

Hormel strikers stand firm as top union officials end support

Strikers shut down plant for 5 hours

BY ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

AUSTIN, Minn., March 20 — Striking meatpackers shut down the Hormel plant here for several hours today. The action stopped production in the plant for part of the first shift. It marked a deepening of the struggle in the seven-month-old strike.

The strikers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9, have been on strike against the Geo. A. Hormel Co. since Aug. 17, 1985. The company was able to reopen the plant only after Minnesota's "friend of labor" governor, Rudy Perpich, sent the National Guard into Austin to herd scabs for Hormel in January. Today marked the first time the strikers have been able to close the plant since then. At 4:00 a.m. hundreds of striking meatpackers and their supporters left the union hall. By 4:15 cars blocked the six gates of the plant. The strikers had shut the plant tight.

Waiting in the pre-dawn cold, the strikers carried signs that read, "Go home, scab, the plant is closed." The crowd chanted, "They say cut back, we say fight



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos

Cops arrest striking Hormel workers in Austin after they shut down plant March 20

back" and "Who are we? P-9!" As the strikers and supporters gathered around fires to keep warm, the Austin cops took up positions at the corners of the plant. State cop cars were stationed on the highway above the plant.

At about 5:00 a.m. two trucks came by the plant gate to deliver hogs for the day's

work. When the trucks could not enter the plant, the local radio station announced that the plant had been shut down by P-9's picket lines.

With the radio announcement, trucks and cars driving along the highway near the plant started to honk their horns in support

Continued on Page 6

Workers vote to continue strike

BY MAGGIE McCRAW

AUSTIN, Minn. — On Sunday, March 16, more than 800 striking meatpackers voted overwhelmingly to continue their strike against Hormel. The vote came two days after the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) International Executive Committee revoked its sanction of the strike.

The workers, members of UFCW Local P-9, have been on strike for seven months.

In a directive withdrawing the sanction, the International declared, "Effective 12 noon Friday, March 14, 1986, the strike against George A. Hormel Co. in Austin, Minnesota, and all related strike, picketing, and boycott activities are unsanctioned and unauthorized."

The UFCW officials have publicly attacked the embattled local many times in the last two months. The directive, repeating the earlier slanders, called the strike a "program of destruction and misery." It again charged that P-9 had abandoned joint bargaining with union locals at other Hormel plants. The directive blamed the local union, not Hormel, for the "suffering" and "loss of jobs of good union members."

The directive also attempted to blackmail P-9 members into calling off the strike. While declaring that the \$40 per week strike benefits now end, the directive states that the International will pay "post-strike assistance to replaced strikers who do not violate this directive." They also promised to obtain "unemployment compensation and other benefits unavailable during the strike."

Despite the directive, pickets remained at the plant gates. Some pickets, however, ripped off "UFCW" on their signs in response to the International's betrayal. Other strikers gathered in the union hall to read and discuss the directive. Some ex-

Continued on Page 6

Protest Reagan's drive to arm 'contras'

In his March 16 television speech to the nation, President Reagan unleashed a torrent of lies in an effort to gain support for the U.S. government's dirty war against Nicaragua.

"The Soviets and the Sandinistas must not be permitted to crush freedom in Central America and threaten our own security on our own doorstep," Reagan said.

Union members, farmers, the Black and Chicano communities, women fighting for

needed. They have not been requested," he said March 16.

But a March 13 dispatch to the *New York Times* stated, "Defense Department officials said tonight that President Reagan was prepared to use military advisers to train rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government if Congress approved the \$100 million in aid the President has requested for the insurgents."

A "top administration source" told *Newsweek* magazine that about 50 U.S. military personnel would be assigned to the contras as "trainers."

Passage of the proposal to aid the contras will be a major escalation of the U.S. war in Central America, increasing the chances that U.S. workers and farmers may eventually be sent to fight a war against Nicaraguan workers and farmers.

The promise that U.S. troops were "not needed" by the contras was just one of the lies dished out by President Reagan March 16.

He charged that "top Nicaraguan government officials are deeply involved in drug trafficking."

Continued on Page 22

EDITORIAL

their rights, youth, and others need to speak out and act now to oppose all U.S. aid to the contras.

Opposition to the U.S. war runs deep among working people in this country. One indication of this is the growing number of demonstrations against any aid to the contras. Another was the March 3 letter from 23 labor leaders opposing Reagan's proposal. The signers included International Association of Machinists President William Winpisinger, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers head Jack Sheinkman, and former president of the United Auto Workers, Douglas Fraser.

A third indication was the fact that the margin of calls to members of the House, which is expected to vote on the aid proposal March 20, continued to run heavily against aiding the contras after Reagan's speech.

Reagan has tried to conceal the danger that Washington's contra war represents to U.S. working people by claiming that aiding the contras is a way to prevent the use of U.S. troops. U.S. troops "are not

Haitians celebrate victory, discuss future

From March 15-21 a *Militant* reporting team visited Haiti to learn about the popular rebellion that toppled the dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier on February 7. The three reporters, Jackie Floyd, Margaret Jayko, and Harvey McArthur, traveled to Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves, and Cap-Haïtien, meeting with workers, students, peasants, unemployed, church leaders, and professionals. Most of the interviews were conducted in Creole, the language spoken in Haiti. This is the first of their reports on the rebellion and the problems facing the people of Haiti today.

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, March 18 — The red-and-blue banner of Haitian independence and liberation from the 29 years of Duvalier dictatorship is being flown everywhere here.

Red and blue were the colors under

which, in 1804, Haitians fought to win independence from France and to abolish slavery. In 1957 François Duvalier replaced this flag with a red-and-black banner. In the course of the Duvalier family's

Eyewitness report

rule, blue and red came to symbolize the struggle to free Haiti, first from the grip of the François "Papa Doc" regime and then from that of his son — Jean-Claude "Baby Doc."

At any street corner in the busy capital city of Port-au-Prince today one sees blue-and-red flags painted on store fronts and flying from taxis and *tap taps* — the many small trucks that provide public transportation. Many people proudly wear new T-shirts with the flag and the slogan "Haiti is free — February 7, 1986."

"Haiti is free," we were told over and

over again. "Now we can breathe. Now we can speak."

With the overthrow of the repressive Duvalier regime, the Haitian people have won the right to know, to speak, to protest, and to organize. These are vital tools Haitian workers and peasants need to confront the enormous challenges they face in trying to develop their homeland, which U.S. imperialist domination has made the poorest country in the hemisphere.

Along the road from the Port-au-Prince airport, families bathe in muddy puddles in front of modern U.S.-owned factories and banks. Children — many naked, with bellies swollen from malnutrition — beg money at the roadside.

Students, peasants, and workers, having overthrown Duvalier, are now beginning to form organizations to defend their rights and fight for needed social changes.

The return of political exiles is an impor-

Continued on Page 8

W. Virginia workers want Hormel strikers' views

BY JOHN HARRIS

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — The strike by United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 against the Hormel Co. in Austin, Minnesota, has generated a good

meatpackers.

This interest in the strike has helped to push forward sales of the *Militant* at area mine portals.

Over the last three months, the *Militant* has been sold consistently

number of miners have rolled down their windows for discussion with salespeople about the strike, which has been prominently featured on the front page of the paper.

One miner told the sales team that "our local supports the Hormel strike, and we're boycotting Hormel products." He quickly pulled out a dollar for the *Militant*. Usually from two to five miners come up with \$.75 or a dollar for a copy of the paper.

These miners want to read about the strike from the point of view of the strikers. They know that this is the kind of coverage they can get in the *Militant*.

The response to the *Militant* at

other mine portals has also been generally friendly. Although no papers have been sold recently, a number of miners have taken fliers displaying a recent *Militant* article discussing the issues in the UFCW strike.

Socialists here also organize sales at the gates of plants in other industries. We have found that interest in the strike is high among these workers as well.

Recently, for example, three *Militants* were sold at the North American Phillips plant in Fairmont, West Virginia. Phillips is organized by the International Union of Electronic Workers locals 625 and 627. These workers' contract expired in March. The contract discussions there have

generated new interest in the paper.

Militant sales have also been stepped up at the Morgan Shirt plant in Morgantown. Morgan Shirt is organized by Local 347 of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Workers at the plant took dozens of fliers on the Hormel strike. Three copies of the paper were recently sold there.

One woman first walked by a salesperson but then turned around. "I've just got to read more about that Hormel strike," she said, and bought a copy of the paper.

Militant supporters here plan to expand sales to more mines and plants as part of building solidarity with the striking meatpackers.

SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

deal of interest and support from the members of the United Mine Workers of America in the area.

These miners are familiar with attacks by the coal companies on job safety and on their union, so they identify with the striking

near the portal of the Emerald mine. This mine is right outside of Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, about 15 miles from the West Virginia border. Since the Minnesota governor sent the National Guard into Austin to herd scabs for Hormel, a

Okla. company lied about uranium plant job safety

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Federal investigators have found that unsafe equipment and absence of safety training were key factors in the chemical blast that killed one worker and hospitalized 130 at the Kerr-McGee uranium processing plant in Gore, Oklahoma, this past January.

A March 13 report to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission found that huge tanks filled with uranium hexafluoride barely fit on a scale supposed to warn of overfilling.

The tank that exploded actually had one end resting on the floor when it was weighed.

The investigation also found that workers required to handle the lethal chemicals received little more than informal on-the-job training.

Earlier, probes found Kerr-McGee had lied about its so-called safety procedures and, despite its claims to the contrary, had regularly ordered workers to carry out unsafe practices that led to the blast.

In the explosion, a highly corrosive cloud formed by the release of 29,500 pounds of uranium hexafluoride killed one worker, sent 130 people to the hospital, and spread a caustic gas across 18 miles of the surrounding area.

The tank ruptured when a supervisor ordered an employee to apply heat to remove the 2,000 pounds of this deadly chemical that had been overloaded into the car-sized cylinders.

The Gore plant, operated by a Kerr-McGee subsidiary, partially refines uranium. It is then shipped to government plants where it is used in making nuclear weapons and fuel for nuclear power plants.

Top federal officials from the NRC were quick to cover up for the company. They tried to blame the workers, suggesting they had violated safety rules.

In reality, the NRC was also attempting to cover for itself. The plant's operating license was recently renewed despite a September 1985 NRC report listing re-

peated company safety violations over the past several years.

Last January 29, Kerr-McGee wrote a letter to the NRC stating that its management "had no knowledge" that overfilled cylinders were reheated and "had specifically prohibited it." A little more than a month later, NRC investigators have publicly admitted that Kerr-McGee regularly reheats these overfilled cylinders in direct violation of their own safety procedures. This was done 20 times in 1985 alone.

The real cause of this disaster was con-

scious corporate policy designed to maximize profits even at the expense of workers' lives.

Speedup meant total disregard for safety. The safe way of removing excess material from these large cylinders uses a vacuum process, but this takes much more time.

Kerr-McGee gained world notoriety when Karen Silkwood, a worker at its Crescent, Oklahoma, plant, became contaminated with plutonium. Soon after, she was killed when her car crashed off the

road while she was bringing documents to a reporter proving safety violations at the plant. The documents were gone from the smashed car.

Kerr-McGee's safety record is similar to that of thousands of chemical companies throughout the United States. According to a survey done by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, from 1980 through June 1985 there were 7,000 chemical accidents in the United States, causing 139 deaths and 1,500 injuries. That's an average of four accidents a day.

South Dakota rally says 'Farms not arms'

BY AUGUST NIMTZ

FLANDREAU, S.D. — "Farms not arms" was the theme of a protest rally on the farm of Craig Severtson February 27.

The action was cosponsored by more than 26 peace and antiwar groups, farm organizations, labor unions, American Indian organizations, and student and church groups.

The event was held on Severtson's farm because it was being foreclosed by the local bank. Prior to the rally, much of the machinery was auctioned off.

The rally did not try to stop the sale since a compromise had been reached with the bank to allow Severtson's father to keep the house and some of the land and cattle. Severtson believes that the bank may have made the compromise because of the expected turnout for the rally.

Opening the rally, Severtson explained to the more than 400 in attendance that the reality of the farm crisis has to be widely publicized. It must be linked, he said, to opposition to Washington's defense budget. Severtson described as "ludicrous" President Ronald Reagan's call for more defense monies.

Bobbi Polzine of Minnesota Groundswell said that "only the people can effect

change." She called for a "moratorium on military contracts" and denounced Reagan's request for \$100 million to aid the *contras* in Nicaragua, as well as his "star wars" plans.

Merle Hansen, president of the North American Farm Alliance, stressed the need for peace and justice activists to join with the farm protest movement.

He pointed to the recently formed National Save the Family Farm Coalition, founded at the end of February in Des Moines, Iowa, as an example of what must be done and urged groups to join. "We must join hands with all. We must stop the march toward war. Let's march out of here together because the issues are one and the same."

Pete Winkels, business agent of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 on strike against the Hormel Co. in Austin, Minnesota, also urged unity. "We in labor can never again be complacent about the situation on the land."

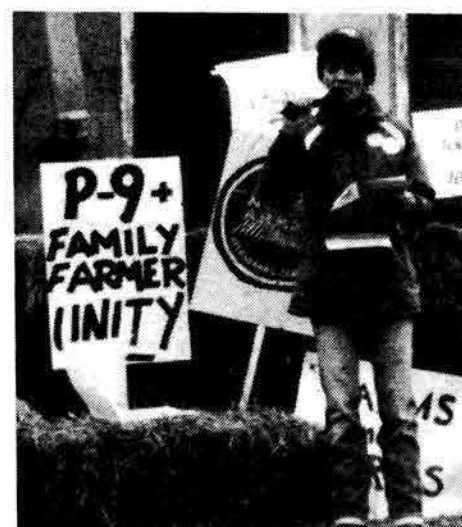
Gene Beckman from Local 1180 of the United Electrical Workers in Sioux Falls also spoke.

Greetings were read from two Native American groups, the Santee Sioux Tribe and the Native American Treaty Council of

the South Dakota Penitentiary. Greetings from Jesse Jackson were also read to the crowd.

Among the participants at the rally were supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Minnesota, Geoff Mirelowitz.

The rally was covered by virtually all the media in the state.



Militant/Jim Altenberg

Bobbi Polzine speaks at rally

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South Koreans fight for democratic rights

BY TOM LEONARD

The U.S.-backed South Korean military dictatorship headed by President Chun Doo Hwan is continuing its brutal repression of South Koreans seeking political reforms in that country. The most recent wave of repression has been aimed against supporters of the New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) and opposition leaders Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam.

The new government attacks came on the eve of the overthrow of the U.S.-supported Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. That victory by the Filipino people has provided fresh inspiration for South Koreans whose democratic rights have been suppressed by authoritarian regimes since the 1950-53 Korean war. Throughout the postwar period the U.S. government has maintained a permanent occupying army in Korea. Currently, the presence of 40,000 U.S. troops, armed with nuclear weapons, plus other military installations make South Korea one of the most heavily militarized areas of the world.

At present over 200,000 U.S. and South Korean troops are carrying out military maneuvers — the "Team Spirit '86" exercise — in the Pacific. Besides U.S. troops in Korea, the 10-week maneuvers involve U.S. troops stationed in the Pacific, in Hawaii, and on the mainland of the United States.

On February 25, the day Ferdinand Marcos was overthrown, NKDP leaders issued a statement saying, "We are all watching the Philippines because there are striking similarities to South Korea."

The statement pointed out that the political upheaval in the Philippines demonstrated a "domino trend of democracy" that could affect South Korea and other parts of the world. If the situation in Korea worsened, they added, it "could develop into another Philippines upheaval."

The statement came after weeks of intense attacks on NKDP members following that party's decision to help launch a 10-million-signature petition campaign demanding a revision of the country's constitution to allow a direct popular vote for the presidency in the 1988 elections. Under the existing constitution, which was rewrit-



Left, President Chun Doo Hwan's cops charge demonstrators in Seoul. Right, current U.S.-South Korean maneuvers underline U.S. backing for repressive dictatorship.



ten by Chun after he took power in a bloody U.S. government-backed military coup in 1980, the president is elected by a 5,271-member electoral college. This body is elected by popular vote.

Because of his dictatorial rule, Chun's political opponents fear the present constitution allows him to pressure and manipulate electors, enabling him to handpick his successor to the presidency. Chun's ruling Democratic Justice Party is opposed to constitutional changes, fearing any signs of relenting to the opposition could lead to mass mobilizations that could threaten the dictatorship.

Last month the regime launched a campaign of political repression against the supporters of constitutional reforms.

On February 4 a demonstration of 1,000 students from 15 campuses demanding constitutional changes was broken up by police at Seoul National University. Some 200 students were arrested, and 51 later indicted for violating laws banning unauthorized meetings.

On February 12 the NKDP and its affiliate, the Council for the Promotion of Democracy, attempted to publicly launch the petition campaign for constitutional change. Chun's political cops responded by announcing that signers of the petition

were violating the existing constitution and were subject to up to seven years in prison. NKDP political offices were raided and temporarily closed to prevent the campaign from being organized. Three hundred NKDP supporters were placed under house arrest.

At one point the home of Kim Dae Jung was surrounded by 500 cops and his phone lines cut. Other known petition supporters were trailed by plainclothes cops and intimidated from meeting under threat of arrest. So flagrant were these attacks on democratic rights that embarrassed U.S. State Department officials were forced to publicly criticize their puppet regime for its actions.

Mindful of what was happening to Marcos in the Philippines at that time, President Chun eased up the attack. This provoked some criticism of the U.S. government among his supporters. One top official in the South Korean Ministry of Trade and Industry bitterly complained, "The U.S. is here to help us, but the U.S. is also here to help themselves."

But a deeper and more profound anti-U.S. government sentiment has been growing among South Korea's prodemocratic forces for over a year. This sentiment is spearheaded by the student movement.

Reporting from Seoul, South Korea, Steven Butler of the *Christian Science Monitor* recounted, "Anti-Americanism is spreading ... and United States officials are worried about it."

"Last year, harsh rhetorical denunciations of the US became a standard feature in hundreds of student demonstrations — a trend dramatized last May when 73 students staged a peaceful, four-day sit-in at

the US culture center in downtown Seoul which attracted widespread attention in the international news media. Since then, attacks on US facilities have been smaller but more violent. Last August, students jumped the fence around the US Embassy in Seoul and burned a US flag before security guards caught them. In early December, other students carrying Molotov cocktails seized the US cultural center in the city of Kwangju and held it for nine hours before police moved in. The attacks have also hit US businessmen. Students occupied the American Chamber of Commerce offices in Seoul last November, spreading kerosene on the floor and threatening to light it. US banks have become targets of protests."

Attacks on U.S. corporations and banks have been fueled by reports that the U.S. Congress has moved to enact protectionist trade laws to limit South Korean imports into the United States. This move comes at a time of sharp decline in the South Korean economy, with unemployment estimated at 7.4 percent and 25 percent of the work force underemployed, working 18 hours a week or less. Because there are shortages of jobs in fields they studied for, more and more college students are taking factory jobs.

In a move to silence the growing sentiment against the U.S. government and U.S. corporations, the Chun regime is resorting to political terrorism against the student movement. Last January two students were sentenced to death for allegedly spying for North Korea and stirring up anti-American feelings. Two others were sentenced to life imprisonment and 11 were jailed for 2 to 15 years.

SALES SCOREBOARD

(Week #1: Totals as of Militant issue #10, PM issue #5)

Area	SINGLE ISSUES		SUBSCRIPTIONS
	Sold this week Militant/PM	% of 10-week goal reached	Sold so far Militant/PM
Atlanta	80/0	—	2/0
Baltimore	102/0	13	0/0
Birmingham	51/0	6	2/0
Boston	208/5	21	20/0
Capital District, N.Y.	54/0	8	14/0
Charleston, W. Va.	121/0	20	0/0
Chicago	58/0	4	2/0
Cincinnati	12/0	2	1/0
Cleveland	76/1	9	6/0
Dallas	132/39	10	5/0
Denver	93/9	13	2/0
Detroit	331/0	21	5/0
Greensboro, N.C.	53/0	8	5/0
Houston	152/33	10	21/1
Kansas City	88/4	8	3/0
Los Angeles	101/44	7	8/6
Louisville	36/0	10	0/0
Miami	43/0	8	4/0
Milwaukee	39/0	5	14/0
Morgantown, W. Va.	98/0	14	2/0
New Orleans	58/0	9	2/0
New York	249/12	8	18/2
Newark	97/2	4	15/2
Oakland	58/8	7	2/0
Philadelphia	99/4	10	3/0
Phoenix	83/53	9	6/3
Pittsburgh	63/4	8	0/0
Portland	45/0	7	4/0
Price, Utah	—/—	—	—/—
Salt Lake City	33/3	8	1/0
San Diego	21/1	4	2/0
San Francisco	83/12	7	6/1
San Jose	76/22	10	3/1
Seattle	81/3	11	3/0
St. Louis	78/0	6	0/0
Tidewater, Va.	68/0	18	0/0
Toledo	58/1	12	13/0
Twin Cities	73/0	5	3/1
Washington D.C.	97/15	14	5/1
Total sold to date	3,348/275		202/18
10-week goal	45,000		2,000
Percent of national goal reached	8%		11%
To be on schedule	10%		10%

Good sales despite rain at L.A. abortion action

BY PAT GROGAN

At the March 16 "National March for Women's Lives" in Los Angeles, the rain was coming down so hard for most of the day that leaflets, newspapers, and even cardboard signs soon turned to mush. So it wasn't easy to sell the press.

Nevertheless, sales were excellent. Although a final tally isn't available, at least 320 copies of the *Militant*, 20 copies of the *Young Socialist*, and 15 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* were sold to march participants.

This was a solid contribution to the second week of our spring circulation drive. Officially launched March 8, the aim is to sell a total of 45,000 single copies of the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister publication, *Perspectiva Mundial*.

A second goal of the drive, which closes May 16, is to sell 2,000 introductory subscriptions to both publications.

To date, 3,623 single copies and 220 subscriptions to both publications have been sold.

Many of the sales took place at around 10:30 a.m. at the assembly area during one hour that the rain let up.

One member of the Oakland Young Socialist Alliance, determined to take advantage of the break in the weather for as long as it lasted, sold 23 copies of the *Militant* during this time. In addition to the coverage of the March 9 abortion rights action in Washington, D.C., he reported a

special interest in the *Militant's* coverage of Nicaragua and South Africa, as well as the Hormel and TWA strikes.

Two TWA strikers bought copies of the *Militant*. After getting a chance to look it over for a while, they came back with two other strikers who also bought copies.

One of the best advertisements for the socialist press was the contingent of 75 young people who marched under the banner of the Young Socialist Alliance. Described by one young man as "the most smokin' contingent," they could be heard blocks away chanting, "Fired up, won't take no more," "Fund contraception, not contras," and "Hyde Amendment has got to go."

Later, at an open house at the headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party, Laura Garza, national co-chairperson of the YSA, said, "The march today and last week in Washington shows that young people are putting a part of our lives into fighting to keep the rights that have been won."

Garza urged young people to join the YSA as the best way to fight. "Just as Reagan proudly proclaims himself a contra, so we proudly proclaim ourselves revolutionaries. If you want to be on the side of the Sandinista Revolution, on the side of the South African revolution, on the side of the Haitian and Filipino people, on the side of fighters like the strikers of Local P-9 of

Continued on Page 15

Thousands view obscene luxury of Marcos dictatorship

BY DEB SHNOOKAL
AND RUSSELL JOHNSON

MANILA, Philippines, March 16 — Since the night of February 25 when Marcos was forced to flee in the face of the "People's Power Revolution," the grounds of the deposed dictator's Malacañang Palace have been open to the public. They have been popularly dubbed as "Freedom Park."

On March 13 the palace itself was opened to the public. Thousands of poor people were bused in from the slums of Manila for a tour where they viewed the evidence of the staggering extravagance of the former president and his first lady, Imelda Marcos.

President Corazon Aquino herself addressed the first batch of visitors: "While seeing for yourselves the lavish furnishings in the palace, you will be able to understand why the government is in such a predicament."

The palace visitors were stunned and shocked by the almost obscene luxury they found — especially that in the Imelda Marcos boudoir, which, apart from the grand piano and the piles of jewelry she did not manage to stash away in her flight bag, included enough racks of dresses, furs, and gowns to stock a department store. Three thousand pairs of imported shoes and 500 bras! Imelda Marcos' bathroom was the pièce de résistance with its marble-tiled chair, mirrored walls, and the vast array of imported soaps, perfumes, and other toilet articles.

Such discoveries immediately became the talk of Manila, and so many people flocked to the palace to see for themselves that scuffles broke out among those seeking to join the tours.

Lack of cooperation from Washington

The government officials here are already expressing frustration with the lack of cooperation from the U.S. government in Philippine efforts to recover the billions of dollars that ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos plundered from the Filipino people and has hidden in the United States and elsewhere.

Presidential Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo has called for "swift and meaningful" action from the U.S. government. "We hope we will not be treated like the Khomeini government in its claim against the property of the shah of Iran," he said.

He was referring to the way that the U.S. government and courts blocked the return of the shah's ill-gotten wealth to the people of Iran after that butcher had been overthrown in 1979.

Already a number of Marcos-owned properties have been located in New York City and elsewhere in the United States, as well as casinos in Australia and a Swiss bank account holding \$800 million.

That the return of the Marcos' stolen billions is not simply a symbolic question has been highlighted by the current visit to Manila by three officials of the International Monetary Fund, the Philippines' largest creditor, to discuss repayment of the estimated \$30 billion foreign debt run up in the Marcos era. This makes the Philippines the fourth most indebted nation in the world, after Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina.

Marcos steals billions

Sources here estimated the Marcos family may have smuggled as much as \$10 billion out of the country over the years, much of it stolen directly from overseas loans. Together with that of the "crony capitalists" like Eduardo Cojuangco and Roberto Benedicto, who fabulously enriched themselves through their collaboration with Marcos and fled the country with him in face of the "people power" uprising of February 22-25, it has been suggested that the total amount smuggled to the United States, Switzerland, and elsewhere may approach that of the entire Philippine foreign debt.

Each day the Manila newspapers report new findings of the commissions of the Aquino government that have been established to uncover corruption under the Marcos regime. The *Manila Times* of March 15, for instance, reported that during January the Marcos-appointed manager of Manila International Airport had pocketed 55 million pesos (almost \$3 million) that was intended for the Philippine National Construction Company. It was also reported that day that five more guest houses in the Philippines, maintained with government money but run by the Marcos family and associates as their own, had been found, bringing the total uncovered to 30.

So far the assets of the Marcos kin and a number of associated businessmen have been declared frozen by the government.



