

Reagan demands open funding for 'contra' war against Nicaragua

BY PAT GROGAN

President Ronald Reagan has launched what administration officials called a concerted effort to resume direct military funding to the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary (*contra*) army fighting against Nicaragua.

This is part of the Reagan administration's escalation in recent weeks of the U.S.-organized war against Nicaragua.

As a cover for this terrorist war, Washington has embarked upon a new slander campaign, centered on the charge of Cuban domination of Nicaragua. In leveling this charge, the U.S. government has made new threats against revolutionary Cuba as well.

In his weekly radio address on December 14, Reagan insisted that "more effective help" was needed for the mercenaries than the \$27 million in "humanitarian aid" approved by Congress last July.

Calling the Sandinista leadership "thugs" who are "drunk with power," Reagan asserted that Nicaragua is "an international aggressor nation," a "breeding ground for subversion," and a haven for more than 7,000 Cubans, Russians, East Germans, Bulgarians, Libyans, Palestine Liberation Organization members, and "other [East] bloc members and terrorists."

"If Nicaragua can get material support from Communist states and terrorist regimes and prop up a hated Communist dictatorship, should not the forces fighting for liberation, now numbering more than 20,000, be entitled to more effective help?" Reagan continued.

That same day, Nicaraguan Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge warned that the U.S. government is now directing the construction of sea units in neighboring Honduras and El Salvador to enable the mercenaries to launch naval attacks on Nicaragua.

Borge reported that high Salvadoran military officials are involved in the effort. The chief of the naval units, Borge said, will be Ysidro Sandino, who was a colonel in the hated National Guard of former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon announced



Militant/Michael Baumann

Funeral of young Nicaraguan militia members. Reagan administration seeks to increase death, destruction caused by U.S.-sponsored war.

that another round of U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers, which will include a five-and-a-half-month military road-building program, is beginning in January. Through similar maneuvers in the past, the Pentagon has set up in Honduras a military infrastructure — airfields, surveillance posts, roads, etc. — capable of supporting a large-scale direct U.S. military invasion of Nicaragua.

This follows on the heels of the shooting

down of a Nicaraguan helicopter with a SAM-7 missile. It was the first use of surface-to-air missiles by the mercenaries and marked an important military escalation of the war. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega compared this development to the CIA's mining of Nicaragua's ports two years ago.

U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and his chief hatchet man for Latin America, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-

American Affairs Elliot Abrams, utilized the incident to unleash a barrage of propaganda claiming that the downed helicopter had been piloted by Cubans. In Abrams' words, "Cubans are now the backbone of the Sandinista Army."

Reagan's December 14 speech repeated the anti-Cuba theme, charging that Cuba is being "used for the export of aggressive communist purposes." It also contained

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Apartheid gov't threatens unions

BY NORTON SANDLER

The South African government responded to the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) with threats against this new union federation. The federation, the largest in South Africa's history, has more than 30 unions with a combined total of 500,000 members. It was founded at a convention that concluded December 1.

COSATU is nonracial — open to workers of all colors. The overwhelming majority of its members are Black.

The federation represents workers in many key industries including mining, auto, metals, food, transportation, chemical, and textiles.

The constitution adopted by COSATU calls for "a united democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation."

The government threats against the federation came in a December 4 broadcast over the apartheid regime's radio network.

"This organization, with its declared aim of standing in for the ANC [African National Congress] is, under the guise of a trade union movement, intent on furthering the aims of a banned organization, namely to make the country ungovernable. The question is whether it can be allowed to do so."

The radio broadcast expressed anger at the fact that the union federation is concentrating not only on wages, "but also on conditions in the townships and on politics."

Outlawed in 1960, the African National Congress has wide popular support in South Africa. The racist government frequently labels opponents of its rule as members or fronts for the ANC.

COSATU's Secretary General Jay Naidoo described the charge that the organization was a front for the ANC as "rubbish."

According to a South African Press Association summary, he said that COSATU is "a front for workers only, but in the present climate in South Africa what happens on the factory floor cannot be separated from the wider struggle for freedom."

COSATU calls for a worldwide economic boycott of the apartheid regime even though the regime says it is illegal to raise that demand.

Other political demands put forward by federation spokespeople include an end to the hated pass-law system that prevents Blacks from being able to move freely throughout the country; an end to the state of emergency imposed in July that has resulted in troops being deployed in a number of Black townships; an end to the ban on the Congress of South African Students, a high school organization outlawed for leading anti-apartheid struggles; and the right to vote for all South Africans in a single, undivided state.

A U.S. State Department spokesman also criticized COSATU saying, "We strongly disagree with the call for divestiture."

Meanwhile, mobilizations against apartheid are continuing. Thousands participated in a December 14 funeral for two Blacks killed in the township of Mamelodi near the capital city of Pretoria. The media reported that the funeral procession was led by a man waving an ANC flag.

Tear gas and whips were used by the cops the next day to break up an outdoor rally in Durban. The event had been called to demand the release of Nelson Mandela, a leader of the ANC who has been in jail since 1962. Speakers at the event included eight leaders of the United Democratic Front, South Africa's largest anti-apartheid coalition. The eight had been acquitted a few days earlier on treason charges brought against them in a frame-up trial.

On December 15, Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, charged that the apartheid government's troops were massing along his country's border. The troop mobilizations followed the explosion of a series of land mines in South Africa. The South African government is claiming that the ANC is using Zimbabwe as a staging area for the attacks. Both the ANC and the Zimbabwean government deny the charge.

Balanced-budget bill sets new round of social service cuts

The so-called balanced-budget bill has been hailed by Democratic and Republican politicians as laying the basis for eliminating the annual \$200 billion federal budget deficit.

Whether the deficit will be eliminated is questionable. What is certain is that the

EDITORIAL

measure is a new weapon in the ruling-class drive to further push down the standard of living of working people.

Any doubts about that were dispelled by President Reagan in a December 18 statement about the legislation. He stated explicitly that it will be deep cutbacks in what he called "wasteful and unnecessary" social services that will close the deficit. The Pentagon's funding, meanwhile, will continue to increase, he pledged.

Both houses of Congress voted overwhelmingly for the bill, and it was signed into law by the president on December 12.

The balanced-budget bill calls for the annual deficit to be reduced by specific

amounts over the next five years. This deficit is scheduled to be eliminated in 1991.

The national debt is the cumulative amount the government owes to wealthy individuals, banks, and other financial institutions. It is the product of the government spending more than it receives in taxes. The debt has more than doubled in the last four years and now stands at \$2 trillion — that is, \$2,000 billion.

The annual deficit is the gap between what the government spends and pays out each year. Year after year of deficit budgets has left the government with this huge debt.

The increase in the debt was, in part, an effort by the government to speed up the capitalist economic upturn. With the upturn showing signs of slowing, the rulers now fear that the budget deficit will spur accelerated inflation.

The bill mandates that working people must pay to reduce the bosses' deficit. Bankers, military contractors, and other multimillionaires are to be the beneficiaries.

The new law states that broad cuts in social spending are to go into effect automatically.

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S. Africa, women's rights coverage spur auto sale

BY GREG McCARTAN

DORAVILLE, Georgia — Socialists have been selling the *Militant* and the *Young Socialist*, the monthly newspaper that re-

march in Atlanta against apartheid that was organized by the NAACP. The videotape *Adapt or Die* was shown at a union meeting, and workers in the plant are

Be sure to come back," one worker said as he gave me all the change he had in his pocket.

Two young white workers stopped their car to listen to the conversation and bought the *Young Socialist* after looking it over and seeing an article on the U.S.-sponsored war against Nicaragua.

Coverage of the fight against concession contracts by UAW members at General Dynamics and Chrysler was another reason some workers bought the *Militant*. When we went to the gates with the issue on the recent UAW strike against General Dynamics, eight *Militants* and two *Young Socialists* — all the papers we had with us — were bought up in 15 minutes.

Some workers said they hoped the strike would prevent the company from imposing the same deep concessions and two-tier wage

structure that are in place at General Motors.

We have also found that women's rights, including the right to safe, legal abortion, are seen as an important issue. Women workers, especially, are interested in the *Militant's* coverage of local demonstrations, meetings, and picket lines to defend abortion rights.

Our sales team greets the second shift at 2 a.m. when workers get off the assembly line after a nine-hour day.

On warmer nights, many workers hang around for a while, talking and relaxing a little. The sale provides us with an opportunity to get to know people and get involved in discussions about South Africa, Nicaragua, the union movement, and socialism.

The *Militant* is getting known by some of the workers at the

plant. The increased recognition of the paper comes both from the plant-gate sale and because several workers distribute it inside the plant.

We run into workers who tell us, "I get it in the mail," or "I got one inside this week." Socialists in the plant recently sold 20 subscriptions.

The plant-gate sales team has developed a regular readership. We also find new readers who want to find out what the paper is all about. "I have seen you out here every week. I guess I better check this paper out," several people have told me.

The *Young Socialist* has also been a regular part of our sales. The plant recently hired a number of young workers. We usually sell between six and ten copies of the *Militant* and one or two *Young Socialists* each week.

SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

flects the views of the Young Socialist Alliance, at the General Motors car assembly plant here throughout the fall. The plant employs 5,500 production workers and is organized by Local 10 of the United Auto Workers (UAW). Located just outside of Atlanta, it is one of three auto assembly plants in the area.

Local 10 has been involved in the fight against apartheid in South Africa. The union supported a

circulating the "Freedom Letter" petition demanding an end to the racist apartheid system.

Not surprisingly, the *Militant* has been well-received by the workers here. The regular coverage of the struggle in South Africa and the growing union participation in the anti-apartheid fight draw a lot of attention every week.

"This is great. We really need a paper that tells the truth about what is going on in South Africa.

N.Y: 200 mark 10 years of Lao People's Republic

BY JANE HARRIS

NEW YORK — One hundred people came together here December 2 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Following a reception, several speakers and a slide show described the advances the Lao people have made since defeating French and U.S. occupation forces.

Bui Xuan Nhat, Vietnam's ambassador to the United States, gave greetings.

Chan Bun Han, a Kampuchean who is fighting for an end to U.S. and UN support to the ousted Khmer Rouge regime and its rightist allies, also spoke.

Roger Rumpf of the Asia Resource Center, who spent three and a half years in

Rumpf passed around three small bombs he had brought back from Laos. They were manufactured by Honeywell Inc. in Minneapolis.

The celebration's featured speaker was Laos' ambassador to the UN, Kithong Vongsay. He noted that there is probably a higher percentage of handicapped among the Laotian people, as a result of the bombing, than even among the people of South Vietnam. He explained that the devastation caused by the U.S. bombing was only one of Laos' big problems.

His country faced economic backwardness inherited from the old regime, recurrent natural calamities, such as drought and floods, and, since last June, the occupation of parts of its territory by Thai troops.

The ambassador said 3,000 agricultural cooperatives have been set up, accounting for 61 percent of all peasant households and 58 percent of the total cultivated land area.

"The Lao peasants can see for themselves the advantage they can reap from the socialist collective path of production, which was unheard of under the old regime. That is why the great majority of them have, of their own free will, embarked upon this path," the ambassador pointed out, adding, "Only through persuasion and not coercion can the remaining Lao peasants be brought step by step into the socialist way of production.

Since 1983, Laos has been self-sufficient in basic foods and grains, the ambassador reported.

"Of particular significance," Vongsay pointed out, "has been the complete eradication of illiteracy in Laos — an achievement for which we have been given a UN-

ESCO award."

The meeting was broadly sponsored. Among those backing it were the Association of Vietnamese in the United States; Casa El Salvador, New York; the New York chapter of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Socialist

Workers Party; New York District of the Communist Party; U.S. branch of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party; Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship/Philippine Solidarity Network; Committee in Solidarity With Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos; *Guardian* newspaper; and others.

Socialist youth leader tours W. Va.

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — "The Young Socialist Alliance calls on young people to help make apartheid unprofitable and unworkable," Mark Curtis told a student forum at West Virginia University.

Curtis is the National Organization Secretary of the YSA. He was touring West Virginia as part of a national tour of YSA leaders this fall. Pat, a South African woman and anti-apartheid activist who lives in the United States, also addressed the forum.

Curtis used his talk at the Morgantown campus to explain the racist apartheid system, the role of the U.S. government in maintaining it, and the importance of the growing revolutionary movement in South Africa to overthrow it. He urged the students to continue their efforts to demand that the U.S. government break all ties with the outlaw apartheid regime.

Curtis also linked the freedom struggle in South Africa to the fight of the Nicaraguan people to defend their revolution against the U.S.-organized war and to other liberation struggles in Central America.

The meeting was recorded by the campus radio station, which played segments of the talks throughout the week.

Curtis also spoke at a student meeting at Marshall University near Charleston, West Virginia. A member of the Black United

Students, after hearing Curtis speak, said, "I think more people would be active if they had the facts about South Africa. We should have some kind of educational activity every week."

The students also discussed the need to work with community groups, unions, and women's organizations active in the anti-apartheid movement. One student pointed out that the United Auto Workers publication *Ammo* was a good educational tool against apartheid.

The United Mine Workers of America, which is centered in the coalfields of southern West Virginia, has played a leading role in the anti-apartheid fight, and students discussed linking up with the miners' union.

Throughout the West Virginia tour, YSA members found that there is much interest in the ideas of the Young Socialist Alliance among students and young workers. At campus literature tables, high schools, factory gates, and at meetings and social events, YSA members found an excellent response to their paper, the *Young Socialist*, and to the *Militant* and other socialist publications. Many young people signed up for more information about the YSA.

This article is based on reports from Margi Husk, Jane Lobman, and Pat Woolbright.

Attention readers:

This is the last issue of the *Militant* before our one-week holiday break. We will resume publication with the issue dated January 10, 1986.

Laos under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee, described the legacy of the U.S. war against Laos. More than 3 million U.S. bombs and artillery shells were dropped on a country that is about the size of the state of Oregon.

Rumpf explained that the B-52 bombers dropped "mother bombs" that in turn released small bombs, many of which remain unexploded in the ground. They are often detonated when farmers clear their land or children enter uncleared territory.

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Philippines: Marcos rival offers 'sincerity'

BY HARRY RING

President Ferdinand Marcos was off and running in his bid for reelection as strongman of the Philippines. He accused his rival for the presidency, Corazon Aquino, of being influenced by "reds."

At the same time he registered his recognition of the sentiment against U.S. imperialism among the Filipino people by also accusing Aquino of being influenced by U.S. "whites."

He demagogically asserted that a victory by Aquino and her running mate, Salvador Laurel, would usher in a decade of bloodshed. His 20 years of rule as a servant of U.S. business and military interests in the Philippines has been marked by uninterrupted government-sponsored bloodshed.

Apparently not ruling out the possibility of an upset in the slated February 7 election, Marcos also suggested that the elections might not be held because of a legal flaw in the way he organized them. If the courts, which he dominates, should find the procedure defective, he said, the vote would have to be postponed 15 months.

And perhaps to ensure perpetuation of the dynasty, Marcos' running mate, Arturo Tolentino, said he would not preclude the possibility that he might withdraw part way through the race in favor of Marcos' wife, Imelda.

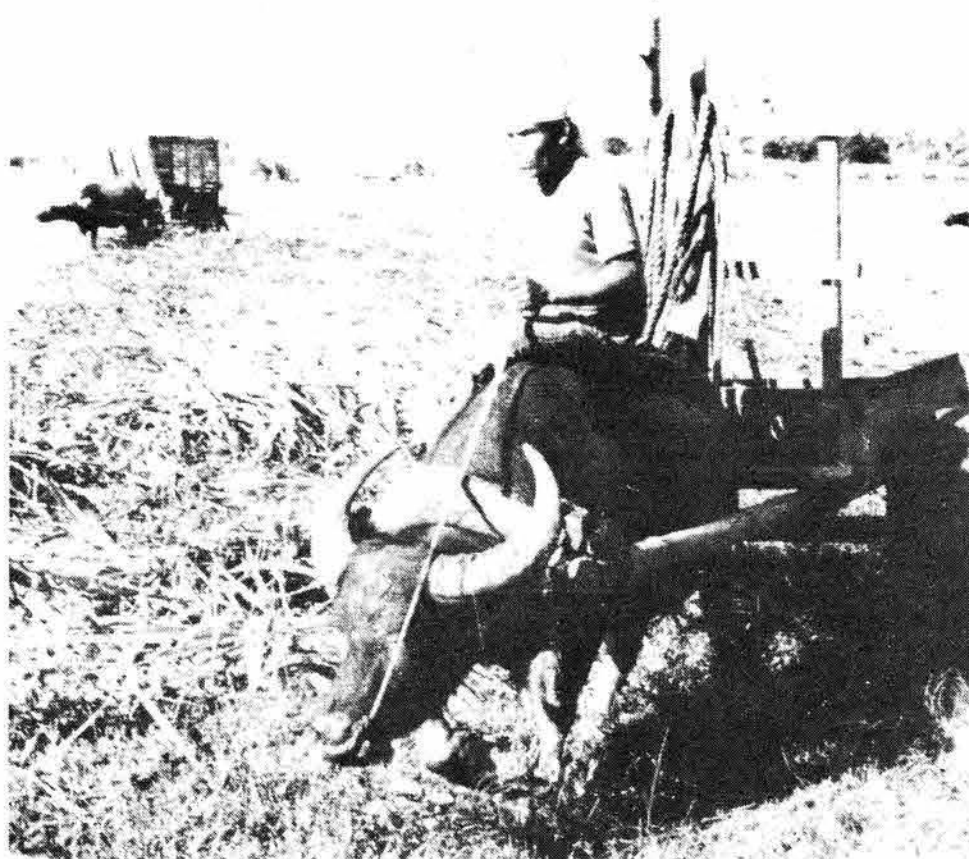
Capitalist opposition slate

Meanwhile, Corazon Aquino, a member of one of the wealthiest landowning families in the Philippines, seemed intent on assuring that her election would not precipitate fundamental social change in the crisis-ridden nation.

