over the last three and a half years.

Solís is a professor of educational philosophy at the University of Puerto Rico and a longtime activist in the fight for Puerto Rican independence. From 1992-1995, Solís taught in the education department at DePaul University here.

"The prosecution has charged a leading Puerto Rican intellectual with a crime he did not commit," said Jed Stone, lead attorney for the defense, in his opening statement in court. "There were two devices as described by the prosecution. They never detonated; nobody was hurt. Marrero will tell you [Marrero] was there and he planted it. José Solís had nothing to do with it!"

The police say they found two devices, one in the military recruiting center and one under a car outside. According to a technical witness who testified March 3, neither detonated, but the one under the car caused a fire.

About 35 supporters attended the opening day of the trial, many of them students from high schools and universities in the city. Members of the Union of Puerto Rican Students at Northeastern University in Chicago who came to the trial said they will be holding a presentation by José Solís: "Puerto Rico and the Plebiscite: the Hope of Decolonization" March 5 at 7:00 p.m.

FBI intimidation plays a significant role in this case. On the morning of Nov. 6, 1997, well over a dozen heavily armed FBI agents surrounded Solís's home in a suburb of San Juan, Puerto Rico. They released pepper spray into his house, and then, in front of



Militant/Elizabeth Stone

Supporters of José Solís protest frame-up by FBI in Chicago, June 1998.

his terrified children, handcuffed him and took him into custody.

The cops transported him to a U.S. government building where he was interrogated for more than five hours before he was allowed to speak to his lawyer. Federal agents did not inform Solís of his counsel's presence in the building until two and a half

hours after the lawyers arrival.

Leading up to the trial, Solís spoke before several meetings at area campuses and rallies. Under the banner: "Support José Solís! — Support the Puerto Rico's Right to Self-Determination — Stop FBI Harassment of the Puerto Rican Community," 120 people gathered February 20 in the Puerto

Rican Cultural Center to learn more about how to support Solís' case. There his legal team laid out the defense strategy and urged everyone to come and show their support in the courtroom as often as possible.

At that rally attorney Stone, in answer to a question on what the jury will be allowed to hear, pointed out the government had filed a motion to prevent this case from being political but the judge ruled against them. "The jury will learn a substantial amount of politics. José Solís stands for the right of people to self-determination, to choose their own political future."

Linda Backiel, Solís's lawyer from Puerto Rico, pointed to the direct connection of this case to the local community. "This case is about destroying the Puerto Rican community in Chicago by destroying its leaders, going after its community institutions, the schools, health centers, etc., that respond to its needs."

The key government witness for the case against Solís was also the key witness for the recent Illinois state legislative committee investigation accusing the local school council and supporters of Puerto Rican independence at Clemente High School in Chicago of misusing federal funds. On January 7 the committee announced it found no illegal activity involving those funds.

José López, director of the Cultural Center, fit this case into years of government and right-wing attacks on the Puerto Rican

Continued on Page 5

Protesters: stop harassment of Irish militants under UK 'anti-terror' law

BY BERNADETTE CAMPBELL AND PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — "Scrap the PTA! Free the prisoners now!" chanted protesters outside Altrincham police station here, after special branch cops seized three men who were returning to Belfast, Northern Ireland, February 23. Pat Coyle, Tony Miller, and Sean McMonagle, all Irish nationalists and former political prisoners, were detained without charges under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) as they were boarding a flight to Belfast at Manchester airport.

"Swoop on IRA terror suspects at airport" was the screaming headline in the *Manchester Evening News* the next day. The paper asserted that the three were arrested because they were "refusing to answer questions, tore up paperwork and would only speak in Gaelic," their native language. They were not accused of any crime.

The PTA has been used by the British government for three decades to harass and intimidate Irish people and others. It allows the police to arrest and detain people without charge for up to 48 hours, and for a further seven days with the authority of the Home Secretary. For the first 48 hours there is no automatic right to see a lawyer or make a phone call. Some 98 percent of all those detained under the PTA have not been convicted of any crime.

Eight protesters took part in a picket outside the police station the evening after the arrests here, and were interviewed by the local newspaper. The following

evening the protest grew to 13, including one man who came along because he read about the previous action in the newspaper.

The *Manchester Evening News* quoted Sinn Féin chairperson Mitchel McLaughlin, who said, "These three men were in Manchester as part of an ex-prisoners employment initiative. They are part of an enterprise group who are involved in creating employment opportunities for ex-prisoners.... It is just not acceptable that these men should be the subject of vindictive Special

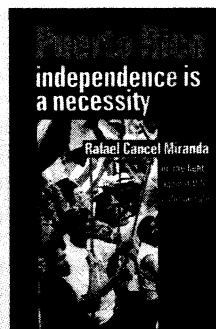
Branch anti-Irish intimidation while traveling on legitimate business and they should be released without further delay."

The three were finally released February 26, three days after their arrest, still without charge, and made their way to Belfast.

Bernadette Campbell is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union in Manchester, Paul Davies is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union.

FROM PATHFINDER

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity
RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA



"Our people are becoming aware of their own strength, which is what the colonial powers fear," explains Puerto Rican independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda. In two interviews, Cancel

Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today." In English and Spanish. \$3.00

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

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For more information, call the Sinn Féin National Office at (202) 547-8883.