Filipinos celebrating their victory in the liberated Malacañang Palace

These include those of Cojuangco (the "Coconut King"), Benedicto (the "Sugar Baron"), and Gen. Fabian Ver. The Aquino government has committed itself to the dismantling of the monopolies of these Marcos cronies.

Meanwhile the *Los Angeles Times* reported March 13 that U.S. Defense Department investigators have subpoenaed General Ver in a federal grand jury investigation of possible kickbacks involving U.S. military aid of more than \$100 million.

These moves against the wealth of Marcos and his cronies are part of the efforts of the Aquino government to dismantle the Marcos dictatorship. For two decades Marcos had shaped the military, government, constitution, parliament, courts, and the local governments as institutions through which he and his associates, known here as the "cronies," could plunder and repress the Filipino people with the backing of U.S. imperialism.

But the February "people power" uprising to install Corazon Aquino as president, after Marcos attempted to blatantly steal the February 7 election, changed all that. Central to Aquino's popular support was her pledge to restore democratic liberties and end the corruption of the Marcos years.

Marcos cronies hang on

While the dictator himself fled the country on February 25, most of the Marcos machine remained in place in the parliament, judiciary, management of government enterprises, military, and in provincial and city governments.

Significant purges of Marcosites are taking place in the officer corps of the armed services, the judiciary, diplomatic corps, and government service. However, less has been achieved in the local governments controlled by Marcos' New Society Movement (KBL).

The provincial governors, drawn from wealthy landlords allied with Marcos, are especially powerful with their private armies sanctioned by Marcos as the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF). These warlords — the hated foes of the peasants and the biggest recruiters for the New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) — are resisting surrendering their powers to the government. For instance, Armando Dustilo, the governor of Negros del Norte and a close Marcos ally, is holed up in his fortified bungalow. He refuses to resign his powers. Dustilo, a local sugar baron, had his CHDF thugs shoot up a demonstration of 2,000 hungry sugar workers in Escalante town last September 20, killing more than 20 people.

Another Marcos warlord, Ali Dimatoro, the Marcos-appointed governor of Lanao del Sur, has challenged the military and President Aquino to remove him. He has established the "Mindanao People's Democratic Movement" and has vowed to use "people power" against any attempt to remove him, although he handed over a case of high-powered arms to the military.

The Aquino government faces a gigantic challenge in disarming these warlords. It was through them that Marcos ruled the country as a whole, reinforcing their traditional role as "conduits of patronage," in the words of the *Manila Times*.

An additional problem for the government is that some 2,000 Marcos supporters in the military — many from the dictator's personal bodyguard of the Presidential Security Command abandoned at Malacañang — have refused to surrender to the new military command, now referred to as the Nu An Forces of the People. They are reported to be massing in Marcos' home province of Ilocos Norte.

The KBL majority in Marcos' rigged national parliament, which declared the dictator the winner of the February 7 elections, is also bitterly resisting moves by the Aquino government toward declaring itself a revolutionary government outside the framework of the 1973 constitution. Such a move would declare the Marcos parliament and local governments defunct, key moves needed to break the Marcos regime.

Some of the KBL politicians openly admit their campaign against the Aquino government is being coordinated by telephone with Marcos from Hawaii. Arturo Tolentino, Marcos' vice-presidential running mate who still calls himself "vice-president elect" and says that Marcos is legal president "temporarily out of the country," and other Marcos ministers denounce Aquino as a worse dictatorship than that of their master. "People power," said Tolentino, is no legal basis for government.

"There were only about 2 million people assembled in Camp Crame during the military mutiny and were not fully representative of the 54 million Filipinos. There were about 27 million voters in the February 7 election," he said.

Others offer support to Aquino

Other KBL politicians, some of whom looked to former Marcos and now Aquino Defense Minister Juan Enrile, are offering to declare Aquino president in return for their maintaining the parliament and the Marcos constitution.

In addition there are many patronage politicians and other former supporters of the Marcos dictatorship in government and

Internat'l Women's Day celebrated by Filipinas

BY DEB SHNOOKAL

MANILA, Philippines — International Women's Day was being viewed in the Philippines as a day of great celebration. A rally on Saturday, March 8, was held in Luneta Park here as part of an international women's conference organized by the feminist group GABRIELA, in which women from the United States, Canada, Britain, Greece, Germany, Japan, and Australia participated. Many carried placards condemning the "sexploitation" of Filipinas and the continued U.S. and Australian military aid and demanding the removal of U.S. bases from the Philippines.

The following day, President Aquino addressed about 2,000 women on the grounds of Malacañang Palace. "Women

have been in the forefront of the struggle," Aquino said. "It is a woman who stands before you as the president of a proud, free, and democratic Philippines. I am proud to be a Filipino, but even prouder to be a Filipina," Aquino told the cheering crowd. It is significant that the new Aquino government includes several women, among them Dr. Mita Pardo de Tavera, a long-time feminist and leader of GABRIELA.

The role of women in Philippine society generally is quite striking. Women are especially prominent among business and professional layers but are also among the most militant unionists. For example, it has been women workers who have led a number of general strikes in the Bataan Export Processing Zone, a so-called "free trade zone" where multinational companies are offered tax incentives and antiunion laws to ensure superprofits.

At the same time the "sexploitation" of Filipinas is a major problem. Women are sent as domestic servants to Hong Kong, the Middle East, the United States, and elsewhere to be treated as virtual slaves. In some countries, Filipinas are actually bought and sold as prostitutes, often kept on drugs to keep them placid.

Within the Philippines, prostitution is big business, especially in Ermita, the tourist part of Manila, and in Olongapo, the town near the U.S. naval base at Subic

Bay.

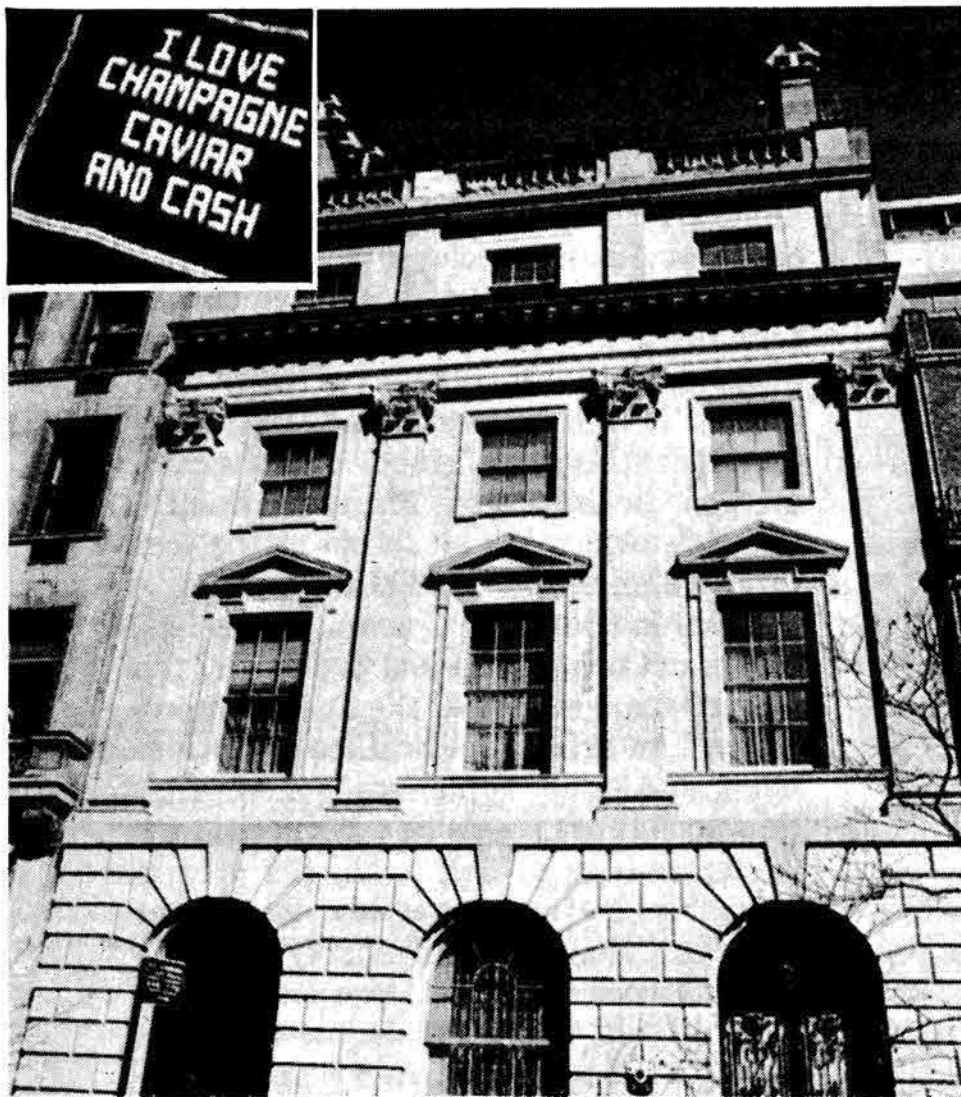
The Philippines is frequently promoted for "sex tourism." Child prostitution, both male and female, is rife. The economic crisis in the Philippines, the lack of jobs in the cities and the driving off of thousands of peasants from their land can only aggravate this problem.

The increasing tendency of Filipinas to assert themselves and their rights is provoking a reaction. Deposed president Marcos ridiculed Corazon Aquino's electoral challenge, saying she was "only a housewife." More recently, one of Marcos' faithful warlords in Mindanao, Ali Dimatoro, who had been the governor of Lanao del Sur, has refused to recognize the authority of the Aquino government. "I for one," he said, "did not believe that a woman could run this country. Why will they get mad at me when this is my personal feeling — that this country cannot be run by a woman?" he said. "Now that she is there she should try to prove to me that I am wrong," he challenged, and dared the military to remove him from his post as governor.

The "People's Power Revolution" of February 22-25, on the other hand, proved that the vast majority of Filipinos did have the confidence that a woman could "run the country" when they pushed Aquino forward to replace the hated dictator Marcos.

1,500 Pakistanis protest port call by U.S. warships

Fifteen hundred demonstrators burned a U.S. flag and an effigy of President Ronald Reagan in Karachi, Pakistan, March 17 to protest a port call by six U.S. warships. According to a Reuters dispatch, the police rushed the protesters "when they tried to march on the U.S. consulate," arresting 50 people. The six ships were led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Enterprise*.



New York town house of Marcos said to be worth \$15 million. Inset is of one of Marcos' cushions found in house.

the military who now declare themselves supporters of the Aquino government. They are also resisting any thoroughgoing housecleaning of the corridors of power.

There is continuing conflict within the Aquino government coalition on how far — and how — to proceed with dismantling the Marcos regime, and to what extent to involve the people themselves in the consolidation of a democratic republic.

This is reflected in the reports in the press. Each day, and in each paper — and there are many today — different statements appear from various members of the government. They give different views on whether the government will be declared "revolutionary" or "constitutional" or on whether the Marcos constitution will be scrapped, and on how and when a new constitution will be drafted.

Those who favor the most sweeping purge of the Marcosites tend to favor President Aquino declaring her government to be "revolutionary" and for Aquino herself to assume personal power for a transitional period based on her "people power" mandate. These are, in general, figures associated with her LABAN Party or the "parliament of the streets" and "cause-oriented groups" that have joined her government. These forces, including Aquino herself and Local Government Minister Aquilino Pimentel, are reported to favor the election by popular franchise of a constitutional convention to draft the new constitution.

On the other side stand especially the old patronage politicians of Vice-president Salvador Laurel's UNIDO Party and Defense Minister Juan Enrile. They oppose using revolutionary power against the Marcosites and want a commission appointed to draft or redraft the constitution. Ex-KBL members Laurel and Enrile are presently maneuvering to create a new national parliament majority with KBLers who have formed themselves into a new parliamentary party, the Philippines Nationalist Party led by former Marcos Labor Minister Blas Ople.

At the up-to-3-million-strong March 2 "Thanksgiving" mass and rally in Manila to celebrate the Marcos overthrow, Corazon Aquino warned that puppet Marcos supporters continued to resist her government around the country and urged the huge crowd to maintain "people power" to combat them.

Workers apply 'people power'

Sections of working people have begun to take up this call and apply "people power" in their own way. On March 11 street vendors from the Cradajo Market in Manila marched on Manila Police Station No. 4 to protest the arrest of fellow street vendors for refusing to pay "pong," protection money to the cops. The marchers

chanted "People power! People power!"

According to a report in the *Manila Times* March 11, "The police complained that the vendors had abused 'People Power' and were forced to release the vendors they had arrested because they feared that the vendors would attack them."

A march was also scheduled for Manila's City Hall to demand the ouster of the mayor for protecting the cops.

Employees of the Development Bank of the Philippines began an indefinite walkout March 13 to protest threatened staff layoffs and demand the firing of top bank officials appointed by Marcos, including the DBP chairman, Cesar Zalmea. They also condemned the retention of Jose "Jobo" Fernandez as Central Bank governor. Posters have appeared around Manila which read: "Cory, save us from Jobo." Fernandez was a particularly hated official under Marcos as an IMF stooge.

Another protest was held by 500 bank workers on February 28 in Makati demanding his removal.

On March 13, some 150 Ministry of Health employees picketed Health Minister Alfredo Bendzon's office to demand the removal of several hospital and health agency chiefs. Ten thousand employees of the Philippines Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) owned by Marcos crony Benedicto continued March 15 to defy for the second day a government order to end their two-week strike. Nevertheless, when the government announced March 15 that it was taking over PLDT and a number of other communications companies controlled by Benedicto, the strikers helped the government secure the company by ensuring that no documents or property were removed by management. Documents seized revealed huge amounts of profits being sent to the United States.

Occupation of education institutions

The press has also reported a spate of occupations of educational institutions and marches on the Education Ministry by students and teachers demanding, among other things, the exposure of corruption, ouster of school heads, and the rollback of tuition fees. Protests have been reported at Rizal Technological College, University of the East, and five state-owned colleges and universities and one public elementary school.

In addition there are reports of labor unrest in the provinces. Labor Minister Augusto "Bobby" Sanchez, whose appointment was supported by the militant KMT union movement, has said he expects the unrest to spread in the next period.

Efforts have begun to unite several of the labor federations.

Activists from the popular organizations that backed Aquino during her election

campaign have also announced plans to take up her call to maintain "people power" through launching a network of community-based "Cory Aquino People's Power" organizations to promote the interests of workers and peasants.

Lorenzo Tañada — known as the "grand old man of the opposition" because of his consistent opposition to the Marcos dictatorship and who is the chairman of the anti-Marcos coalition Bayan, which is politically led by the Communist Party of the Philippines — is reported to have been appointed chairman of a Commission of National Reconciliation. The commission is expected to play a role in trying to negotiate an end to the guerrilla war being waged by the New People's Army and the Muslim-based Moro National Liberation Front.

The appointment of the 81-year-old Tañada, if it is publicly affirmed by Aquino, will be one of a series of appointments to government positions of figures associated with the so-called "parliament of the streets" opposition to the ousted dictatorship. Along with Labor Minister Sanchez, these include Minister of Social Services Mita Pardo de Tavera, a former head of the GABRIELA women's movement, and her deputy, Kareena David of Kaakbay, which was part of Bayan until June of last year.

Moro National Liberation Front

Leaders of two of the three major wings of the Moro National Liberation Front have returned from exile in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia to negotiate the terms of a cease-fire with the new government. They have publicly declared support for Aquino and their willingness to end their guerrilla war if the government grants the Muslim areas of Mindanao autonomy on the terms of an agreement reached with the Marcos government in 1978 but never implemented. Saudi Arabia has announced its willingness to provide almost \$500 million in aid for development of such an autonomous Muslim region.

The third wing of the liberation front has

been reported to be holding out for secession.

The press here is constantly highlighting claims from the military of unofficial cease-fire agreements reached with NPA forces in various provinces, or of the surrender of NPA or CPP militants to the government. While no doubt there is a broad sentiment among Filipino peasants to give Corazon Aquino a chance, and this is sure to have some reflection within the peasant ranks of the NPA, little credibility can be put on most of these reports, however.

For a start, the peasant movement has been aimed as much at the rural warlords and the Civilian Home Defense Forces as at the military per se, and the CHDF gang has not been disarmed. For instance, on Bohol, one of the provinces where it was claimed that the NPA had agreed to a cease-fire, 10 members of one of the anti-communist "death squads" known as "Tad-tad" and CHDF militiamen were reported in the March 16 *Manila Sunday Times* to have been killed March 13 in a clash with the NPA. Clashes were also reported in the same paper in Mindoro Oriental, Pangasinana, Negros Occidental, and Misamis Oriental.

An additional point of tension has been the reluctance of the military command in many provincial areas to carry out President Aquino's orders to release all the NPA, CPP, and other political detainees. In Cebu City, for instance, the Task Force Detainees organization is protesting the fact that the army continues to hold 16 detainees on the excuse that military authorities have not yet received an official copy of Aquino's freeing order.

Cuba's artistic freedom is target of smear

BY HARRY RING

NEW YORK — Dan Georgakas, an editor of the widely respected film quarterly *Cineaste*, recently returned from his third visit to Cuba. Information that came to his attention there bolstered his belief that a conscious international campaign is being conducted to discredit revolutionary Cuba among artists and intellectuals. Cuba is being portrayed as a country where artistic freedom has been crushed.

For instance, one recent international scandal was created around the notorious Armando Valladares, the "wheelchair poet," who supposedly had been jailed for dissident views and subjected, as he told it, to blood-curdling torture.

Valladares, in fact, had been a cop under the Batista regime and was convicted of participating in a counterrevolutionary bomb plot. And, on release in 1982, he walked off a plane in Paris without benefit of wheelchair.

Now, Georgakas said in an interview, another hoax has been exposed.

In mid-1985, a Spanish publishing house, Editorial Playor, published a novel, *El tiempo es el diablo* (Time Is the Devil), by Ricardo Bofill, a writer who has done time in Cuba.

The book's jacket describes the work as "The extraordinary novel of a Marxist dissident incarcerated in Cuba."

But, by Bofill's own admission, this is a fraud. The book was not written by Bofill, but by José Lorenzo Fuentes, a prize-winning Cuban novelist. In somewhat revised form, it is slated for publication in Ecuador and Cuba.

Bofill, Georgakas said, has formally acknowledged that Fuentes is the author of the book. Meanwhile, Fuentes has initiated a \$3-million suit against the Madrid publishing house.

The plagiarist, Bofill, was first convicted by a Cuban court in 1967 as a member of a "microfaction" led by Anibal Escalante. Charges against the group included working to get the governments of

other workers' states to put economic pressure on the Cuban leadership to modify its course in Latin America. Sentenced to 12 years, Bofill was released after five.

In the early 1980s, Bofill again became involved with the law. Currently, Georgakas said, he is at liberty in Havana.

Georgakas said Bofill obtained a copy of the manuscript from Fuentes, who wanted his opinion of it. Later, when Fuentes pressed for its return, he was told it was "lost."

Then, while Bofill was in jail, his papers — apparently including the Fuentes manuscript — were taken out of the country by an unknown person.

Georgakas said the plagiarized work was published with much fanfare, obviously designed to make Bofill a "cause" among intellectuals.

Editorial Playor, he observed, has published other works aimed at discrediting the Cuban revolution, including the book of poems by the hype artist, Valladares.

It also published a Spanish edition of *Gays Under the Cuban Revolution*, by Allan Young, a U.S. writer. Vehemently anti-Cuba, Young argues that in many respects, gays were better off under the tyrant Batista.

Georgakas said he finds the efforts to discredit Cuba among artists and intellectuals particularly invidious because during his visits there he's found an open, stimulating atmosphere in the filmmaking community and among artists generally.

"Artists there are concerned about raising critical issues in a constructive way," he said. "But I found no fear of discussing any idea. They have gripes that any filmmakers would have. But they're not silent about it. There is debate."

Because he does find the artistic climate in Cuba so unfettered, Georgakas is persuaded "there's something fishy going on" — that the persistent efforts to discredit Cuba among intellectuals does have the quality of an organized international campaign.

Strikers shut down plant for five hours

Continued from front page of the strikers below.

While most of the strikers and supporters stood near the main gate, others drove their cars around the plant honking their horns. Some cars carried American flags. One Chicano striker drove by with a Mexican flag. Each time the cars drove by, they were cheered by those at the gate. Especially warm cheers were reserved for the car carrying a delegation from Hormel's Fremont, Nebraska, plant. That delegation represented the more than 50 Fremont workers who were fired by Hormel for honoring P-9's picket line.

Most of the pickets were members of the striking local or their supporters from Austin. But there was also a delegation of about 50 activists from St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Among these activists were two steelworkers who work at American Can Co. in St. Paul. They have just ended a strike. During their strike, the Austin meatpackers had joined steelworkers' picket lines in an act of labor solidarity and support. The Twin Cities delegation also included leaders of the Black community, as well as members of other steelworkers' locals and of the auto workers' and machinists' unions.

The pickets today included miners from northern Minnesota's iron range, and there were meatpackers from nearby Albert Lea. Workers came from as far away as Wisconsin, Ohio, and Missouri to support the strike.

At a little after 6:00 a.m., the scabs started to arrive for work. Hundreds of people greeted them with jeers and chants of "Scab, go home" and "Go get a real job." Without the help of troops to herd them into the plant, most scabs either checked with the cops on the corner and turned around or drove by the gate and disappeared.

Two scabs, however, kept driving by, yelling at the strikers and making obscene gestures, trying to provoke the crowd. When no one responded, the scabs went from provocation to threat. Outside the area of the picket line, they pulled over a striker's car and put a shotgun to the face of one of the strikers inside. Although the striker reported the threat to the cops, they did nothing.

At 7:00 a.m. the Austin cops, reinforced by sheriffs from the surrounding counties, moved in. They announced that the crowd was in violation of a December 1985 court injunction limiting strike activities at the plant. They ordered the crowd to leave the plant gate.

About 100 strikers and supporters locked arms and grouped at the gate, sing-

ing "Solidarity Forever."

Across the street a crowd stood shouting at the cops. The crowd included strikers and supporters who were among the 115 people arrested March 10 during a protest at Hormel's corporate offices.

It had been decided earlier that those who have already been arrested for strike-related activities should avoid arrest if possible today.

The cops began to carry people at the gate to waiting vans. They filled two vans without trouble. Sixteen people, including two members of P-9's executive board, John "Skinny" Weis and Carl Pontius, were arrested. But, as the cops began to bring a third van toward the gate, the crowd moved in to block the way.

Locking arms, they chanted, "What do we want? A contract. When do we want it? Now!"

As the cops formed a wedge to push through the crowd, the strikers held firm. In encouraging the crowd, one striker yelled, "Remember, we're fighting for our jobs, our dignity, and our children." The strikers were able to hold off the cops for a while. But by 10:30 a.m. it was decided to pull back. The plant was opened.

The action at the plant demonstrated that the strikers can stop production. It was a



Militant/Tom Jaax

Strikers and supporters outside plant in January. That action also closed Hormel.

fitting answer to the claims of Hormel and the top officials of the United Food and Commercial Workers International that the strike is over. Obviously, the strike is alive and well. More solidarity, including workers coming to Austin to participate in ac-

tions, is needed.

Meanwhile, the local has sent a letter to Hormel management requesting to reopen negotiations. The company has told the press that it would meet with P-9 next week.

P-9 votes to continue Hormel strike

Continued from front page

pressed confusion and uncertainty. But many said, "This will bring us closer together."

To try to justify their action, the International Executive Committee claimed that "many others have asked us to lift the sanctions so that they might save their jobs without violating deeply held union principles..." But as of March 18, only 25 union members followed the International's order and signed up to return to work.

Hormel claims that there are no jobs available. The strikers, the company says, will be entitled to future jobs only if they drop all bargaining demands and offer to return to work.

The revocation of the sanction comes after local members narrowly approved a motion, March 12, requesting that the UFCW International meet with the local's executive board to settle the differences that exist between them and that led to the officials' attacks on the local. The motion also requested that the International work with the local leadership to write a contract to present to Hormel. Finally, the resolution gave the local leadership more leeway in bargaining with the company.

In forwarding the motion to the International Executive Committee, P-9's leader-

ship explained that the rank and file were requesting a meeting in Austin with the union's officials and representatives from the other locals in the Hormel chain.

The local made it clear that the motion was not a vote on their strike, their boycott, or any other strike-related activities.

In response to the International's withdrawal of the strike sanction, the local organized a press conference March 14. In addition to the media, nearly 200 strikers attended. Pete Winkels, the local's business agent, told the press that "the UFCW International Executive Committee has seen fit to abandon the rank and file members. The Hormel company," Winkels said, "claims the strike is over. Wynn claims it is over. Yet the rank and file of P-9 has not ended this strike. This strike will not be over until there is a signed agreement amenable to the parties involved."

Referring to the motion passed by the members, Winkel continued, "The intent of our vote was to settle differences, not add to them. The UFCW has wrongly assumed that this was a request for intervention."

At the March 14 support meeting, the spirits of the 500 strikers and supporters were high. When P-9 Vice-president Lynn Huston read the International's directive, the crowd booed.

Some in the audience blamed the International's intervention on those who had voted for the previous week's motion. But Huston explained that "the people who supported that resolution didn't know the International couldn't read. We need to move on together," he said, "with one plan to beat the Hormel Company."

The revoking of the sanction, Huston said, wasn't "a nail in the coffin," but "a knife in the back. Nothing," he said, "changes but the 40 dollars."

Kathy Buck, a member of the local's executive board, told the crowd, "We need to unite our forces to become stronger. We need to put our emotions aside and think clearly about what's best by Sunday's rank and file meeting."

Huston reported that support for the strike continued. "All day," he said, "unions across the country have called to say if Local P-9 is still in the fight, they're with us."

The sentiment at the meeting was to continue and deepen the struggle against Hormel.

This sentiment was expressed a few days later by P-9 President Jim Guyette when he urged people to join in their struggle. Guyette said, "We intend to take the company on in a much bigger way. Our fight is with Hormel and First Bank. We're not going to let the International take our fight from us."

"At this point," Guyette continued, "we have no contract. We have no income, but the fight is going on. This is a fight that transcends P-9."

After Sunday's rank and file meeting, Huston told the *Militant* that "we're going to continue with the boycott and the roving pickets." The membership, he said, passed a motion protesting the International's action and requesting that it withdraw its directive.

Guyette announced that P-9 will file a federal lawsuit against the International union.

The suit, Guyette said, will seek compensation for the International's actions "undermining the local's bargaining position with Hormel."

The suit will also seek an accounting of funds designated for P-9 that are being held by UFCW Region 13 in Bloomington, Minnesota. The local estimates that this amounts to more than \$100,000.