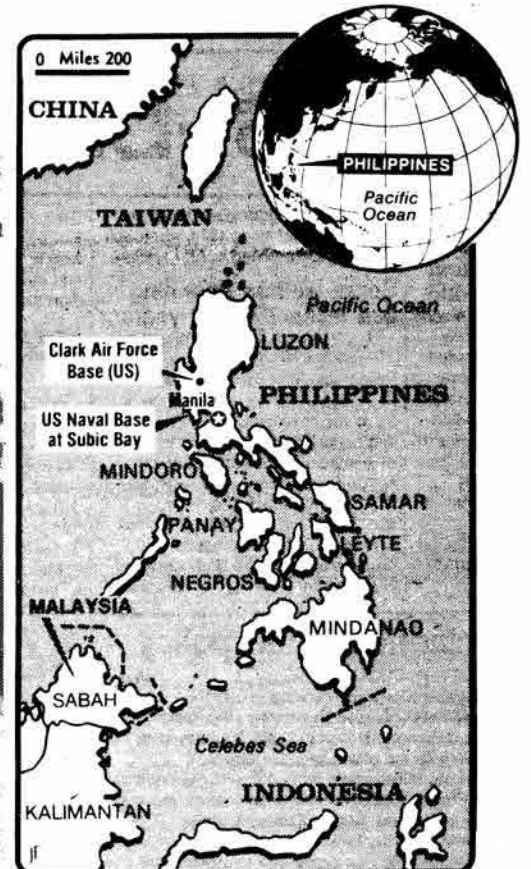
Aquino became a major public figure as the widow of Benigno Aquino, a capitalist politician who was murdered in 1983 for his opposition to the Marcos regime. The assassination provoked deep rage among the Filipino people.

The slain oppositionist was a "moderate" in Philippine politics. He wanted to replace Marcos as head of state, but was not ready to take the radical measures necessary to come to grips with the enormous suffering of the mass of Filipino workers and peasants.

Corazon Aquino shares that approach. She has declared that if elected she will press to have Marcos prosecuted for the murder of her husband. And she had pledged a relaxation of autocratic rule. But when it comes to program, she said "the



Neither Marcos nor Corazon Aquino offer meaningful land reform program for landless peasants and superexploited tenant farmers



only thing I can really offer the Filipino people is my sincerity."

But despite the disclaimer, she has indicated positions on key political questions — the presence of U.S. military bases, land reform, business operations, and an approach toward the increasingly strong insurgent New People's Army.

The answers offered so far by Aquino suggest that she intends to relate to popular concern on these key issues, while carefully avoiding any commitment that goes in the direction of basic change.

U.S. bases

In a special interview with the *New York Times* December 15, she discussed the issue of removal of the two large U.S. military bases when their leases expire in five years.

Some members of her group, she said, "just want the bases out after 1991."

But not her. "I am for the removal of the bases," she said, but "I have not set my mind on the actual date. . . . My husband always said this: while he was for the removal of the bases, he was not for the immediate removal. . . ."

She was equally ambiguous on the crucial issue of land reform.

The number of landless Filipino peasants is so vast that Marcos was compelled

to pretend he was doing something about it. But his "land reform" program is a transparent swindle.

Under it a few thousand acres of land have actually been transferred to peasant ownership. Meanwhile, the program has been utilized by wealthy Marcos cronies to grab hundreds of thousands of acres of land.

Noting reports that some of the few peasants who actually received some land under the program have already lost it, Aquino says, "So there must be something wrong with the land reform program, and I've heard people say that maybe we should look into farm cooperatives instead of simply transferring title from one person to another. . . . So there has to be a reexamination of the land program."

But no mention of the obviously necessary expropriation of the huge landed estates without which no significant amount of land can be made available to the landless, as co-ops or any other way.

Nor does Aquino address herself to the issue of a widespread sharecropping system under which landlords take as much as two-thirds of the crop, with but a third for the toiling tenant.

No program for crisis facing workers

In the cities, workers' wages are mini-

mal and unemployment massive. Strikers face brutal attack from government forces functioning nakedly as agents of the employers.

How does Aquino propose to deal with this? Guarantee the right to unionize and strike without fear of government repression? Nationalize key industries that have been looted by the Marcos family and their buddies?

No. The problem, she explains in the *Times* interview, is that Marcos is too deeply involved in business operations and checks out all transactions involving more than a million pesos.

"I mean," Aquino said, "how can a president run a government if every little deal . . . involving a million pesos or more has to be referred to him?"

Aquino also addressed herself to the issue of the steadily advancing guerrilla force, the Communist Party-led New People's Army.

The NPA is fighting for a land-reform program, an end to U.S. military and economic domination, and an end to dictatorial rule.

Marcos, who persistently understates the strength of the guerrilla forces, recently said that of 42,000 Philippine villages, the NPA "would definitely control about 4,000, influence another 5,000." Those are not small numbers. And other observers, including the *New York Times* — no friend of the guerrillas — calculate the number of villages they control as just about double the Marcos estimate.

When queried by the *Times* on the New People's Army, Aquino initially responded by referring the reporters to a priest, "one of our experts on communism."

"In fact," she added, "I asked him one night to come here to brief me on Communism and how we go about fighting it."

She added she might favor a six-month cease fire with the NPA and a dialogue, provided "they renounce all forms of violence."

She gave no hint that such a dialogue would include consideration of basic social changes in a bankrupt status quo. Rather, she said, "Of course I know I won't get the real hard-core NPAs, but I would like to get the majority that are with them."

In sum, the function of a dialogue would not be to find a progressive solution to the problems that have led to civil war in the Philippines, but simply a maneuver to try to split the guerrillas.

Aquino said that it's necessary to get rid of Marcos to give the people hope for a better future.

Perhaps inadvertently, she added, "All I can offer them really is just a hope."

Young Socialist

Millions say:
Free South Africa!



New December-January issue of the *Young Socialist* contains an article on the campaign in the U.S. to collect 1 million signatures on the "Freedom Letter," which condemns apartheid.

Also in the issue are reports on the national abortion rights marches scheduled for spring, and on the development of plans for autonomy of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region, which has a large Black and Indian population.

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YSA defends Nicaragua in La. debate

The following article is from the December-January issue of the *Young Socialist*, a monthly publication that reflects the views of the Young Socialist Alliance.

BY JIM ROGERS

BATON ROUGE, La. — A debate on whether Washington should continue trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government drew 300 students here at Louisiana State University on November 20. The debate was between the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) and the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF).

During the debate, YAF, represented by a Nicaraguan student who supports the U.S.-backed *contras*, or counterrevolutionaries, and another student, claimed that the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution is a "revolution betrayed." They maintained that the majority of Nicaraguans want the six-year-old Sandinista government overthrown.

The YSA speakers responded by explaining the gains Nicaraguans have made since overthrowing the murderous Somoza dictatorship in spite of the U.S.-backed aggression.

One of the YSA speakers visited Nicaragua as part of the 1984 international work brigades to help bring in the country's coffee harvest. He pointed out that if the majority didn't support the Nicaraguan

government, they could easily overthrow it with the arms and military training that a large percentage of the population has received in order to defend their revolution.

YAF spent a lot of time trying to prove that the U.S.-organized *contras* attacking Nicaragua are "freedom fighters." Reagan makes the same claim. The YSA answered that the *contras* are primarily led by ex-Somoza forces and are carrying out the same atrocities they committed against workers and peasants while Somoza was in power in Nicaragua.

The Young Americans for Freedom are for the unlimited rights of capitalists to exploit and oppress working people here and around the world. On the LSU campus they have been the best-organized political group. They regularly disrupt activities of groups such as the National Organization for Women and the Progressive Student Alliance.

The YSA is new to LSU but had plenty of allies during the debate. The audience was about evenly split. Many students came up afterward to congratulate the YSA speakers for taking on YAF and getting the truth out about Nicaragua.

Jim Rogers is chairperson of the New Orleans chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance.

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U.S. and Britain veto UN sanctions against S. Africa

The governments of the United States and Britain vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling for mandatory sanctions against South Africa because of that country's failure to grant independence to Namibia.

The November 15 resolution was introduced by members of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, who argued strongly that South Africa's continued refusal to implement a UN resolution in favor of Namibian independence was grounds for mandatory sanctions.

One of the speakers was Andimba Toivo ja Toivo, secretary-general of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which is leading the struggle for the liberation of Namibia. SWAPO is recognized by the UN as the "authentic representative of the Namibian people."

NAACP rally: 'wipe out apartheid'

BY JULIETTE MONTAUK AND DAVID SALNER

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — West Virginia labor and the Black community joined forces December 6 for a "Wipe out apartheid in South Africa" meeting.

Solly Simelane of the African National Congress (ANC) was the featured speaker at this city's First Baptist Church. The NAACP hosted the meeting.

Mike Browning, vice-president of the United Mine Workers of America District 17, declared that the UMW would do everything "humanly possible to fight apartheid and end the conditions that the Black majority faces in South Africa." He drew a parallel between the violence U.S. miners

face at the hands of the bosses when they fight to defend their unions and the attacks on Blacks in South Africa.

The audience of 140 was overwhelmingly Black, and included steelworkers, Central America solidarity activists, students, and many supporters of the NAACP.

Joe Powell, state president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO, received loud applause when he declared that working people have a right to demand from U.S. corporations, "Which side are you on? Are you on the side of one man, one vote, or for the tyranny of the few?" in South Africa.

"You are the ones who are responsible for stopping the war against Vietnam," Simelane told the audience. He pointed out that people in the United States could also act to stop the aggression against South African Blacks. "We shall certainly take the land back into our hands because we enjoy the support of our brothers and sisters across the ocean," Simelane said.

Salt Lake City: 'Boycott S. Africa not Nicaragua'

BY DAVID SANDOR

SALT LAKE CITY — More than 100 people gathered in the city council chambers November 22 to hear Pat Naidoo of the African National Congress (ANC). The program was sponsored by the Central America Solidarity Coalition (CASC). It was titled "Boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua."

It opened with the film "The Discarded People," which documents the brutality of the policy of forced resettlements of Blacks carried out by the apartheid regime.

CASC leader Bruce Plenk stated that the U.S. government's description of Nicaragua as "totalitarian" and a "police state" should be applied to South Africa instead. Plenk denounced the

U.S. Corporations In South Africa

Ten largest U.S. employers, ranked by number of employees

Company	Number of employees
Ford Motor*	6,700
General Motors	4,900
Coca-Cola	4,800
Mobil	3,300
U.S. Gypsum	2,600
Goodyear	2,500
CalTex Petroleum	2,200
Allegheny International	2,000
R. J. Reynolds	1,800
I.B.M.	1,800

*Ford has merged its South African operations with Amcar Motor Holdings of which it now owns 42%.

U.S.-backed war against Nicaragua and defended the Sandinista revolution.

State Sen. Terry Williams pointed out that the U.S. government and corporations "underwrite a system of oppression" in South Africa. He asked those present to support the Utah Transfer Act, which would require divestment of all state moneys from businesses that operate in South Africa.

Will McQuade, a member of the University of Utah student government, said that "many universities and cities are divesting, and we should be a part of that."

Naidoo blasted the phony "reforms" enacted by the Botha regime. "We are demanding our basic human rights, the right to determine our own destiny in the land of our birth."

"We must get rid of this evil system, this evil government, this evil Botha regime," he said.

Gordon Ottley, president of the Central Utah Federation of Labor, and Rachel Knapik, a representative of the International Association of Machinists Local 1525, also spoke.

Teens Against Apartheid

"The main goal of Teens Against Apartheid is to educate high school students against apartheid and to organize protests," says Marianne Johnson, cochair of this new, Seattle-based organization.

Johnson explained that "it's important to focus on high-school-age people. They are good people to reach. They are open-minded, still forming opinions, and it's important to help them have a better understanding."

Teens Against Apartheid's other cochair, Zena Eltayeb, declared, "We have to educate high school students about Africa. We still meet students who are ashamed of their African heritage because of the negative image of Africa and Africans in the media."

She said, "Fighting apartheid is especially important to us because we're Black. It reflects back on our own society. It's racism over there and here at the same time."

The organization is presently involved in a boycott of Jeanjer jeans, which are made in South Africa and sold in the Seattle area, and are popular with students.

Students pledge not to work for apartheid

At a press conference in front of the Mobil building in Manhattan, student leaders from colleges in New York State pledged not to seek or accept employment with Mobil Corp. after graduation until it ceases all economic ties with South Africa.

Attending the press conference were David Goldiner, representing the Columbia Coalition for a Free South Africa; Karen McMahon, chairperson of the New York Public Interest and Research

Group; and Melvin Lowe, chairperson of the City University of New York student senate.

African National Congress leader tours Houston

BY WILLIE MAE REID

HOUSTON — "If we're struggling for peace, we cannot be silent about apartheid. We cannot say we are too busy fighting against apartheid to be concerned about the movement for peace," explained Neo Mnumzana, chief representative to the United Nations for the African National Congress (ANC). He was speaking to participants in the Peace and Justice Fair on November 23.

"The enemy has always been united," he continued. "Our only strength and our only chance for success lie in the recognition of the unity of all our causes." Mnumzana's three-day tour of Houston was sponsored by the Texas Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice and the Houston Free South Africa Movement.

Five hundred people attended the fair, which was sponsored by more than 35 organizations.

Fifteen workshops discussed Central America, South Africa, and the Middle East, as well as a freeze on U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons, jobs, and the U.S. economy.

During the tour, Mnumzana spoke at the Acres Homes branch of the Houston Public Library; at Texas Southern University; to a meeting sponsored by the Black Student Union at the University of Houston; and to unionists.

The Harris County AFL-CIO and the A. Philip Randolph Institute hosted a meeting and reception for the ANC leader. Thirty-five unionists and their families turned out.

Mnumzana was interviewed by the *Houston Chronicle* and taped an interview for the TV show "Black Voice."

Boston: protest hits break-ins at antiwar offices

BY JON HILLSON

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Stressing their determination to continue organizing opposition to U.S. foreign policy in Central America, representatives of Boston-area solidarity and antiwar groups denounced recent break-ins at six of their offices in the Old Cambridge Baptist Church. The organizations held a widely covered news conference December 10.

The illegal entries, which took place on the night of December 4-5, were the fifth break-in of the church in the past year.

Local solidarity, antiwar, labor, religious, and civil liberties activists noted possible government involvement in the break-ins because of the church's use as a sanctuary for a Salvadoran refugee. Also, the pattern of the break-ins — rifled files, drawers left open, valuables left untouched — smacks of a police operation.

"The FBI has done this before," John Roberts, executive director of the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union, told the media. "And they never admit to doing it until they have been exposed."

Beverly Treumann, director of New Institute of Central America (NICA), which sponsors a solidarity project—Spanish language school in Esteli, Nicaragua, told reporters about a united campaign by NICA, Central America Solidarity Association (CASA), and the church to fight to gain access to FBI files on the three organizations, all of whose offices have been broken into.

Citing informer protection statutes and "national security," the FBI has refused to release the files.

The possible presence of an informer in the building would not deter NICA, nor the other organizations, Treumann said. "We have more unity, more determination to

fight for our rights. We demand that the city of Cambridge investigate the break-ins. We demand our files from the FBI. We have nothing to hide. We do nothing illegal. We are not second-class citizens."

CASA representative Bob Warren linked the break-ins to national harassment of antiwar activities, such as the current trial in Arizona of activists who aided refugees from Central America.

In the face of these attacks, Warren said, CASA will "redouble its efforts."

Jim Philliou, a staff member of Local 26 of the 4,000-member Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, offered his solidarity in

the effort to press for a police investigation of the crime.

"Why are we here?" Philliou asked. "Because labor has a big stake in fighting this attack on these groups, an attack which attempts to stifle debate on U.S. foreign policy in Central America," he said.

"Salvadoran refugees come to the United States because they cannot live with dignity and make ends meet in their own land — and the same is true for workers in the United States," he said. Many members of Local 26 are undocumented workers, but, Philliou said, "we have no illegal members. We salute NICA, CASA, and

the sanctuary movement and pledge ourselves to support your efforts to function without harassment."

African National Congress representative Themba Vilakazi joined the gathering. Vilakazi told the *Militant* that he wanted to support those who fight for and respect the right of the oppressed to self-determination. "I see it as a duty to be here," he said.

Other speakers included church leaders Jim Wallace and Betsy Sowers; Cambridge city council member David Sullivan, who said he would urge a congressional investigation of the break-in; and Mario Davila of Comité El Salvador.

Garment union makes gains at L.A. factory

BY PAM BURCHETT

LOS ANGELES — The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) registered an important victory here November 7. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) upheld the union's Jan. 11, 1985, union representation victory at the Somma water bed factory in East Los Angeles. The company is owned by Angel Echevarria, a Los Angeles commissioner of water and power.

The decision recognized Local 512 of the ILGWU as the sole bargaining representative for the 200 predominantly Latino workers at the plant. The workers have been waging an uphill battle for recognition for nearly a year. The company had appealed the decision to the NLRB twice before.

In another legal victory for the union the same week, the company agreed to pay a total of \$48,000 to eight workers who had been fired or suspended after the election

vote. Most of them had been the backbone of the original in-plant organizing committee. The firings were part of an intensive campaign by the company to defeat the organizing drive. Other tactics employed were intimidation and harassment of workers and legal stalling.

These victories are a boost to the other nearly two dozen or so workers still out of the plant after being fired or suspended.

It also gave a boost to workers in the plant. Some have started to attend the union's organizing meetings again, and others have become active for the first time.

An aggressive boycott of Somma water beds at retail stores and wholesalers has been carried out by the union. As a result of picketing, media coverage, and labor solidarity, more than 250 stores in the Los Angeles area and several national retail chains have agreed not to sell or display the water beds.

The Los Angeles County AFL-CIO has sent information on the organizing drive and the boycott campaign to its 4,000 union affiliates. The local AFL-CIO backed a September demonstration of 200 outside the factory. Another demonstration was scheduled for December 17.

These victories have placed the company on the defensive.

"We intend to keep picketing, keep on boycotting, keep up the pressure until Echevarria agrees to sit down at the bargaining table," Saul González, a leader of the struggle, told the *Militant*.

The union has prepared bilingual T-shirts that say, "We are ready to strike — estamos listos para la huelga." It has also printed buttons that read, "Contract or fight," in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

Donations to help the organizing drive can be sent to ILGWU Helping Hand Fund, 675 South Park View St., Los Angeles, California 90057.

N.Y. parley on 'Socialism and Activism'

'Guardian,' 'Nation,' and 'Progressive' host conference



Dr. Michio Kaku, physicist and antinuclear activist, chaired first session of conference.

BY FRED MURPHY

NEW YORK — A "Conference on Socialism and Activism" was held at Columbia University here December 6-8. According to conference organizers, more than 1,000 persons registered for one or more sessions of the conference.

The gathering was sponsored by the *Guardian* newspaper, by the *Nation* and the *Progressive* magazines, and by radio station WBAI-FM of New York City. Representatives of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) also played a prominent role in several of the weekend's events.

According to Dr. Michio Kaku, the physicist and antinuclear activist who chaired the opening session, the aim of the conference was "to bring together the best traditions of socialism and activism" and to "build networks and rise above organizational jealousies" among socialist-minded activists.

The composition of the meeting was overwhelmingly white. There were few Latinos and an even smaller number of Blacks in attendance. Few student activists or other youth were there.

The conference consisted of two plenary sessions, one Friday evening and the other Sunday morning, and a series of workshops and smaller panels held throughout the day on Saturday.

Among the many topics covered by the latter were "anti-interventionism," "food, farms, and the future," "the ballot box as an organizing tool," "reproductive rights," "rejuvenating the labor movement," "combating racism," "the crisis in Marxist theory," and "theology of liberation or theology of reform?"

It was suggested that the workshops could serve as catalysts for setting up "committees of correspondence" that would help to knit ongoing ties among activists attending the conference. Several such committees were reported to have been set up.

Several recurring themes were struck during the course of the weekend.

In the view of various speakers, those who consider themselves socialists in the United States today have little confidence in themselves and lack credibility with working people. "The vast majority of socialists don't believe socialism is a viable objective; they think it's a good idea but won't really happen," said *Progressive* senior editor Sidney Lens, who played a key role in initiating the conference.

Scientist and antinuclear activist George Wald suggested that the danger of nuclear weapons would be the basis of a new "party of the oppressed."

"We don't have to bring in issues like gay rights and abortion," he said. "We just have to agree on survival."

Democratic State Senator David Patterson disagreed with Wald, noting the importance of issues such as gay rights and women's right to abortion.

Several speakers referred to what they called the "collapse of the liberal center" in U.S. capitalist politics and said that this meant advocates of socialism had to make greater efforts to make their views known. "I miss the Democratic Party, since I'm a member myself," said DSA Cochairperson Barbara Ehrenreich. She added that the liberals' rightward shift on a range of questions meant that "we have to be the ones to

tell the truth" about abortion rights, poverty among Blacks, the "class war against working people," and the "arms race."

Ehrenreich called for building "a socialist political movement" that would offer "a moral vision" while "engaging in and using the mainstream institutions of American life — the press, and the Democratic Party if we can find it."

None of the principal speakers at the conference challenged the notion that socialists should work within the Democratic Party or advocate voting for its candidates. Most had lent support to one or another Democratic candidate in the 1984 presidential primaries, and virtually all supported Walter Mondale against Reagan in the November election.

But at the Sunday morning plenary none of the representatives of the sponsoring publications and radio stations would respond to a question asked from the floor, "Can the Democratic Party be a vehicle for bringing about social change?"

DSA leader Ehrenreich stated that "voting for the lesser evil can be a sign of great intelligence."

Progressive publisher Erwin Knoll warned, however, that "the U.S. left has been crippled and devastated by lesser-evilism." Knoll also expressed the view that it would be better for socialists to "talk about doing away with the profit system" rather than "pussyfooting around about a welfare state."

"We also have to make it clear," he said, "that the U.S. government is the worst terrorist of all."

Few speakers found anything positive to point to in countries where capitalism has been abolished. Several equated U.S. imperialism and the Soviet Union as "the two superpowers."

"Smart people in the Soviet Union know that the system there is not working," Rev. William Sloan Coffin of Riverside Church in New York City declared in leading off his speech to the opening session, "and the same is true in this country."

The recent wave of protests in the United States against U.S. support to the racist apartheid regime was not one of the central concerns of the conference. Nonetheless, a workshop was held on the student divestment movement, and a representative of the African National Congress of South Africa addressed the gathering Sunday morning.

Several important questions were posed at the final plenary by Samori Marksman of WBAI radio. Marksman, a leading figure in New York's large Caribbean community, suggested the audience consider carefully "why so much of the U.S. left is so right-wing on so many questions." He said some answers might be found in the "mirage" of capitalist democracy, in "the bourgeoisification of the left intelligentsia," in racism and sexism, and in "objective anticommunism" toward countries like Cuba and Angola.

Benefit for Puerto Rican activists

BY RON RICHARDS

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — One hundred people attended a dinner to raise funds to help pay for the legal defense of 13 Puerto Rican activists. The activists are accused of being members of the *Macheteros* (literally, machete wielders), an organization that supports Puerto Rican independence. The FBI claims they were involved in the 1983 robbery of a Wells Fargo armored truck in Hartford, Connecticut.

The November 24 fundraiser was sponsored by the Boston Committee for Puerto Rican Civil Rights. The committee was formed in response to the August 30 FBI attack on the Puerto Rican independence movement. At that time the FBI raided more than 38 homes and offices of independence supporters in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Texas and arrested the 13 activists.

The featured speaker at the event was Javier Colon, an attorney at the Puerto Rican Institute for Civil Rights. Colon explained that the colonial domination of Puerto Rico by the U.S. government undermines all civil rights on the island.

The August 30 raid, Colon said, was only the latest FBI attack on the movement to win Puerto Rico's independence from Washington's domination. The FBI has a long history of trying to disrupt the movement. In 1978, for example, the FBI was involved in the assassination of two independence activists at Cerro Maravilla. The FBI participated in the five-year cover-up of these murders.

The latest attack on the Puerto Rican independence movement, Colon said, must be seen in the context of the U.S.-backed war against the Nicaraguan revolution, Washington's intervention in El Salvador, and its continuing aggression against revolutionary Cuba.

As a colony, Puerto Rico has been used by the U.S. government as a military stag-

ing ground for Washington's interventions against the people of Latin America. A statement distributed at the event by the Boston Committee for Puerto Rican Civil Rights explained that Puerto Rico "will be utilized to coordinate military support of military interventions in Central America. For these reasons, it is important for the United States to eliminate in Puerto Rico opposition to their policies. The independence movement in Puerto Rico is a line of resistance for Reagan's strategies in the Caribbean and Central America."

Colon explained that one purpose of the August 30 raids was "to frighten the Puerto Rican people." The message, he said, was clear: "There is a war going on in the region. We are willing to do whatever is necessary to maintain law and order in our colony."

Michael Avery, one of the attorneys for the 13 activists, also spoke. He told the audience that the Justice Department had argued against setting bail for the activists because they allegedly received aid from Cuba. This, Avery said, was a lie. "The es-

sential politics of the case," he explained, "is the legitimate aspirations of the Puerto Rican people for independence."

Cuba has been dragged into this case because it is a staunch supporter of independence for Puerto Rico. The revolutionary Cuban government has used every international platform to expose U.S. colonial domination of the island.

During the police raids, Avery said, the FBI confiscated materials that were clearly unrelated to the Wells Fargo robbery. These included trade union documents and the printing equipment of the proindependence magazine *Pensamiento Crítico*. These confiscations, he said, clearly violated the first amendment rights of the activists.

On November 25, Colon and Avery spoke to a meeting of 50 people, mostly Puerto Rican and Black, at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

Contributions to the defense case can be made to: Boston Committee for Puerto Rican Civil Rights, P.O. Box 1222, Jamaica Plain, Mass. 02130.

Ky. unionists back striking meat workers

BY BETSY SOARES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — More than 250 trade unionists turned out here on a cold Sunday, November 24, to show their solidarity with striking members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 227.

The local went on strike in early November against the Dawson-Baker Meat Co. after the company refused to negotiate a decent contract. Dawson-Baker is demanding takebacks, including a cut in the guaranteed workweek from 40 to 32 hours, a two-week cut in vacation, and wage cuts that would result in a \$7,000-a-year wage loss. A two-tier wage system for new hires, cuts in medical care and pensions, and changes in work rules and job classifications are also being demanded by the meat company.

"This is union-busting. That's all. They just want to get rid of our union," one of the striking pickets explained.

Jess Pierce, president of Local 227, explained to the crowd that this attack is part of the national attack companies have

launched against the UFCW and other unions. He said that all across the country workers are being asked to take less, to give back, and give in.

"Brothers and sisters we are proud today of the 40 people who work at the Dawson-Baker Company, who stood up to this and said, 'No, we're not going to take that. You're not going to take back what it took us 20 to 30 years to win,'" he said.

Many of the signs were directed at the two owners of the company and at James Smith, a notorious union-busting lawyer hired by the company.

Roger Preston, International representative for the United Auto Workers (UAW), explained that Smith has been employed by the Continental Air Filter Co. of Louisville, where the UAW was forced out on strike in August.

"The UAW has been on strike and continues to be. We're out here today to show our support for your strike and to stand together."

Dozens of other union locals also turned out to show their support. They included

machinists, steelworkers, ironworkers, plumbers, pipefitters, electrical workers, truck drivers, and seafarers.

Ron Cirius, head of the Kentucky AFL-CIO, addressed the rally. "Our brothers and sisters in the union movement are going to stand by you. Together we will see this through," he said.

The overall spirit of the rally was that of labor solidarity. As one sign said, "United we stand — divided we ain't."

Strikers at Dawson-Baker have also received support from people living near the plant, who have brought kettles of home-made soups, sandwiches, and coffee.

The union has established round-the-clock pickets at the gates, fighting an injunction, and winning the right to have nine pickets at all times.

The UFCW has also called for a boycott of Dawson-Baker meats and is carrying out informational leafleting and picketing at some stores in the area.

Contributions to help the strike can be sent to UFCW Local 227, 2140 Dixie Highway, Louisville, Ky. 40210.

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Ray Sparrow — six decades as a revolutionary communist fighter

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

SAN FRANCISCO — Meetings were held here, in Los Angeles, and in New York City the weekend of December 13-15 to pay tribute to and celebrate the life of Ray Sparrow. Sparrow, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party, died here of a heart attack November 16 at the age of 70.

Known to many under his pen name Art Sharon, Ray devoted his entire life to building a revolutionary working-class party in the United States, and collaborating with like-minded revolutionists worldwide.

"First and foremost, throughout his lifetime of political activity, Ray was a communist," said Mary-Alice Waters in summing up his life. Waters, a national leader of the Socialist Workers Party and editor of the magazine *New Internationalist*, spoke at all three meetings on behalf of the party's Political Committee.

"In his own political life, in the experiences he lived through and the battles he fought throughout 58 years of revolutionary work, there was one constant," Waters said. "Ray took the path of fighting to advance the working class toward realizing its historic task — leading the working people of the world to take power and begin the construction of a new social order."

"That was his continuity, and it's ours too."

Early years

For Ray, like many fighters of his generation, political life began early. He was 13 when he joined the Young Pioneers, the young young peoples' organization of the Communist Party. That was in 1927.

Ray Sparrow was first introduced to working-class politics by his family. George Novack told the meeting in New York. Novack, himself a veteran of more than five decades in the SWP, recalled that Ray's parents, both workers, were members of the Communist Party. His youth coincided with the early years of the Russian revolution.

"That political milieu," Novack said, "set an early and enduring stamp upon his world outlook and individual aims." And on the personal side, Novack noted, "Ray's genial personality exhibited the traits of the proletarian environment in which he was most at home."

Ray joined the Communist Party at age 16 and was assigned to help build the Young Communist League (YCL), youth group of the CP. He was soon expelled from high school as a dangerous antiwar agitator, and only through the intercession

of his parents, he related later, was he eventually able to obtain his diploma.

He also passed through the military during these teenage years, but soon found himself discharged with a forfeiture of pay, once again for antiwar agitation. He turned his efforts to organizing the unemployed in Los Angeles and served on the California state executive of the YCL as education director.

Break with CP

The rise to power of Hitler's fascist movement in Germany was a watershed in Ray's early political life. As the Nazi stormtroopers advanced, Ray grew increasingly critical of the Communist Party's ultraleft line in Germany and internationally. The CP refused to form a united front with the German Social Democracy and other antifascist fighters, instead proclaiming "After Hitler, us."

In 1933 when Hitler took power, Ray broke with the Communist Party and joined the Communist League of America (CLA), as the forerunner of the SWP was called at the time.

"Ray concluded," Novack told the meeting in New York, "from his own personal experience in passing through the gamut of CP organizations, and from what he learned from the criticisms of the Left Opposition, how far Stalinism — the ideology and practice of the Soviet bureaucracy — had diverged from the path of Marx and Lenin." The Left Opposition, led by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, fought to maintain the Marxist program.

"Ray turned his back on the Stalinist movement in 1933," Mary-Alice Waters explained, "in order to continue to be a communist, in order to continue to be loyal to what he had learned from Marx and Lenin, and remain true to the continuity of the Russian revolution and the early years" of the Communist International.

"He did not hesitate to break with his family, with his friends — with the whole milieu he had been a part of since he was a child — to join the CLA, which at that time was a small and struggling group," she said.

From that time on, Waters continued, "Ray was a supporter of Leon Trotsky because Trotsky represented the continuity of Bolshevism, of Leninism. Like the founders and other early leaders of the CLA, nothing was more alien to Ray than the idea that 'Trotskyism' represented something counterposed to Leninism, or that Trotsky not Lenin was the Russian leader who had charted the political course that brought the workers and peasants of the tsarist empire to power. He never got the



Militant photos by Osborne Hart
SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters (left) explained that, because Ray's political roots were in Russian revolution, he understood significance of 1959 Cuban revolution and role of its leadership. Ernie Tate (right) recalled Ray's help in building revolutionary workers' party in Britain in 1960s.

relationship between Lenin and Trotsky turned upside down."

The fact that his own political roots were sunk deep in the Russian revolution helped Ray to understand the significance of the Cuban revolution and the role of its leadership today.

The Cuban revolution opened a new epoch on a world scale, Waters noted, and the 1979 victories in Grenada and Nicaragua confirmed this.

"Ray saw our party as part of this process, as part of these revolutionary forces," Waters continued. "When Fidel spoke at the United Nations in 1979 on behalf of the Nonaligned countries, it was broadcast on TV all over the country. I happened to visit Ray just after he had heard Fidel's speech. He couldn't talk about anything else, he was so politically elated. 'Not since the early years of the Russian revolution has our class had world leaders of this caliber,' Ray told me. 'It's been decades since we had a voice like Fidel's to speak for us.'"

"And later Ray saw immediately and had a similar reaction to the Cuban CP's leadership in the worldwide campaign on the question of the foreign debt of the semicolonial countries."

Years in maritime

In the mid 1930s, "Ray Sparrow was one of the pioneers, one of the first party members to get into maritime," to hire out in the U.S. merchant marine, Oscar Coover told the meetings here and in Los Angeles. Coover, himself a veteran leader of the party, joined the movement in 1938 at the age of 18.

For more than a decade Sparrow worked in the maritime industry, participating in and helping to lead the party's fractions in the Sailors Union of the Pacific, the Seafarers International Union, and the National Maritime Union. This experience, along with his participation in organizing drives of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in textile and steel in Chicago in 1936 and 1937, gave Sparrow a rich appreciation of the trade union movement and the challenges faced then and today by those like himself who sought to advance the organization of the working class.

As a number of speakers and messages to the meetings noted, Sparrow always placed his trade union activity in the broadest political context. Harry Ring, a staffwriter for the *Militant* and a longtime leader of the party, recalled the following about working alongside Ray:

"For a period I had the opportunity to be a shoreside member of our maritime branch. This was a major industrial fraction, including many young seamen recruited during World War II and the immediate postwar period. The comrades were deeply involved in union activity and internal union politics.

"Ray was as thoroughly immersed in this as the others and was a central leader of the work. But I always felt there was a difference in his approach. When comrades are intensively involved in union activity there can be a very strong pressure to slip into, or adapt to, workerism. But I never got that sense with Ray."

"He always seemed to have the broader political issues — national and international — very much in mind. He never fell victim to approaching union activity as an end in itself. When he spoke you felt you were listening to a rounded revolutionary politician."

Waters, in her remarks, stressed the same point. "The last thing Ray ever was," she said, "was a trade unionist — as opposed to a revolutionary worker who devoted enormous amounts of energy and reserves to the fight to help the working class forge the instruments of struggle necessary to unite the working class, to defend the

British Black leader's speech in 'IP'

Antiracist struggles are on the rise in Britain. More than 100,000 people demonstrated against South African apartheid on November 2. Asian and West Indian youth in several cities have rebelled against the racism and exploitation they face.

Diane Abbott, a leader of the Black struggle in Britain, was recently selected by the Labour Party as its first Black woman candidate for Parliament.

The current issue of *Intercontinental Press* carries her speech to a conference on "An Alliance for Socialism" sponsored by the newspaper *Socialist Action*.

Abbott addressed the role of women and Blacks in the fight for socialism. "One thing that Black people, both in this country now and of my parents' generation in the colonies for hundreds of years, know is the nature of the British state," she said.

Pointing out that women make up 80 percent of the lowest-paid workers, Abbott stated, "Anyone who takes women's issues seriously will take the issue of low pay

seriously." The Labour Party leadership, she explained, has traditionally been oriented toward the "aristocracy of labor, the white male working class."

This issue of *IP* also includes an article from France on the second generation of Arab youth and their efforts to build a movement against racism.

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Washington Increases Military, Political Pressure on Nicaragua

Sandinista militia member in Exile Reagan administration says Contras control Nicaraguan history

Ireland

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey on Thatcher-FitzGerald Pact

British Parliamentary Candidate Diane Abbott

Blacks and Labour Party



Militant
Sam Manuel, organizer of San Francisco SWP branch, told meeting that Ray remained active in branch until end of his life.

working class, to move toward class consciousness, to learn to think socially and act politically."