P-9 is asking that all contributions be sent directly to them. (See "Strike at a glance" on page 7 for the address.)

Delegations from Local P-9 and from UFCW Local 431 from Ottumwa, Iowa, where more than 500 workers were fired by Hormel for honoring P-9's picket lines, will be going to Washington, D.C., to demand a meeting with UFCW President William Wynn.

'IP' on struggle of South African miners

Black mine workers are among the most exploited workers in apartheid South Africa. For a century, they have labored under dangerous and difficult conditions to dig up the gold and other minerals that have made South Africa's white capitalists so rich and have helped finance the white minority regime.

But today, Black mine workers are organizing themselves into a powerful weapon — the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The upcoming, April 7 *Intercontinental Press* features a background article by Ernest Harsch on the conditions of these miners and on their efforts to build the NUM.

In just a little more than three years, the NUM has grown into the single-largest union in the country, with a quarter of a million members. It has engaged in numerous strikes, many of which were brutally attacked by the police. Despite this, the miners have made some notable gains. They have also been

drawn increasingly into the broader political struggle against the oppressive apartheid system.

The same issue of *IP* reprints a joint communiqué from a recent meeting among leaders of the African National Congress, South African Congress of Trade Unions, and the recently formed Congress of South African Trade Unions.

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N.Y. rally supports Minnesota strikers

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEW YORK — Despite heavy rain, well over 1,000 people packed the 11th floor of District 65 of the United Auto Workers (UAW) headquarters on March 14 for a spirited rally in support of striking meatpackers from Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Austin, Minnesota.

The hall was filled with signs from area unions, including auto workers, communications workers, transit workers, teamsters, and others.

The success of the rally was summed up in the lead banner: "New York labor supports Local P-9."

Bill Nuchow from Teamsters Local 840 opened the meeting on behalf of the New York Labor Support Committee for Local P-9.

To chants of "P-9, P-9," Nuchow announced that fire marshals could allow no more people on the 11th floor. Therefore, workers were filling the second floor hall to hear the speakers.

In welcoming everyone to the rally, David Livingston, president of UAW District 65, pledged continued support. "The Hormel strikers," he said, "are part of the family of labor, and we will stick with them as far as they need to win."

The crowd rose to its feet to welcome a contingent of some 75 striking TWA flight attendants who left their picket lines to come to the rally.

Sam Myers, president of UAW Local 259, announced that the UAW had already sent \$20,000 to the meatpackers. His local, he reported, raised \$5,000 from a shop floor collection. He urged all unionists to increase their financial support to the strike.

The members of UFCW Local 431 from Ottumwa, Iowa, and from the local's support group were greeted with a standing ovation. More than 500 members of that local were fired and then locked out by Hormel for honoring P-9's picket lines. Bill Cook, speaking for the Ottumwa workers, appealed for support since they receive neither strike nor unemployment benefits.

Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), also addressed the rally. FLOC has just won a major victory for farm workers in Ohio and Michigan. After years of struggle, including a national boycott, the union forced the giant Campbell's Co. to sign a contract.

Velasquez pledged the union's support for the striking meatpackers. "We don't have much power or influence to offer you," he said, "but we have 11,000 boycott

activists around the country who can help make sure nobody buys Hormel products!"

Among the speakers most warmly received was Karen Lantz, vice-president of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), which is on strike against TWA.

Lantz explained that TWA was preparing to try to bust their union. Months before they were forced out on strike, she said, the company hired 2,000 replacements. The union set up informational picket lines to explain to these workers that the company intended to use them as scabs.

She expressed her admiration for the striking meatpackers.

"We really understand what solidarity means when a group of workers from Minnesota who have been on strike for six and a half months can take time off their picket lines to come and join our picket line."

Jan Pierce, the International vice-president of the Communications Workers of America, introduced Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9.

The crowd rose to its feet to greet Guyette with prolonged applause and cheers of "P-9, P-9."

"We in Austin," Guyette said, "are involved in a struggle for justice and dignity. We are in a key struggle against concessions that concerns the whole labor movement." For this reason, Guyette explained, the strike has won broad support from working people across the country, from both unions and farm organizations.

"The Iowa Farm Unity Coalition, Minnesota Groundswell, and the North American Farm Alliance have come out in support of the Hormel boycott, and these farmers are not selling their hogs to Hormel," Guyette said.

Appealing for unity among workers and working farmers, Guyette said, "If the labor movement and the agricultural movement are to be heard, the time has come to start helping each other."

He viewed the history of concessions the Hormel workers in Austin have given to the company in the last 23 years. The result of these concessions and of speedup, he said, has been an injury rate of 202 per 100 workers.

Hormel is the most profitable company in the meatpacking industry. It has used these profits, Guyette said, to invest in two new plants in South Africa.

He appealed to the audience for help. He called on all present to support the boycott of Hormel products, send resolutions of support to the local, and adopt a striking family. Finally, he invited everyone to come to Austin to learn the truth about the strike.



Militant/Dee Scalera
Karen Lantz, a leader of striking TWA flight attendants, and Jim Guyette, president of striking Minnesota meatpackers' local, at New York solidarity rally.

Guyette explained that although the UFCW International union had cut off all strike benefits to the local (see article on page 1), the struggle would continue.

In closing, he said, "From Watsonville, California, to the TWA picket line, to South Africa, to Austin, Minnesota, and Ottumwa, Iowa, people need to know — which side are you on?"

Among the other speakers at the rally were Guillermina Ramirez, a striking cannery worker from Watsonville; Stanley

Fischer, president of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-760 at the 3M plant in Freehold, New Jersey; and Harold Mendlowitz, president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1202, which organizes Greyhound workers in the northeast and in Quebec, Canada.

Ruth Messinger and Steve De Brienza from the New York City Council announced plans to introduce a resolution to that body supporting the strike.

Publication fund drive gets reporters to Haiti

BY ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

In this issue of the *Militant*, readers will find an eyewitness report from Haiti.

A team of reporters, including Margaret Jayko, managing editor of the *Militant*; Harvey McArthur from the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* Managua bureau; and Jackie Floyd, a national leader of the Young Socialist Alliance, is in Haiti covering developments since the overthrow of the Duvalier dictatorship.

On-the-spot coverage of major political developments makes up an important part of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The reporting team now in Haiti is one example. Closer to home is the *Militant*'s team covering the strike by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local P-9 against Hormel in Austin, Minnesota.

Since Gov. Rudy Perpich sent the National Guard into Austin to herd scabs for Hormel January 21, *Militant* reporters Maggie McCraw and Tom Jaax have been on the scene.

Their reports from Austin enable *Militant* readers to follow the week-by-week developments in this important labor battle.

Their reports on this strike have helped to get out the strikers' side of the story and to build support among working people.

Telling the story from the point of view of fighters here and around the world is a hallmark of the socialist publications.

With a bureau in Managua, for example, the socialist periodicals have helped tell the truth about the struggles of Nicaraguan workers and farmers to people in the

United States.

The Managua bureau has been a feature of these publications since the Nicaraguan masses overthrew the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

The reports from Nicaragua have helped to politically arm antiwar and solidarity activists to answer the U.S. government's campaign of lies against the Sandinista revolution.

In the last year, the Managua bureau has grown from two reporters to three. This growth has enabled the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to expand coverage of the deepening revolution. Stories on the debate over legalization of abortion, autonomy for Nicaragua's oppressed nationalities on the country's Atlantic Coast, and the deepening land reform are examples of the increased breadth of coverage.

On-the-scene reports are exciting. They are also expensive.

That's where the Socialist Publication Fund comes in.

The \$100,000 fund enables us to continue this type of coverage, from Managua, Nicaragua, to Austin, Minnesota.

The fund drive began March 15. It's off to a good start, with over \$4,234 contributed in the first five days.

Your help can insure the success of the drive. To contribute, just make out a check to the Socialist Publication Fund and send it to the address on the coupon on this page.

If you'd like to help but don't have the money right now, you can make a pledge. Just fill out the coupon on this page and send it in. Your pledge can be paid any time before the drive ends May 10.

The Hormel strike at a glance

The 1,500 members of United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local P-9 were forced out on strike by the Geo. A. Hormel meatpacking company on Aug. 17, 1985. They are workers at the company's Austin, Minnesota, operation.

Several months earlier, Hormel had unilaterally slashed wages from \$10.69 to \$8.25 an hour. They were later raised to \$9.25. When the union's contract expired August 17, the company refused to return wages to their former level.

Hormel also demanded additional concessions, including gutting the seniority and grievance systems and instituting a two-tier wage system. The company has demanded the right to punish workers injured on the job. The injury rate per year at the Austin plant is 202 injuries for every 100 workers. Hormel is also demanding contractual restrictions on workers' democratic and political rights.

In the course of the strike, Local P-9 has had to face attacks by the company, courts, and governor.

On Dec. 24, 1985, the courts issued an injunction limiting strike activity at the plant.

On January 21, Minnesota Gov. Rudy Perpich of the Democratic Farmer-Labor

Party sent in the National Guard to herd scabs for Hormel. Public outrage forced Perpich to pull the Guard back from the plant on January 29. The strikers were then able to close the plant again.

On February 3 Perpich again assigned the Guard to herd strikebreakers. Although there are about 900 scabs in the plant, production is only at about 20 percent of normal.

The striking local sent out roving pickets to other Hormel plants. On January 28 the company fired over 500 workers at Hormel plants in Ottumwa, Iowa, and Fremont, Nebraska, for refusing to cross P-9's picket lines.

On February 22, P-9 removed their pickets from the Ottumwa plant. The workers, members of UFCW Local 431, an amalgamated local representing 5,000 members statewide, then marched en masse to demand their jobs. The company refused, locking out the workers.

Donations and messages of support for the Austin strikers can be sent to: UFCW Local P-9, 316 4th Ave. NE, Austin, Minn. 55912.

Donations for the Ottumwa workers can be sent to: Terminated Employees Support Group of Ottumwa, P.O. Box 1355, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501.

On March 15 we launched the Socialist Publication Fund with the goal of raising \$100,000 by May 10.

A major purpose of the fund is to help finance publication of the *Militant* and our Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial* and other socialist publication projects.

Checks should be made out to: Socialist Publication Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, NY 10014.

Enclosed is my contribution to the Socialist Publication Fund of \$ _____

I pledge a contribution of \$ _____ to the Socialist Publication Fund to be paid by _____.

Name _____

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\$100,000

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\$4,234

Alabama conference on Central America

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua. Stop U.S. military intervention in Central America and allow sanctuary for refugees. Stop the trials and deportations! These were the themes of the First Alabama Conference on Central America held March 1.

The 70 people who attended the conference included activists from solidarity and peace organizations from 10 cities around the state.

Steve Schaffer from the Mobile Committee for Peace and Justice in Central America opened the program, saying, "It's not just economic support we're giving the contras. The United States is at war with Nicaragua."

Abraham Woods of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference explained that "we Blacks are concerned about foreign policy. We would be hypocrites if we were only concerned about South Africa. The CIA-supported contras are trying to hold back the blessing of the revolution in Nicaragua."

Sidney Hill, full-time organizer for the Shell Oil boycott and a member of the United Mine Workers of America, received loud applause following a slideshow about South Africa and the Shell

boycott campaign. Royal Dutch Shell is a major supplier of fuel to the South African government.

The participants voted to endorse the boycott.

Following the program, a planning session decided to organize a statewide demonstration against contra aid March 22 in Birmingham.

They also decided to support the boycott of Hormel products. A message of support was sent to United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 on strike in Austin, Minnesota. It read in part, "Just like the people of Nicaragua are leading the struggle for justice in Central America, you are leading a similar struggle here."

Nomonde Ngubo tours Price, Utah

BY JAN STEPHENSON

PRICE, Utah — Nomonde Ngubo, staff member of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), recently completed a successful tour to educate working people about the racist system in South Africa. She directs the miners union's anti-apartheid campaign.

Ngubo was invited by the Black Student Union at the College of Eastern Utah to participate in Black History Month.

At a February 19 campus meeting featuring Ngubo, she explained what the system of apartheid was and why Blacks are fighting back against it.

A reception was held for her at UMW District 22 headquarters organized by the Lady Miners of Utah.

More than 50 people, including retired and working miners, came to meet and hear her speak.

Also on the platform were UMW Executive Board member Richard Cordova and Rita Miller, president of the Lady Miners of Utah.

Cordova explained that hearing Ngubo speak would be an opportunity for those who had come to gain a better insight into the UMW's activities in opposition to apartheid. He pointed to the latest issue of the *UMW Journal* the union's newspaper. It had extensive coverage on apartheid and the union's support for the boycott of Shell Oil.

Ngubo described what living conditions are like for Blacks in South Africa. She explained that Blacks cannot own land or property, nor can they vote.

She said that it was a big step forward for Blacks when they organized themselves into unions to fight for their rights as workers and to improve their working conditions and wages.

Following the program, a number of union members stopped by the UMW table to pick up bumper stickers, buttons, leaflets, and posters about the Shell boycott.

Ngubo's tour in the Price area also included two engagements at Carbon High School, speaking to 100 students.

Nicaragua leader speaks to 200 at U. of Pittsburgh

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

PITTSBURGH — The Nicaraguan minister of trade and commerce, Alejandro Martínez Cuenca, spoke March 7 to an audience of 200 at the University of Pittsburgh.

He explained why they should oppose U.S. aid to the contras and that "the contras cannot win the war no matter how much money they receive from your government. Like Somoza, who had money, they cannot win because they don't have popular support."

As evidence of the contra mercenaries' lack of success, he cited the fact that the Nicaraguan people were able to carry out the recent coffee harvest without a single casualty.

Cuenca further explained that when the Reagan administration finally realizes that the contras cannot win and "if he decides to invade, it will be no Grenada. I am an economist, not a military man, but when the first marine puts his feet in my country, I will fight — we will all fight."

A March 22 protest against U.S. aid to the contras was announced at the meeting. The assembly point for the march is "Freedom Corner," Center Avenue and Crawford near St. Benedict the Moor Church, at 11:00 a.m.

Sponsors of the protest include

Pledge of Resistance, Religious Task Force on Central America, and the Central America Mobilization Committee.

West Virginia divestment hearing

BY GREG ROSEMONT

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Nomonde Ngubo spoke here at the end of February on what West Virginia can do "to end the repugnant racist regime" in South Africa.

She addressed a well-attended public hearing before the state's Senate Finance Committee on a bill that would divest state funds from companies that operate in South Africa. West Virginia has some \$131 million invested in such companies.

Ngubo explained that what's needed in South Africa is not just reforms. "The question is real civil and political rights," she said. "If I get involved in too much political or union activity, I can be banned or banished to a Bantustan," as the South African reserves for Blacks are called.

Ngubo spoke also about the boycott of Shell Oil, which was launched by the UMW, TransAfrica, and the AFL-CIO.

Referring to apartheid, Joe Powell, president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO urged the Committee: "Let's get rid of this cancer once and for all."

Haitians celebrate victory, discuss challenges

Continued from front page

tant part of this growing political activity. During the nearly 29 years of Duvalier's rule, more than 1 million Haitians — one-fifth of the population — fled the country. Many were leaders of unions and opposition political parties, journalists, or other opponents of the dictatorship. Due to the bloody repression, the union movement and opposition political groups that did exist were small and weak.

On February 7 the National Council of Government replaced the Duvalier regime. It includes four high-ranking military officers who served under Duvalier and two civilians. The new government said that it would screen exiles who wanted to return and that none could come back without an official visa. This is a requirement the Haitian government has maintained since the 1940s. In recent weeks, many exiles have been given visas to come back.

In the past week, these included Serge Gilles, leader of the Union of Haitian Democratic and Patriotic Forces (IFOPADA); Renée Theodore, secretary-general of the Unified Haitian Communist Party (PUCH); Col. Octave Cayard, who led an unsuccessful revolt against François Duvalier in 1970; Pierre Clitandre, journalist and editor, expelled along with hundreds of other dissidents in November 1980; and Thomas Desulné, anti-Duvalier businessman and former member of the Haitian Senate. Most of these have held press conferences and appeared on radio and television.

Miami delegation visits Haiti

Among the most prominent exiles to return is Father Gerard Jean-Juste, director of the Haitian Refugee Center Inc. in Miami. Jean-Juste was imprisoned by Duvalier in 1971 and has been in exile for 14 years. He returned to Haiti March 15 for one week with a fact-finding delegation from the

Haitian Refugee Center.

At the Miami International Airport, Jean-Juste told reporters that many Haitians in Miami asked him to return home to find out "the conditions, the people's demands, to see if liberation is proceeding. I am going to return," he said, "not to tell people what to do but to find out what the conditions are." He added that he did not know what reception he would get from the new Haitian government, although he had been issued a visa to return.

Jean-Juste took with him checks for \$31,000, money donated by Haitians in Miami to help rebuild schools damaged or destroyed in the uprising against Duvalier.

The delegation also included Leonel Cius, father of Jean-Robert Cius, a youth murdered by Duvalier's troops on November 28, 1985; and Gabriel Augustan, a Haitian Refugee Center board member and prominent activist in Miami. Both had been exiled during the 1970s. Haitians on board the flight from Miami broke into applause and shouts at the first glimpse of their homeland when it could be seen from the airplane windows.

At immigration in Port-au-Prince's Maïs Gâté airport (formerly named for François Duvalier), Jean-Juste's group was processed through the receiving line for diplomats and met by local church leaders. Several police and army officers stationed at the airport shook hands with the Miami delegation as they left immigration. A Haitian flag was held over Jean-Juste's head as he addressed a crowd of Haitians outside the airport.

'People have begun to pose questions'

On Sunday, March 16, Jean-Juste led a mass at the Saint Jean Bosco Church in Port-au-Prince. He was introduced by the church's pastor, Father Aristide Bertrand, a prominent opponent of the Duvalier regime.

The more than 600 people attending the service broke into applause when Jean-Juste was introduced and gasped with surprise and delight when Aristide announced that Leonel Cius was present.

In an opening prayer, Aristide said that "the people have begun to pose questions. We must continue to work for a better Haiti, with jobs and food for all."

Jean-Juste gave the sermon, explaining

how Haitians in Miami had organized demonstrations against Duvalier and to defend Haitian refugees in the United States and the Bahamas from deportations and mistreatment.

He said that he would take a report back to the United States and asked if all the problems were solved now that Duvalier had gone.

"No, no!" people shouted. "We don't have jobs or food. Children can't go to school. We need hospitals."

One woman insisted on speaking and was led to the altar microphone by Aristide as Jean-Juste led the congregation in chanting, "The people are fighting everywhere,

they demand freedom."

"There is hunger throughout the country," she said. "The rich don't care if we don't have work, or if they kill us. Duvalier was a thief, a criminal, and an assassin," she declared to enthusiastic applause. Father Jean-Juste pointed out that the most important achievement of the revolution was winning the right to speak freely.

The two-and-a-half-hour service, which was filmed by camera crews from three Miami-based television stations, included the singing of the Haitian national anthem and calls to continue Operation Uproot, the term used to describe the revolution.

Miami: debate over contra aid spurs right-wing attacks in city

BY STU SINGER

MIAMI — The debate over the U.S. war in Central America is sharply polarizing this city. The large number of right-wing exiles from Cuba and Nicaragua control most of the Spanish-language news media here. They have been campaigning to support Reagan's proposal for \$100 million to arm the contras attacking Nicaragua. They organized a rally, reportedly of 3,000 people, last week in the West Miami suburb of Sweet Water.

Reagan, a self-proclaimed *contra*, addressed the rally on a live phone hookup.

Sweet Water, known as little Nicaragua, is where many cronies of ex-Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza live. It is also home to families of former Somoza National Guard officers who lead the U.S.-backed contra army seeking to overturn the Nicaraguan government.

Right-wingers mobilized by Spanish-language radio stations have tried unsuccessfully to break up three recent meetings here. The first, held at the North Miami campus of Florida International University, was a talk by Arnaldo Ramos, a representative of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front—Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador. A hundred people turned out for the meeting February 28, and no attacks took place despite the threats.

A March 7 meeting to hear the former

prime minister of Jamaica, Michael Manley, was also threatened. Again the meeting, held at the university's south campus, took place successfully.

A gang of 12 right-wingers did show up Sunday afternoon, March 16, outside Pathfinder Bookstore in the Haitian community of Miami to threaten a meeting of the Militant Labor Forum. This forum was a discussion on the role of women in the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean.

The right-wingers were accompanied by a car from WOTN "Union" radio, one of the right-wing Spanish-language stations. People attending the forum stood outside the building confronting the gang and after about 15 minutes the right-wingers left. The forum went on as scheduled.

The biggest test will be a noon demonstration at the Torch of Friendship in downtown Miami, Saturday, March 22. It is called to protest the U.S. war against Nicaragua. A news conference held at that site in 1983 to protest U.S. attacks against El Salvador was attacked and broken up by a right-wing mob with city officials and police looking on. But since then at least two antiwar protests have successfully taken place at the site.

The March 22 rally is already being denounced by right-wing radio stations, which urge people to attack the demonstration.

Barricada Internacional, the weekly official voice of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, is now available in Spanish and English. The price is 6 months for \$12. Send check or money order to: Barricada Internacional, Apdo. No. 576 Managua, Nicaragua.

Sri Lanka: democratic struggle of Tamil minority

BY MALIK MIAH

The "isle of paradise" is about a day's flight from New York. It is the home of the best tea in the world. It's beautiful — surely a place to have a nice vacation.

Its name: Sri Lanka.

Its location: the Indian Ocean, off the southern coast of India.

But for the vast majority of people on this island of 16 million, life is no paradise. The economy is in crisis, and the ruling government has declared a state of war against the minority Tamil population.

For the last decade, the Tamil people, who live mainly in the northern and eastern parts of the island, have been waging a determined struggle to protect their democratic rights. Decades of discrimination of the Sinhala-majority government has led to growing support among Tamils for the demand for a separate state — Tamil Eelam. (See accompanying article on the ethnic makeup of the country.)

Some separatist groups have armed themselves against the central government's military occupation of the predominantly Tamil provinces. Many groups have training bases in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu where nearly 50 million Tamils live.

The government of President J.R. Jayewardene of the United National Party (UNP) has pledged to militarily crush the democratic struggle of the Tamil people. His government has sent the army into much of the northern and eastern provinces. It has declared the area around the Jaffna Fort — Jaffna is the main city in the northern province — a military security zone. A 1,000-meter radius area is now a free-fire zone for the army. This is a residential area that has already come under military attack.

There are daily killings of Tamil "terrorists" — mainly civilians. All Tamils are considered potential terrorists. A prominent Tamil priest is currently on trial in Colombo for aiding "the boys," as the separatist militants are called in the Tamil community.

In the south, the government uses the war in the north and east to justify broadside attacks on trade unions and peasants and on the basic democratic rights of all working people — Tamils, Sinhalese, Muslims, and other ethnic groups. It is also used to explain away the declining economy.

There are daily banner headlines in the major Sinhalese and English-language press on the "Tamil threat." This chauvinist propaganda is mainly aimed at the majority Sinhalese population.

Sri Lanka is a semicolonial country. It won its independence from British colonial rule in 1948 but remains dominated by imperialism. This is reflected in its foreign debt, which is nearly 35 billion rupees (\$1.5 billion). Interest payments to the foreign banks now take up 25 percent of the country's export earnings. Sri Lanka's major trading partners are Britain, the United States, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

The government anticipates a 28.7 billion rupee (about \$1 billion) deficit in 1986. That's 14 percent of the gross domestic product. To make up the deficit, the government is raising taxes and imposing other austerity measures.

Who pays for this? Sri Lanka's workers and peasants — of all nationalities.

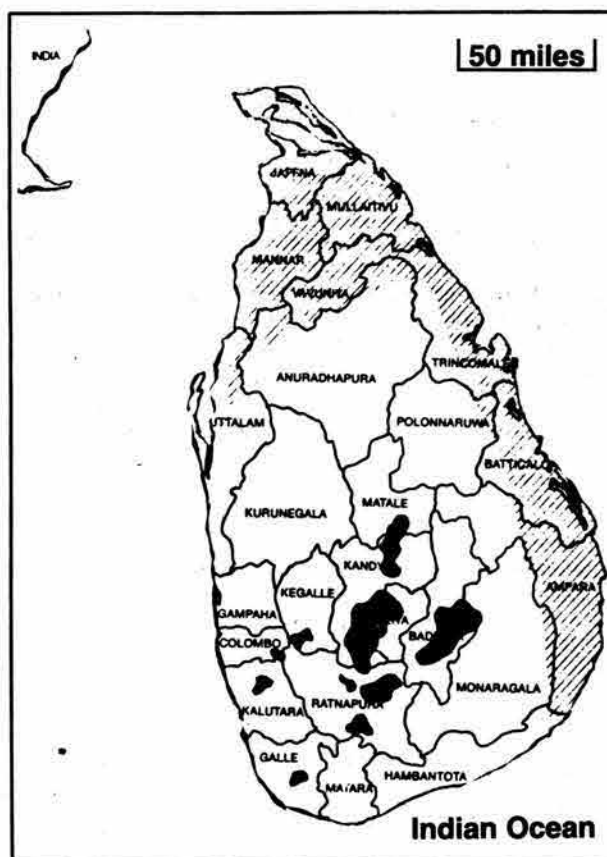
For example, the defense budget is 10 times what it was a decade ago. The government has also discussed levying a "national defense" tax on the wages of every employed person.

Official unemployment is around 15 percent, although this is difficult to confirm since the government no longer gives regular reports on employment. At least 40 percent of the population is underemployed.

In 1981 average annual per capita income was \$266. Most plantation workers earn much less. They are the worst-paid workers in the country.

Like many other Third World countries dominated by imperialism, Sri Lanka's foreign exchange is primarily based on export crops and tourism. Major exports include tea, coconut, spices, rubber, and gems. There is also an expanding fish-producing industry.

But in the last year, the price of tea — the major export earner — has dropped by 50 percent. The war in the northern and eastern provinces has led to a decline in rice — the basic diet of the people — and fish production.



Distribution of Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka: shaded areas, Ceylon Tamils; gray areas, Indian Tamils; white areas, Sinhalese.

These two provinces produce 25 percent of the rice and 40 percent of the country's annual fish production.

There has been a sharp decline in tourism. Visitor arrivals for the first seven months of 1985 were 149,000, down from 185,000 recorded in the comparable period in 1984.

In response to this economic crisis the current government has offered tax holidays and other incentives to foreign investors. A free trade zone has been established in Colombo. There, the workers have few rights and no unions and face terrible working conditions.

While the quality of life for the upper classes is improving, it is declining for workers and peasants.