Waters cited the example of how Sparrow looked back on one of the most important battles in which he had participated and helped to lead the party's fraction. That was the 1949 convention of the National Maritime Union (NUM).

By 1949 the witch-hunt within the unions was in full swing. It was aimed at driving out every communist, socialist, or radical-minded worker and breaking the power of the union movement born in the CIO organizing drives of the 1930s.

"By this time, the Joseph Curran leadership of the NMU, in collaboration with the U.S. government and the shipping companies, was culminating the vicious campaign to blacklist all radicals in the maritime industry and drive them off the ships," Waters explained. "Ray was a delegate to the 1949 convention and the floor leader of our fraction during the proceedings. The convention was a raging battle from start to finish."

"After several attempts, Curran managed to suspend the rules and get a motion on the floor to put every delegate on record, by a roll-call vote, on whether they would defend the United States in a war against the Soviet Union. The intent was clear — to establish a blacklist to be used in purging 'communists and subversives' from the union."

"Our fraction, along with the other delegates of the opposition caucuses, condemned the motion, exposing its purpose," Waters said. But Curran ran roughshod over all opposition. Most of the delegates had been intimidated into silence by his witch-hunting tactics and goon-squad violence.

There was no opportunity for the fraction to caucus to decide how to vote on a motion that everyone knew would cost them their livelihood to oppose. As floor leader, Ray decided to vote against. The fraction followed Ray's lead.

"Afterwards," Waters explained, "many comrades in the fraction felt we had done the wrong thing. That it would have been better tactically to have called on everyone to vote for the motion and thereby defeat its purpose of establishing a blacklist."

"I don't know what Ray thought at the time," she continued, "but later he told me he felt we had done the right thing politically. That it was important to take the long view. It was one of those times when you had to be able to step back and see things in their broad historical framework. No matter what tactical maneuver we had tried on that particular motion, it wouldn't have stopped the witch-hunt in the NMU. Broader class forces were at work."

"Ray concluded that it had been right to take an unambiguous stand. He felt we had gained much more politically from the course we followed than we would have by saving the seaman's papers of a few comrades for a while."

Industrial branches

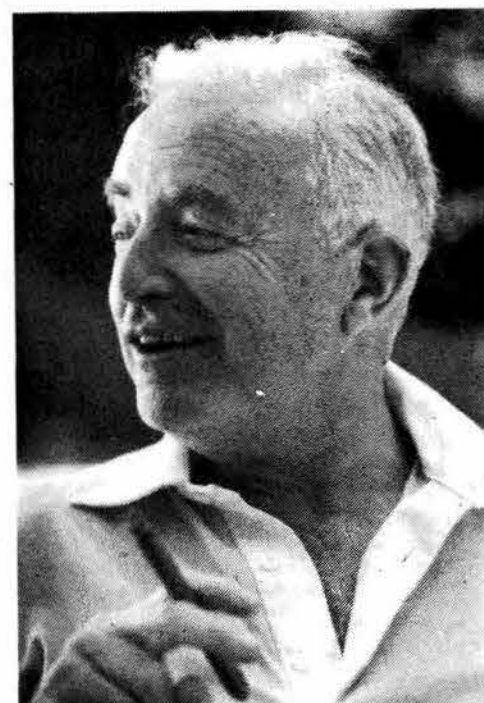
Another aspect of the party's experiences during this period that Ray often



Militant/Osborne Hart
George Novack, long-time leader of the SWP, spoke at N.Y. meeting.



Militant photos by Della Rosa
Ray Sparrow as merchant seaman in the 1940s. He led party's work in National Maritime Union. "Ray was a revolutionary worker," SWP leader Waters explained, "who devoted energy to helping working class forge instruments of struggle necessary to unite, to move toward class consciousness, and to learn to think socially and act politically." At right, Ray at social event in 1982.



commented on, Waters noted, was the policy of organizing branches that were based on only one industrial fraction.

For a time during the post-World War II period Ray served as organizer of the branch of the SWP in New York City in the Chelsea area of Manhattan. This was the branch to which all members of the maritime fraction were assigned. This form of party organization was also used in Chicago, which had a steelworkers' branch, and in Flint, Michigan, where an auto branch existed.

In reflecting on these experiences, Waters said, Ray concluded that such one-industry branches fostered too narrow a political perspective on the party's tasks. Like many others in the party leadership, he felt they had been a contributing factor in the party taking more losses than were objectively necessary in the split in the party that took place in 1953. The large majority of those in the auto and steel branches left the party in that split.

Based on his years of experience in the trade union movement and his broad political understanding of the challenges facing the working class in this country, Ray had nothing but contempt for those radicals who thought that the road to the transformation of the unions was through involvement in the kind of petty union politics that have dominated the labor movement in the United States for the last 35 years.

There too, Waters said, he thought the historical perspective was decisive. He understood that only as powerful forces come into play will the kind of battles begin to occur that will forge a leadership capable of halting the erosion of the organized workers' movement and transforming the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle.

This was the political perspective that Ray held in common with the rest of the SWP, and it is why he thought the line being followed by the party today in its turn toward the industrial trade unions was politically correct. He rejected the various alternative orientations put forward by other forces on the left, all of which came down to one or another variant of adapting to the trade union bureaucracy that today encrusts the labor movement.

Construction industry

After being witch-hunted out of the maritime unions, Ray served for a time as the organizer of the New York branch of the party.

By 1954, however, his wife Marie — also a long-time party member — was seriously ill. Medical bills were piling up. With party resources and membership shrinking, he returned to work and eventually found employment in the construction industry.

"Ray, like other comrades, had no financial cushion and no medical coverage," Waters said. After taking whatever construction work he could get, he eventually landed a job as the construction supervisor for a portion of the job of building the Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

George Novack, in his remarks in New York, told how this came about:

"Ray managed to fuse theory and practice in all his endeavors, from politics to craftsmanship. This was characteristically evidenced when he bid to direct a key part of the construction crew that erected the Guggenheim Museum, one of the last structural achievements of Frank Lloyd Wright."

"This project presented novel and difficult problems because it had spiral rather than the usual squared and angular joints. Most contractors and carpenters had no experience with such intricate curved cement forms and shied away from undertaking the work."

Not Ray.

"Ray went to the libraries to study the unusual problems involved in this circular type of cement construction and successfully carried it through. The celebrated museum stands today on Fifth Avenue not only as a monument to the artistry of Frank Lloyd Wright but to the ingenuity of Ray Sparrow."

"That job made him recognized as an expert in the construction field when he decided to resettle in the Bay Area in 1958. His competence was confirmed over the next 20 years as he supervised some of the largest construction jobs on the West Coast, including the Marin County Civic Center and part of the expansion of the San Francisco Airport."

Ray brought the same competence and skill and professionalism to this work as he did to the tasks of party building, Waters pointed out. But what Ray was most proud of, she said, was the fact that not a single worker had lost his or her life on any project he supervised.

"This was more important to him than anything else," Waters said. "Ray used the contracts we all have to work under not as the bosses do, as a manual of exploitation, but as a means of enforcing safety measures on the job."

"Ray also did what he could to break down the exclusionary hiring practices in the construction trades. He fought for the hiring of Black workers and pushed subcontracting jobs to Black contractors whenever possible."

"And Ray thought it was an important step forward when the rise of the women's liberation movement brought affirmative action victories that forced the hiring of women into the industry. He went out of his way to help them learn the skills they would need to survive."

International leader

The last major leadership assignment Sparrow took on was one of the most important. He was asked by the party in 1965 to go to Europe to serve as a fraternal member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, an international revolutionary communist organization.

In taking the assignment, Waters said, Ray knew there was a good possibility he

might not be able to get back into the construction industry later.

But that wasn't the angle Ray looked at things from. He said, "Look. I'm 50 years old. I've got another 10 years at most of really productive activity. If the party needs me to do something, now's the time."

"Ray didn't look at it as a sacrifice," Waters said, "but as an opportunity."

The importance of Sparrow's work in Europe during the next several years was testified to by messages read at all three meetings, from Fourth International leaders Ernest Mandel and Livio Maitan.

Other messages came from a number of comrades, including Alan and Connie Harris and Ernie Tate, with whom Sparrow worked in those years to rebuild the British section of the Fourth International.

Tate, for many years a leader of the Canadian section, told the New York meeting of Ray's important contribution to building the movement in Britain against the Vietnam war, including the demonstration of 100,000 in London in 1968 and the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal.

But one of the things he remembered best about Ray, Tate said, was the help he gave the fledgling British group in standing up to and politically defending itself against the physical intimidation practiced by Gerry Healy's Socialist Labor League (SLL).

It had become necessary to rebuild the British section after Healy split from the Fourth International in disagreement over the Cuban revolution. Healy considered the 1959 overthrow of the Batista tyranny to be only a minor episode in the transfer of power from one capitalist government to another.

To prevent any discussion in the ranks of his movement on this and other political questions, Healy used a combination of goon tactics against all opponents inside as well as outside the SLL, and instituted libel suits against anyone who dared tell the truth about his operations.

If you tried to sell your paper at one of Healy's meetings, Tate explained, you were beaten up. If you wrote anything exposing the SLL leadership, you ended up with a costly court case that only Healy had the resources to pursue.

Tate was one of those beaten up by Healy's goon squads, and Ray was instrumental in helping the handful of British comrades organize a response and not just let the matter slide.

Continued on Page 12



Nazis occupying union office in Germany in 1933. Ray broke with Communist Party over ultraleft policy in fight against rise of fascism.

'Unions must look to entire working class'

Socialist Workers Party Nat'l Committee discusses labor movement

BY DOUG JENNESS

The Socialist Workers Party's National Committee, meeting in New York December 8-10, adopted a report that reviewed the long-term social crisis in the United States and its implications for the strategic course of the working class.

Reporting for the party's Political Committee, Jack Barnes pointed out that the world capitalist economy has been depressed for 15 years. It's been more than 10 years, he said, since the 1974-75 recession signaled the beginning of a period of economic stagnation in the United States and opened a major offensive by the employers against the working class and exploited farmers.

And it's been nearly eight years since the SWP decided that a big majority of its members would become active in major industrial unions. "We've become a new party as a result of this experience," the SWP national secretary noted.

"One of the big questions the party's union fractions are continually grappling with," Barnes explained, "is working out the relationship between our long-term strategic goal of transforming the unions as part of the struggle of the working class for political power and our day-to-day activity in the unions and the workplace."

Barnes said that there's much to be learned by looking at how the labor movement was radically changed in the 1930s. Labor then took "its first giant step, as we have often pointed out," he stated, "by establishing industrial unions."

The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), Barnes said, was not the child of the union bureaucracy nor the brainstorm of the United Mine Workers' leader John L. Lewis. Nor did the CIO launch a social movement. Rather it was the broad social and political movement that created the CIO. The CIO was the organizational form this movement achieved.

"In order to appreciate this, we have to go back to the 1920s, before the 1929 crash," Barnes said, "to years of economic crisis and savage blows and defeats suffered by the working class."

During this period the American Federation of Labor (AFL) was greatly weakened and lost many members. The big majority of the working class was not in the organized labor movement, and most of basic industry was not organized.

"Revolutionists waged a determined struggle for industrial unionism," Barnes explained. "Militants in the 1920s and

early 1930s talked much the same way as we do today in the unions." They fought to get the labor movement to think socially and act politically, to look beyond the existing narrow craft union structures. This was the framework in which they fought for industrial unions.

The founding of the Communist Party soon after World War I was a big turning point, Barnes said. It brought to the labor movement the strategic perspective of organizing the working class to struggle for political power. It saw industrial unionism as the next obvious step in helping to advance this goal.

'The men from nowhere'

"The union bureaucrats, the paycheck bandits," Barnes said, "had a different approach. They thought the big bulk of the unorganized workers was unorganizable. They considered them hillbillies and uncultured. And Blacks didn't count at all."

The bureaucrats then, like today, Barnes continued, "didn't like workers. They didn't identify with them. When workers spoke out for their interests they only saw them as 'troublemakers,' as a problem. They saw workers as objects, not as subjects capable of making history."

"But," Barnes explained, "it was 'the men from nowhere' — as some historians of the labor movement referred to those who built the CIO — who redefined the character of the U.S. labor movement between 1934 and 1937. For those who didn't know anything about history, it seemed like they came out of the blue."

Class-struggle left wing

Barnes pointed out that there is no concrete organizational form like industrial unions that can be proposed for the labor movement today. "We explain the need for a class-struggle left wing in the unions," he said, "but that is not an organizational form. It includes tasks, a perspective for a fighting labor movement, but not a clear organizational form. We can't draw a picture of what the class-struggle left wing will look like. It's different than fighting for industrial unions."

Barnes said that today, like the 1930s, the big majority of workers are not organized in unions. In fact the proportion of the working class organized in unions has declined. There are more than 110 million workers today in the United States, he pointed out, the largest number in U.S. history. And a greater percentage of the popu-



Militant/Lou Howort

SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes explained in report that a political organization of entire working class is necessary. Union ranks need a labor party that is a classwide party, not just a union party.

lation is employed than ever before.

There are more Blacks and women in the work force. "But the proportion of workers organized in the unions is less," he said.

The notion that there is a deindustrialization taking place in the United States and a shrinkage of industrial jobs is false, Barnes observed. New industries are being set up and many new jobs are being created. But most workers in these jobs are unorganized.

The employers are also reorganizing the work force, he noted. Besides geographical relocation of many plants, there are more temporary and part-time jobs, including through Manpower-type agencies. And there is also an increase in the permanent pool of unemployed labor — the industrial reserve army.

The union bureaucrats, Barnes stated, don't care about these workers. Like the AFL officials of the 1920s and early 1930s they consider them unorganizable and unimportant. "They feel no sense of responsibility toward them," he said. "They keep turning inward."

The Bridges plan

Barnes pointed to a recent article in the *New York Times* about long-time International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union leader Harry Bridges. The article reported that Bridges considered one of his proudest achievements to be the agreement he worked out with the employers in 1960 to permit them to introduce mechanical loaders and prepacked containers. In return the workers were supposed to keep their jobs and receive wage and pension guarantees.

But as the longshore work force was reduced by attrition, the union dwindled and grew weaker.

It's this kind of plan that many union officials mistakenly look to for their salvation, Barnes said. It's an attempt to find solutions for unemployment simply on the plant or industry level.

The bureaucrats are also becoming more integrated into the capitalist system, Barnes noted. He cited the example of how they take union pension funds and invest them for their own benefit. They are increasingly becoming *business* unionists, he said.

'Us,' the unions, vs. 'them,' the class

There is also a tendency, Barnes said, among workers in the unions to counterpose "them" — the working class as a whole — to "us," the organized workers.

"They tend to think primarily about defending themselves in their own unions, plants, and even departments," he noted. "But this 'we' versus 'them' is a form of *union* consciousness, not *class* consciousness. The two are not the same thing.

Union consciousness does not equal class consciousness."

Barnes noted that the employers have launched an enormously successful flanking tactic against the unions by going after the entire working class, most of which is unorganized. The nonunion workers "are least able to protect themselves and become increasingly isolated from the labor movement," he said. "This is the most important contradiction in the working class today."

By driving down the real wages of unorganized workers in all kinds of ways, Barnes pointed out, the employers have succeeded in lowering the value of all labor power. With the help of the union bureaucrats they are forcing union workers to accept less by pointing to the meager wages of nonunion workers. They say, "Look, if you don't accept wage cuts, we may have to close down this plant, and you'll be lucky to get even a \$4 or \$5 an hour job like those people have. Even with a wage cut you'll be better off than them."

The employers' flanking tactic, Barnes said, avoids a head-on confrontation with the big industrial unions, but it is gradually weakening them. It is laying the groundwork to "go in for the kill."

This operation, Barnes argued, has helped the employers to polarize the working class and to increasingly pauperize a section of it.

The SWP leader noted that there is a grinding character to the current crisis that is quite different than the devastating effects of the Great Depression between 1929 and 1933. At that time up to one-third of the work force was unemployed and there were no Social Security or unemployment benefits.

Today workers are being gradually ground down as the employers attempt to get workers used to lower and lower wages and worse and worse working conditions. They are lowering workers' expectations.

Women not viewed as equal

Barnes pointed to the fact that there are more women in the work force than ever before, but this increase isn't proportionately reflected in the unions. Moreover, the bureaucrats "don't see women as potential union members. They look at them as *women*, not as *workers* who deserve the same wages as men. They don't view them as equals with men. For example, they would never question the right of men to control their own bodies, but that's not true for women," he said, referring to the question of abortion rights.

To involve women workers, Barnes said, it is necessary for the labor movement to orient toward the *entire class*, not retreat into narrow union perspectives.

He noted that the March 9 and 16 actions called by the National Organization for Women in defense of abortion rights offer excellent opportunities for education in the unions on the need for a broader orientation to the class. These are the first major actions for women's rights since the 1978 march on Washington for the Equal Rights Amendment, and they are the first national actions for abortion rights since the early 1970s.

Barnes also referred to the big gap between the wage levels and job opportunities for Black workers and white workers. The capitalist rulers "keep U.S. society racially segregated. Housing is segregated. Schools are segregated. It is this segregation that is responsible for Blacks getting inferior jobs and low wages; not vice versa." Blacks are not segregated because they have bad jobs, Barnes said. Rather, the value of the labor power of Black workers is lower because the employers have separated them by skin color.

'Unions must back oppressed workers'

"It's not simply a moral obligation for the unions to champion the most oppressed and exploited workers," Barnes said, "but a *political necessity*. This will determine the fortunes of the unions."

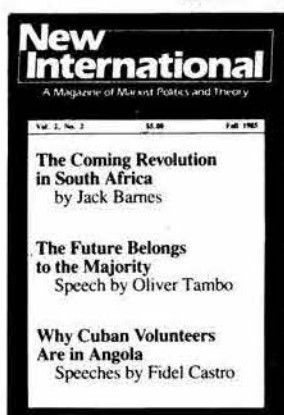
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'class'

s line of march

Barnes stated that the unions "can't get past the impasse they're in simply with guts and militancy as long as they are restricted to the narrow perspective of attempting to defend their ever-declining union structures. Even the best struggles today are within this framework. They are attempts to slow down the decline."