Although the free education system has not been abolished by the government, the lack of jobs means there are tens of thousands of educated but unemployed youths. This is true for all major ethnic groups — Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims.

But educational and job opportunities for Tamils are declining because of government discrimination and the dislocation caused by the war. For example, the government's general per capita expenditure in the Jaffna District in the northern province is 313 rupees (\$12) while the national per capita expenditure is 656 (\$26).

It is estimated that there are between 85,000 and 200,000 Tamils living as refugees in southern India and another 10,000 to 40,000 in Western Europe.

The Tamils are made the scapegoats by the government. This encourages right-wing vigilante groups to attack Tamils. It undermines worker and peasant solidarity between all ethnic groups.

January visit

I experienced firsthand anti-Tamil discrimination during a recent visit to Sri Lanka in January. After arriving at Colombo's international airport, I bought several English-language dailies to orient myself. Each paper had a story about "terrorists" attacking the army, "terrorists" kidnapping someone, and so on.

Because I had a few hours to kill, I decided to take a city tour of Colombo — the commercial and political center of the country.

I hired a car — a Toyota — for a five-hour trip.

We traveled a winding road to Colombo. We went through several small towns — all bustling with activity. Catholic churches, Buddhist temples, Mosques, and Hindu temples lined the road.

I asked the taxi driver — a Sinhalese Catholic — why so many Catholic churches? The Portuguese, he replied. (Portugal occupied parts of the island in the 16th century.)

Everything was pleasant until we entered Colombo. At a bridge, an army patrol stopped our car to see who was inside.

Was I a Tamil?

Clearly not. We passed through.

A Muslim reporter for one of the major English-language dailies, *The Island*, told me later that such violations of civil rights go on all the time. It is to fight the "terrorists."

There is a siege mentality among many Sri Lankans. They feel threatened by neighboring India. "We have no place to go like them."

"We" are the Sinhalese; "they" are the Tamils.

Besides emigrants, the only Sinhalese in the world live in Sri Lanka. But, as Sinhalese chauvinists will tell you, there are millions of Tamils in India.

The Buddhist hierarchy propagates the lie that Sri Lanka must be Sinhalese to preserve the Buddhist religion. There is a fear that Tamils from the "north" — India — will invade the island.

The rulers fan the flames of anti-Tamil bigotry to maintain their domination of the country. The objective is to divert working people of all ethnic groups from fighting their common enemy — imperialism and the landlord-capitalist class — and establishing a nation-state where Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and other ethnic groups can live together.

The antidemocratic policies of the UNP government and its predecessors are learned from their former colonial rulers: Britain. It was during the colonial period that ethnic differences between different nationalities were encouraged.

It was the Christians (Catholics and Protestants) who were first pushed to top colonial administration posts. They received preferential treatment. They were the most educated and still are.

The Tamils working on the large estates in the hill areas in the interior were pitted against Sinhalese peasants who had lost their lands to make room for the plantations. While the condition of life for plantation workers was virtual slavery, most peasants blamed them for their loss of land.

And in the civil service, the British colonialists gave disproportionate representation to Tamils, who were more willing to learn English. This was done to blunt the Sinhala-led independence movement and undermine unity between Sinhalese and Tamils, who both fought for the use of their own languages instead of English.

Origin of Tamil struggle

The failure to forge a secular Ceylon — Sri Lanka since 1972 — is primarily rooted in this history of colonial and imperialist domination.

Through a mass struggle, the Sri Lankan people won their independence from British colonial rule in February 1948. Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims struggled together for independence. While religious and ethnic conflicts had existed, they were mainly at the instigation of the

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

British colonial rulers. There was no movement to establish two separate states as occurred in India with the formation of Pakistan in 1947.

But the mainly Sinhala bourgeois nationalists led by D.S. Senanayake — “father of Ceylon,” founder of the United National Party, and the country’s first prime minister — immediately moved to consolidate their rule. Established in the 1940s, the UNP was the leading capitalist party at the time. To establish its dominance, the UNP had to first corral an insurgent working-class leadership.

The Marxist left had grown during and after WWII because of its forceful anti-imperialist stand. It had led strikes and taken a strong position against Sinhala chauvinism and for secularism.

The strongest left party — the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) — was a revolutionary organization with a strong working-class base. In the 1947 general elections, the LSSP and other left parties won significant votes. The LSSP became the largest opposition party in parliament.

After independence was granted, D.S. Senanayake and the UNP moved to isolate the left and strengthen their hold over the state apparatus. Since much of the LSSP’s base was among industrial and agricultural workers, including among workers on the tea and rubber plantations, the UNP moved against these workers.

The plantation workers — the most exploited section of the working class — were in the main Tamils of Indian origin. They had been brought to the island by the British in the middle of the 19th century to work on the tea plantations. There was little overt hostility between the Sinhala peasants and Indian Tamil workers until the late 1920s. It was then that the British colonialists gave the Indian Tamils some legal rights.

While Sinhala chauvinists say Tamil and Sinhala people have always had communal conflicts, this is not true.

(Communalism here refers to the conflicts between Sinhala and Tamil communities, fueled by different religious outlooks. In this case, Buddhism and Hinduism.)

This communal hatred only developed with the rise of colonialism, and then it was mainly between dispossessed Sinhala peasants and super-exploited Indian Tamil workers who were a captive work force without rights. The Sinhala landlords and the British colonialists encouraged this misdirected hatred.

Indian Tamils denied citizenship

After independence, communal conflicts increased significantly. In 1948 and 1949 three laws were enacted that effectively denied citizenship to Tamils of Indian origin. For 20 years these mostly agricultural workers had had the right to vote under the British colonial system.

In his article “Ethnic Consciousness in Sri Lanka: Continuity and Change” reprinted in *Sri Lanka: The Ethnic Conflict, Myths, Realities and Perspectives*, Kumari Jayawardena writes: “The Ceylon Citizenship Act provided that citizenship was to be determined either by descent or by stringent conditions of registration, including proof of three generations of paternal ancestry in Sri Lanka, but providing for citizenship to be conferred by



Workers on tea plantations are most exploited section of working class in Sri Lanka. Majority are Indian Tamils, who were brought to island by British in mid-19th century to work on plantations.

the government on persons for distinguished service to the professions, commerce, etc.”

A special electoral act, also adopted, said only citizens could vote. This disenfranchised the largest section of the working class — Indian Tamils.

In the next parliamentary elections in 1952, all Indian Tamil representatives lost their seats. The UNP swept the elections.

The Ceylon Workers Congress, which organizes the mostly Indian Tamil plantation workers, and the left-wing parties lost most of their seats.

In December 1948 Ceylon Tamils formed the Federal Party. Its leaders were mainly from Colombo’s middle class. The Federal Party sought to defend the rights of the entire Tamil minority. Initially it had little influence.

The citizenship laws turned out to be only the opening shot in the drive to limit the rights of Tamils. In September 1951 S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike split from the UNP to form the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) — an openly pro-Sinhala party. It based itself on Sri Lanka nationalism — that is, Sinhalese nationalism. The SLFP appealed primarily to the exploited Sinhala peasants and the urban middle class. While saying it still favored a secular Ceylon, it screamed that Tamils and other minorities had more privileges than the Sinhalese. The SLFP leaders were backed by sections of the Buddhist clergy, who demanded state control of the schools — but under their guidance.

The SLFP’s chauvinist appeal got a good hearing. The left parties were too weak to counter the reactionary campaign.

Tapping the progressive, anti-colonialist, nationalist sentiments of the Sinhala workers and peasants, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party launched a campaign to eliminate

English as the language of government administration.

This campaign was not to replace English with Tamil and Sinhala on an equal status as national languages in line with Sri Lanka being a secular state. Instead, the SLFP called for “Sinhala-only” as the state language.

This chauvinist campaign undermined Tamil and Sinhala unity and encouraged communal hatred. It was a blow to real solidarity.

In the 1956 parliamentary elections, an SLFP-led coalition won the majority of seats, mainly on its “Sinhala-only” campaign. The UNP was seen as too secular.

One of the SLFP’s first acts after taking over the government was to get a law adopted making Sinhala the official state language.

Rise of Tamil nationalism

Since most Tamils could not speak Sinhala, this decision caused a deep wound in the society. Sinhala-only not only discriminated against Tamil workers and peasants, but all classes of Tamils.

The Tamil capitalists, middle class, and workers and farmers rejected the view that Sri Lankan nationalism included all people of the country. Sri Lanka is the Sinhalese name for the country.

Immediately after the Sinhala-only law was adopted, riots broke out across the island.

The Federal Party in August 1956 issued a call for autonomy for the northern and eastern provinces under a federal constitution, parity of status for Sinhala and Tamil languages, and citizen rights for Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin.

This was not the first time the Federal Party called for autonomy. K.M. De Silva writes in *A History of Sri Lanka*: “As early as 1951, at its first national convention, the Federal Party asserted that ‘Tamil-speaking people in Ceylon constituted a nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every fundamental test of nationhood’ and in particular stressed the ‘separate historical past’ of the Tamils and their linguistic unity and distinctiveness.”

From 1956 onward the Tamil question became the central political issue in Sri Lanka. Should Sri Lanka be a secular country? Or, should it be secular with a Sinhala and Buddhist bias?

The Sinhala-dominated landlord-capitalist ruling class refused to bend on the language question. Each government — whether led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party or the United National Party — refused to give the Tamil language equal status to Sinhala.

And whenever the Tamil people sought to press their just demands, state terror or extralegal violence was used against them. In 1958 a pogrom was organized against Tamils. This became the pattern thereafter.

In 1961, for example, after the Sri Lanka Freedom Party-led coalition won the elections again, it declared a state of emergency in the northern and eastern provinces. The Tamils and Muslims there had been protesting government language policies.

The SLFP had promised before the elections to make some compromise on the Sinhala-only law. The Federal Party had backed them for taking that stand.

But the SLFP’s election promise meant nothing. There was no compromise. Anti-Tamil chauvinism increased.

The LSSP — once a revolutionary party and an affiliate of the Fourth International, a world Marxist organization — succumbed to Sinhala chauvinism in the early 1960s when it joined an SLFP-led government. (It was expelled from the Fourth International for doing so.)

The capitulation of the traditional left to Sinhala chauvinism left a void in working-class leadership. No mass party existed that supported a democratic, secular Sri Lanka.

The main Tamil organizations remained the Federal Party and the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC). Each sought to maneuver with the UNP and SLFP to gain more influence and limit the attacks on Tamil rights.

The Federal Party’s base was in the northern and eastern provinces. It raised two demands: regional autonomy and citizenship rights for Indian Tamils.

The CWC, which also functions like a party, is based on the Indian Tamil plantation workers. There are more than a half million plantation workers — the largest section of the working class. The CWC pressed for citizenship rights for stateless Tamils. It did not favor autonomy.

The CWC’s president, S. Thondaman, traditionally maneuvered the CWC between the UNP and SLFP to increase his political influence.

Since 1948 the Sri Lankan government has pressed India to repatriate Indian Tamils, whom Sri Lanka declared stateless. The first of three agreements on this issue were made by the two governments in 1964. In his book on Sri Lanka, K.M. De Silva, a prominent academic, writes, “The agreement . . . provided for the repatriation over a 15-year period of 525,000 Indian residents in Sri Lanka to India, along with their natural increase, and the absorption of 300,000 as citizens of Sri Lanka; the future of the remaining 150,000 was to be negotiated later by the two countries.”

The SLFP government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike,

Continued on ISR/4

Peoples of island-nation of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island-nation off the southern coast of India. It has 16 million people. Of these, there are several ethnic groups: Sinhalas and Tamils are the largest; additionally there are Muslims (Moors) and Burghers.

The original inhabitants of the island were subdued by North Indian invaders several thousand years ago. Their descendants are the Sinhalese, who are divided between low country Sinhalese and Kandyan Sinhalese. The latter refers to the Sinhalese in the mountainous area in central Sri Lanka where the last Sinhala kingdom existed.

Immigrants from South India also came to the island more than one thousand years ago. Their descendants are known as Ceylon Tamils. (Until 1972 Sri Lanka was named Ceylon.)

In the mid-19th century the British’ rulers brought another group of Tamils to the island to work on the tea plantations. They are known as Indian Tamils.

Today 75 percent of the people are Sinhalese; 18 percent Tamil (12 percent Ceylon Tamil and 6 percent Indian Tamil).

The Ceylon Tamils live throughout the island but are concentrated in the northern and eastern provinces and in Colombo, which is the capital, as well as the financial and political center of the country.

Indian Tamils remain mostly plantation workers living in the Kandy region and southern Sri Lanka. (See map on ISR page 1.)

The official language is Sinhala. But few Tamils speak that language. They speak their own language, Tamil. Few Sinhalese speak Tamil.

In addition, there are communal (religious) differences between the two main ethnic groups. Nearly 70 percent

of the Sinhala believe in the Buddhist religion, which is the de facto state religion. Most Tamils follow the Hindu faith. Other Sinhalese and Tamils are Roman Catholic or Protestant Christians — about 7 percent of the population.

The next largest ethnic group is the Muslims. They are descendants of a mixture of Arab and Malay immigrants and the Tamils and Sinhalese. They’ve lived on the island for centuries and are 7 percent of the population.

Because they are primarily Tamil-speaking, many Muslims live in Tamil areas but are distributed all over the country.

The Burghers are a mixture of Sri Lankan people and the former Portuguese, Dutch, and English colonialists and are less than 1 percent of the population.

The Portuguese occupied part of the island beginning in 1505. The Dutch replaced them as colonial rulers in 1658. The British seized the territory in 1796. Sri Lanka won its independence in 1948.

Nearly half the population is active in agricultural production — either as plantation workers or as farmers. The chief crops are tea, coconuts, rice, spices, and rubber.

Twenty-nine percent of the workforce is involved in industrial and commercial production. The working class is highly organized, with more than 1,200 unions.

Less than 25 percent of the population lives in urban areas. The Greater Colombo area has more than 1 million people.

Sri Lanka has one of the highest literacy rates in the Third World at 86 percent. — M.M.

Namibia's fight for independence: speech by leader of South West Africa People's Organization

The following speech was given Oct. 14, 1985, by Andimba Toivo ja Toivo. Ja Toivo is secretary-general of the South West Africa People's Organization.

The speech was delivered in Toronto, Canada, to a conference on "Strategies for Change," attended by Black lawyers, judges, and others in the legal field.

The South West Africa People's Organization leads the struggle of Namibia's 1.5 million people for independence. Namibia, which has a common border with Angola to the north and South Africa to the south, has been occupied and ruled as a colony by the South African rulers since they seized it from German colonial rulers in World War I.

In 1957 Andimba Toivo ja Toivo and a group of Namibian students and migrant workers formed the Ovamboland People's Organization.

In 1960 the Ovamboland People's Organization changed its name to South West Africa People's Organization, reflecting the orientation toward building a nationwide independence movement.

In 1966 SWAPO began carrying out an armed struggle against the apartheid regime.

The next year Ja Toivo and 37 other Namibian patriots were placed on trial in the South African capital city of Pretoria under the Terrorism Act. The act had become law days before and was made retroactive to 1962 to facilitate prosecution of the independence fighters.

In an effort to force a confession from Ja Toivo, he was deprived of sleep, severely beaten, and tortured.

In February 1968 Ja Toivo and eight others were sentenced to 20 years at hard labor. Twenty were sentenced to life imprisonment, and five received suspended sentences.

For 16 years Ja Toivo was held in the Robben Island prison.

He and four other SWAPO leaders were transferred to Windhoek central prison in 1984. Windhoek is the capital of Namibia. Soon after, Ja Toivo was released.

Shortly thereafter, Ja Toivo was elected to SWAPO's Central Committee and then chosen secretary-general. He works closely with SWAPO President Sam Nujoma.

The speech that follows is reprinted from the November 1985 issue of the *SWAPO Information Bulletin*, published in Luanda, Angola, by the SWAPO Department of Information and Publicity.

You have invited me here today in order for us to map out strategies for change in the governmental policies in your countries and the struggle for liberation in southern Africa. Your invitation affords me a unique opportunity to personally thank you all for the noble fight that you have put up, at both national and international levels, for the release of political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia. My being here today is a result of your untiring fight over the years; and for this I would like to express my deep gratitude to you all.

In this connection, I would like to urge you, brothers and sisters, to continue demanding for the release of Comrade Nelson Mandela and all other South African and Namibian political prisoners. If we can succeed to force the apartheid state to release all political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia, we will be a step closer to our final goal of bringing an end to colonialism in Namibia and apartheid oppression in South Africa.

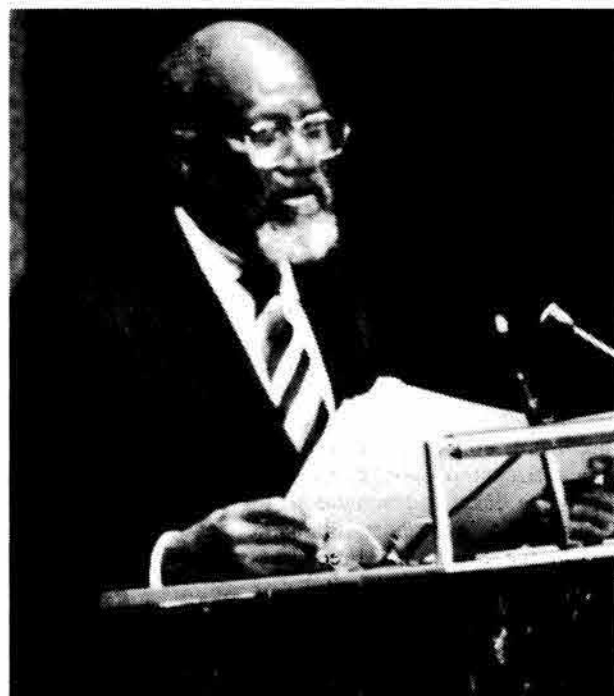
This conference is taking place at a critical time when the struggle for liberation in southern Africa has reached great intensity.

Over the past 13 months the world has witnessed the intensification of a popular revolt against the apartheid system in South Africa. You have all seen films on your television of how the masses of the people of South Africa are bravely coming out in their thousands to confront the racist and brutal South African troops and police. The unprecedented courage with which the people of South Africa are opposing apartheid fascism in the face of death is in itself a clear testimony of the fact that the time to act in order to destroy the apartheid crime against humanity has come.

The challenge for progressive mankind to give all-round support to the struggling people of South Africa must be faced now.

Namibia and struggle against apartheid

I would like to make one important fact clear; that the struggle to dismantle the apartheid system is inextricably linked with our own struggle to put an end to colonialism in Namibia. The two struggles are not contradictory but rather complementary to each other; and as such, must be carried out and supported concurrently. It is, for instance, obvious that in the face of mounting and sustained attacks at home and intensified international pressure for political isolation and economic sanctions, racist



South West Africa People's Organization Secretary-general Andimba Toivo ja Toivo speaking at United Nations General Assembly debate on Namibia in November 1984.

South Africa will not be able to hold on to Namibia for much longer. Its human and material resources are not unlimited.

Upon realization that its human and material resources are being overstretched, the apartheid regime will be forced to pull out of Namibia in order to try to defend itself within its borders. It is also important to recognize that one way of hastening the collapse of the apartheid state in South Africa is to cut off its weak links, and Pretoria's control over Namibia is one such weak link.

Namibia's occupation affords racist South Africa an additional source of vital natural resources and a strategic buffer zone. South Africa is exploiting Namibia's uranium, diamonds, tin, silver, lead, zinc, and several other strategic minerals which the apartheid republic does not itself produce in the required amount for its industries. Namibia's uranium and natural gas are among the vital strategic resources which Pretoria needs in its ambitions to develop nuclear weapons and to achieve self-sufficiency in energy.

In strategic terms, the occupation of Namibia provides racist South Africa with a sense of security that it still has a wider defense perimeter. The advance of the movement for national liberation in our region, which has found its expression in the independence of Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe over the last ten years, has caused a profound emotional shock among the white minority racists of South Africa. They have since been suffered a sense of encirclement by hostile countries. Their loss of control over Namibia will certainly aggravate their trauma, as it will bring home to them more clearly the emerging signs of doom in southern Africa. Also, independent Namibia, which will be born of a bitter and bloody struggle against the same white racist minority, will, no doubt, join the ranks of the Frontline States¹ and will play its part in support of the struggle of the people of South Africa.

It is in the light of this that we in SWAPO consider it erroneous and short-sighted for some of the solidarity organizations here in America to try to support one of these

1. The Frontline States is a group composed of the governments of six countries near South Africa. They are Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

two struggles to the exclusion of the other. What is needed is a strategy which enables all the solidarity organizations in the Americas and elsewhere to simultaneously support the peoples of Namibia and South Africa to attack the racist state on all fronts, weaken it from all angles, and thereby hasten its defeat.

On the current stage of the struggle in Namibia, I would like to point out that the resistance to apartheid colonialism in Namibia continues to be perpetrated on both political and military fronts. On the political front, SWAPO activists are organizing the broad masses of our people to oppose Pretoria's puppet schemes. Although our movement is not allowed to hold public meetings and rallies, SWAPO cadres have been able to mobilize the oppressed people of Namibia to reject puppet institutions that racist South Africa has created and is trying to impose on us. Our people, therefore, understand that these institutions are intended to serve the colonial interests of South Africa. SWAPO has worked hard to make the Namibian people recognize that only genuine self-determination and national independence will enable them to democratize our society and eliminate the existing racial and class privileges.

This political work by SWAPO is being carried out in the mines, factories, schools, townships, and villages across Namibia; and it is due to this political work that Pretoria's puppets in Namibia are isolated from the people and rendered inconsequential. Our people are therefore steadfastly demanding for the immediate implementation of the UN plan for the independence of Namibia whose main provision is UN-supervised elections to enable our people to choose their own leaders.

It is not the puppets of South Africa but SWAPO which holds the actual political sway over the minds and actions of the broad masses of the Namibian people. This is the obvious reason why South Africa is refusing to agree to the holding of UN-supervised elections in Namibia.

Protracted liberation struggle

Because of this mass political support, SWAPO has been able to wage a protracted armed liberation struggle over the last 19 years. When the armed struggle started in 1966, the South African government announced that it was going to send police units into Namibia to wipe out a small band of SWAPO "terrorists." But, what was supposed to be a few days of police work turned out to be 19 years of a costly war. South Africa has since been forced to deploy more than 100,000 troops in our country in a desperate attempt to reverse the tide of the liberation struggle by the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the military wing of SWAPO. Pretoria has also been forced to spend more than 2 billion American dollars annually in a futile attempt to maintain its colonial hold on our country.

The combatants of the PLAN have not only broadened the zone of armed confrontation in Namibia, but are also successfully pinning down Pretoria's massive army of occupation. They are making daily direct attacks on South African military bases and camps, ambushing enemy convoys, and planting landmines on the roads used by racist military vehicles.

Our freedom fighters are also carrying out extensive sabotage actions, blowing up rail lines, bridges, roads, enemy communication networks, electricity and telephone pylons, petrol stations, and water pumps. Over the last five years, PLAN fighters have extended the war of liberation to the north central part of Namibia which used to be the heartland of the colonial settlers' cattle-ranching industry. Terrified settler farmers have been forced to flee their properties in order to seek sanctuary in towns. Many others have left the country to live elsewhere. The official figure given by the occupation regime in our country is that more than 4,000 colonial settlers have already left the country.

Colonial economy in decline

Furthermore, the armed struggle in Namibia has created a sense of uncertainty and insecurity among the foreign and local investors. Many are scared to invest their money in a country whose immediate political future seems uncertain. As a result, investments have been drying up, and the colonial economy in Namibia has sharply declined in recent years. This has affected the standard of living of the colonial settlers. The decline of the economy has led to widespread unemployment estimated at 30 percent. Thus the decline in the population's buying power. In other words, the armed struggle in Namibia has punched irreparable holes in the socio-economic structure of occupied Namibia.

Similarly, the war in Namibia has significantly exacerbated South Africa's current financial and economic

Continued on ISR/6

Interview with leaders of Sri Lanka civil rights group

The following are excerpts from an interview with Ainsley Samarajiwa and Redley Silva. It concerns the political activity of the Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE), a civil rights organization based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Samarajiwa is an attorney and vice-president of MIRJE. Silva is the secretary of the organization.

MIRJE was formed in 1979 and stated its aims as promoting "inter-racial justice and equality, in accordance with the following principles:

- "1. Equality of all rights among the various racial and linguistic groups in the country.
- "2. Opposition to communalism and racial injustice and discrimination in all their overt and covert forms.
- "3. Opposition in the area of inter-racial relationships to all anti-democratic policies and procedures of government, all repressive legislation and repressive action of security forces.
- "4. Upholding in the area of inter-racial relationships of democratic and civil rights and human liberties.
- "5. Upholding of the rights to full and free citizenship of all the people of this country, including the Tamil people on the plantations and elsewhere.
- "6. Opposition to racial discrimination against estate workers and others in the fields of employment, education, housing, and health.
- "7. Fostering the union of workers and peasants of all races in the struggle for inter-racial justice and equality."

Militant editor Malik Miah interviewed Samarajiwa and Silva at MIRJE's Colombo office on January 16.

* * *

Question. Could you explain what MIRJE is and why it was formed?

Ainsley Samarajiwa. MIRJE stands for the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality. We have about 750 to 800 members. Most are in the Colombo area. We have a group in Jaffna, which is quite active.

At the moment our staff works here in this little office in Colombo. We try to monitor cases of injustice and cases of hardship suffered by people belonging to a particular race.

We also have a legal-assistance program because a large number of people are being held without trial. Many are brought before the high court on indictments.

I'm the convenor of the legal-assistance program. We have about 25 lawyers who have agreed to give their services. Some of them absolutely gratis and others at a very modest fee.

We also publish *Justice* in English and Sinhala.

Q. Is Justice published in Tamil?

Samarajiwa. I'm afraid not. Of course, in Jaffna, the branch publishes their own publications. We need to do a publication in Tamil here.

Silva. Our main task, because we are based in the south among the Sinhala people, is to fight against the communalism, the chauvinism of the Sinhala people.

We aim to convince them through our propaganda and agitational work of the need for a political solution to the Tamil question. We try to educate the Sinhala that Tamils are citizens of this country, and they must be treated equally.

We also oppose the discriminatory actions of the government. For example, the colonization of Tamil areas with Sinhala settlers.

We also question Sinhala being the only official language in the country. The Tamil language is not recognized as an official language. This leads to various difficulties for the Tamil youth getting jobs, getting promotions, and going to universities.

Q. Is Tamil taught in the schools?

Samarajiwa. As a medium of instruction, it's found even here in Colombo. Of course, it's used in the Tamil areas.

But that's not all there is to it. As long as Tamil occupies the second position, and Sinhala — the language of the majority — is the only official language, there will always be a disadvantage to the Tamils.

Silva. There is also the issue of religion — the constitutional recognition given to Buddhism as the religion of the state. Hinduism and other religions are not given that status in the Constitution.

This again is discriminatory. All these things contribute towards Tamils being alienated from the state.

Q. MIRJE supports a political solution to the ethnic problem. Could you explain what you mean by a political solution?

Silva. We don't agree with the government's military solution — their attempt to suppress what they call "terrorism."

We don't call them terrorists. We refer to them as militants. They are fighting for a cause. They are fighting for their rights in the face of government repression by its security forces.

When we call for a political solution, we are against sending the armed forces to the northern and eastern provinces. We are against army occupation there.

We say the government should discuss with the political leaderships, the leaderships of the armed groups, and the political parties of the Tamil people. It should arrive at a political solution that is agreeable to them.

Q. Has the government harassed MIRJE?

Samarajiwa. Well, our former secretary is now in prison.

Q. Why was he arrested?

Samarajiwa. He was arrested because he was suspected of belonging to a party that has taken an antigovernment stance.

But that's not a justification. This is supposed to be a five-star democracy according to our president.

He has been in prison now for nearly two months. And there is no indictment. He's just being interrogated and kept in a police cell.

Silva. The government is not in favor of what we are trying to do. The government wants to maintain its political support base and doesn't want to do anything that will erode its political support among the Sinhala masses.

We, as MIRJE, are trying to build inter-racial justice and equality. This puts us in conflict with the government's discrimination against the Tamils.

We organize public meetings to do this. We have had public meetings with political parties on the need for a political solution to the ethnic problem.

We distribute leaflets. We agitate for our views. That's why we constantly come into contact with the police and the CID.

We defend the rights of the Tamil minority.

Samarajiwa. The real terrorists are the army and the security forces. We should be afraid of them, not the militants.

State terrorism is the problem.

Tamil people's struggle for self-determination in Sri Lanka

Continued from ISR/2

widow of the party's founder, however, decided to implement the agreement in such a way as to cause an explosion. The government decided to put all persons of Indian origin — those who had already obtained Sri Lankan citizenship, as well as those who were entitled to it under the 1964 agreement — on a separate electoral register.

Tamil leaders called the government's actions discriminatory. Antigovernment protests were organized.

The UNP decided to oppose the registration. In the 1965 elections the UNP was put back in office. The Tamil vote was decisive.

Once back in office, the UNP dropped the registration and adopted provisions for the "reasonable" use of the Tamil language. This was done to live up to a promise made to Tamil organizations.

The UNP government, however, refused to grant the Federal Party's main demand: for regional autonomy in the northern and eastern provinces. The UNP said that an integrated Sri Lanka can only be based on a Sinhala-dominated state.

A turning point in modern Sri Lankan history occurred with the 1970 elections where a United Front coalition

government of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the LSSP, and the Communist Party was elected to office. This "popular" government nationalized the tea plantations and initially carried out some widely supported measures. But its main accomplishment was to deepen the divisions between Tamils and Sinhalese.

The government's brutal crushing of a youth revolt led by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in 1971 exposed the phoniness of the LSSP's and CP's "socialism." It also was a warning to Tamils favoring autonomy.

The United Front government's adoption of a new Sinhala chauvinist constitution in 1972 brought this home. The new constitution gave the government sweeping emergency powers that would be used to curtail democratic rights. The government undemocratically extended the life of parliament by two years until 1977.

The new constitution also explicitly stated: "The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism."

Soon after the constitution was adopted, the main Tamil opposition groups formed an alliance called the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). It included the

Federal Party and the Ceylon Workers Congress — thus uniting the major groups representing Indian and Ceylon Tamils.

But the alliance didn't last long.

The CWC, led by Thondaman, was wooed away by the United National Party — now in opposition to the SLFP-led government. The UNP promised to remedy the grievances of stateless Indian Tamils and upgrade the status of the Tamil language once returned to office.

The UNP's 1977 election manifesto also promised to summon an all-party conference to discuss these issues and pledged to implement the conference's decisions.

The CWC had never favored the Federal Party's, now TULF's, call for autonomy for the northern and eastern provinces. Most Indian Tamils lived in areas surrounded by Sinhala people. They were a minority. The CWC's main demand had always been for citizenship rights for its members without papers.

Shift to Eelam

For Ceylon Tamils, the years of discrimination by the Sinhala-majority government made the issue of autonomy and self-determination more central. From 1973 to 1977 militant Tamil nationalism significantly increased.

The bourgeois nationalist leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front made a historic shift in its position in 1976. At their convention that year, a resolution was adopted "to restore and reconstitute the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of Tamil Eelam."

The TULF ran on this separatist platform in the 1977 parliamentary elections, winning the overwhelming majority of votes in the northern province and a simple majority in the eastern province. The TULF became the largest opposition party in the parliament. The UNP became the governing party, routing the SLFP-led United Front coalition.

The new government of J.R. Jayewardene lived up to one of its pre-election promises by enacting two laws: recognizing Tamil as a national language while maintaining Sinhala as the official state language; and abolishing the distinction between citizens by descent and by registration.

Continued on next page



Sri Lankan government is trying to militarily crush democratic struggle of Tamil people. Right, troops on patrol in Jaffna in northern province where Ceylon Tamils are concentrated. Left, Tamil guerrilla fighters in training.



Continued from previous page

These moves led S. Thondaman, president of the CWC, to join the government in 1978 as Minister of Rural Industrial Development. It was the first time such a prominent and powerful Indian Tamil had joined a government since independence.

But Jayewardene's government made no similar moves to grant a second demand: regional autonomy.

The majority of Tamils in the north and east became more militant as a result of this "betrayal." Most Tamils had voted for the UNP. They became disillusioned in the central government's intentions to ever grant autonomy or even protect their civil rights.

This affected the leadership of the TULF, which for three decades had been primarily based on Ceylon Tamils in Colombo. The radicalization of the Tamil population increased pressure for self-determination and led to a shift in leadership from Colombo to Jaffna in the north.

The UNP used its big majority in parliament — 140 out of 168 members of parliament — and its alliance with the CWC to draft its own sweeping new constitution in 1978. The objective was to give even more power to the central government. The new constitution established a presidential system. A prime minister and parliament would remain, as existed since 1948, but with less powers.

Ceylon Tamils took this new constitution as another attack on their democratic rights. They felt they were being isolated in their own country. Discrimination was on the rise.

Jayewardene was sworn in as president in 1978. In 1982 the parliament voted to extend its term six years to 1989. This was narrowly ratified in a national referendum later in the same year.

From all indications, the central government was digging in, not planning to concede any rights to Ceylon Tamils.

Armed struggle launched

It was in this context in the late 1970s that Tamil separatist groups began to grow and launched the armed struggle for Tamil Eelam — an independent Tamil country.

There are five armed groups. Four are in the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF): the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO). The fifth group is the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE).

The mainly parliamentary Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) has no armed wing.

Last July the six groups participated in talks with the Sri Lankan government in Thimphu, Bhutan. This was a few weeks after a fragile cease-fire was agreed to January 18 by the Tamil groups and the Sri Lankan government. The talks were arranged by the Indian government.

The meeting lasted for six days but did not resolve any issues.

The talks resumed again in August but collapsed when the six Tamil groups walked out to protest an army massacre of Tamils in Vavuniya and Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.

At the first round of talks, however, the six Tamil groups set out four basic principles on which any solution should be based: recognition of Tamils as a nationality, their right to self-determination, their right to a homeland, and citizenship rights for Indian Tamils who had made Sri Lanka their home.

The government refuses to discuss their demands. Its decision to participate in talks reflects the general sentiment in Sri Lanka for a political solution. This is true for Sinhalese workers and farmers, as well as Tamils and Muslims.

The government maintains that terrorists only understand state violence. In 1979 the government adopted a Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), giving it the authority to violate basic democratic rights.

Under this dictatorial law, the government can arrest and detain anyone on suspicion of being a "terrorist," without access to lawyers or relatives, for up to 18 months. There is no formal charge, no jury.

In 1983 the UNP government amended the constitution. The new Sixth Amendment outlaws the demand for separatism and requires all members of parliament to disavow support for Eelam.

The 15 TULF members of parliament refused and its central leaders went into exile in Madras, India.

Less than a year later, government-inspired mobs launched an anti-Tamil pogrom. More than 2,000 people were murdered. Tamil businesses were burned. Homes were attacked. Tamil unionists were chased down.

Members of the government's thug-run "trade union," the JSS, led the assault. This so-called union hardly existed until the UNP took office in 1977.

After the 1983 pogrom, tens of thousands of Tamils — Indian and Ceylonese — became refugees. Many went abroad to India and Europe; others were placed in settlements in Sri Lanka.



In 1983, government-inspired mobs carried out pogrom against Tamils. More than 2,000 were murdered. Here, street in capital city of Colombo where hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed. After pogrom, tens of thousands of Tamils became refugees.

Many Tamils look to the Indian government to place pressure on the Sri Lankan government to protect their rights. The Indian government has been critical of reactionary attacks on Tamil rights and has told the Jayewardene government its concerns.

The ruling Congress Party of India feels pressure from the 50 million Tamils in the state of Tamil Nadu, as well as the fact that Sri Lanka has been an important ally in the region. Sri Lanka, like India, was a founding member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Nations. It still remains in that body despite the UNP's proimperialist tilt, which includes military ties with the Israeli government. The Israeli army provides counterinsurgency training with the nod of the U.S. government.

Also, India is opposed to the breakup of Sri Lanka for its national interests. It is concerned about its own internal ethnic and communal problems and the impact of an independent Tamil state on the region as a whole.

At the same time, the Indian rulers approach the question pragmatically, just as they did with the breakup of Pakistan in 1971 with the formation of Bangladesh. They supported Bangladesh once it became clear it was not going to be crushed by Pakistan.

The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, is maintaining its firm resistance to the movement for self-determination in the northern and eastern provinces. It not only rejects Eelam, but regional autonomy too.

Jayewardene made this position crystal clear in a number of interviews with the major Indian press in January. In an interview with *Hindu*, for example, he said: "We want a political solution. But you can't have a political solution with terrorists. This is a military problem. They seek a military solution."

In a speech to parliament, UNP leader Cyril Matthew explained: "Terrorism cannot be stopped and has never been stopped by the means of the law. Terrorism has been stopped by terrorism. In no other way is it possible. . . . Terrorists have to be killed because they are terrorists. They are like mad dogs and no better than that."

There is general agreement in the Sri Lankan ruling class on Jayewardene's policy in opposing Tamil rights. The capitalist opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party's criticism of the government is that it isn't defending the interests of the Sinhala majority effectively. The former prime minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, even says she has a solution to the "troubles," but won't reveal them unless new parliamentary elections are called.

In line with its divide-and-rule policy, the UNP-led government continues to collaborate with the Ceylon Workers Congress. In January it reached a third agreement on the stateless Indian Tamil issue — a main demand of the CWC.

The new agreement — once implemented — will grant citizenship to 94,000 Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin.

In 1964 it was estimated that there were 975,000 estate workers without citizenship. Sri Lanka had agreed to grant citizenship to 375,000 and India to 600,000. But 94,000 Indian Tamils refused to be uprooted.

A significant aspect of this new pact is it came after S. Thondaman's CWC threatened a three-month work stoppage to "pray" for peace and an end to the problem of statelessness. This action not only would have harmed production but the fragile alliance between the CWC and UNP.

In spite of the stepped-up state terror in the north and east, the separatist groups continue to gain support.

"We are now stronger and more confident than before," said a leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. He explained that the guerrilla groups now have 40 military bases scattered across the northern and eastern provinces.

At the same time, most working people — Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims — favor a negotiated settlement. There is growing pressure on the government to reach a political solution.

This pressure is one reason why basic democratic rights still exist in the southern parts of the country. The Prevention of Terrorism Act is used, but very selectively. Trade unions can meet; meetings are held.

Democratic rights organizations can have public offices and distribute anti-government newspapers.

MIRJE

In Colombo, for instance, a civil rights organization — the Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) — is campaigning for the release of all political prisoners and for "the government, all political forces and mass organizations to reinforce and strengthen the drive toward a negotiated and just political solution."

MIRJE is mainly composed of Sinhalese democrats in the southern part of the country. It puts out Sinhala and English-language publications. Supporters include leaders of a number of trade unions, Christian organizations, and left groups, as well as academics. (See accompanying interview with two MIRJE leaders.)

There are two important trade union coalitions calling for a political solution to the Tamil liberation war. They are the Group of 21 Trade Union Organizations and the 12 Joint Trade Union Action Committee Organizations. The former includes unions led by or closely tied to the reformist LSSP and Communist Party, as well as trade unions led by more radical leaderships such as the Ceylon Mercantile Union.

The "12 trade unions" front's leading union is the Government Clerical Service Union (GCSU), which led the 1980 aborted general strike that was defeated by the government.

The Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), which organizes clerical and industrial workers, is one of the strongest unions in the country, with nearly 30,000 members. It has branches across the country including in Tamil areas.

Its general secretary, Bala Tampoe, himself a Ceylon Tamil, is also a prominent civil rights lawyer. He is presently defending a Tamil Catholic priest for aiding the Tamil militants. The government is attempting to use this widely publicized trial to show the world that Tamil priests are really "terrorists."

On the stance of the CMU to the struggle in the north and east, Tampoe explained: "We have a duty to speak on behalf of the working class and guide others by taking a clear stand on the rights of the Tamil-speaking minorities (Tamil and Muslim) to determine freely for themselves the way in which to govern their own destinies and to develop themselves economically, culturally, and socially."

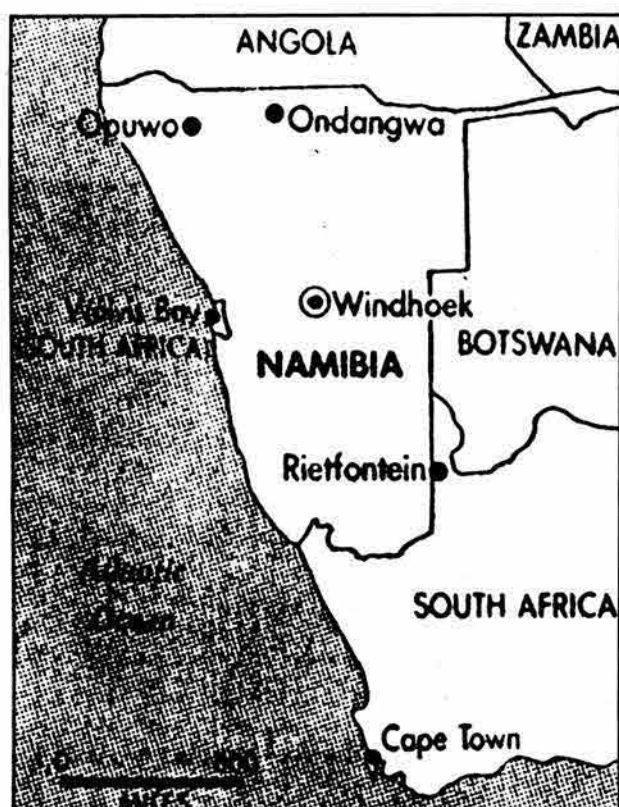
"We are not going to run away from this country," he added. "We must continue to be in the forefront to defend democratic rights and human rights, as we have always done."

The strong solidarity for Tamil democratic rights within a section of the union movement is a factor in how far the government is able to go in its terror campaign against the Tamil people.

The U.S. government is concerned about Sri Lanka's unity. The official U.S. position is that the Sri Lankan government is responsible for any just grievances the Tamil people may have. But U.S. officials add that, in their view, Tamils are not persecuted by the government. U.S. officials point to the number of Tamils in government, the courts, and other state institutions.

Working people internationally should solidarize with the just, democratic struggle of the Tamil people and oppose the terrorist war of the Sri Lankan government.

Namibian independence struggle: speech by SWAPO leader



Continued from ISR/3

crises. The war has also begun to expose some of the weaknesses inherent in the South African army. For example, there is widespread frustration, born of many years of waging a war which Pretoria can never win. The casualty levels among the white South African soldiers have also become high, increasing the rate of desertion from the racist army. Thousands of young white South Africans are leaving their country, and Namibia, for self-imposed exile in Western Europe and North America in order to avoid being drafted to fight in Namibia. Many others are serving prison terms for their refusal to go from military service in Namibia.

Draft dodging and desertion from the South African army is, moreover, aggravating Pretoria's already acute defense manpower situation. Over 50 percent of South Africa's white male population between the ages of 17 and 55 is engaged in some form of security and defense activity. But a big number of them is also badly needed to perform jobs that are reserved for whites only in the South African economy. As a consequence of this acute manpower problem, South Africa was increasingly forced to use mercenaries in its military operation in Namibia. The futility is, however, obvious for any nation which tries to rely on the use of mercenaries for its defense.

These stresses and strains of the racist South African army are bound to become even more obvious in the months to come because, in addition to the 100,000 troops deployed on the Namibian battlefield, Pretoria has recently been forced to deploy some 10,000 more troops to deal with the escalating mass uprising in the African townships across South Africa. This new situation is overstretching the regime's defense line, which now extends over 3,200 kilometers, from the Atlantic Ocean, cutting across the borders of Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, to the Indian Ocean.

South Africa's inability, over the last 25 years, to check SWAPO's preponderant political influence and broadening armed struggle has led to a drastic increase in the regime's methods of repression against the Namibian people in recent years. For example, a martial law and a dusk-to-dawn curfew has been imposed in the northern areas of Namibia since 1981. These draconian measures have provided the South African occupation army with unlimited power to kill, abduct, arrest, detain, torture, rape, and destroy the property of the population, especially in the war areas. In this connection, South Africa has created a number of special murder squads, such as Koevoet (Crowbar), Takkies, and Etango. These units, particularly Koevoet, have been responsible for a long chain of sordid atrocities committed by the South African army in Namibia against thousands of Namibians.

Little information has filtered out of Namibia about these atrocities. But to cover up its heinous crimes, South Africa has thrown a blanket information blackout over Namibia. One of the methods by which this blackout has been effected is censorship of the local press, which is not allowed to report anything relating to the activities of the occupation army without the approval of the South African Defense Ministry. With the exception of well-known apologists of the apartheid regime, even the local white journalists in Namibia are not allowed to enter the war zone and report on what is happening there. Furthermore, the blackout was reinforced recently when, in March this year, South Africa imposed the so-called Security Districts Proclamation. This proclamation covers six areas of Namibia and is intended to further prevent

local and foreign journalists, church people, and foreign visitors from entering districts in the war area without a written permit issued from the South African police. In addition to the permit, the person entering any of these areas must be escorted by members of the South African army. This is designed to ensure that nobody leaks out information about the atrocities being committed by the occupation army in the rural areas where the bulk of the Namibian population lives.

SWAPO's guerrilla network

However, despite this blackout, SWAPO and the churches in Namibia are able to receive and disseminate fairly up-to-date information about what is happening in Namibia. This information is obtained through SWAPO's guerrilla network, the news services of the churches in Namibia, and through Namibians who are occasionally allowed to travel abroad on business and other trips. The main problem is, therefore, how to disseminate such information adequately in order to enable our supporters in North America and other parts of the world to explain more effectively the plight of our people and their heroic struggle for liberation. It is our hope that the many contacts which we have made during my current tour of North America will enable us to disseminate more information about Namibia.

We also hope to be able to supply information on Namibia to the solidarity organizations and progressive community newspapers in a relatively shorter time than we have done in the past.

Concerning the now widely discredited U.S. policy of "constructive engagement," I would like to say this reactionary policy has been an ill-conceived and short-sighted faith in the long-term survival of the apartheid state which the Reagan administration regards as an important bulwark against the so-called Soviet expansion in Africa. Therefore, from this standpoint of the Reagan administration, the fascist apartheid regime had to be supported both overtly and covertly. The agony and sufferings of the black majority in both Namibia and South Africa under apartheid fascism is of no concern to Ronald Reagan and his administration.

The Reagan administration has encouraged and abetted the racist white minority state in its brutal campaign of destabilization of the neighboring independent African countries with a view to forcing them to submit to the idea of a peaceful coexistence with apartheid fascism. The submission of the neighboring independent African states to the dictates of Pretoria was to lead to the isolation of SWAPO and the ANC² and to the liquidation of their military organizations, PLAN and Umkhonto we Sizwe.³ This strategy was to be realized by means of what the Reagan administration has called a "comprehensive peace process" in southern Africa. This "peace process" was ostensibly to lead to the consolidation and entrenchment of the oppressive status quo in South Africa and puppet independence in Namibia.

The policy has, however, failed because it was ill-conceived and short-sighted. The Reagan administration failed to understand the basic underlying logic of the situation in southern Africa that no regional peace is possible without the elimination of the apartheid system, which is the root cause of all the armed and political tensions in that part of the world.

The linking of Namibia's independence to the presence of Cuban troops in Angola is one of the key planks of Ronald Reagan's imperialistic policy towards southern Africa. It assumed that, as a result of prolonged, destructive military aggression by South Africa, Angola would submit to the dictates of Washington and Pretoria to agree to send the Cubans home, bring the UNITA⁴ puppets into the Angolan government, and compel the MPLA leadership to abandon its solidarity with and support to the oppressed people of Namibia and South Africa. None of this has happened; and as a consequence, the policy of "constructive engagement" is now facing

2. The African National Congress, which is supported today by the great majority of Black South Africans, was founded in 1912 to oppose the racist policies of the white minority regime. With the consolidation of apartheid after World War II, it led massive protests against pass laws and other brutal racist policies.

In 1955 it convened the Congress of the People, which adopted the Freedom Charter, calling for a united, democratic, nonracial South Africa.

The ANC was outlawed in 1960.

Its central leaders include Nelson Mandela, in prison since 1962, and Oliver Tambo.

3. Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) was founded by Nelson Mandela and others in 1961 after the banning of the African National Congress. It carries out armed actions against the apartheid regime.

4. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, led by Jonas Savimbi, is a terrorist organization. It operates as part of the 10-year war waged by the South African rulers, who arm and finance UNITA, against the government of Angola. The U.S. government also backs UNITA.

total discredit. Its authors have ceased to wallow in their own delusions that they could arrange unjust deals in our region.

Part of worldwide struggle

SWAPO considers our own struggle for national and social liberation as an element of the worldwide struggle against national and class oppression, fascism, and neo-colonialism. Independent Namibia, under SWAPO, will identify itself with the interests, wishes, and aspirations of the black people at home and in the diaspora. Our vast and under-populated Namibia will have plenty of room for all those progressive blacks and other people who may wish to come live with us and help us to develop our country's vast resources to the benefit of all those who live in it.

We in SWAPO are conscious of the fact that quite too often fighters for national liberation tend to forget, after winning victory, those who have supported them during their struggle. I pledge to you here today, in the name of SWAPO, that we will not forget those of you who have stood by us in the hours of great need. This pledge will remain true, not only with regard to the blacks in the Americas, but also to all other friends who have supported us in the course of our long and difficult struggle, those people who share with us the ideals of popular democracy, peace, social progress, anti-imperialism and antiracism.

I would like to restate one important axiom that, in our fight to bring about freedom and socio-economic justice in society, we must always remember the fact that there is very little that we can achieve in the modern world without effective organization. In this connection, I would like to congratulate you, dear brothers and sisters from the USA, for having created the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) in order to combine your intellectual resources and professional competence in defense of the rights and interests of the downtrodden blacks and others in this part of the world.

I would like to point out, too, that it is thanks to SWAPO's organizational ability that the Namibian patriots have been able to withstand the storm of apartheid repression and to bring Namibia to the threshold of its independence. NCBL's ability to sponsor and organize our tour of North America and this important gathering is an impressive demonstration of what can be accomplished when a people have made a decision to make a collective organizational effort in pursuit of a noble ideal.

I would like to, once again, thank you all for the warm and fraternal hospitality that you have extended to me and my two comrades during our month-long tour of North America. I would also like to urge you to continue with your good solidarity work with oppressed but struggling people of Namibia and South Africa. You must know that, although our victory is both certain and within reach, many more and bitter battles lie ahead.

You must prepare yourselves to continue to support the struggle in South Africa when it will be transformed from the present mass political resistance into generalized armed struggle. You must resist the pacifist view of the struggle in southern Africa. We are confronted with the ugly reality of limitless violence by apartheid South Africa; and, as such, to try to view our struggle from a pacifist standpoint is to wittingly or unwittingly assist the white minority racists in South Africa to continue to kill and oppress millions of blacks without these racists being called to account for their heinous crimes.

The apartheid regime will only surrender state power to the peoples of Namibia and South Africa under intense political pressure, armed struggle, and tightening global sanctions. Only in this way will it be forced to allow the Namibian people to proceed to independence through the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435⁵ and to agree to genuinely negotiate with the true representatives of the oppressed people of South Africa, led by the ANC. Therefore, you must continue to demand the release of *all* political prisoners in Namibia and South Africa, the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions on South Africa, and the passing of the Schroeder Bill⁶ in the U.S. House of Representatives, which is intended to stop the U.S.-based transnational corporate monopolies from exploiting the Namibian people's natural resources without their consent. In short, stay the course of moral and material support to our struggle. Our victory will be your victory.

5. United Nations Security Council resolution 435 calls for a cease-fire, restriction of South African troops to their bases, and withdrawal of all but 1,500 South African troops prior to the start of the election campaign. All South African troops would be withdrawn after elections overseen by United Nations observers.

6. Submitted by Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.), H.R. 2589 is aimed at U.S. companies that participate in Namibia's mining industry under the South African occupation. It bars these companies from making any use of Namibia's natural resources "without the permission of the United Nations Council for Namibia."

25,000 march in L.A. for abortion rights

Continued from back page

backed the March 16 action, including the Pacific Northwest Council of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, United Electrical Workers Union Local 142, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District 36, and the Santa Clara County Central Labor Council.

Two Hormel workers, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) who were fired for refusing to cross picket lines supporting Local P-9 members on strike in Austin, Minnesota, staffed a table at the rally site to gather support for the strikers.

Many banners carried the names of women's professional, health, or religious organizations.

A contingent opposing U.S. intervention in Central America distributed information publicizing the April 19 march in San Francisco. The Nicaragua Task Force displayed a banner.

A University of Southern California psychology student told the *Militant* she was here because "it's time to take a stand. I believe in choice, and I don't like having my or my kid's choice impeded by others."

Marie Guevara held the U.C. Davis banner. A 21-year-old mathematics major, she had traveled along with two busloads of students from Davis. Like Guevara, many Latinas marched with student contingents.

When it was pointed out that she had grown up at a time when the right of choice was taken by most as a given, Guevara said, "That's right, and there's no way we're going back to the old way!"