"Some of the best and most honest of the local leaders of these struggles," Barnes said, "are being shattered as they come to a dead end in this framework."

Workers in struggles like the recent strikes against Wheeling-Pittsburgh or General Dynamics clearly desire help. Unionists need and seek support for their struggles, Barnes said. But this is not the same as a perspective based on looking to the entire class. It's looking for help for their particular union or plant struggle. But the unions' fortunes are determined by the level of struggle of the entire class, he explained, not simply shop-floor militancy or contract battles.

"There is not a single voice among union leaders today with a broader class orientation," Barnes continued. "They are all retreating into the jurisdiction of the union."

Barnes pointed to the situation confronting the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) as an example of the logic of this suicidal course.

The ILGWU, he said, has reached a point where, in most cases, it can't retreat any further within the narrow union framework and still show an advantage over the wages and working conditions in nonunion shops.

"There is no way out," he said, "except to look to the class as a whole. This has important implications for our members in the ILGWU. The social question is totally interconnected from the outset with even getting a serious fraction established," he said. "If we had members in the United Farm Workers, we'd face a similar situation."

Barnes explained that "there is growing identification of union workers with the underdog. And there is more openness to discussing international questions."

But there is a big gap between these developments, he said, and any direction toward transforming the unions. The unions are going in the opposite direction, deeper into a plant and industry orientation.

The growing activity around South Africa and Central America in the unions is very important, he said. But a social and political movement that will transform the unions will involve a great deal more.



Sweatshop in New York City's Chinatown (right); Black youth applying for jobs in Chicago (left). Unions must champion needs of most oppressed workers, unorganized workers. Employers have launched successful flanking tactic against unions by striking at whole working class, big majority of which is unorganized, thereby weakening and isolating labor movement.

Rather, anti-apartheid and antiwar activity are scaffolding that can help vanguard workers in the preparatory building process.

"We are fighting for a political and social movement," he said. "Everything else is temporary."

Political organization needed

Barnes explained that "the working class is politically atomized. This is behind the unions' drive into a narrow craft, dues-paying, internal course," he said. The absence of any political organization of the working class plays a role in the success of the employers' offensive against the class as a whole.

Union ranks need a labor party in order to organize themselves. They need a *class* party, not just a *union* party. A union can't speak for the class, he said.

The more political things the unions get involved in, he explained, the more reason to have a labor party.

Barnes pointed to the significance of the National Black Independent Political Party as the only voice for independent working-class political action outside the SWP. "It represents the continuity of more than 20 years of experience by Blacks in trying to get an independent Black party off the ground," he said. "That's its importance."

Barnes noted that Jesse Jackson has been gearing up for the 1986 and 1988 elections. He is appearing in many places in the United States and internationally and getting a lot of publicity. He was in the front

line at the big anti-apartheid rally in London in November and was in Geneva during the summit talks between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan. And he announced plans to "march for peace" through Central America starting December 12.

Jackson, Barnes noted, is not oriented to the working class. He has a petty-bourgeois program and orients to the middle class.

Louis Farrakhan: reactionary program

Barnes continued by explaining that Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, presents a different kind of obstacle to the struggle for Black liberation than Jackson does. Farrakhan's appeal is to Black workers, who make up the bulk of those attending his rallies. "This is our starting point in discussing Farrakhan," he said. "We were off for a while in our coverage in the *Militant* because we began on the wrong axis. We made what others were saying about Farrakhan the center of what we wrote. We started with defense of him against racist attacks."

The key issue, however, is Farrakhan's program for Black workers. "We think it's reactionary and an obstacle to the development of class consciousness and oppose it."

"Our opinion," Barnes said, "is that many of the young Blacks attracted to Farrakhan's meetings are potential revolutionary leaders and communists. So there are big stakes in achieving political clarity. We should fight to win the Black workers who are hearing reactionary ideas from Farrakhan."

Barnes said the most important thing is not Farrakhan's economic proposals for increasing the number of Black businesses. "They are essentially a diversion from the actual economic problems facing Blacks," he said.

Anti-Semitism is reactionary

The deeper problem, Barnes explained, is Jew-baiting — blaming many of the problems that Blacks face on Jews. Farrakhan attributes historical guilt to an entire people. This is an obstacle to class consciousness. It confuses rather than clarifies the road forward. It's a form of scapegoatism.

Barnes explained that there is not a separate "Black anti-Semitism" that has a different origin and character than the anti-Semitism of white workers and farmers. "Anti-Semitism has a single source," he said. "In our epoch this source is the capitalist ruling class. The U.S. ruling class is white, but it's not Jewish." It transmits anti-Semitism to both Black and white workers, and there is nothing progressive about it. The victims, he said, are the oppressed workers.

Barnes noted that the Ku Klux Klan champions anti-Semitism along with anti-Black racism and prejudice against Catholics. And the victories of the civil rights

movement in the 1960s, he said, set back anti-Semitism.

Barnes added that Farrakhan hurts the cause of the Palestinians with his anti-Semitism. The Palestine Liberation Organization came to grips with this a long time ago. And it doesn't help its struggle to confuse anti-Semitism with opposition to the reactionary Israeli government, which has nothing to do with anti-Jewish prejudices. It weakens the struggle against the Israeli regime.

Barnes said he didn't think Farrakhan's meetings were mass right-wing, anti-Semitic rallies. Among the participants were many radical-minded Black workers and youth. "Most of those attending the meetings came to hear what Farrakhan had to offer, but they went away disappointed," he said.

Those who hate Farrakhan the most, Barnes argued, are the middle-class Blacks who pretend to lead the Black nation. He goes after one thing for which they have no defense — their political corruption and collaboration with the enemies of Blacks.

Barnes said that the Nation of Islam has politically degenerated from the organization it was more than 20 years ago when it produced such outstanding leaders as Malcolm X.

Malcolm, he said, broke not only from the politics but the moral corruption of Elijah Muhammad. One of the Nation of Islam's attractive features was its asceticism, which was part of developing self-respect and pride.

Malcolm was unlike any other Black leader who has come along, Barnes said. He was a revolutionist who was moving to a more internationalist outlook. He was uncorrupted and he "would not touch the political parties of the exploiters and oppressors."

"We are confident," Barnes affirmed, "that millions will take the same course Malcolm started on and develop a 'nose for power,' as he did."

Barnes explained that the SWP is part of the working class and is fighting for political clarity within the class. "If we were to give up this fight among Black workers who Farrakhan speaks to, we'd be abandoning what the party is and what it intends to become. We'd be putting a big question mark over the prospect of developing a multinational revolutionary party."

Barnes concluded by pointing to the growing convergence of key international developments that can have a big effect on the working class in the United States. As one example, he cited the prominence of the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain and the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa and the interconnection of their struggles with developments in the United Mine Workers in the United States.

Victories in the struggles of the oppressed and exploited elsewhere in the world are a precondition for qualitative steps forward for working people in the United States in their struggle for political power, Barnes concluded.

Meeting plans S. Africa classes

At its meeting in early December the Socialist Workers Party National Committee approved a proposal that all party branches organize a series of classes on South Africa in the coming weeks. These classes will be based on a systematic study of a report by SWP National Secretary Jack

Barnes that was adopted by the SWP National Committee in August.

This report, "The Coming Revolution in South Africa," appears in the Fall 1985 issue of *New Internationalist*.

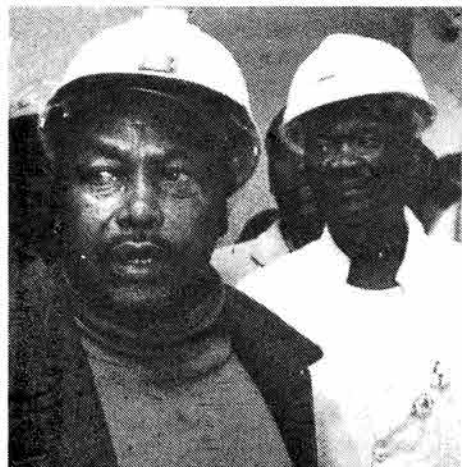
SWP leader Steve Clark elaborated on the main points in this document in a report to the December meeting.

He also stressed the significance of the recent union conference in South Africa that established the Congress of South African Trade Unions. This is by far the most important development that has occurred in South Africa during the upsurge of the past couple of years, he said.

In preparing the class series, Clark explained that branches would find the other articles in that same issue of *New Internationalist* useful, as well as the last several issues of the biweekly news magazine *Intercontinental Press*.

The November 18 issue of *Intercontinental Press* carries several documents from South African organizations, including the African National Congress and the National Forum.

The December 16 and 30 issues include a two-part series by Ernest Harsch on the land question in South Africa.



South African mine workers. Report on South Africa stressed importance of formation of new union federation for fight against apartheid.

Open prison farm in Nicaragua is humane

BY HÉCTOR CARRIÓN

TIPITAPA, Nicaragua — At the beginning of December, the *Militant* visited an open prison farm here, 15 miles north of the capital city of Managua.

Kilometer 23.5 Open Farm is the name of the prison. There are 50 prisoners at this farm. They were all members of the National Guard during the reign of the U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza. These people were convicted of committing crimes against the Nicaraguan people during Somoza's regime.

After the triumph of the revolution on July 19, 1979, the Nicaraguan government established a maximum sentence of 30 years for any prisoner. Some of the 50 prisoners here were sentenced to 30 years, but some of them will be freed before their time is up. Previous prisoners who went through some reeducation programs at this farm were set free before they had served their full sentence.

In addition to the 50 prisoners, there are three people from the Ministry of the Interior (MINT) on the farm. Gabriel Aguilar, a 22-year-old lieutenant from the MINT, greeted us at the prison. Aguilar is in charge of the functioning of the farm. He talked to us about it and then urged this reporter to speak with the prisoners.

The farm has 136 acres of land. There are no fences and no armed guards. It is run by a committee of four prisoners chosen by the MINT. Hernán Lozano is the overall administrator. Ricardo Gómez is in charge of cultural and political education. There are two cooks and a gardener. The rest of the prisoners work in the fields. There are no women on this farm.

There are 11 of these open farms throughout the country, some with common prisoners and political prisoners together.

At this farm, the prisoners grow yucca, corn, plantains, tomatoes, squash, onions, beets, other vegetables, and all kinds of fruit.

There is a tractor and an irrigation system that covers 40 acres of land. Productivity is better-than-average and the farm is self-sufficient in food. Some of the vegetables are sold at public markets.

The prisoners work 10 hours a day, and they have a two-hour lunch break. Besides working in the fields, they also attend liter-

acy classes. Some of the prisoners just finished third grade.

The government sponsors three-month agricultural courses. Prior to being convicted, some of the prisoners had knowledge of different trades, such as shoemaking, carpentry, and tailoring. They teach each other the trades they know.

The Sandinista Workers Federation, Rural Workers Association, and some of Nicaragua's mass organizations arrange visits to the open prison farms and assist the prisoners with specific jobs.

These organizations also work with the prisoners' families to help them cope with everyday life. All these efforts are part of the reeducation program to integrate the prisoners back into society.

Meetings are held every week at the farms to discuss any problems that arise and to organize the following workweek. All the prisoners participate.

Newspapers, magazines, and some books are available for them to read in their spare time. Sometimes they have political discussions on different subjects. This reporter asked Gómez and Lozano about the kind of political discussions they hold.

They explained that the U.S. trade embargo against Nicaragua is affecting their families and friends, as well as the prisoners. "Therefore we sit down and discuss it. We are against it."

I also asked them if they think of running away. Lozano explained there is no need to run away. They visit their families every two weeks, and every six months they get an eight-day vacation to be with their families. He also emphasized how the prisoners do not get mistreated. "It is against the law to do so," he said.

"Although we are prisoners, our democratic rights are respected," declared Lozano.

The way prisoners are dealt with in revolutionary Nicaragua contrasts sharply with their treatment under Somoza — and with the brutal treatment they receive in the racist U.S. prison system.

The humane treatment of former National Guardsmen on these open farms is especially striking considering the number and type of crimes committed against the Nicaraguan people by the Guard, who carried out torture, mutilation, rape, and murder on a grand scale.



Militant/Gary Bridges

Pictures of Nicaraguans slain by Somoza's National Guard in 1978 in town of Monimbó. Despite murderous role, captured guardsmen receive humane treatment at hands of revolution.

Chiltepe dairy project boosts milk production

BY HÉCTOR CARRIÓN

CHILTEPE, Nicaragua — Chiltepe is a peninsula 19 miles northwest of Managua. It has a flat terrain with very fertile soil and a steady temperature, which makes it perfect for the type of dairy project the Nicaraguan government is developing here today.

The Chiltepe project is a gigantic undertaking whose goal is to make sure that milk gets to all Nicaraguans. It is one of the biggest mechanized dairy projects in Latin America.

During the U.S.-backed regime of Anastasio Somoza, milk was not available to most working people. For Somoza it was not a priority to produce milk, since Nicaraguan agriculture was geared to profitable export crops for the United States.

The production of milk per cow under Somoza was 2.6 quarts per day, very low compared to the 11 to 13.7 quarts per day produced at Chiltepe today.

On July 19, 1979, Somoza was overthrown by the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. A new revolutionary government was established. One of the projects this new government started in 1981 was the Chiltepe dairy project. Milk has now become available to most Nicaraguans at a reasonable price.

The project is spread over nearly 20,000 acres and has 16,800 cows. In addition to producing milk, the cattle are raised to increase the stock in the whole country. Hay for the cattle is grown there during the rainy season.

The project is divided into seven equal sections. Each is a field where the milk cows graze. There are roofed-in areas to protect them from the sun. Eighty percent of the cattle are holstein, mostly from Canada, which are conditioned to a colder climate.

Five of the seven sections are due to be finished this month and the rest by 1987. The goal is to have eight milk-extracting machines in each section.

Around 4,000 cattle a year are raised, with a mortality rate of 1 percent. Females are kept for milk production and mating; males are slaughtered for meat and some are saved for breeding.

Nationally, production of milk is already going well. From 1979 to today production has increased 35 percent, bringing it to the highest production level ever in Nicaragua. In 1978 milk production was a total of 55 million gallons; now it is 74.5 million.

The Chiltepe project produces more than 3.8 million gallons of milk annually. This is done with only 18 of the projected 56 milk extractors.

Governments of several countries are involved in helping to get the project going — Sweden, Canada, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the German Democratic Republic. The Food and Agricultural Organiza-

tion of the United Nations is helping financially. The technological training for the workers is done in Cuba. Canada donated some of the cattle. Sweden and the Soviet Union donated the machinery.

There are some 600 workers at the project, most of them from the surrounding rural area. The main problem facing the project right now is the lack of enough trained technicians to run the operation. A school was just opened on the site to continue the training of workers, and an adult education program was set up to continue literacy courses.

One of the main objectives of the project is to develop the technological know-how of the milk industry in order to increase milk production and improve cattle raising. The integration of women into the work force is also a priority. The project has a goal of increasing the number of women working there to 20 percent of the work force.

The U.S.-sponsored war and trade embargo against Nicaragua have a negative impact on projects like Chiltepe. Many machines and spare parts that are easy to get in the United States cannot be bought because of the embargo. Despite these problems, the Nicaraguan people are continuing to develop the project to its full capacity, to see that there is milk for all the children in Nicaragua.

Church bombers captured in Nicaragua

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Nine counterrevolutionary terrorists have been arrested for the December 3 bombing of a church in the southwestern city of Rivas.

According to *Barricada*, daily newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the bombers were organized and financed by the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the main mercenary group sponsored by the U.S. government and based in Honduras.

Twelve people, most of them children, were injured when the bomb exploded during a celebration of Purísima, a Catholic holiday observed nationally here.

Barricada explained that the purpose of such terrorism was "to make it look like the Sandinista government was persecuting religious groups and obstructing the celebration of Purísima."

Leading up to the holiday, forces in the Catholic church hierarchy had spread rumors that the Sandinistas would prevent people from observing the traditional Purísima activities.

Do you know someone who reads Spanish?

Nicaraguan union leader in 'PM'

"In a serious, responsible, and premeditated way, we have decided to survive in order to win the war," said Lucio Jiménez, general secretary of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) of Nicaragua. He was explaining in an interview with *Perspectiva Mundial* why the labor movement in his country supports the state of emergency decreed by the Sandinista government.

Political power in Nicaragua is in the hands of the workers and farmers. That is why defending that power, Jiménez said, is not just an abstract idea for the workers' movement.

In the new issue of *PM* Jiménez explains some of the challenges faced by the Nicaraguan labor movement as it confronts the war sponsored by Washington.

He explains the importance of international working-class solidarity, especially from U.S. workers, and of combating the lies and misinformation of the capitalist media.

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Mothers' fight for Argentina's 'disappeared'

BY SELVA NEBBIA

Only Emptiness Remains. (Todo es Ausencia.) A Cinema Guild release. Produced by Luis Megino. Directed by Rodolfo Kuhn. In Spanish, with English subtitles. 95 minutes.

"For many years, everybody in Argentina said that nothing was going on. In the meantime people were disappearing like flies." These are the words of Marta Bettini, a member of a wealthy Buenos Aires family. Bettini's son was killed by the Argentine military, and her husband, son-in-law, and 77-year-old mother were "disappeared" during the years of terror in Argentina.

She is one of a group of mothers and grandmothers of the victims of the military dictatorship whose testimony makes up most of the documentary *Only Emptiness Remains*.

FILM REVIEW

*main*s. They are demanding that the government account for their missing children and grandchildren and that those responsible for the torture and death of the thousands of victims be brought to justice.

From 1976 until 1983, Argentina was ruled by a military dictatorship. During this period of brutal repression, thousands were jailed, tortured, murdered, and "disappeared" by the regime.

U.S. premiere

Only Emptiness Remains was made in Argentina for Spanish television. It is having its U.S. premiere at New York's Public Theater through December 26. Hopefully, it will then be available in other cities.

The film's chilling account of this period in Argentine history is documented through the words of the women interviewed, intermixed with footage and still photos of the military and of Catholic church hierarchy figures. And there are the heroic demonstrations staged by the mothers and grandmothers of the disappeared.

Two grandmothers, Antonia Segarra and María Ignace, tell of their disappeared children and grandchildren.

"In 1978, right in the middle of the World Soccer Tournament, when we were giving the outside world the image that we lived in peace in Latin America, my children were disappeared: Laura, who was nine-months pregnant; Alicia, pregnant two months; my husband, my son, and my son-in-law. I believe they are all still alive somewhere, that I have two grandchildren who I have



Scene from documentary shows demonstration of mothers of some of thousands who 'disappeared' during years of Argentina's brutal dictatorship.

never seen, also alive somewhere," says Antonia with conviction.

María, a gray-haired woman whose son and his pregnant companion both disappeared in 1977, sadly explains how desolate she has felt since they have been gone. Antonia and María are members of a group called Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. This group, as well as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, were formed by the relatives of the disappeared. The Plaza de Mayo is the site of their weekly demonstrations.

A transformation

Hebe Bonafini tells her story. The daughter of a working-class family, raised to be a "good housewife," she married a working man. She was transformed into a fighter through her children and their involvement in struggling for the "rights of the poor." Bonafini puts her story — and the story of the thousands of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, which she is president of — in the context of the class war that was developing in Argentina.

"The economic situation was getting worse and worse in Argentina during the years 1974, 1975," Bonafini recalls. "With the military coup in 1976, young people involved in protests against the government began disap-

pearing en masse. So did the workers. And the trade unionists who were fighting for what was justly theirs began to become victims of the regime."

At first only a handful of mothers became involved in the organization. But Bonafini points out that "unfortunately it grew because thousands had and were disappearing."

The documentary exposes the Catholic hierarchy's complicity with the military in the "dirty war."

All the women are Catholics. In their search for their loved ones, they sought the help of the church, only to find out that church officials not only looked the other way, but played an important role in the campaign of terror against the population.

"The whole church officialdom was an accomplice in all the doings of the dictatorship," declares Marta Bettini bitterly.

The women name church officials who were present at torture sessions.

Doctors also participated in the torture. "These doctors would advise the military how far and how long they could torture" before the individual would die. "They, too, have to be judged," adds Bonafini.

Malvinas war

"Las Malvinas son argentinas y los desaparecidos también" — the Malvinas are Argentine, and so are the disappeared — chant the demonstrating women.

In 1982, British imperialism launched a savage assault to assure its continued possession of the Malvinas Islands, illegally usurped from Argentina.

Despite their opposition to the military regime, Argentines rallied against the British aggression.

Bonafini says the British victory exposed the bankruptcy of the military regime to the Argentine people.

"They lied about the war. They could not be trusted." This was the response of the people, she says.

The film's interviews are effectively combined with footage of demonstrations. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo carry signs demanding: "They were taken alive: return them alive."

"I am not searching for the remains of my children. I do not want the bones of my children. But something I will always do is search for all those who tortured, all those who are guilty," declares Bonafini. "We learned a lot from our children, and we learned to turn our grief into struggle."

This emotionally intense documentary succeeds in portraying the depth of this grief and the real fighting spirit of these determined mothers and grandmothers of Argentina's disappeared.

Reagan demands open funding for 'contra' war

Continued from front page
threats against Cuba itself.

"What are we to do about such aggressions?" Reagan asked. "What are we to do about Cuba's willful disregard of the 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding." The answer, said Reagan, "is more than we are doing now."

The "Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding" was a reference to the Cuban missile crisis.

In the wake of a failed attempt to invade Cuba by CIA-organized exiles, the Soviet Union deployed defensive missiles on Cuban soil in 1962. Then-president John F. Kennedy brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war over the missiles. The Soviet government agreed to remove them when Washington pledged that the U.S. government would not invade Cuba.

Reagan's claim that the Cuban government has violated this agreement is a thinly veiled threat against Cuba.

'Connection to Colombia'

Reagan also claimed that Nicaragua was behind the decision of the Colombian April 19 Movement (M-19) to occupy the building that houses Colombia's Supreme Court on November 6. The Colombian government laid siege to the building, massacring some 100 people.

"Nicaragua's connection with the recent terrorist attack against Colombia's Supreme Court is now clear," Reagan said. He offered not a single fact, however, to back up this bare-faced lie.

Colombian Foreign Minister Augusto Ramírez Ocampo announced December 15 that no evidence had been found to link Nicaragua to the guerrilla group's occupation of the Palace of Justice.

Escalation of U.S. propaganda

In his December 14 speech, Nicaraguan leader Tomás Borge denounced the charges of Sandinista involvement in the M-19 action.

The bogus charge that Cuban soldiers

are "the backbone" of the Nicaraguan people's army marks the third major escalation in Washington's five-year propaganda campaign justifying its mercenary war against Nicaragua.

Initially, President Reagan argued that U.S. aid to the contras was needed to intercept supposed Nicaraguan arms shipments to Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas in El Salvador.

Later, the White House contended that the contra funding was needed to replace the Sandinista-led government in Managua.

Now, says Elliott Abrams, the U.S. government must "prevent Cuba from taking over a country [Nicaragua] in Central America."

Contempt for facts

In leveling the charge that Cuba is trying to take over Nicaragua, the Reagan administration again demonstrates its utter contempt for history and for facts.

As every Nicaraguan school child knows, for decades the U.S. Marines occupied Nicaragua and a U.S.-installed Somoza dynasty ruled the country. Augusto César Sandino, who led Nicaragua's resistance to the U.S. occupation, was murdered in 1934, when Fidel Castro was only seven years old.

It was the 1979 Sandinista revolution, which toppled Anastasio Somoza's brutal regime, that made it possible for the first time for Nicaraguans to enjoy a free and sovereign homeland, one in which the workers and farmers could rule.

The Cuban government and people, having earlier experienced firsthand the punishment that Washington inflicts for such behavior, have provided enormous help to Nicaragua in the form of teachers, technicians, doctors, and nurses, as well as military advisers.

Cuban soldiers have helped the Nicaraguan government set up the modern military structure needed to withstand the counterrevolutionary army that Washing-

ton unleashed against the Sandinistas.

The Sandinista People's Army and the armed workers and peasants of the people's militia are defending their homeland and their revolution with great determination and at an enormous cost. And they have dealt the contras heavy military blows, especially in the past year.

In four years of fighting, the contras have been unable to hold a single town or strip of land in Nicaragua.

War's toll

But with vast amounts of U.S. arms, supplies, and money, the mercenaries have been able to inflict tremendous damage on Nicaragua.

From their bases in neighboring Honduras, the contras have launched countless hit-and-run attacks against small towns, isolated farming communities, and villages.

Given the vastly disproportionate size and wealth of the United States and Nicaragua, Washington has been able to finance the contras out of what amounts to a petty-cash fund while inflicting untold suffering on the Nicaraguan people. And there is every indication that Washington intends to squeeze Nicaragua even more.

Of a population of about 3.5 million, nearly 250,000 Nicaraguans have been left homeless by the mercenary war.

Nearly 4,000 Nicaraguans have been murdered by the U.S.-trained killers. More than 4,000 others have been wounded and an additional 5,000 kidnapped.

If the United States suffered a proportional number of deaths, the toll would be more than 260,000 killed.

In addition, Washington has applied an economic embargo against Nicaragua, prohibiting all trade between the two countries, and has pressured other countries and international bodies to join in the economic blockade.

The Pentagon knows full well that the contras cannot overthrow the Nicaraguan workers' and farmers' government. But

Washington hopes that the contra war will create and deepen divisions among Nicaragua's working people and erode confidence in the government as economic shortages multiply and the casualty toll mounts.

Sacrifices

The Reagan administration hopes that war weariness will create conditions that could lead to an internal revolt against the Sandinista government, opening the door to a possible direct U.S. invasion.

Defense of the revolution has, indeed, forced heavy sacrifices on the Nicaraguan people. Many social programs aimed at improving standards of education, health, and housing have been shelved or cut because of the cost of military defense. Economic development programs have been put on the back burner.

Shortages caused by the U.S.-imposed embargo and the general costs of the war have made day-to-day life very difficult for most of the population.

Thousands of families have lost loved ones in attacks by the mercenaries.

In all, the war has already cost the Nicaraguan people more than \$1.5 billion.

In addition to the material and physical sacrifices that the contra war has forced on Nicaraguan working people, the aggression has also forced Nicaraguans to make a political sacrifice. They have had to give up some of their hard-won rights and civil liberties under the state of emergency that was invoked in October. This was done to further centralize the fight against the contras' attempts to develop an open internal political front in support of Washington's military aggression.

The fact that the majority of Nicaraguans agree with and accept the need for the state of emergency makes it no less of a sacrifice on their part.

U.S. working people have a responsibility to protest Washington's actions and to show our solidarity with the right of the Nicaraguan people to determine their own affairs.

Last minute gift ideas — To help put commerce back in Christmas, we suggest the following stocking-stuffers:

A gold satin trench coat, by



Harry Ring

Ralph Lauren . \$1,458. (Wear it on sunny days, it's not water-repellent.)

A small atoll, north of Tahiti.

White sand, year-round sun. Once used by Marlon Brando. \$4 million.

Sable car seat covers. \$30,000 apiece.

An oversize black shawl, lined and fringed with red leather. \$3,250.

Or, from Neiman-Marcus, a pair of his-and-hers diamonds, cut from a single rock. \$2 million, but N-M will mount it any way you choose.

For the rumpus room, a custom-made, two-lane bowling alley with automatic pin setters and ball return and computerized scoring. \$90,000.

For when there's no heat, a knee-length, baby-soft cashmere

cardigan with big buttons and batwing sleeves. \$995.

For someone who's into duck-hunting, but not feathering, an Orvis duck plucker. Whirling rubber fingers will pluck a medium-sized duck in one minute, 20 seconds. \$385.

And for the fisherman, a week of salmon angling on Iceland's Grimsa River. \$4,300, plus air fare.

Prefer pheasant? Organize a party of eight for a two-day shoot at Adbury Park in England. For the group, including two hot lunches, \$23,000.

If he's into partying, Saks Fifth Avenue in New York is featuring a black wool evening cape with vel-

vet collar and red satin lining. \$595.

And for when he makes it home, a silk dressing gown with matching boxer shorts. \$310.

Or, a bit warmer, a paisley cashmere silk-lined robe. \$950.

If he's still missing a button on that old blazer, take the rest off and sew on a new set from Tiffany's. 14-karat gold. \$125 each for the sleeve buttons and \$185 each for the big ones on the front.

For the serious drinker, a bottle of 25-year-old Glenfiddich single malt scotch. In a crystal decanter with a silver stopper and boxed in an inlaid walnut chest. \$2,100.

And for the heavy check writer a Mont Blanc 14-karat fountain

pen at a reduced price. Were \$6,500. While they last, \$3,995.

Finally, for Xmas dinner, if you can't book a flight to Paris, try the new Maxim's in New York. Prix-fixe dinner. \$65. (If you choose the quail eggs and caviar, add on \$25. A side order of string beans is \$7, but they're called haricots verts.)

On your way home, pick up some Fiorello's ice cream from Italy. Try the champagne ice. Made with 1978 Dom Perignon. Or the chocolate chip, featuring Swiss chocolate and truffles. \$900 a gallon.

For the person who's had it, a three-month introductory subscription to the *Militant*. \$3.

Ray Sparrow — a revolutionary communist fighter

Continued from Page 7

"When Ray heard about the attack, he was absolutely livid," Tate recalled. "He immediately saw the full implications of Healy's action. That if it was to continue we would no longer be able to function in Britain. What was involved here, Ray convinced us, was something that could spread like poison."

The British comrades had a problem of resources, Tate said. "We were already deeply involved in the movement against the Vietnam war and in helping to organize the War Crimes Tribunal. And we had only 15 people. But Ray convinced us to take on Healy politically, to make the facts of the beating known far and wide. And he was right."

"When we started the campaign we were defending not only ourselves but everyone on the left who had been victimized by Healy. We won wide support, and the attacks abated. Ray played an absolutely critical role here in showing us how to defend ourselves without getting involved in some draining legal battle."

In later years, Tate noted, Ray never lost interest in British politics. He followed closely the Labor Party and trade unions, as well as organizations on the left and developments inside the British section.

Sparrow's years of experience as part of the leadership of the Fourth International, Waters remarked, gave him a keen appreciation of the challenge of building an international movement and also of the weaknesses of the Fourth International. He also arrived at an even deeper conviction — that the fight to build the Fourth International is inseparable from the task of building the SWP.

Later years

When Sparrow returned from Europe in 1968 he also returned to San Francisco and to work in the construction industry. He remained an active member of the San Francisco branch, carrying out a variety of political assignments.

"Even in the last year," noted Sam Manuel, the organizer of the San Francisco branch, despite his failing health "Ray was keenly interested and involved in the work of the party around South Africa and Central America."

When the April 20 coalition was organized last spring to build the demonstration against U.S. intervention in Central America, Manuel said, Ray started going to its meetings and volunteered to help organize the construction of the speakers platform.

"I always looked forward to a day of political discussion with Ray," Waters said. "He would approach every question, every new development in its broader social, historical, and political context."

He loved to read, she noted, and after he retired several years ago, that was his greatest enjoyment. He read broadly and was knowledgeable about literature, art, music, and especially history; but he never used this to intimidate others. Rather he used his broad range of interests to encourage others, to stimulate curiosity, to get you reading as well.

"Ray was in many ways what Trotsky called a 'citizen of time,'" Waters said.

Furthermore, he embodied an important political trait of genuine revolutionaries — the ability to continue to be interested in, to have respect for, and to relate to young people, to work with them objectively as comrades.

"Ray would spend hours in discussion with new comrades or party contacts," Waters related. "He was deeply interested in what the Young Socialist Alliance was doing."

"What's happening in the YSA? Where is it recruiting? Why? What are people interested in? These were always some of the first questions when I had a chance to talk with him."

This side of Ray was also referred to by Clifton DeBerry, in his remarks at the San Francisco meeting. DeBerry, for many years a national leader of the SWP, told of how in the early 1950s he had been fired — for the first time in his life — and bounced out of the Communist Party after a run-in with the CP leadership of his union at International Harvester.

Later, when DeBerry was a young cadre participating in the SWP leadership school, "Ray took a real interest and listened to my story. Not only that," DeBerry noted, "but Ray asked questions that helped me to think, to overcome my anger, and to come to grips with what had happened."

In the course of 52 years in the party, Ray held nearly every post or political responsibility a comrade could shoulder. He was a member and leader of half a dozen different branches, and a member of the National Committee from 1941 to 1975. He didn't like to write, but when he had to, he wrote well, including for a period a lively column in the *Militant* called "Notes of a Seaman."

In a number of messages and remarks at the three meetings, comrades and friends who had had a chance to know and work with Ray added personal recollections that illustrated varied facets of his character.

A number of speakers noted that Ray's exuberant personality and political enthusiasm earned him the reputation of being a nonstop talker. But the real measure of Sparrow on this score, Waters pointed out, was that "even though Ray loved to talk, he was also a good listener. And he seldom if ever talked about himself

personally, or his role in the events he was describing."

Ray Sparrow, Waters said, was one of the "most objective people I've ever known, inside or outside the party. He was warm, outgoing, and generous. He was also a scientist, a materialist through and through, and had not a touch of the sentimental about him." It was the breadth of his vision, she said, that enabled him to remain what Marx and Engels called a "party man" for nearly six decades.

"Through those six decades," Waters summed up, "Ray learned and trained others in what it took to build a revolutionary party in the bastion of the Yankee enemy of humanity."

"He gave everything he had to that task. His was a notable record, because there are few who have the stamina to stay the course for so many years."

"But Ray knew that no more useful or rewarding life was possible."



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MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: SWP, YSA, 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th Floor. Zip: 02215. Tel: (617) 262-4621.

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Pay equity for women: a simple proposition

"Upon my word . . . the females [are] doing more and better work for \$900 per annum than many male clerks who were paid double that amount."

The speaker was Gen. Francis Elias Spinner, the U.S. Treasurer during the Civil War. It was Spinner who hit on



WOMEN IN REVOLT

Pat Grogan

the idea of bringing women into government offices as clerical workers to replace men who were fighting in the war.

Women started out trimming the new paper money in the Treasury Department and gradually moved into other clerical jobs. Congress overcame the prevailing prejudice that women were "unsuited" for work in offices long enough to pass a law setting the wages of female clerical workers in government offices at one-half the wages of the male clerical workers.

Before the Civil War office work was considered a "man's job." The idea that flighty female creatures could be anything but a disruption in the serious world of "business" was accepted.

In the decades following the Civil War, the advantage of cheap female labor to fill the expanding clerical jobs became obvious.

Today 98.8 percent of all secretaries are women. It's "women's work." That's why it doesn't pay much.

I like to use this example to answer the "I just don't understand" argument used by employers against the demand for pay equity — also called "comparable worth."

Just a little more subtle than the "pay equity is looney tunes" view of the Reagan administration is one that goes something like this: "I can understand equal pay for the same work. I can even understand affirmative action (although I'm against it). But comparable worth is just so confusing."

But there's nothing confusing about it.

If the labor movement had been strong enough a century ago to stand up to Gen. Spinner's sexist two-tier set-up for women clerical workers and had been able to win equal pay for equal work back then, maybe secretaries wouldn't be fighting for pay equity today. But that's not the way history worked out.

Women workers today are fighting to raise wages in jobs that have become "traditional" women's jobs — like secretaries, nurses, teachers, sewing machine operators, and some other categories of factory work.

The low wages paid in these jobs have nothing to do with level of skill, difficulty, brain-power, or muscle power. The wages are low because the workers are women.

Here's another example. By the time of the Civil War, women made up two-thirds of the school teachers. Anna E. Dickinson, an antislavery and women's rights fighter of the time, explained what happened when she applied for a teaching position. She was told, "\$26 is what we have paid when a man kept the school, but in the case of

a woman we only pay \$16." Furious, she refused. But most women had no choice but to accept. One editor of the *Boston Daily Evening Voice*, so enraged at the injustice that was befalling thousands of women teachers, wrote this impassioned, if unrealistic, editorial: "There ought to be a general strike among female teachers. Go to Texas, Colorado, Oregon, take up land, raise cattle, dig gold, cultivate the earth! You can do it as well as men if you only determine to learn to shoot."