The Young Socialist Alliance contingent prominently displayed its banner.

Chants heard along the march route included: "What do we want? Free choice! When do we want it? Now," "Hey, hey, no, no, the Hyde Amendment's got to go," "Let it rain, let it pour, we know what we're fighting for: Free choice," and "Our struggle, our fight, abortion is a woman's right."

As the drenched marchers entered the rally site in the park, they were forced to seek islands of high ground among the many puddles — even ponds — that had accumulated during several days of continuous rain.

Confronted with the continuing downpour, rally organizers kicked things off ahead of the scheduled noon start. Speakers took the microphone to give abbreviated versions of their talks before a sea of umbrellas in the field beyond the stage.

British activist tours U.S. to back Irish freedom fight

President Reagan met with visiting Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, to press for a \$250-million U.S. aid package to British-ruled Northern Ireland.

The aid is aimed at sweetening a November 1985 agreement between the Irish and British governments, in which London gave Dublin a voice in Northern Ireland in return for Dublin's acceptance of continued British rule there.

FitzGerald and Reagan also attacked those in the United States who raise funds for the families of Irish patriots held in British jails.

A different message is being given to people in the United States by Martin Collins. Collins, a leader of the British Labour Party's Labor Committee on Ireland, is on a six-city tour of the United States, explaining that the only solution to the strife in Northern Ireland is to end British rule.

In a tour that began March 14 in Albany, New York, Collins is telling audiences at meetings and through radio interviews that the Anglo-Irish Accord is not in the interests of working people in Britain, Ireland, or the United States.

Collins is also meeting with figures in the U.S. labor movement to discuss how trade unionists in Britain and the United States can work together to foster Ireland's reunification.

While Reagan and FitzGerald were in the White House slandering those who

Many of the marchers, spirits still high, chose to seek shelter rather than stay for the rally. For a time the flow of marchers exiting the rally site was as great as those arriving. Passing streams of marchers saluted one another with chants.

Many thousands stayed for the rally, standing ankle-deep in mud and continuing to cheer speakers throughout the nearly two-hour program.

"The people are rising and you are showing it," Ed Asner told the crowd to loud applause. Former president of the Screen Actors Guild, Asner has been an outspoken critic in the labor movement of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

Actress Morgan Fairchild and actor Robin Foxworth of television's "Falcon Crest" were among the first speakers. Jane Fonda followed soon. Other celebrities were present, including Cybil Sheppard, Ron Liebman, and Carrie Fisher, among others.

Los Angeles is the entertainment capital of the world, and dozens of Hollywood figures came forward to lend their names as sponsors.

Ruth Miller of the Coalition of Labor Union Women told the marchers: "We are the women who work in the fields, in the factories, in the offices, and on the stages. We're all kinds of workers. We are the ones who understand what it is to have children, what it is to provide for them, and support them. We join with you here today for one very good reason. We believe that all women, including and particularly women who work, must have the right to choose if, when, and whether they should have children."

"It has always been strange to me that those people who deny us the right to abortion and the right to birth control never support us when we talk about child care."

"The women of CLUW support NOW, and we support any movement that gives us the right to abortion and the right to live our lives and protect our bodies."

NOW President Eleanor Smeal told the rally that the "reason we had so much confidence in calling these marches is that women and men throughout the country have said, 'We've had it.' The moral majority is neither."

"We want the organizers of those anti-human rights referenda to know that we will never, ever let California deny poor women the right to legal abortion."

"We say to those who are faint-hearted," she continued, "'Look at the message we are sending you today. We shall overcome.'"

back Irish freedom, Collins was marching in New York's St. Patrick's Day Parade in the Irish Northern Aid Committee's contingent. Irish Northern Aid, which raises funds for the families of prisoners in Northern Ireland, has been slandered by U.S., British, and Irish officials as supporting "terrorists."

In Philadelphia, Collins will speak on "Ireland: Britain's Vietnam" on March 20 at District Council 47 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

He will be on WDTV radio there at noon on Friday, March 21, and will speak at a noon, March 22, rally against U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan *contras* at John F. Kennedy Plaza.

On March 23 Collins will speak at 4:00 p.m. at Keene State College in New Hampshire. The following day he will address the Militant Labor Forum in Boston at 7:30 p.m. Sharing the platform in Boston will be Bill Homans, a civil liberties attorney who has investigated British trials in Northern Ireland.

Collins will also meet with members of the Massachusetts State Legislature and with prominent labor figures.

The British activist, who edited the book *Ireland After Britain*, will also visit St. Louis, March 26-28, and Birmingham, Alabama, March 29-30, before returning to New York, March 31-April 1.



Many stood for hours in rain listening to rally speakers demand safe, legal abortion.

Marchers continued to file into the rally area well after the program was under way, as several speakers noted, each time sparking a new wave of cheers from the crowd.

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley greeted the marchers, saying, "If this weather won't stop you, nothing will."

Other elected officials included state Assemblywoman Maxine Waters and Pennsylvania Congressman Robert Edgar. Several others were present but did not speak.

Eleanor Smeal returned to the microphone to salute the striking TWA flight attendants. She pointed out that they face a boss "who thinks women don't need as much money to feed their families as men do. I urge all of you — don't cross those picket lines."

Smeal noted that NOW's first legal action was to force the airlines in the 1960s to drop rules forcing female flight attendants to quit if they got married, had children, or turned thirty-five.

Introducing Carol Downer, director of the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers, Smeal said Downer represents those who are "working at risk of

their own lives — working in the face of terror. They have to worry not just about rain, but about bullets coming in their windows."

Downer said, "We are under attack because the antiabortionists have had no success reaching the hearts of the people. So in a totally cowardly way, they come to attack individual women" arriving at the clinics.

"Our clinics have been shot at, bombed, and burned down," Downer said.

Other speakers included Gaye Williams of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.

As the rally got under way, a noxious odor began to permeate the air around the stage. Thought at first to be a possible electrical fire, it was soon determined to be the work of march opponents. Some two dozen "right to lifers" set up station near the demonstration, displaying signs emitting a noxious odor of their own.

NOW President Smeal drew loud cheers when she said, "There is no way we're ever going to go back one more inch. We're only going forward. We're here to stay, and we are moving, moving, moving."

Striking Hormel workers win support at March 16

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

LOS ANGELES — Support for the strike against Geo. A. Hormel Co. was very visible among participants at the March 16 Los Angeles abortion rights demonstration. Two striking packinghouse workers — Mark "Bear" Martsching, from the Ottumwa, Iowa, Hormel plant, and Frank Vet, from the Fremont, Nebraska, plant — came to the march to get out the truth about their strike and solicit support from the tens of thousands of march participants.

Martsching and Vet were joined in this effort by nearly a dozen West Coast unionists who are active in supporting the Hormel strike in their cities. Despite a torrential downpour that made literature distribution difficult, the Hormel strikers and their supporters set up information tables at both the march assembly area and the rally site and got out thousands of leaflets, buttons, and bumper stickers. Most popular of all was a button produced by the workers from Ottumwa, who were locked out by the company after they honored picket lines set up by Hormel workers from Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota. The button says simply: "Local 431, Ottumwa, Iowa. 1986 — the year of union solidarity."

As one young woman said while buying the button, "Yeah, 1986 is shaping up to be a good year for us and a bad year for Hormel, the antiabortion forces, and dictators like Marcos and Duvalier." Hundreds of dollars were collected through sales of this button and through generous donations made by the abortion-rights rally participants.

The information tables set up by the Hormel strikers were busy throughout the day despite the weather. Many unionists — teachers, machinists, service workers, oil

workers, and others — came by to talk and find out how their unions could aid this crucial strike. Members of the National Organization for Women, young women from campus women's organizations, and activists against U.S. intervention in Central America came by to shake the strikers' hands and offer their support.

Especially warm solidarity was offered to the Hormel strikers by the large contingent of striking TWA flight attendants who attended the rally. The Hormel workers, carrying a banner that said, "P-9 Proud, boycott Hormel," joined the militant and spirited flight attendants' contingent in the march. Together they led other marchers in chants supporting both the packinghouse workers and the flight attendants.

Good 'Militant' sales at West Coast action for abortion rights

Continued from Page 3

the United Food and Commercial Workers, on the side of young women and men fighting for women's rights — if you want to be on the winning side, join the YSA," Garza said.

Matilde Zimmermann, SWP candidate for governor of California; Greg Jackson, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor of California; and Amy Husk, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Oregon, also greeted the participants at the open house.

A Hormel worker from Ottumwa, Iowa, one of those who was fired for refusing to cross the picket lines of the striking Hormel workers in Austin, Minnesota, dropped by the open house. He was greeted by a long standing ovation and chants of "P-9, P-9."

Third Congress of Cuban Communist Party

—pages from reporter's notebook

The Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party took place in Havana February 4-7. The delegates discussed and adopted a Main Report, presented by party First Secretary Fidel Castro. That report reviewed the progress of the last five years, outlined the shortcomings and problems that must be dealt with, and projected the main lines of development for the next five-year period.

The congress also adopted resolutions dealing with economic and social guidelines for the coming period, international policy, and the administrative organization of the country and made some minor changes in the party statutes.

In addition, the congress elected a new Central Committee and adopted a sweeping report on the criteria and guidelines for the composition of the party's leadership bodies.

The congress also adopted a draft program of the party, which will now be discussed throughout the country — in the trade unions, women's organizations, student groups, the farmers' association, the armed forces, and the neighborhood committees. At the end of 1986 a special session of the Third Congress will be convened to discuss and incorporate changes coming out of the mass discussion process now under way. When the program is finally adopted it will replace the shorter Programmatic Platform adopted at the party's first congress in 1975.

The following sketches are from the notebook of our reporter who attended the congress in Havana.

* * *

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

On the morning of the second day of the Cuban Communist Party Congress, an SR-71 spy plane from the United States provocatively circled the island, being careful not to violate Cuban airspace. Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, reported this event to the delegates, humorously noting that the sonic booms heard over the city of Havana earlier that morning were obviously the Reagan government's salute to the Third Congress of Cuban communists.

In a more serious vein, however, Raúl noted that such acts frighten no one in Cuba.

Moreover, he commented to prolonged applause, by the time the Cuban communists of the future are celebrating their 203rd congress in the year 2985 — and probably well before that — instead of a North American spy plane, "what will come from the north will be a plane carrying an official government and party delegation to represent the socialist — that is, communist — government of the United States."

* * *

The Cuban government staunchly defends the rights of all nations to be treated with equal respect and dignity — whether their people number a hundred thousand or a hundred million.

This political principle was clearly demonstrated by the simultaneous translation services offered guests at the Cuban party congress. Signs at the front of the convention hall announced that the entire proceedings were available in Lao, Khmer, Korean, Japanese, and Hungarian, as well as Arabic, Portuguese, German, Russian, French, English, and Spanish.

* * *

How can we make better use of our own labor power and the material resources available to us to hasten the industrial development of our country? Delegates at the congress centered a great deal of their attention on this question.

More than 29 percent of the delegates were currently production workers. Many other delegates had direct responsibilities related to management, planning, scientific and technical training, and provincial government. The economic and social guidelines for the next five-year period had been discussed by more than 3 million people prior to the congress, and more than



Militant/Mary-Alice Waters

Billboard in Havana faces offices of U.S. Interests Section (formerly U.S. embassy). It says, "Mr. Imperialist, we have absolutely no fear of you!" Aim of government is full participation of people in defense of their country against any imperialist attack.

1,600 proposals and changes coming from these meetings had been incorporated in the draft resolution before the congress.

The main challenge, numerous delegates stressed, is one of revolutionary leadership.

Technical aid and favorable long-term trade agreements between Cuba and the other countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, and Mongolia) have enabled Cuba to plan for and construct a number of modern industrial complexes. Production of sugar, textiles, food, steel, nickel, petroleum, agricultural equipment, electrical power, pharmaceuticals, and many other basic products has increased dramatically.

But a modern industrial plant employing thousands of workers does not run on technical know-how alone. First and foremost, it takes men and women who are able to lead their fellow workers.

Several delegates from Santiago de Cuba, for example, spoke of the challenge they face in reaching full production capacity at the giant new Celia Sánchez textile complex located in their eastern province. The complex, they noted, already employs some 7,300 workers in three production shifts, but two problems remain: increasing the size of the work force and retaining the skilled workers who have been trained to operate the technologically advanced equipment.

One difficulty they pointed to has been inadequate housing for the trained personnel moving into the area. The housing shortage has prompted many to leave and look for jobs elsewhere.

Fidel Castro interrupted the discussion on this question to explain the context — for the benefit of guests from capitalist countries who, he was afraid, might not fully understand. "In capitalist countries," he remarked, "workers have to fight to keep their jobs. But here these workers have numerous possibilities and options. It is the factory that has to fight to keep them from leaving."

Despite some difficulties of this kind, however, the weak spot has not been technical preparation and training, insisted one delegate, the general secretary of the party nucleus at the plant.

The work force includes many young workers who have studied abroad and are well trained, he noted. But, he added, "it is not enough to have mastered the technology. You must also know how to lead people." You must know how to lead the men and women who will make the productive process work. And that, he emphasized, you don't learn in a trade school in any country.

In response to questions posed to the delegates by Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, it was established that among the 7,300 employees at the Celia Sánchez textile plant, there are currently some 470 members of the Communist Party, 1,300 members of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), and 1,500 trained and armed members of the rapid action forces of the Territorial Troop Militias. Forty-seven percent of the militia troops are women.

* * *

Ensuring the working-class composition of the Cuban Communist Party has always

been a central concern of the leadership. The Main Report adopted at the First Congress in 1975 noted the challenge facing the party in this regard. Precisely because the party "is formed by workers with the highest prestige among the masses, with great authority and most outstanding achievements in labor, they are always the first to be chosen to hold any administrative leadership post."

It is positive, that report noted, that a high percentage of those who assume leadership responsibilities at farms, factories, and workplaces, and as officials in the mass organizations, the party, and municipal and provincial government departments, are of working-class origin. Unless the party takes measures to guarantee its continued growth and constant renewal in all work centers, however, it will cease being a party of workers.

That class perspective has guided the growth of the Cuban Communist Party from the beginning. Today, 37.3 percent of the party members are production workers, another 5.9 percent are service workers, and 16.5 percent are teachers, professionals, and technicians.

A similar class perspective guides the construction of the Union of Young Communists and the recruitment of youth leaders to the party.

The Main Report adopted by the Third Congress noted that "young people working in production, teaching, or services make up 59 percent of the membership" of the UJC. Another 20 percent are students.

Women make up 41 percent of the UJC membership. The report, however, pointed out that women are not fully represented on the leadership level. Despite progress in the last five years, women currently make up only 19.5 percent of the leadership cadres.

In line with a policy of accelerating the promotion of young people to party membership and leadership responsibilities, the Main Report observed that hundreds of UJC cadre have taken on responsible positions in the party, the state, and other spheres in the last five-year period.

The report called attention to another important guideline for party membership, however. "It is highly appropriate for UJC cadre to spend some time in production or services before being promoted to responsible positions in the Party. No textbook, no academy can take the place of the experience one gains in the work and struggle of the rank and file."

I asked Julio Canera Gutiérrez, the first secretary of the UJC in the province of Ciego de Avila, if this guideline is carried out in practice.

Yes, he assured me, it is the norm. But just as important, he went on, is the composition of the UJC. There is no quota system for young workers, for women, for Blacks and mulattos, or any other group. But, he said, it is not by chance that a majority of our members are workers.

"This is not a concession to workers," Julio added. "It is simply a recognition of the fact that the conditions of one's life determine consciousness." Only the working class can lead a socialist revolution, he went on. "We are a working-class party and a working-class youth organization."

* * *

One of the most important developments

registered by the Third Congress was the decision to implement a "broad renewal" of the leadership bodies. Forty percent of those elected to the Central Committee were new, and a policy of affirmative action for leaders who are young, female, or Black and mestizo was discussed and adopted.

As Fidel explained it in his report on the election of the new central committee, "It was a matter of renewal or death."

For the first time, a party congress discussed and adopted a policy of promoting Blacks and mestizos.

"Hypocritical societies that practice racial discrimination are afraid to talk about this," Fidel told the delegates and guests in a speech that was carried live on radio and TV throughout Cuba. "Revolutionary societies are not."

"If you do not feel embarrassed to say white or blond, why do you feel embarrassed to say Black or mulatto or mestizo? Why? Especially in this country, when we are children of mixed blood. This is our greatest source of pride, because it is not a bad mixture, it is an excellent mixture."

Castro discussed the history of slavery and racism in Cuba and the legacy inherited from decades of imperialist exploitation. One of the first acts of the victorious revolution in 1959 was to outlaw discrimination on the basis of race. And the anti-racist laws were not just on paper. They were enforced by the new revolutionary power. But, as Fidel noted in his report, "it is not enough to establish laws on equality and expect total equality." The correction of historic injustice cannot be left to spontaneity, he insisted; it has to be consciously promoted.

The promotion of an affirmative action policy in relation to Blacks and mestizos represents another important step forward by the Cuban Communist Party — a continuation of the process begun at the Second Congress in 1980 when, Castro noted, "we gave the Central Committee a strong dose of feminism, a strong dose of workers." (Not only workers "in their condition as leaders," Fidel said, but "workers in their condition as factory workers.")

Now, he told delegates, we have "to continue along those lines and insist on three issues, three promotions" — women, Blacks and mestizos, and youth.

In recent years in Cuba it has been highly unusual to hear revolutionists argue that affirmative action for Blacks and mestizos is necessary to eliminate the legacy of discrimination. The emphasis has been on the very real progress of the revolution in eradicating racism — often to the point of denying that any legacy of racism exists in Cuba.

Even statistics that would show the real advances have not been available. Until recently, Fidel noted, no one knew what percentage of the party or its leadership was Black and mestizo. "No one cared to ask," he commented, because the attitude was that "this question was erased in our constitution."

In capitalist Cuba, questions about one's race were asked for purposes of discrimination, Fidel continued. So after the revolution people stopped asking. But now the situation has changed. It is necessary now to keep track, he insisted, "because we have to see how this policy of proportion advances and how each of the sectors is

represented."

According to Fidel's report, 34 percent of the Cuban population is Black or mestizo. Of the new Central Committee, 28.4 percent are Black or mestizo, which is close to the proportion in the party membership as a whole.

Esteban Lazo, a Black who is first secretary of the party in the province of Matanzas, was one of the newly elected members of the Political Bureau.

Following the close of the congress, discussion of this question more than any other dominated the public commentary. There were many Cubans who felt like the young Black woman taxi driver who told *Granma*, "This congress made me happy three times over: to be a revolutionary, to be a woman, and to be a Black."

* * *

A big discussion in the Cuban Communist Party in the period leading up to the Third Congress concerned the need to accelerate the pace of recruitment of women, the need to promote women leaders on a preferential basis, and the need to step up the educational efforts of the party in combating sexist attitudes toward women.

The heightened consciousness on this question was evident in numerous ways at this congress.

Women today comprise 21.5 percent of the party membership, up from less than 15 percent a decade ago and 18.8 percent in 1980.

But women were 26 percent of the delegates to the Third Congress. Even more striking was the fact that 41 percent of the delegates who took the floor in the open sessions of the congress were women.

Of the Central Committee elected by the Third Congress, 18.2 percent are women.

That figure represents conscious leadership advances over the last two decades. In 1965, at the founding of the Cuban Communist Party, only 5 percent of those elected to the Central Committee were women. At the First Congress in 1975, 8.9 percent were women. In 1980 the Second Congress elected a Central Committee of whom 12.4 percent were women.

Fundamental to the advancing social status of Cuban women is their steadily rising educational level and growing integration into the productive labor force.

At the time of the Cuban revolution, well over 25 percent of Cuban women were illiterate, with the percentage sharply higher in rural areas. Today, the campaign for all adults to complete a ninth-grade education is being successfully waged.

In 1959 fewer than 10 percent of Cuban women worked outside of their own homes or plots of land. Of those who were employed, 70 percent worked as domestic servants!

Today 37.3 percent of the work force is female. More than 55 percent of technicians and college graduates are women. No one is employed as a domestic servant.

In explaining the inadequate percentage of women in the Cuban Communist Party and its leadership, Fidel referred to this historical legacy inherited from centuries of colonial domination and imperialist exploitation and the fact that only with the victorious socialist revolution in Cuba were women able to begin to enter the labor force in significant numbers.

But it takes time and conscious leadership action for such historic changes in women's economic and social status to be translated into comparable changes in women's leadership role. And this is doubly difficult in an underdeveloped country with sharply limited resources to devote to creating the kinds of social services that are necessary to alter women's double burden of domestic labor — the foundation of women's oppression.

Sex discrimination has been and remains more prevalent than ethnic or racial discrimination, Fidel told the delegates. It is obvious, he noted, that there has been more progress on overcoming race discrimination than prejudice against women. The statistics on women in the party and in municipal and provincial bodies of People's Power offer irrefutable proof.

The promotion of women who are lead-



The Black Scholar

Cuban factory worker. Congress noted that to remain working-class party, constant growth and renewal in work centers was needed. In important step, 40 percent of those elected to leadership bodies were new, and a policy of affirmative action for leaders who are young, female, Black, or mestizo was discussed and adopted.

ers is not something that can be left to chance, Castro insisted in his report to the congress on the election of the new Central Committee. It will not happen spontaneously.

That is why the congress adopted a policy of boldly renewing the party leadership bodies, with an emphasis on promoting young leaders, women, and Blacks. "We must change what history has created," Fidel told the delegates. And that is what they set out to do.

* * *

The negative impact of sexist attitudes toward women — including on industrial productivity and efficiency — received pointed attention at the congress. *Machismo*, delegates pointed out, often prevents the most qualified worker from being hired — if that worker happens to be a woman.

It is commonly acknowledged that many administrators will try not to employ women in skilled jobs in Cuba, arguing that there is a greater turnover among women workers because of family pressures, that absenteeism is higher among women because they take time off to care for sick children, and that women have the right to paid maternity leaves of several months.

Political Bureau member Jorge Risquet gave delegates one example of the kind of *machismo* he said had to be combated. He recalled that when a large, new cement factory began operation a short time ago in Cienfuegos, one of the furnace operators was a young woman who had been trained for her job in the German Democratic Republic.

Risquet commented that he recently learned the woman was no longer working at the cement plant. She had married, and her husband objected to her continuing to work there.

"Our political work," Risquet concluded, "must include the struggle against *machismo*."

Risquet's intervention prompted Fidel to add another example. Recently, he commented, he had been talking with a young woman doctor working in the family medical program. He asked her if she was being awakened often in the middle of the night by calls from patients.

The doctor told him that her real problem was something else. Her husband got very angry because the phone calls awakened him. She indicated she was trying to educate her patients not to call unless it was absolutely essential.

And, Fidel told her, she should educate her husband as well.

* * *

In 1985 another important step was taken in organizing the full participation of the masses of Cuban people to defend their country against any military attack.

For the first time, Fidel's Main Report stated, 14- and 15-year-old students "began to receive their pre-military training and have been organized into small reserve units."

"To date, 150,000 young people have joined these reserve units voluntarily and with parental consent."

* * *

The Main Report adopted by the Third Congress contained some sharp criticism of the functioning of the daily press in Cuba.

While praising *Granma* and the other national and provincial daily newspapers for their efforts to provide a growing number of readers with information in a "sober and precise" manner, the report also noted that there are "frequent signs of a mistaken notion of what criticism of economic and administrative activities should be."

In practice, the report said, there is a tendency to point out problems in an isolated way and treat "criticism as though it were a separate genre in journalism." In fact, criticism is simply a method of work, necessary to "interpret reality as a whole, to promote collective action aimed at transforming it and to overcome deficiencies," the report said.

"In a workers' state like ours," it noted, "criticism of the deficiencies, or mistakes in economic or administrative activities is not made to destroy anybody or damage the people's trust in the Revolution, but rather to confront the cadre on the basis of their own sense of honor, to educate the people, and point the way to corrective action."

The report underscored, however, that the weaknesses of the Cuban press are not simply due to inadequate training or inexperience. The bureaucratic practices of officials and administrators who are afraid of a press that is competently doing its job are also a very real factor.

"Many officials and administrators do not expedite the work of the journalists or maintain contact with them," the report stated. "They deny access to unclassified information, become self-appointed censors, try to justify everything, or simply pretend they're not involved."

The Cuban journalists covering the congress proceedings were glad to hear the critical remarks contained in the report. They thought the report would help to stimulate discussion within the Journalists' Union of Cuba — which will hold a national congress later this year — and would encourage the press to be more systematic in going after necessary information and presenting real problems.

A number of journalists also commented that the criticisms contained in the report did not go far enough.

* * *

What motivates people to work efficiently and well in a society where produc-

tion is regulated by planning to meet the social needs of all, where everyone is guaranteed a job, where rent is only 10 percent of income, where health care and education are free?

Capitalists "efficiently" organize the work force to meet capitalist needs. They intensify labor and increase the rate of exploitation. The only limit is the consciousness, organization, and struggle of the workers themselves.

Revolutionary workers who are increasingly playing a role in planning and controlling an economy that produces for need not private profit have a completely different set of criteria for organizing production "efficiently."

In his Main Report, Fidel Castro remarked that even if the Cubans have much to learn in the realm of technical efficiency, "becoming the sorcerer's apprentice, i.e., apprentice capitalists, is not the solution."

As the congress discussion unfolded, Fidel gave a concrete example.

To much laughter, he recounted the kinds of mutual misunderstandings that had accompanied a recent experiment in joint management of an enterprise in Cuba partially funded by Spanish capital.

"There are a lot of things we don't know about running industries efficiently," Fidel said. "But one thing we do know something about is how to manage industry in the midst of a revolution that must defend itself."

That is a political question, Fidel went on, "and it is only with our political principles that you can organize a factory in Cuba today."

He explained that the first thing the Spanish managers objected to was being told they had to work together with the trade union leadership — that no work schedules or other decisions on organizing the work could be implemented without union agreement.

"They didn't like that," Fidel said. That's not the way they are used to organizing a plant in Spain. "But they liked it even less when they learned that the party was organized in the plant, and the Union of Young Communists, too." They learned that those organizations also had a say in what could be done.

"They learned, for example, that there was a militia unit in the plant," Fidel went on, that the workers were armed, and that time for militia training had to be organized into the work schedule.

In Cuba, that is part of "efficiently" organizing production.

When it came time for the sugar harvest, Fidel continued, "the Spanish managers learned we would need 30 volunteers to cut cane as part of a national mobilization." Naturally, 30 of the hardest workers in the plant volunteered and the rest of the workers agreed to make up for their absence.