Because women's oppression is as old as class-divided society itself, the ruling class passes off the oppression of women as the "natural way of things."

Although women's oppression preceded the rise of the capitalist system, capitalism has made good use of it. Because of women's second-class status in society and dependent position in the family, women's labor can be bought more cheaply than men's. This drives down all wages and lowers the standard of living of the whole working class.

The employers also use it to sow political divisions among working people. And women are an important part of the pool of unemployed workers, the existence of which intensifies job competition and also drives down wages. It is considered more acceptable for women to be unemployed, underemployed — and underpaid.

Women today, brought into the labor force in record numbers by capitalism's hunger for cheap labor, are challenging our second-class status. We are fighting for affirmative action, equal pay for equal work, reproductive rights, child care, and pay equity.

All working people have an enormous stake in fighting for pay equity and full equality for women.

AMC uses seniority scheme to divide Jeep workers

BY JOE CALLAHAN

TOLEDO, Ohio — Two recent decisions have had the effect of cooling down the situation that had developed among the work force at the American Motors Corp. (AMC) Jeep plant here.

A federal judge issued a temporary injunction

UNION TALK

November 29 prohibiting AMC from using "corporate seniority" at the Jeep facility. A few days later, the United Auto Workers (UAW) Convention Appeals Board also ruled that the union would not support AMC's attempt to implement the "corporate seniority" plan.

Through this seniority scheme, the company was pitting workers forced out of jobs at two Wisconsin AMC plants against workers here. The failure of top officials of the UAW, as well as the officers of UAW Local 12 at the Jeep plant, to act decisively in defense of the rights of all the workers involved allowed the company to pursue its divisive course.

Workers from Kenosha and Milwaukee began moving to Toledo after layoffs at the Wisconsin plants. There is no national contract between the UAW and AMC. The union negotiates separately with the company at each plant.

The contract in effect at Kenosha contains "corporate seniority" provisions that allow some laid-off workers to move to another plant where the company is hiring and to retain three years' seniority.

But the contract signed by the UAW at Jeep in early 1985 had no "corporate seniority" provisions.

The company's actions were designed, from the beginning, to get AMC workers competing among themselves for jobs instead of taking on the company. Seniority time received by the workers who had moved here had been at

the center of controversy at the plant for months.

Tensions rose especially high in early November when layoffs began here.

A November 8 lunchtime demonstration in front of the plant was attended by several hundred workers. Hand-made signs were carried that read, "Kenosha seniority is taking Toledo residents' jobs" and "No bump rights for Kenosha."

"Kenosha sucks, Toledo Jeep — Toledo jobs" T-shirts began to be worn in the plant. Bathroom graffiti included things like, "UAW — United Against Wisconsin."

Several Kenosha workers had their cars damaged. There was a fistfight in the body shop. One Kenosha worker was hung out of the window by his feet.

The whole reactionary episode was the logical extension of the anti-imports, anti-Japanese-workers campaign that the union bureaucracy pushes.

It flows from viewing the unions as narrow job trusts for a relatively thin layer of working people, as opposed to broad organizations that use their power to champion the rights of all the victims of the employers and the employers' government.

Commenting on the depth of the hostility faced by Kenosha workers, Rudy Kuzel, president of UAW Local 72 in Kenosha, told a newspaper there: "I thought Toledo was part of the United States. I didn't think you needed a visa to get in there."

Not all Jeep workers got caught up in the hysteria. "There's no sense getting mad at people from Kenosha. They're just like us. They're trying to get a job and support themselves and their families," said one Black worker.

After many months of not saying anything to counter the hostility — and, at times, helping to whip up reactionary sentiments and activities — Local 12 officials finally issued a statement November 19 that included an appeal for solidarity from all members of the union.

But the November 22 meetings of both shifts were

large and stormy. One thousand attended the day shift meeting, which degenerated into screaming about the seniority issue.

Following the court decision against the implementation of corporate seniority a week later, the company laid off 40 workers who had come to Toledo from Kenosha and recalled the same number of Toledo workers.

Being forced to migrate from city to city to hold a job and retain their rights to company benefits is a common phenomenon for workers in the auto industry today. Many have to leave their families behind. These workers and their families are victims of the auto industry's drive for profits.

While they should not be placed on the seniority lists ahead of those already working in a plant, they have many longstanding seniority rights that should be defended by all auto workers.

These include retaining their full company seniority date for recall at their original plant. They should also have all their years' work count toward maintaining full health-care coverage, and toward pensions and retirement.

Instead of negotiating a job protection plan with each company or in each industry, the unions should join with the unemployed and with Black and women's rights organizations in launching a political movement around a program of "jobs for all."

The movement should demand the reduction of the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay to spread the available work around. It should also demand the creation of a mass public works program to provide jobs building desperately needed schools, hospitals, housing, roads, and railroads. There are billions of dollars in the government's war budget for these projects.

Joe Callahan is a member of UAW Local 12 and works at the Toledo Jeep plant.

Know your enemy: the 400 richest people in U.S.

BY SCOTT BREEN

Know your enemy. That's good advice for workers fighting corporate union-busting, for farmers battling foreclosure, for Blacks and women victimized by dis-

AS I SEE IT

crimination, and for people everywhere struggling against imperialism and for justice and human rights.

To know who's responsible for economic and social injustice, just find out the answer to the question: "Who profits?"

Fortunately, we have been provided with a list of the number one suspects for the crimes of capitalism. It appears in *Forbes*, a magazine of, by, and for the rich. They have published the 1985 edition of "The Richest People in America" — the 400 richest people in the United States.

Most of the names you will see here have been on this list for many years — the Mellons, Fords, Rockefellers, Gettys, 16 duPonts, etc. — although there are a few newcomers.

Nearly half of the 400 richest (181 according to *Forbes* researchers) on the list were born there — they inherited their wealth from their family. The rest of them "earned" it the old fashioned way: they ripped off the wealth created by workers and farmers in this country and around the world through swindles known as "smart" trading and "playing the stockmarket."

Through no productive work of their own, these parasites accumulate vast fortunes. For example, Warren Buffett, a billionaire, made \$2,390.40 per minute over the last three years — just from the increase in the price of his stock in Berkshire-Hathaway. Or, as billionaire Helmsley put it: "You don't have to do anything. You just have to sit. The values go up."

Amongst this elite of high finance, even losing takes on a different meaning. Jack Kent Cooke made a \$1 billion bid for Multimedia, Inc. He lost, but made \$25 million profit by selling his own stock in Multimedia!

The combined wealth of the 400 is estimated to be \$134 billion (and probably much more than that in fact). That is nearly equal to the entire wealth produced by the 700 million people of India last year. The 400's average net worth is \$335 million, or more than I would earn working 10,000 years at my present job as an oil operator!

Some of the 400 are directly active in politics — a few are officeholders, past or present, and a few are avid right-wingers like one who was a founding member of the John Birch Society, or Mellon-Scaife, who donated \$1 million to Gen. William Westmoreland to conduct his libel lawsuit against CBS.

The billionaire families run the government through the Democratic and Republican parties, which they own and control. President Ronald Reagan always spends New Year's at the Rancho Mirage estate of Walter Annenberg, whose wealth exceeds \$875 million.

As Max Fisher (net worth, \$225 million) put it: "Presidents come and go, but Max Fisher remains a force."

Is it any wonder, then, that more than 3,000 millionaires paid no income tax to the government last year?

So, next time your rent goes up in New York City, you'll know that one of the 32 richest people who derive their wealth from New York real estate holdings just got richer.

Next time food prices go up, or you're forced to accept wage cuts, or your heating bill doubles, or are forced to go to war to protect U.S. companies, it's all for a worthy cause: to keep a Cargill, Ford, or a Rockefeller on the *Forbes* 400 list next year — or else, help get someone else on the list.

Why Angola is under attack

President Reagan says he favors what he calls "covert" aid to UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), a group fighting to overthrow the government of Angola in southern Africa. Congress is considering several bills to openly aid UNITA as well.

UNITA is a creature of the apartheid regime in South Africa. For years, the South African racists have armed, trained, financed, and provided military personnel for UNITA.

The Pretoria government has repeatedly invaded Angola to support UNITA and recently threatened to do so again if UNITA is threatened with decisive setbacks.

But for the U.S. government, many Republican and Democratic politicians, and much of the capitalist media, South Africa's aggression in Angola is not an issue. They portray UNITA's forces as "freedom fighters" combating alleged Cuban occupation and Soviet aggression.

Cuban troops have been in Angola since 1975, when tens of thousands of South African troops invaded the country shortly before it won its independence from Portugal in November 1975. With Washington's backing, the South African troops sought to capture the capital city of Luanda and place UNITA and other rightist forces in power.

The government set up by the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) appealed for Cuba's help, and thousands of Cuban troops arrived. The South African invaders were forced to withdraw.

Angola needs Cuba's assistance because it is an underdeveloped country of 7 million people that is threatened by the mightiest economic and military power in Africa — South African imperialism.

At the time of independence, Angola had few trained soldiers. Today, it has an army of 37,000. The apartheid regime has 404,000 troops. Angola has 68 combat aircraft. South Africa has 274.

Cuban troops do not participate in the fighting against UNITA, which is carried out by Angolan armed forces.

The propaganda poured out by the U.S. capitalist politicians and media about Cuba's role in Angola finds almost no echo in Black Africa. The masses there view Cuba's troops as an obstacle to the expansionism of the racist regime in South Africa.

Julius Nyerere expressed their views in a recent trip to Cuba. Nyerere recently retired as president of Tanzania and chairperson of the Frontline States of southern Africa.

According to the October 13 issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*, Nyerere said that, "if Cuba hadn't helped Angola defend itself, that country would now be one more

South African Bantustan."

The real reason for supporting UNITA — to help the racist South African regime — was hinted at by Howard Phillips, a right-wing Republican politician. "The real issue is whether we will permit the Soviet Union to replace South Africa as the dominant power in the region.

"If we don't, we will have to help Savimbi [Jonas Savimbi, head of UNITA]."

Savimbi makes similar arguments for supporting the apartheid regime and UNITA. While saying he finds apartheid "repugnant," Savimbi insists: "The economy of southern Africa needs South Africa, the strongest regional power. We seek cooperation, not violence. I tell you only Russian imperialism would benefit from revolution in South Africa, and only Blacks would suffer."

The Soviet peril argument is pure demagoguery on the part of Phillips and Savimbi.

Unlike the South African government, the Soviet government has not threatened the independence of any African country. Nor has Moscow imposed semislavery on any Blacks, as Pretoria has on tens of millions in South Africa.

The reason for the moves to aid UNITA is that the U.S. rulers, as Phillips puts it, back "South Africa as the dominant power in southern Africa."

That means destabilizing Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, where successful independence struggles helped inspire the mass opposition to the apartheid regime.

It means opposing the independence struggle in Namibia, a country bordering on Angola, which is occupied and ruled as a colony by the white minority regime in South Africa.

It means opposing the millions of South Africans who are fighting to bring down the white minority regime.

Support for "South Africa as the dominant power in southern Africa" explains why the administration and Congress are debating how to weaken or overthrow the Angolan government, rather than how to get rid of apartheid. It explains why the UNITA terrorists, rather than those waging an armed struggle against the apartheid regime, win the label of "freedom fighters" from the U.S. government and capitalist media.

Washington needs the South African regime as a cop to protect big-business interests throughout southern Africa.

Aiding UNITA is a way of stepping up Washington's moral, political, and military support to the apartheid regime. All opponents of the crime of apartheid should respond, "No aid to UNITA! Hands off Angola!"

Louis Riel: led struggle against Canada's rulers

The following article is reprinted from the December 9 issue of *Socialist Voice*, the biweekly newspaper that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, the sister organization of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

One hundred years ago, on Nov. 16, 1885, the Canadian government executed Louis Riel in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Louis Riel led one of the most important mass revolutionary struggles in Canadian history. This is why the Canadian capitalist class murdered him in cold blood.

In 1867 the Canadian bourgeoisie established Canada. In 1869 one of the first things the new Canadian govern-

OUR REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE

ment did was to buy back from the Hudson's Bay Co. the vast territories west of Ontario. The main purpose of this transaction was to keep this region out of the hands of the expanding United States.

But the Métis already inhabited the land situated south of what is now Manitoba. The Métis were produced by the mixing between the white and native populations of the region and were for the most part hunters and small farmers. About one-half of the Métis spoke French and the other half English.

They refused to be pushed off their land by the government and railway company speculators. They were also opposed to the intention of the government to deprive them of their rights.

As a first step in fighting back, they formed the National Committee of the Métis and installed a provisional government. They seized Fort Garry in Manitoba and demanded entry into Confederation with full recognition of their democratic and national rights.

Led by Louis Riel, the mobilization finally forced the federal government to give in. In 1870, Manitoba became the fifth Canadian province. Formally on paper, French and English had the same rights, and the rights of the Métis and native people on their land were recognized.

However, very rapidly growing anglophone immigration descended on the new province. Harassed by land speculators, the Métis moved west to Saskatchewan.

Riel was forced into exile in the United States. Although he was twice elected to the parliament in Ottawa, he was never able to take his seat as a member of parliament.

Fourteen years after the Red River uprising in Manitoba, the brutality of Canadian capitalism as it moved west pushed the people living in the south of Saskatchewan to revolt.

In 1884 the native people, the Métis, and small white farmers held a series of mass meetings throughout Saskatchewan. They sent a petition to the federal government which responded by sending the Mounted Police to "restore order."

In order to defend themselves, the rebels set up a new provisional government led by Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. The government was defended by force of arms.

Ottawa then sent 8,000 soldiers to aid the 800 armed police in the area. Overwhelmed by numbers, the 700 rebels were forced to surrender at Batoche. Riel, as well as the chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker, were taken prisoner.

Riel was accused of treason and condemned to death by a unilingual English court, and despite a broad protest movement in England, France, the United States, and Quebec, Riel and eight natives were hung.

Six days later, 50,000 people demonstrated their indignation and anger in the streets of Montreal.

"He shall hang, though every dog in Quebec bark in his favour," declared Prime Minister John MacDonald.

One hundred years after the death of Riel, the native peoples, the francophones outside of Quebec, and the Québécois are still struggling for their national rights. For them, as well as for us, Louis Riel remains the heroic symbol of the struggle of the oppressed and exploited against the Canadian ruling class and its state.

Balanced-budget bill: cutbacks

Continued from front page

ically if the budget adopted by the White House and Congress fails to reduce the deficit by a set amount each year.

Under the banner of "balancing the budget," the ruling class plans to impose automatic cuts in housing programs, medical research, education, student loans, and farm aid.

Medicare, veterans' health programs, community and migrant health programs, and Indian health services are also on the list to be automatically cut back.

The bill bars automatic cuts in social security; nutrition programs for women, infants, and children; Aid to Families With Dependent Children; and food stamp programs.

These funds are far from safe, however. They can be cut at any time by the White House and Congress. And many of these programs have already taken devastating cuts since 1981.

Heading the list of items to be protected from automatic cuts are the interest payments made to the banks that have loaned the government money. While social spending has been cut \$110 billion in the last five years, the interest payments have been increased \$124 billion.

The Pentagon, too, has little need to worry. At \$305 billion a year the war budget is the biggest in U.S. history. And it will continue to grow.

The Reagan administration projects funding for the military to rise by 3 percent a year. That's on top of an annual increase to match the rate of inflation.

According to the provisions of the balanced-budget bill, 50 percent of the automatic cuts are supposed to come from the Pentagon budget. Sen. Philip Gramm, an author of the bill, assured reporters, however, that there will be nothing automatic about these cuts: If the Pentagon "makes its case" for a bigger budget, he said, Congress will go along.

The White House and Congress are united in supporting stepped-up use of U.S. imperialist military power against the struggles of workers and farmers in Central America, the Caribbean, southern Africa, and the Middle East. They have poured billions into efforts to step up nuclear blackmail against the Soviet Union and other countries. Undoubtedly, the Pentagon will have no trouble "making its case."

The balanced-budget bill is a bipartisan operation. It was initiated by Republican senators Gramm and Warren Rudman and cosponsored by Democratic Sen. Ernest Hollings.

Liberal Democrats, such as Sen. Edward Kennedy, rallied to the bill.

Mickey Leland, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, told reporters, "We're holding our noses, but we're committed loyalist Democrats." Most Black Caucus members voted with Leland for the bill.

In the October 12 *AFL-CIO News*, AFL-CIO Legislative Director Ray Denison explained that the bill directs "those who depend on the nation's already battered social programs to pay the major cost of deficit reduction when wealthy individuals and profitable corporations pay little or no taxes."

The top AFL-CIO officials appealed to Democratic senators and representatives to block this attack. But these politicians, like their Republican counterparts, represent the rich individuals, bankers, and corporations who will benefit from the bill.

Asking them to defend working people is like asking a fox to guard a chicken coop.

To put an end to attacks like this one on our basic human needs, working people need to fight for a radically different kind of government than the capitalist government that rules over us today. We need a workers' and farmers' government.

A workers' and farmers' government would expand social programs and eliminate the military budget. It would stop interest payments to the banks and end the increasing burden of taxes on working people.

To fight for this program, working people need a fighting political organization.

We need a political party that represents working people and that working people control. We need a labor party based on the unions. Such a party would not be simply a trade union party, however. It would be a party of the whole working class, of the exploited farmers, of Blacks, Latinos, and women, of antiwar fighters, of immigrant workers (with and without papers), young and old, organized and unorganized.

Such a party would wage an uncompromising political fight for the priorities of working people, not the priorities of big business.

From our readers behind bars

The *Militant* receives many letters from our readers who are in prison. Unfortunately, space permits us to print only a portion of these letters, and some of them are abridged.

We receive letters from prisoners on a wide range of subjects, from letters of appreciation for receiving the *Militant*, which is made possible by our Prisoners Fund, to letters from prisoners engaged in struggles to defend their basic democratic rights and letters describing political discussions. This week we devote the entire letters column to the sisters and brothers behind bars.