"They didn't like the microbrigades, either," Castro added. He was referring to the system by which a great deal of the housing in Cuba is built. A factory organizes a construction brigade. While the brigade members build apartments, their jobs are covered by other workers in the plant. The new housing is then assigned to the workers at that plant on the basis of greatest need.

Finally, Fidel related, along came Hurricane Kate last November, one of the most destructive storms ever to hit Cuba. With sugar cane stalks battered to the ground by the wind and rain, an extraordinary mobilization of labor power had to be organized to go out and cut the cane by hand. Many more workers volunteered, and a great deal of the harvest was saved.

But that's not the way capitalists organize labor power to produce profits for themselves.

The experience, Fidel said, convinced him that it was difficult to operate a factory on the basis of joint management with capitalists. "Our workers have different conceptions of why and for whom they produce, and our workers think the capitalists' concepts are even more alien than the capitalists think ours are."

Only we can manage production in

Continued on next page



Militant/Bob Allen

YSA is nationwide organization of young workers and students with chapters in 35 cities.

BY KATY KARLIN

BATON ROUGE, La. — This winter, a New Orleans Young Socialist Alliance member debated two right-wingers from the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) here at Louisiana State University. The Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) is a nationwide organization of young workers, students and unemployed youth with chapters in over 35 cities.

After the debate five leaders of the Progressive Student Network in Baton Rouge decided to join the YSA themselves. "We had been working on several different issues, and it seemed to us that the YSA could draw them all together," said John Babin. "All of these issues have the same root cause — capitalism."

"We think being in the YSA will be an educational opportunity for us," Babin explained. "We hope to draw more people into the chapter by continuing our work in these movements. That's where we meet people who have already begun to see what some of the problems of capitalism are."

Babin was exposed to radical ideas for the first time when he was a student in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "The socialist publica-

tions I could get there made a lot of sense to me."

After coming to Baton Rouge in the fall of 1984, Babin participated in a pro-abortion rights demonstration called by the newly formed LSU chapter of the National Organization for Women.

For the past two years activists involved in the LSU chapter of the Progressive Students Network have kept up a fast pace of events. In the fall of 1984 they organized a rally at the USS *Kidd*, a drydocked warship, to protest U.S. aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

They also organized vans of activists to attend last year's April 20 demonstration for Peace, Jobs and Justice in Washington, D.C. They had a local send-off rally on April 18 dealing with the same issues as the national event — military intervention in Central America and apartheid in South Africa.

In the fall of 1985 the students returned to campus even more confident. They sponsored a visit from a caravan of Salvadoran refugees; an appearance by a member of Witness for Peace who had been on a boat captured by contras on the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border; and

Young Socialist Alliance 'brings it all together'

New YSA chapter formed in Baton Rouge

staged a mock trial on campus, charging Uncle Sam with war crimes.

"Some of us in the Progressive Students Network are socialists, and some are not," Edwin Ortiz, a PSN leader, said. "The common denominator for the PSN is that we are against U.S. military intervention in Central America and we are against apartheid."

Ortiz himself decided to join the YSA for the "clear perspective it gives."

"YSAers approach every issue with an anticapitalist, anti-imperialist perspective, and figure out how to work on the issue based on that perspective."

Ortiz, 22, became interested in socialism while he was growing up in Puerto Rico. A turning point in his life was the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada. "It was the first time in my lifetime that I was aware of imperialist aggression. Being from Puerto Rico made me especially identify with the Grenadians."

"The more I read about Maurice Bishop," he said, "the more I realize what an important example he set for all revolutionaries."

Mike Ferry, 20, decided to join the YSA because it offers "political activity, not just political thought."

"The YSA is up front about what it stands for," he said. A leader of PSN, Ferry first read about the YSA in the *Daily Reveille*. "In the debate with the YAFer the YSA member said the YSA stood 100 percent behind the Cuban revolution," he said. "I had never heard anyone say that before. It was so refreshing, especially after hear-

ing so many liberals apologizing for 'communist evils' that don't exist."

Ferry grew up in Lake Charles, Louisiana, where a teacher introduced him to socialist ideas. When he was 15 the Iranian revolution occurred. "I couldn't understand why so many people wanted to throw out the shah, when the press painted him as basically a good guy," he said. "So I started reading everything I could find about it. The more I read, the more radical I became."

The Baton Rouge YSA members are part of the YSA's efforts nationwide to defend abortion rights, building and attending demonstrations such as the March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C.

They will also join with others on the LSU campus in the next few months to publicize a film series on Central America, and a workshop featuring Lois Gibbs. Gibbs is an environmental activist who led a fight against the cover-up of the danger involved in the Love Canal toxic dump in New York.

The YSA is helping to build two rallies in Baton Rouge this spring. One is scheduled for March 20 to commemorate the assassination of El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero. The other will be held on April 3 to oppose U.S. ties with apartheid in South Africa and to demand divestment.

If you would like to join the YSA contact the chapter nearest you (see directory, p. 20).

Katy Karlin is chairperson of the Birmingham, Alabama, YSA chapter.

From *Young Socialist*

Notebook on Cuban party congress

Continued from previous page

Cuba, he concluded. But our political principles alone do not mean we operate efficiently. To improve that we must master the technology. To improve that we have to learn.

* * *

"Hey, *compañera*, Over here."

It is 1:30 a.m. Out on the patio of the reception hall the dance music is swinging and hundreds of delegates and guests are unwinding after four long days of congress proceedings.

I join the three *compañeros*, who are laughing and joking. They know I'm a *norteamericana*, a guest from the United States. They want to know what I think

about their party, their revolution, their country.

The three are workers from the province of Holguín. One is a trade union official in a cement plant. Another works on a state farm in the sugar industry. The third works in a brewery.

The brewery worker is missing part of his right arm. "I left that part of my body in Africa," he jokes. "It was a contribution from the Cuban people to the Angolan people."

He is one of the 100,000 Cubans who have completed internationalist missions in the last five years and returned to Cuba to take up their lives and work there anew.

I try to ask them questions about Cuba, but they want to talk about the United States. It's three-to-one and they win. What do North American workers think about the Cuban revolution? Will workers in the United States make a revolution like Cuba's?

When I confidently tell them that workers and farmers in my country will make a revolution, they promptly agree. I am surprised at their confidence, because many Cubans, who have been living with the imperialist monster at their throats for so long, think of the socialist revolution in the United States only as a historical certainty. It is not something they consider likely to occur in their lifetimes.

But my friends from Holguín have a different view. They assure me that working people in the United States need a socialist revolution now. They do not believe U.S. workers will allow themselves to be exploited forever. The U.S. government, which wages war against Nicaragua, arms the South African-backed forces in Angola, and threatens to destroy Cuba, does not represent the interests of working people in the United States. So it will not last forever.

The party begins to wind down and we head for the door. But the three *compañeros* from Holguín want the last word.

"We have a message for working people in the United States," they tell me. "We want you to know what the Angolan people know. You have friends here in Cuba."

Do you know someone who reads Spanish? 'PM' on Cuban CP congress

"I'm a *machetera*," Carmen Sánchez Reyes said proudly. She is a cane cutter from one of the giant agro-industrial sugar producing complexes in the province of Holguín, Cuba. Before the revolution, she explained to *Perspectiva Mundial*, Cuban women who worked for employers were mostly maids. "Now we're proving there is nothing women can't do."

Sánchez was a delegate at the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party held in Havana February 4-7. The congress focused on the major gains and challenges of the revolution over the past five years.

In the recent period, Cuban leader Fidel Castro pointed out, there have been "two revolutions" in Cuba. "One in the field of defense and the other in the economic field." Both defense against U.S. aggression and developing the economy are seen as genuine "people's wars."

A third development reflected at the congress was the renewal of the party leadership bodies, with a conscious effort to advance youth, women, and Blacks.

A full report on this congress is in the new issue of *PM*.

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Nicaragua: a 'Face the People' meeting

BY HÉCTOR CARRIÓN

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — "We are carrying out a very effective military defense, but the economic defense is more difficult and complex. It imposes limitations demanding major efforts by everyone in order to accelerate the final defeat of the enemy," said Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega to 1,000 workers here last January.

Ortega spoke at a Face the People meeting at the Nicaraguan Paper Company (COMPANIC) in Managua. The workers at this meeting were union delegates representing wage workers from the cities and the countryside.

The Nicaraguan government holds weekly Face the People meetings with different sectors of the population to find out their needs and demands and to discuss major national and international issues. A different factory, farm, neighborhood, or mass organization is chosen for each meeting. These meetings are later televised so workers and peasants throughout Nicaragua can follow the discussion.

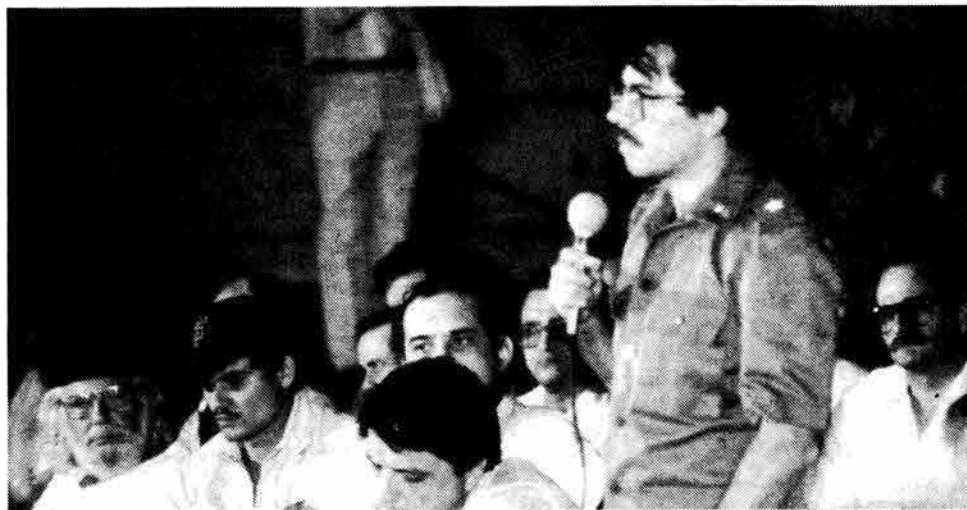
The meeting at COMPANIC was dedicated to the Haymarket martyrs, eight U.S. workers' leaders executed by the U.S. government following a May Day protest in Chicago in 1886.

The meeting was very high spirited. To show their understanding and determination to defend the Nicaraguan revolution in case of a U.S. invasion, workers chanted throughout the whole meeting slogans such as: "Wherever they come, the Yankee will die," "One single army," "They shall not pass," "National Directorate, give the command!"

For three hours the workers took the floor to raise their concerns and get answers from government officials.

Cotton processor speaks

Cristina Rodríguez, a worker from the Ricardo Morales Avilés cotton-processing plant in Chinandega Province, explained that they needed at least 500 tires for cotton trailers. There are hundreds of cotton acres that need to be harvested, but it cannot be



Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega answers workers' questions at January meeting held in Managua factory. Government holds such meetings weekly to hear needs and demands of people and to discuss national and international issues.

done unless they get the tires, she said.

Minister of transportation William Ramírez explained that the tires his ministry imports are for small trucks and jeeps. Another ministry was supposed to import tires for cotton trailers, but had forgotten to do so. They were trying to get an emergency order of tires now. "However, if necessary, the Ministry of Transportation will supply jeep tires and try to mount them on the trailers," Ramírez said.

Enrique Obando, a worker from COMPANIC, spoke of the lack of spare parts for machinery and how inadequate maintenance was decreasing production. He pointed out that each work center should strengthen its maintenance department.

The minister of industry, Emilio Baltodano, explained that the lack of machinery, the shortage of qualified workers, the problem of skilled workers who quit their jobs, and the lack of foreign exchange to import great quantities of spare parts are the cause of these problems.

A woman worker at the Lenín Fonseca Hospital in Managua also spoke of the need for better maintenance. She said, "50 per-

cent of the hospital equipment is not functioning." She also pointed out the problem of technicians who leave public hospitals for better-paying jobs in private clinics.

Dora María Tellez, minister of health, responded by calling on hospital workers to take care of the equipment they use, to realize that the country does not have the money to fix all broken equipment immediately. Tellez explained that it would take the whole year of 1986 to fix all the broken equipment in the hospitals. "You workers must take care of the other 50 percent of the equipment so it is not broken by the time we finish these repairs," she said.

A woman worker from the La Libertad gold mine spoke on behalf of her coworkers to ask for more safety equipment. The minister of industry had good news for her. He explained that the country had just received a shipment of safety equipment and it would be distributed to all the mines in the country.

Napoleón Vargas, a worker from a cooking oil company in León Province, said that all his coworkers were worried because they had heard rumors that the Su-

preme Court had decided to return the company to its former owner, Antonio Lacayo. The oil company had been expropriated from Lacayo and he is seeking to get it back through the courts.

Emilio Baltodano explained to the workers that the Supreme Court has not decided anything yet, and the rumor that the plant was being returned to Lacayo was not true.

Luis Anduray, leader of the union of banana packers, pointed out the problem of speculation and illegal sale of bananas that are too ripe for export. He mentioned that some workers have left the job to sell these bananas from which they make more money than by working in the packing plant.

Decline in real wages

After the discussion between the workers and other government officials, President Ortega took the floor. He focused on steps the government is taking to cope with the country's severe economic problems and explained the national economic plan of the government. He took up the sharp decline in workers' real wages, which really began in 1982, he said. The root cause of the high inflation eating up wages is the U.S.-backed war, he said.

"There was much irritation and a lot of uneasiness on the workers' part and with good reason," the president said. The Ministry of Internal Commerce, responsible for policing prices, was going through "some very difficult moments," he added.

Grinding Nicaragua down economically is a key part of Washington's war, he pointed out. "The U.S. strategists have illusions that the revolutionary government, the Sandinista Front, and the workers cannot control the crisis and this will provoke discontent among the people," he explained. "According to them, the people will rebel, opening the door to the Yankee troops."

Ortega explained the new measures the government has taken to ease the crisis. On January 1, wages were raised by 58 to 100 percent.

"We have been watching the workers' reaction to the wage increase," Ortega said. "And what was the reaction? The reaction was not one of applause. The workers received the measure with some doubts, because it is clear that this is not the way to solve the problems. Instead the problems will be resolved by producing, controlling prices, and good distribution of products."

Following the wage increase, the Ministry of Internal Commerce launched a campaign against speculators. The campaign is

Continued on next page

Revolutionary gov't revises wage scale

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Under the new wage rates decreed by the revolutionary government here January 1, technicians and professionals are receiving proportionately higher raises than most factory production workers or farm workers.

In an interview in the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) daily, *Barricada*, union leader Lucio Jiménez explained why. Jiménez is the general secretary of the Sandinista Workers Federation, Nicaragua's largest union federation, which is based on workers in industry.

Under the new wage program, the lowest-paid production workers will get a 58 percent raise, and more skilled workers will see an 80 to 90 percent raise. But some engineers, professionals, and administrators will get a 100 percent increase or

more, despite the fact that they already take home substantially more money than production workers.

Production workers in the lowest pay category, for instance, will go from 4,500 córdobas a month to 7,100 córdobas. A skilled mechanic in the same plant will go from 11,800 córdobas to 22,300. The highest-paid engineer in the factory will go from 24,400 córdobas to 48,900. And the plant's top administrators will go from 28,900 to 58,400.

Jiménez told *Barricada* the raises were structured this way deliberately, to reinforce the pay system established in Nicaragua in 1984. This system placed each type of occupation, based on the skills and training involved, in one of 28 pay categories. One goal was to make uniform the wages

all workers received for doing the same type of labor. But another was to give material incentives to workers, technicians, and administrators so they would increase their skills and productivity and stay on the job.

Because of decades of U.S. domination, Nicaragua has very little industry and few skilled production workers or engineers, scientists, and administrators. It desperately lacks medical personnel as well. Maintaining and increasing the number of trained people has become harder because of the pressures of the war against Nicaragua sponsored by Washington.

In 1985, in order to curb some of the effects of galloping inflation, three national wage increases were made by the government. The wage differentials set up by category in 1984, however, were not maintained. Technicians, professionals, and administrators received proportionately lower raises than production workers.

"This deviation was more than an error of inexperience," said Jiménez. "It was a political error based on the demand of those workers who didn't agree with the idea of higher salaries for technicians." He said the Sandinista Workers Federation and the Ministry of Labor were both partly responsible.

"The correct thing would have been to maintain the 1984 wage scale and make the appropriate explanation, to convince the workers that this was necessary and correct," Jiménez said.

"If we paid everyone the same regardless of their qualifications, instead of developing the economy, we would push it backward," he argued.

At the same time, he added, the new wage increases do not only give extra benefits to technicians, but also to the more skilled workers. "In sum, it should be understood that the recent raises are not just a political goal of the technicians and professionals, but rather a political means of stimulating the increase of skills among the workers, and through this, developing the country."

Contra terrorists raid near Jalapa

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MATAGALPA, Nicaragua — Terrorists financed by the U.S. government attacked the Inpeli state farm 17 miles north of here March 11, destroying seven tobacco sheds, seven trailers, a tractor, the supply store, and the farm's office. No civilians were injured.

The farm is located about five miles south of the city of Jalapa, close to the Honduran border. The U.S.-organized terrorists had slipped across the border to carry out the assault and attempt other attacks in the area.

Troops of the Sandinista People's Army moved in quickly against the mercenaries, and battles were reported in several locations south of Jalapa.

Meanwhile, all the farm cooperatives in the area went on a general defense alert to be ready if the mercenary bands attempted other attacks. Residents of Jalapa itself stepped up revolutionary vigilance, the nighttime neighborhood defense patrols.

Carlos Manuel Morales, regional coord-

inator of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, said the attack on the Inpeli farm was part of the Reagan administration's campaign to get \$100 million in aid for the *contras*. Unable to mount major military campaigns in the region, the mercenaries are attempting quick forays against economic or civilian targets to prove that they can earn their keep. Such attacks — whenever successful — do further damage to Nicaragua's war-torn economy.

Terrorist assaults are also a constant threat further south, here in the Matagalpa area. On a trip from Matagalpa to the town of San Dionisio, deep in the mountains, peasants pointed a power plant out to the *Militant*. The first week in March, they said, mercenaries attempted to blow the plant up, but failed. While large contra units can no longer operate in the Matagalpa region, small terrorist bands still attempt ambushes of peasants, soldiers, and organizers for the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers traveling in such remote areas.

Cost in lives of U.S.-backed war

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Recent statistics released by the Sandinista People's Army demonstrate the enormous price in lives being paid by the Nicaraguan people to defend their sovereignty and conquer the right to live and work in peace. The figures also show the improved combat capacities of the Sandinista troops and the scope of the losses they are inflicting on the mercenary forces organized by Washington to wage war on Nicaragua.

The army reports that 1,143 Nicaraguan troops were killed in 1,249 military confrontations with the mercenaries in 1985. This is a giant loss of life for a country with a population of only 3.5 million. In a war of similar proportions in the United States, it would equal 78,000 dead.

Death statistics for the Sandinistas over a three-period, however, show that an important shift is taking place. In 1983, about 300 Nicaraguan troops died in 900 battles, attacks, and skirmishes. The number soared in 1984 to nearly 1,000 combatants killed in more than 1,500 military confrontations.

Sandinista army officials say 1984 was the worst year militarily for Nicaragua, and that the 1985 figures — relative to the losses inflicted on the counterrevolutionary forces — reflect major progress in turning the tide of the war.

In 1983, some 1,800 mercenaries were killed in combat. The number increased to 3,000 dead in 1984. And in 1985, over 4,600 were killed.

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Ireland: Britain's Vietnam. Speakers: Martin Collins, member British Labour Party, editor *Labour and Ireland*; Georgia Fleming, editor *Irish American Voice*; Brian Fleming, publisher *Irish American Voice*. Sat., March 29, 7:30 p.m. 205 18th St. S. Donation: requested. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (205) 323-3079.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

A Free Nicaragua — What the U.S. Government Aims to Destroy. Eyewitness report and slideshow on Nicaragua. Speakers: Barbara Greenway, Socialist Workers Party; Karen Stockard, Young Socialist Alliance. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 22, 7 p.m. 3750 W McDowell. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (602) 272-4026.

Free South Africa Rally. Sat., April 5, 12 noon. Phoenix College Theater. Ausp: Arizona Coalition Against Apartheid. For more information call (602) 894-2209.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Fight for Women's Rights Around the World. Film showing of *Women in Nicaragua, the Second Revolution* and a presentation by a representative of the African National Congress of South Africa. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Ausp: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Is a Revolution Possible in the United States? A class series of the Young Socialist Alliance.

1. "The Workers and the Unions." Sat., March 22, 3 p.m.
 2. "The Ruling-class Offensive." Sat., March 29, 3 p.m.
 3. "Revolutionary History in the United States." Sat., April 5, 3 p.m.
 4. "The Workers' and Farmers' Government." Sat., April 12, 3 p.m.
- Translation to Spanish. 2546 W Pico Blvd. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Oakland

Socialist Campaign Kick-Off Rally. Speaker: Miesha Patterson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, 8th C.D. Translation to Spanish. Sun., April 6. Dinner, 5 p.m.; rally 7 p.m. 3808 E 14th St. Donation: \$5. Ausp: Socialist Workers Campaign. For more information call (415) 261-3014.

KENTUCKY

Louisville

Popular Revolt in the Philippines Topples Dictator. Speaker: Aida Jordan, Ohio Citizens for Philippine Concerns. Sat., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 809 E Broadway. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (502) 587-8418.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Campaign Rally and Open House. Speaker: Jon Hillson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 8th C.D. Sat., March 22, 3-7 p.m. 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th floor. Ausp: Socialist Workers Campaign Committee. For more information call (617) 262-4621.

March and Rally. U.S. Out of Central America! Break All Ties With South Africa! Sat., March 22. Assemble 11 a.m. Copley Sq. Rally 1 p.m. Boston Common. Speakers: Amilcar Navarro, Nicaraguan UN Mission; representative, African National Congress of South Africa; Arnoldo Ramos, representative of the FMLN-FDR of El Salvador; Pete Winkles, United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 and Hormel striker. Ausp: March 22 Coalition. For more information call Casa (617) 492-8699.

Ireland: Britain's Vietnam. British Workers' Stake in Irish Freedom. Speaker: Martin Collins, leader, British Labour Party's Labour Committee on Ireland. Mon., March 24, 7:30 p.m. 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th floor. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 262-4621.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Boycott South Africa, Not Nicaragua! A Socialist Workers campaign rally. Speaker: Kate Kaku, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Michigan. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 22, 8 p.m. 2135 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Michigan Socialist Workers Campaign. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Socialist Campaign Rally: Solidarity With the Austin Strikers, Stop Farm Foreclosures, End U.S. War in Central America! Speaker: Geoff Mirelowitz, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor. Sun., April 6. Reception, 4 p.m.; rally, 5 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Ausp: Minnesota Socialist Workers Campaign. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

Kansas City

Protest U.S. Aid to Nicaraguan 'Contras.' Speakers: Anita Atkinson, participant on Nicaragua coffee brigade and member of Leonard Peltier Defense Committee; Alvino Carrillo, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Auto Workers Local 31; Kris Kurovsky, participant in Nicaragua coffee brigade. Sun., March 23, 5 p.m. 4725 Troost. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 753-0404.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Memorial Procession for Archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Romero. Sat., March 22, 12 noon to 3 p.m. Meet at Peter Francesca Park (east side of Newark Penn Station). Ausp: Comité El Salvador. For more information call (201) 242-3743.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Hormel Strikers - Fighting for All Working People. Eyewitness report from Austin, Minnesota. Speaker: Rich Stuart, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate, member of textile workers' union; other speakers to be announced. Sun., March 23, 5 p.m. 2219 E Market St. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

OHIO

Cincinnati

Solidarity with the Hormel Workers. An eyewitness report. Speaker: Mark Rahn, chairperson, Cincinnati Young Socialist Alliance, just returned from Austin, Minnesota. Sun., March 23, 7:30 p.m. 4945 Paddock Rd. Donation: \$2.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (513) 242-7161.

Toledo

Why Haitians Revolted Against Duvalier. Speakers: Carolyn Fowlkes, Socialist Workers Party, and Errol Samuel, Bowling Green Caribbean Association. Sun., March 23, 7 p.m. 1701 W Bancroft. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (419) 536-0383.

How FLOC Won: Farm Workers Get Unions. Speaker: Ray Santiago, secretary-treasurer of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. Sun., April 6, 7 p.m. 1701 W Bancroft. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (419) 536-0383.

OREGON

Portland

No U.S. Aid to Nicaragua Contras! Speakers: Markie Wilson, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 127 and representative of the Socialist Workers Party; Jaime Partridge, member National Association of Letter Carriers, executive secretary of Portland Labor Committee on Central America and the Caribbean. Slideshow and discussion. Sat., March 22, 7:30 p.m. Preforum dinner 6 p.m. 2732 NE Union. Donation: forum, \$2; dinner, \$3. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

How Can We Stop the U.S. War Against Nicaragua? A panel of antiwar activists. Sat., March 29, 7:30 p.m. 402 N Highland. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS

Dallas

Haiti: Why Duvalier Fell. Speaker: Lee Oleson, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 336 W Jefferson. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor

Forum. For more information call (214) 943-5195.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Roots of Women's Oppression. A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 22, 7 p.m. 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston

Nicaragua: Eyewitness Report from the War Zone. Slideshow and presentation by Marsha Lou Parker, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., March 23, 7 p.m. 611-A Tennessee Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee

The Socialist Alternative in '86. Speaker: Margo Storsteen, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate. Sat., March 22. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; rally, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon. Ausp: Storsteen for Senate Committee. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

'Face the People' meeting

Continued from previous page

called "Iron Fist." Hundreds of merchants have been fined. Many products have been confiscated from shop owners found speculating or operating without a license. The president announced the formation of a task force of volunteer inspectors organized by the neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees to help MICOIN personnel in their Iron Fist campaign.

Can't make crisis disappear

The president continued, "The crisis must be controlled, because it is not in our power to make it disappear. It is caused by outside factors that bear down on the Nicaraguan economy, as you know perfectly well. What is the main outside factor that bears down? The aggression."

Ortega called upon the workers to meet this crisis. He mentioned the need for work discipline and the responsibility of the workers' leaders to strengthen this in the workplace. An hour lost, multiplied by thousands of workers, means millions lost for the country, explained Ortega.

After discussing these challenges facing urban workers, Ortega told them that the priority for development in 1986 would be in the countryside, not the cities. If Nicaragua can build any schools or health centers, they will be in the countryside, not the cities.