The *Militant* special Prisoners Fund makes it possible to send subscriptions to prisoners who can't afford them. Where possible the fund also tries to fill prisoners' requests for other literature. To help this important cause, send your contribution to: *Militant* Prisoner Subscription Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.

The first three letters are from imprisoned activists in the movement for Puerto Rican independence. They are from four of the 13 people who were arrested August 30 in a massive raid on the island by 300 armed FBI agents from the United States.

The letters were sent to Andrea González, the Socialist Workers Party 1985 candidate for mayor of New York and a staff writer for the *Militant*. They were written in October. The translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.

Revolutionary greetings

We send to you and your comrades our most revolutionary greetings. We have received your publications with pleasure. We will be able to continue to read them as we did in Puerto Rico when we received them as members of the editorial board of the magazine *Pensamiento Crítico*.

We, like all who fight against imperialist domination, will be the object of the most brazen campaigns to discredit our revolutionary image before the people and the world. Yesterday, revolutionaries were called "bandits," "guerrillas," "seditionists," "subversives," and "communists." Now, when this last name no longer serves them, they call revolutionaries "terrorists." We know that all these campaigns against our liberation struggle will, in the end, be defeated.

Our people are moving closer each day to their liberation.

Our struggle is part of the struggle of working people and all people of the world. Therefore, we will not back away from our support for the struggle of our Latin American peoples, especially in Central America and the



Elias Castro Ramos

Claridad

Caribbean, as well as the struggle of our brothers and sisters in Africa, with whom we share deep roots in our national origin.

Our struggle is also part of the struggle of the North American working class, who will fight for the development of social justice for all and who will enjoy with all people an era of peace.

Hilton Edgardo Fernández D.
Elias Castro Ramos
Otisville, New York

Solidarity

Let me express my appreciation for the solidarity expressed in your press and in your work.

The solidarity shown by the North American people, like that of the people of Puerto Rico and their descendants living in the United States, is of strategic value for us and for the Puerto Rican revolutionary movement.

The importance of such support has been made clear when the Vietnamese, Cuban, Nicaraguan, Palestinian, and other peoples have needed it. Now one can feel the fervor of that support for the people of South Africa in the struggle against apartheid and against the Yankee aggression against Nicaragua and El Salvador.

We Puerto Rican fighters know that we are not alone. We feel the same kind of solidarity and in the same spirit as those with whom we make common cause.

Filiberto Ojeda Ríos
Otisville, New York

Hunger strike

I am beginning a hunger strike on October 14.

It will continue until October 30, the date that commemorates the Nationalist revolution of 1950, one of the dates that marks the only true road to follow to resolve the problems of our nation.

It is only by a change in who holds power that the problems will be resolved. For the rich in their mansions, the poor are neither important nor worth worrying about — the poor with their dilapidated wood and zinc houses and their roads and paths full of potholes. Only when the working people and the poor govern, when they direct the structures of the government of our people, will what happened in the suburbs of Ponce [landslide that destroyed a shantytown, killing 500] not happen again.

Thank you for your solidarity with me and the others arrested and for our homeland.

Luis Alfredo Colon
Otisville, New York

Different from others

Greetings to those who keep people aware of their social conditions, from a Marxist, rationalist perspective. What makes this periodical different from many others is that it does not sympathize with the capitalist class in any way, form, or fashion. The *Militant* does not compromise, or rub elbows with liberal politics.

My cellmate and I just so happened to be on the subject of South Africa. After much discussion and debate, it compelled me to ask for a subscription.

The *Militant* is the vanguard of the struggle. It would be very productive for me to receive this paper for two reasons. One, I could enlighten myself and judge the fate of the world. Two, I could enlighten my comrades and others.

A prisoner
Tamal, California

National Lawyers Guild

I am a member of the National Lawyers Guild and began the first NLG chapter inside a prison.

However, the situation here re: Aids, racism, veterans' issues, and vocational and educational programs is negative.

I have been receiving the *Militant* for a number of years, and I pass it around to all members of our chapter. Weekly discussions are held that focus on the struggle in Nicaragua, South Africa, strikes of certain unions, El Salvador, lesbian and gay rights, military draft, veterans' issues, and, of course, the rights of prisoners.

We have been able to put together a network of "outside" support — grassroots organizations, peoples' lawyers, law students, professional educators, and concerned citizens, who help us gain a broader perspective on local, national, and international issues.

In a nutshell, we continue to be learners, struggling against the manipulation, exploitation, and oppression of the capitalist system.

A prisoner
Dallas, Pennsylvania

Real inspiration

This is just to thank you for the biographies of Daniel Ortega and his wife, Rosario Murillo.

It has been a real inspiration to watch the people of Nicaragua in their struggle to be free and a very real inspiration to see women taking a leading role. I hope that our sisters in this country are paying very close attention.

A prisoner
Vienna, Illinois

Avid reader

I am presently serving a 99-year sentence for armed robbery, which I have put in 10 years and four months of.

I am an avid reader of your news publication and a strong follower of your beliefs and struggle. However I am indigent, with no means of support other than what is given to me by this institution's administration.

I am presently housed in a segregated, one-man cell in the lockdown cell-block unit, for being a "threat to security." All in all, I am literally cut off from the world. If it weren't for me being in this situation, I could at least donate plasma, thereby being able to purchase your publication. This administration has been known to hold certain inmates in a cell for five to 10 years or even longer, regardless of their behavior.

I am against racism in all of its forms.

If I could sell my "soul" to Satan in exchange for victory of my struggle, then, sir, my soul is sold! I would rather rot and suffer in hell for 10 billion years than to submit and give up my beliefs.

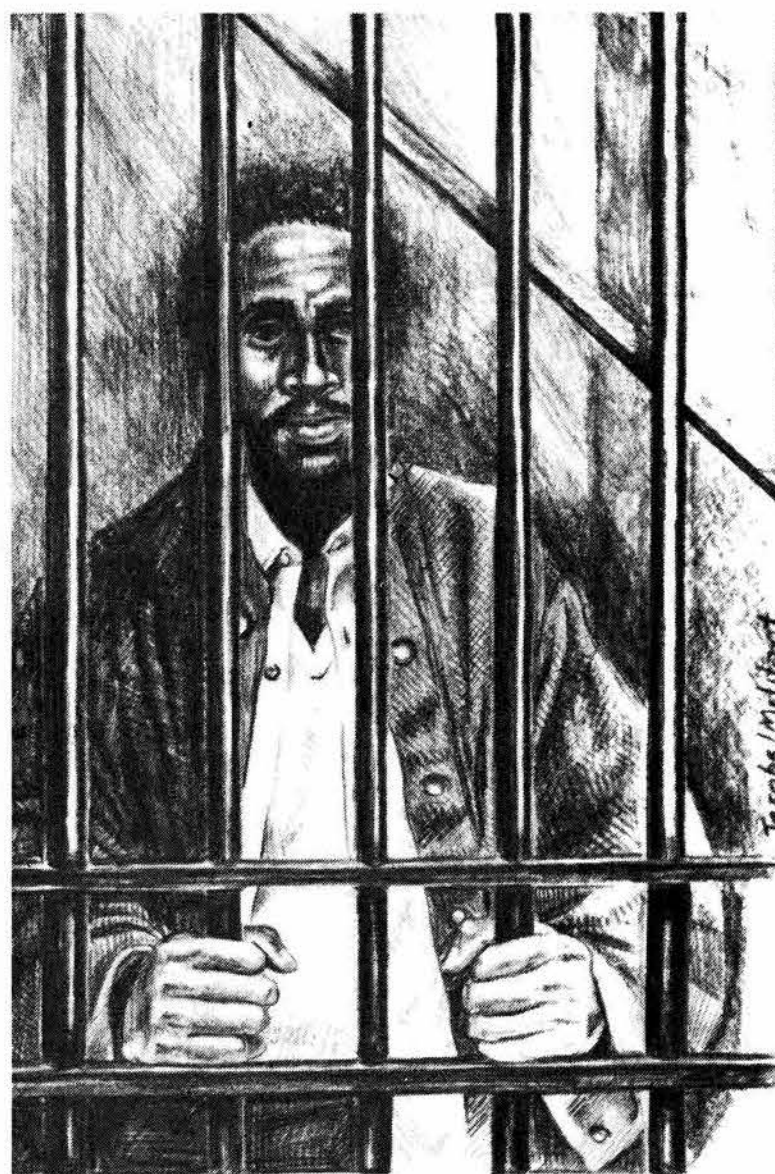
There is a lot I have no knowledge of and a lot I must learn in the way of struggle and just what struggle is all about. Given time, and I don't have anything but time, anything can be learned.

A prisoner
Angola, Louisiana

A lot of changes

I'm going through a lot of changes with the administration here. I'll send a contribution as soon as I can. Please keep up the good fight.

A prisoner
Lucasville, Ohio



Tasogs/Militant

Behavior modification

By stealth, the Justice Department has converted United States Prison-Marion into its major involuntary behavior modification center for the federal prison system.

Oct. 27, 1985, marked the second year of its full-scale operation.

Men are being sent to Marion for involuntary behavior modification. No pretransfer hearing is given to determine whether it's needed for prisoners to function in a general population prison.

The courts won't interfere because housing at Marion concerns prisoner classification, a process which the courts have ruled doesn't involve any due process rights for an aggrieved prisoner.

Being housed at Marion without a due process hearing is unconstitutional because: 1) many of us weren't classified as special management problems by the transferring prison; 2) Marion is for management-problem prisoners; and 3) involuntary behavior modification is the purpose of Marion prison.

Involuntary behavior modification involves an enforced 23-hour lock-in schedule, Skinnerian behavior-modification principles, and summary ultrapunitive segregation for even the most trivial violation of any condition of our treatment prescription.

New legislation is needed to stop this blatant government abuse. We're therefore asking the citizenry to write or call their U.S. representatives and senators about the Marion lockdown and its involuntary behavior-modification program.

Demand that Marion be closed. Its only purpose is to program poor people for long-term, no-parole incarceration.

A prisoner
Marion, Illinois

Enjoying paper

Thank you for your socialist solidarity. I am enjoying your newspaper and passing it around.

You're doing tremendous work right in the middle of the "snake's den." Your campaigns in defending third world revolutions are inspiring.

I wish you all the success, especially in your campaign to defend the Central American revolutionary struggle.

Thank you for the paper, which is keeping me in touch with the world and breaking my isolation.

A prisoner
Ottawa, Canada

Nicaraguan revolution

The triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979 expressed the Nicaraguan people's desire for self-determination. It also signified the end of the oppression and exploitation that the Nicaraguan people suffered for so many years. The Nicaraguan people are in power today, under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

The U.S.-backed war against the Nicaraguan people is not only a dirty war, but it is also a war that violates international laws. Nicaragua is a sovereign nation, and no other nation has the right to intervene in its internal affairs. The United States' reason to back that war is that it no longer has Nicaragua's natural resources and people to exploit and oppress.

Imperialism made the Nicaraguan revolution possible, and the revolution was only a product of the Nicaraguan peoples' oppression and exploitation.

A prisoner
Stormville, New York

I am pleased

I have been reading a few issues of your newspaper, and I am pleased with the subjects you have addressed.

I am requesting a subscription. I am presently indigent. However, upon my release I will make all efforts to reimburse you promptly.

A prisoner
Soledad, 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.

Utah mine disaster: 1 year later

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

PRICE, Utah — It has been a year since a mine fire killed 19 miners and 8 company personnel at the Wilberg mine here. The company and government cover-up of the cause of the accident is continuing. And so is the dangerous production speed-up that led to the fatal fire in the first place.

In early November, crews were finally able to reach the bodies of 25 of the fire's victims.

After being taken to Salt Lake City for autopsies, the bodies were released to the victims' families. The government has not disclosed any facts on the autopsies. The 19 workers who were killed were members of Local 2176 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

The Wilberg fire was the worst mine disaster in the United States since 1970.

The company was trying to set a 24-hour world production record at the time of the fire. Most of those killed were working in a sector of the mine where the longwall, a modern piece of mining machinery, was in use.

Few miners and community residents here believed the company's story that the fire was an accident that couldn't have been anticipated or headed off. They blame Emery Mining Corp. and Utah Power and Light Co. for recklessly endangering lives and disregarding safety in their drive to boost coal production and profits.

Earlier this year, the families of 14 of the victims filed a lawsuit against the owners asking for \$70 million for "willful, wanton, and reckless and callous disregard for life."

State and federal government officials refused to allow the families to be present at the mine when the bodies were removed.

But the federal government's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)

allowed two FBI agents and the Emery County sheriff to be there. The company has been claiming since April that arson was a possible cause of the fire.

The two miners who discovered the fire and risked their lives trying to extinguish it have said that it looked like the company overloaded the electrical circuits in the area where the "world record" production was going on. They have been harassed by the FBI and the sheriff's department.

The company has renamed the mine the "Wilberg and Cottonwood Mines" and continued production in sections not affected by the fire.

Nothing much has changed since last year's disaster. Company profits come before safety. All sections of the mine are under the same production bonus plan that was in effect at the time of the fire. Both bosses and miners get bonuses. So the bosses discourage injuries from being reported since the company cuts the amount of bonuses if there are lost-time accidents.

Firebosses — the union miners responsible on each shift for checking the safety conditions underground — report being harassed by the company when they attempt to enter safety violations in the mine safety book.

The company has no full-time person to monitor the mine's fire detection equipment or the minewide telephone communication system. That job was eliminated last year. There have been a series of unexplained power outages in the past several weeks.

In spite of the pressures for production, the miners keep informing each other of safety hazards and are also regularly reporting them to the union safety committee. Miners are becoming openly opposed to the bonus system.

A few months ago the company held a



On Dec. 19, 1984, Wilberg mine caught fire, killing 27. Here rescue worker takes break in emergency effort to reach those trapped underground. It took 11 months before negligent company recovered bodies. Two are still missing.

memorial meeting for those killed in the fire.

Top officials of Utah Power and Light and of Emery Mining spoke, along with Utah Gov. Norman Bangert.

Neal Savage, an Emery owner and chairman of the Utah Mining Association, said in his remarks that the families and friends of the victims should "put their grief behind them" and "get on with our learning and our achieving."

But miners here are not so willing to put the fire behind them. The UMWA is continuing its own investigation of the accident.

As one miner said, the company "is trying to get us to believe the fire never happened. We will never forget."

Cecelia Moriarity is a member of United Mine Workers of America Local 2176 and works at the Wilberg mine.

Threatened by boycott, Dearborn racists retreat



Auto worker protests Dearborn law designed to exclude Blacks from city's parks

BY ED JOSEPHSON

DETROIT — More than 600 people jammed the Hartford Memorial Baptist Church here on December 9 to show their determination to fight the racist city ordinance that bans nonresidents from Dearborn city parks.

The ordinance was passed into law November 5 after it was approved in a referendum vote. Dearborn is a suburb of Detroit. Of its 90,000 residents, less than 100 are Black.

On November 9, under the threat of a massive consumer boycott of Dearborn's businesses by Detroit Blacks, the Dearborn City Council voted 7-to-0 to suspend the enforcement of the racist ordinance pending a court ruling on a lawsuit challenging the ordinance filed by the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The boycott was suspended until the court rules on the case or until the Dear-

born city government moves to enforce the law.

Speaking at the protest meeting were Charles Adams, president of the Detroit NAACP; V.D. Stoots, president of the Detroit Council of Baptist Pastors; Tom Turner, president of the Detroit AFL-CIO; Joe Madison, NAACP voter education director; Bob King, president of United Auto Workers Local 600; and Howard Simon, executive director of the ACLU.

Adams explained that the issue was not a seat on a park bench, but "the dignity of a people that has been insulted for decades," who are demanding dignity and respect in Dearborn. A week earlier, a Black man was badly beaten in Dearborn by three racists who shouted, "Nigger, what are you doing in Dearborn?"

A leader of the Dearborn Republican Club explained the meaning of the ordinance very clearly: "We are fighting to preserve the neighborhood concept on which Henry Ford founded Dearborn" — that is, keep the city white.

Mayor John O'Reilly, who had previously opposed the ordinance, has promised to "vigorously and enthusiastically" defend it in court.

Anger in the Black community is beginning to focus on racism within Detroit as well. The 260-acre, private Detroit Golf Club, located in a predominantly Black neighborhood, recently gained notoriety when Mayor Coleman Young applied to be the first Black among its several thousand members.

As one letter to the *Michigan Chronicle*, Detroit's Black newsweekly, put it: "I can't help but think about how, whenever we hear the word apartheid, we automatically focus our thoughts on South Africa when, on a clear day, apartheid is sometimes as close as our own backyard."

Ariz. trial: informer exposed as criminal

BY BARBARA GREENWAY

TUCSON, Ariz. — Jesus Cruz, the government's star witness in the trial of 11 sanctuary activists here, admitted that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) knew that, while he was on its payroll, he was continuing to illegally force undocumented workers to pay him in order to cross the U.S.-Mexican border.

This is especially ironic given the fact that the government is trying to smear the defendants by accusing them of being part of a national operation to smuggle undocumented workers into the United States for money.

Cruz also testified that the INS had given

him \$18,000 to spy on Tucson churches that give sanctuary to refugees from Central America.

Those on trial include two priests, a nun, and a minister. They are part of the sanctuary movement, a national network of churches and synagogues that helps Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees who are fleeing political repression at the hands of U.S.-backed regimes in their homelands settle in the United States.

Cruz, on the other hand, is a *coyote*. Coyotes prey on workers from Latin America who want to come to the United States, charging them money to help them cross the U.S.-Mexican border.

Cruz became an INS informer to avoid a long prison term for transporting undocumented workers in Florida. Cruz told the court that, as an informer, he continued his coyote activities with the agreement of the INS.

Under cross-examination, Cruz admitted that he had been paid by the government to make himself available for questioning by the prosecutors and for photocopying documents.

The judge has ruled that both the activists' religious views and facts about government repression in Central America are inadmissible in court. This makes it almost impossible for the defendants to answer the charges in the courtroom.