This is a conscious step to encourage many nonproductive city residents to return to the countryside where they are needed for agricultural production. The war has driven 250,000 peasants and agricultural workers off the land and many of them have come to Managua and other cities. Because there is a shortage of productive jobs, they live by hawking fruit, sodas, candies, and other small items on street corners and in the neighborhoods.

In Managua, Ortega said, "we have half of the population engaged in unproductive labor."

This increase in urban population with-

out an increase in production puts an intolerable burden on the water, transportation, health, and education systems. Therefore, the Nicaraguan government is devoting resources to improve living conditions in the countryside, and encouraging displaced people who've moved to the cities to return to the country.

"We want the people who are engaged in unproductive labor in Managua to go to the countryside for useful work," Ortega told the workers. If they want water, electricity, and housing, he said, "they will find it in the countryside."

Ortega concluded his remarks by explaining that the government would schedule more such meetings with urban workers to continue this discussion in the near future.

TWA strike support

Continued from back page

of the San Francisco Central Labor Council; and a TWA pilot, all offering messages of solidarity. Many workers from other unions in the airline industry were present. These included members of the International Association of Machinists, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the Air Line Pilots Association.

A representative of the San Francisco chapter of the National Organization for Women spoke, offering support and solidarity with the struggle of these workers against sexist attacks and urging those present to join the March for Women's Lives in Los Angeles March 16. San Francisco NOW offered to subsidize bus tickets for striking workers who wanted to go to the march.

Also in the crowd were many family members of flight attendants. Some carried signs saying, "My mom is a breadwinner" and "My wife earns 55 percent of the bread."

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CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: SWP, YSA, 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. **Oakland:** SWP, YSA, 3808 E 14th St. Zip: 94601. Tel: (415) 261-3014. **San Diego:** SWP, YSA, 1053 15th St. Zip: 92101. Tel: (619) 234-4630. **San Francisco:** SWP, YSA, 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255. **San Jose:** SWP, YSA, 46 1/2 Race St. Zip: 95126. Tel: (408) 998-4007.

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TEXAS: Austin: YSA, c/o Mike Rose, 7409 Berkman Dr. Zip: 78752. Tel: (512) 452-3923.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.: SWP, YSA, 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 797-7699.

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WEST VIRGINIA: Charleston: SWP, YSA, 611A Tennessee. Zip: 25302. Tel: (304) 345-3040. **Morgantown:** SWP, YSA, 221 Pleasant St. Zip: 26505. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

WISCONSIN: Milwaukee: SWP, YSA, 4707 W. Lisbon Ave. Zip: 53208. Tel: (414) 445-2076.

Impulse shopper — "There are bills and bills and bills. . . . Imelda would buy a million dollars in jewelry at one store in the morning, and then turn around and buy



Harry Ring

\$2 million worth from an antique store in the afternoon." — Beatrice Zobel, who is cataloging what the fleeing Marcos family left be-

hind.

A right-handed compliment? — "I may have said something about the NAACP being un-American or communist, but I meant no harm by it." — U.S. Attorney Jefferson Sessions at a hearing on his nomination to be a federal judge.

Moral obligation? — Patti Davis, whose new autobiographical novel suggests what it's like growing up with Ron as daddy, was suddenly cancelled from a scheduled guest appearance on NBC's "Tonight Show." Nobody at the network knew why.

The Spartans — Responding to reports in Miami's Nicaraguan exile community that contra chiefs flit about in private jets and draw \$7,000 a month plus expenses, a PR person for the mercenaries said that if they sometimes use private jets they've been invited by friends. She didn't know how much they knock down, but was sure it wasn't "extravagant."

In depth — The White House organized a congressional delegation for an overnight flight to Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua to get "a first-hand assessment" of the situation in the region. Like, if it's 4 o'clock, this must be Hon-

duras.

Let's not go overboard — A corporate benefit for the Metropolitan Opera featured an onstage dinner. Enthused Esther Ferguson, spouse of the chief honcho at General Foods, "It gives you a sense of what free enterprise is all about. . . . After all, culture is no less important than, say, Maxwell House coffee or Jell-O."

Fan mail — Gov. White of Texas insists he really didn't propose compulsory drug tests for all teachers in the state. His proposition evoked unsolicited urine samples at the State Capitol.

And blow your nose — If you feel the youngster could do better, table-mannerswise, sign her up for a weekend crash course at the Ecole des Ingenues. Among other things, she'll learn to identify 74 different pieces of silverware. Fee, \$500. Or, more in depth, the nine-day summer session. \$2,000.

Thought for the week — "The stock market's gains probably don't lead to people eating steak instead of hamburger. They do lead to someone taking a week's vacation in Europe instead of Las Vegas, or adding a second week to their Vegas trip." — Walter Dolde, a Wall St. economist.

'Fire from the Mountain': a gift from Sandinistas

Fire from the Mountain, the Making of a Sandinista. By Omar Cabezas. With a foreword by Carlos Fuentes. 233 pages, hard cover. \$13.95. Crown Publishers, New York.

BY SONJA FRANETA

Fire from the Mountain has won the hearts of many people throughout the world. Not only is it Nicaragua's best-selling book ever, but it has been translated into 10 languages. It received the 1982 Cuban Casa de las Americas award and has even evoked praise from U.S. reviewers.

First published in Nicaragua in 1981, *Fire from the Mountain* was released here last summer and is slated to come out in paperback next summer. Cabezas has been approached for movie rights.

Currently an official of Nicaragua's Ministry of the Interior, Cabezas offers a fascinating account of his experiences as a Sandinista fighter, with a particular focus on the period he spent as a guerrilla in the Nicaraguan mountains.

From the early part of the century, U.S. imperialism dominated Nicaragua, and its grip was not broken until

BOOK REVIEW

the victorious Sandinista revolution of 1979. In 1933 the liberation movement led by Augusto Sandino succeeded in driving out the U.S. Marines. Meanwhile, the U.S. military had organized and trained the Nicaraguan National Guard and installed Anastasio Somoza as head of this brutal force.

In 1934 Somoza assassinated Sandino, established his dictatorship, and set out to exterminate Sandino's movement. U.S. domination continued.

Cabezas writes, "The Sandinistas were isolated after the death of Sandino, and they started educating their children in that tradition, encouraging that feeling against the occupying Yankees who had invaded and were humiliating us."

Inspired by the victory of the Cuban revolution and committed to Sandino's example, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) was founded in 1961.

Subtitled *the Making of a Sandinista*, *Fire from the Mountain* is the story of a young man who wanted to fight the Somoza dictatorship, became attracted to the FSLN, and developed into a determined revolutionary.

In reflecting on why he joined the Frente, Cabezas says, "Remember, I didn't have any firm political convictions. . . . I had serious doubts about whether Marxism



Omar Cabezas

Militant/Bill Gretter

was a good thing or a bad thing. . . . What I mean is, I knew what I wanted. I wanted to fight the dictatorship. But I wasn't very sure, and not only that, I had a sort of fear or doubt, or who knows what I felt, about seeing that commitment through to its final consequences."

When you read *Fire from the Mountain*, you will feel Cabezas is talking to you — around a fire, to pass time, to trade stories. He describes the physical hardship and the loneliness and fears during his training. And also the good times, the camaraderie. Every new compañero who came to the camp, he says, was "like hitting the jackpot . . . an influx of new things into camp, new ways of seeing, new opinions. . . ."

The charm of Cabezas' book is its directness, its deeply personal point of view, and its earthy, warm sense of humor.

After joining the Sandinistas on graduating from high school in León, Cabezas functions underground for a while, but is soon selected to join the student movement at the university in León.

The students, with a vigor characteristic of young people everywhere, were eager to build an opposition to the dictatorship.

He describes vividly the campaign he participated in to have "El Gato," a fellow Sandinista youth activist,

elected president of the student government.

El Gato, he proudly recalls, "was the first . . . president to be elected by going from class to class repeating over and over that he was a communist, a Sandinista. . . . That was 1970."

Spurred by the Sandinistas, the students formed study circles and began organizing demonstrations. However, Cabezas reports, the people of León did not take the students seriously until the students took the people seriously.

Led by the Frente, the students began to work in the barrios. Cabezas and others worked with the native Subtiavian Indians living there. This gave him a new appreciation of what the FSLN and people all over Nicaragua were fighting for.

Cabezas describes the firelike spreading of the revolutionary movement: "The people were attracted by the use of candles in demonstrations. So the students began to gather people around by building bonfires."

Fires began flaring up in the barrios. "Fire took on this subversive character because everybody in the opposition, all the anti-Somoza people and all the pro-Sandinistas, clung together around the flames. So the bonfire was a sign of subversion, a symbol of political agitation, of revolutionary ideas brought by the students into the barrios."

Cabezas was 22 when he went to the mountains. "So, when I left for the mountains, it wasn't just the march of Indians I had behind me, but also a chain of fires, a spreading of fires in all the barrios."

That experience gave him the confidence that sustained him through the physically grueling, lonely period in the mountains. The high morale of the Sandinistas was based on political work, their knowledge of the people's needs and capabilities, and their confidence in their organization, no matter how small it was at the time.

Cabezas describes a critical personal moment. His political mentor is shot dead by the Guard. Cabezas is badly shaken. What went wrong? He doubts his training. He loses confidence in the FSLN. He wonders if they will all be defeated.

"And what saves you then? Because eventually your head stops spinning. Those feelings subside, and you start to reflect maturely, calmly. You are saved by the fact that the FSLN inculcated in us a historical will, an infinite, boundless stubbornness."

This book is about how that iron political will was built. How these revolutionaries kept going.

Fire from the Mountain is full of powerful feelings and rich stories about life and being a revolutionary. It is a real gift from the Sandinistas. May it deal a good hard blow to the imperialists.

Maryland savings bank owners swindle depositors

BY BAXTER SMITH

BALTIMORE — During an investigation related to why specific Maryland savings and loan owners were stealing money from their banks, a lawyer for one of the owners explained, "Everybody did it."

The remark was included in a recent state-ordered probe into Maryland's savings and loan (S&L) failures. This crisis has brought ruin or hardship to tens of thousands of people over the past year, and there is no guarantee of complete relief.

More than \$4 billion in depositors' money has been lost or endangered in real estate and other gambles by S&L owners. Some depositors' money has been frozen in bankruptcies. Other depositors had their money stolen by S&L owners.

The special report termed the theft "a virus." It said there was greed and abuse of depositors' money in half of Maryland's S&Ls, sometimes called thrifts.

One lawyer involved in the investigation said, "You'd read [the evidence] for five

minutes, and you'd just up and run into another room and say, 'You wouldn't believe what these guys did.'"

The most prominent of "these guys" is the president of defunct Old Court Savings and Loan, Jeffrey Levitt. He has been named in a 25-count indictment for stealing \$14.6 million from his depositors.

Levitt is seen as the personification of the scandal. He and his business-partner wife amassed lavish homes, real estate, jewels, and antique automobiles at the expense of depositors.

In January, Levitt was jailed on a contempt charge for violating a court order limiting his personal spending to \$1,000 a week. In one day alone, the court found, Levitt spent \$83,000 for personal expenses. The spending order was intended as a hardship to prevent Levitt from spending all the money he stole.

Besides the criminal indictments, Levitt and others are named in a \$200 million civil fraud suit.

A few victimized depositors have committed suicide. Several hundred others have translated their anger into action and marched on the state capitol demanding relief.

On the surface, the S&L crisis appeared to begin last May when depositors started withdrawing their money as rumors of impending bankruptcies spread. The governor responded to the withdrawals by closing all thrifts to prevent their collapse.

But the crisis was precipitated before the withdrawals by small depositors. Large depositors, mainly corporations with sources of advance information, quietly withdrew their money months before the whistle was blown. This left the brunt on the small depositors — workers, pensioners, retirees.

The roots of Maryland's S&L failures lie not just in the greed of thrift owners. They also lie in the failure of loans, which has hit the broader capitalist banking system. According to the January 27 *Business Week*, some 120 banks and 70 thrifts went under

nationwide in 1985, the most since 1933.

Most S&Ls attract depositors by offering higher rates on savings accounts than commercial banks. Some thrifts then put depositors' money into riskier-than-normal ventures, often in real estate.

One such operation was a 68-unit, high-priced condominium project funded by Old Court. The project is 95 percent complete, but only two units were ever sold.

Old Court sank \$8.9 million of depositors' funds into it. The project recently sold on the auction block for \$3.3 million.

The auction and the liquidation of other Old Court assets is one limited way the state is trying to help stricken depositors. The governor has permitted the buy-out of other failing thrifts by big New York banks. He also proposed a state-funded bailout of depositors spread over several years.

But without immediate relief, most people have found it difficult to make ends meet.

Attack on Soviet UN missions

The U.S. government has ordered the Soviet, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian missions to the United Nations to reduce their personnel by more than one-third. (The Ukrainian and Byelorussian republics are part of the Soviet Union.)

A U.S. government statement claimed March 7 that the size of these missions "poses a threat to national security." They were charged with "activities unrelated to UN business, including espionage."

This U.S. action should be opposed. It is part of Washington's war propaganda portraying the Soviet Union and many other countries as sinister threats.

The move against the three diplomatic missions, like the unprecedented number of espionage trials being staged by the U.S. government, is being used to foster a spy scare. The goal of the scare is to justify attacks on the democratic rights of U.S. working people in the name of "national security."

The action was taken as the Reagan administration pressed Congress for massive arms aid to the U.S.-organized *contra* terrorists who are attacking Nicaragua.

Whipping up fear and hatred of the Soviet Union is one of the Reagan administration's tactics in seeking more support for the war against Nicaragua, which they falsely portray as a "base" for alleged "Soviet-Cuban expansionism."

The move is also an implied threat to cripple United Nations delegations that oppose U.S. policies. Like Washington's recent withdrawal from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), it is a form of blackmail.

The U.S. government has already barred the delegations of Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Iran, Libya, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam from traveling beyond a 25-mile area around the UN offices.

By imposing travel and other restrictions on the diplomatic delegations from these countries, the U.S. government limits their ability to make known facts that might counter Washington's propaganda. Restrictions on these diplomats are also restrictions on the right of U.S. working people to hear their points of view.

Protest Reagan's contra drive

Continued from front page

This lie was shot down March 18 by the U.S. government's own Drug Enforcement Administration, which said it had no information implicating Nicaraguan government officials.

Reagan did not mention that U.S. cops and supporters of the *contras* have confirmed that these terrorists are involved in the cocaine trade.

Reagan charged that the only synagogue in Managua (the capital of Nicaragua) had been "desecrated and fire-bombed" and that the "entire Jewish community" had been "forced to flee Nicaragua."

Rabbi Balfour Brickner of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York refuted those charges, which he investigated during a 1984 visit, in a March 18 interview with the *New York Times*. The American Jewish Committee and the World Jewish Congress also investigated the charges and found no evidence to support them.

A July 1985 report by the Americas Watch Committee, an independent group which monitors human rights issues in the Americas, concluded, "Jews remaining in Nicaragua worship without restrictions and suffer no discrimination."

To hear Reagan tell it, the port now being built at El Bluff on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast is a probable submarine base and a major military threat to the United States. In fact, the El Bluff port will facilitate the development of Nicaragua's trade and of the whole Atlantic Coast region by providing the country with its first significant Atlantic Coast trading port.

Reagan portrayed Nicaragua as a country where "there is no longer any independent labor movement." Another lie. For the first time in the country's history, all of Nicaragua's workers are free to join unions, and 260,000 (out of a total population of only 3 million) have done so.

In addition to other lies, Reagan also appealed to racism when he warned that "desperate Latin peoples by the millions would begin fleeing north into the cities of the southern United States" if the Nicaraguan revolution is not destroyed.

Reagan also denounced Nicaragua as "totalitarian."

But the Nicaraguan people today enjoy the right to organize unions, peasant groups, women's groups, and other mass organizations; they enjoy the right to food, clothing, and shelter, however modest; the historically oppressed peoples of the Atlantic Coast enjoy the right to speak their own languages; young people can walk the streets without being murdered by Somoza's National Guard; and, most importantly, the Nicaraguan people no longer have to take orders from Uncle Sam — they are free. And they are willing to defend that freedom with their very lives.

The workers' and farmers' government there is a popular regime — so popular that it can arm the people without any fear that the guns will be turned against the government.

What Washington hates about Nicaragua is that there is no longer a U.S.-dominated regime there looking out for the interests of U.S. big business.

That is why the U.S.-organized *contra* army has been unable to capture and hold a single town or city. That is why the Nicaraguan army and militia have been able over the past year to deal them a major defeat, limiting their capacity to strike inside the country, and carrying out a successful coffee harvest without disruption.

Nicaragua has paid a high price for these gains. About 14,000 Nicaraguans have been killed in four years of war. (The same percentage of the U.S. population would be 1.1 million.)

Tennessee Sen. James Sasser, who responded to Reagan for the Democratic Party, demonstrated the bipartisan character of the U.S. government's attack on Nicaragua. He echoed Reagan's lies by stating that the

Nicaraguan government had "betrayed the promise of its revolution."

He stressed that the Democratic Party supported Reagan's goals in Central America. "Our disagreement is with the means the President has used to achieve these goals."

Although the ruling capitalist class and both capitalist parties are united in seeking to isolate, weaken, and roll back the Nicaraguan revolution, they have serious tactical differences.

The debate in the ruling class, the capitalist parties, and the capitalist media has been heightened by the success of the Nicaraguan people in pushing back the *contras*.

The U.S. rulers were also put on the spot February 10 when the foreign ministers of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela asked the U.S. government to end aid to the *contras* and resume negotiations with the Nicaraguan government.

Washington broke off talks last year and has refused to resume them, despite repeated requests by the Nicaraguan government to do so.

Sasser and other Senators are pushing a "compromise" proposal to vote to place \$100 million for the *contras* in escrow while the administration goes through the motions of negotiating with the Sandinistas. Some hope such a charade will wear down opposition in Latin America and the United States to the U.S. war.

Other ruling-class critics, however, concede that the mercenary war has failed. An editorial in the March 19 *Washington Post* states that "the *contra* force is not a useful instrument to bring to bear against the Sandinista government."

One simple democratic idea, which has broad support in the United States and around the world, has found no echo in the debate in Congress and the capitalist media. That is the idea that the Nicaraguan people are a sovereign nation that has the right to determine its own government and its own foreign and domestic policies.

The president's speech left no doubt that, in his view, the composition of Nicaragua's government, its foreign and domestic policies, and even who may visit or do business there must be approved by Washington.

After all, as Reagan put it, Nicaragua is on "our own doorstep." It is in "our hemisphere."

Reagan's ruling-class critics, like the *Washington Post* and Senator Sasser, share this imperialist outlook.

In defiance of U.S. imperialism's claim to own the hemisphere, the Nicaraguan workers and farmers won their national sovereignty in battle. Fifty thousand of them gave their lives in the insurrection that toppled the brutal Somoza dynasty that Washington had imposed on their country. And thousands more have died in successfully defending their independence against the U.S.-organized *contra* war.

Similar aspirations to self-determination and freedom from imperialist domination spurred the recent overthrow of U.S.-supported dictators in Haiti and the Philippines.

Washington's determination to resist these aspirations is behind the U.S. government's conflict with the many other countries and organizations that were denounced in Reagan's speech — such as Cuba, Iran, Libya, and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The battle over aid to the *contras* in Congress is important. Rejection of the aid, as Sandinista leader Luis Carrión put it, will show the world "that the American people are rejecting the military option entirely." If an aid package passes, however, it will mean further escalation of the bloody and unjust war against the Nicaraguan workers and farmers.

We must demand:
U.S. hands off Nicaragua!
No aid to the *contras*!

Maurice Bishop on U.S. attacks on Cuba, Nicaragua

The following excerpts are from a June 1983 speech delivered by Grenada's prime minister, Maurice Bishop, to more than 2,500 people at New York City's Hunter College.

Bishop headed the workers' and farmers' government that was in power from March 1979 to October 1983. He was murdered by opponents within his own party on Oct. 19, 1983, just a week before a U.S.-led invasion imposed a puppet regime in the country. Bishop remains a popular hero to the masses of Grenadians.

In these excerpts, Bishop discusses the importance of

OUR REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE

Cuba and the U.S. imperialist campaign against Nicaragua.

The full text of the speech can be found in *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, published by Pathfinder Press. The book costs \$7.95 and can be ordered from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. It is also available from Pathfinder bookstores listed in the directory. Copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press; reprinted by permission of the publisher.

We will always have relations — warm, fraternal, close relations — with the people and government of Cuba. And that is our admiration and our respect for the internationalism and the achievements of the Cuban people. [Applause] Whether they [the U.S. government] like it or not, Cuba was the first revolution in this hemisphere to have succeeded. And if there was no Cuban revolution, there could have been no Grenada or Nicaraguan revolution. [Applause]

Whether they like it or not, Cuba was the first country in this hemisphere to give a sound licking to U.S. imperialism at the Bay of Pigs [in 1961]. [Applause]

Whether they like it or not, Cuban internationalist soldiers have been the first in the world to charge the racist South African monster and to face it with arms in their hands while defending Angola. [Chants of "Viva Cuba! Viva Cuba! Viva Cuba!"]

If there were no Cuban internationalist troops in Angola, how long ago would the South African apartheid monster have overrun Angola with the assistance of several Western powers? Cuba is a great stabilizing factor in that Angola equation. And that is why when they come up with this hypocrisy of linkage, and say that for Namibia to get independence, Cuban troops have to leave, we who are in the Third World understand that and have seen their bluff and will fully back the Cuban soldiers and the Angolan people in ensuring that they stay in Angola.

They like to talk a lot about backyard and frontyard and lake. Grenada is nobody's backyard and part of nobody's lake. [Applause]

The more desperate that imperialism gets, the more it comes up with the most vulgar and hostile measures to try to keep the poor oppressed people of the world, who are trying to win their national liberation and to build their own future, down. Think of Nicaragua. Nicaragua, a country invaded over the years — two, three times in this century — by the United States. Nicaragua, a country that has been under the brutal heel of the Somozas for over forty-five years. Nicaragua, a country that, just like the Americans 200 years ago, finally resorted to their supreme right to overthrow their oppressors and murderers and to take their destiny into their own hands. And when the people of Nicaragua, when the sons and daughters of Sandino assumed their liberation, when they won in July of 1979, what was the crime they committed thereafter?

Their crime was to be bold and manly and fresh enough to say that their resources belong to them, to say that they want to build their country in their own way, to say that they want to choose their own friends.

And because of that, you have this situation where today the most vulgar, shameless acts of the last year or so can pale only in comparison to what is happening in El Salvador, or what happened in the middle of last year in Lebanon when the Palestinian people were slaughtered. The most vulgar, shameless act of open CIA activity in their country.

The most open, vulgar, shameless act of even admitting that not only will they resort to covert actions, but if necessary, they will publicly back overt action against the Nicaraguans. The shamelessness of it can only be exceeded by the way in which sections of the media have chosen to respond. To pretend that the Nicaraguans are losing popular support. To pretend that these murderers, ex-Somocista elements, are some kind of freedom fighters. To pretend that these butchers who will just throw bombs on women and children as they are passing and run when they see the Sandinista soldiers. To pretend that these people deserve to have some opportunity to rule the people of Nicaragua — the shamelessness of it is really extraordinary.

Service Employees Union backs immigrant workers

The following is a guest column by Nancy Russ from Houston, Texas.

Sixty-nine Latin American workers were picked up by the Immigration and Naturalization Service when they left their jobs cleaning offices at the Allen Center in



¡BASTA YA!
Andrea González

Houston January 25. Forty of the workers who were Mexican were immediately bused to the border and deported. The others, including 10 Mexicans, 18 Salvadorans, and one Honduran, were held in the INS Detention Center in Houston.

Raids of this kind are commonplace. *La migra* — as the Immigration and Naturalization Service is known — expects and usually gets little flak about these vicious at-

tacks.

But this one turned out to be different.

These workers had voted last May to affiliate to the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Although the election has yet to be certified, the union decided to take a stand against this attack.

The SEIU organized a news conference at the office of the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council to protest the raid as an attack on union rights.

Sandra Garza Spector, a union representative, charged that the INS was being used to bust the union at American Building Maintenance. She told the media that in an attempt to intimidate the workers, the company had threatened them with deportation throughout the organizing drive.

"All workers have a right to a union," Spector said, and noted that it was not the union's responsibility to screen its members for citizenship papers.

La migra denied that the raid was aimed at busting the union. The cop agency was forced to admit, however, that the raid was the result of a tip by the company.

Such tips are commonly used to bust union organizing drives and strikes in the Southwest. It is far from unusual for la migra to arrive at a picket line outside a struck plant or on the eve of a union-recognition vote to round up the

workers and deport them — busting the union.

Unfortunately most union officials say nothing when this happens. They accept — and even perpetuate — the bosses' claim that these workers "rob" jobs. So they are disarmed in the face of these antiunion attacks.

This time the union did respond. It was immediately joined by other organizations in protesting this attack. These included the League of United Latin American Citizens, Mexican American Democrats, American Civil Liberties Union, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, State Rep. Al Luna, and Congressman Mickey Leland.

Following the press conference, SEIU took legal steps to win the release of the 27 workers being held in the INS detention center.

After they were released, the union accompanied them to American Building Maintenance to secure their jobs back.

At this time only one worker has been rehired. The union is going to the labor movement and the Latino community to win support for its campaign to win back the jobs of all 27 workers.

The SEIU's defense of those workers is an important example for the entire labor movement.

San Diego youth faces trial for defending himself



Sagon Penn

BY ALLAN GRADY

SAN DIEGO — The trial of Sagon Penn, who defended himself from an attack by cops last March 31, began on February 19.

Twenty-three-year-old Penn was driving a group of eight friends home in his pickup truck when two cops stopped them, claiming they were looking for an armed gang member.

He showed the cops his driver's license when asked and said, "What's the problem."

Witnesses report that one of the cops, Donovan Jacobs, then asked Penn, "What do you claim, Cuz' or Blood?" (This refers to two gangs.) Penn told the cops that he belonged to no gang and did not associate with gang members.

After continued harassment, Penn asked again what he had done and got no response. As he turned and walked away, Jacobs grabbed him by the arm. Penn pulled away.

Jacobs then started to beat Penn with his nightstick. The cop from the other car, Thomas Riggs, came over and joined in, hitting Penn in the ribs.

"Why are you doing this?" Penn asked the cops as they continued beating him. He

eventually fell to the ground after a blow to the head.

"You think you're bad, don't you, boy," said Jacobs. "We're gonna beat your black ass."

During the struggle to save his life, Penn got hold of Jacobs' gun and shot and killed Riggs. Jacobs and a civilian passenger riding in the cop car, Sarah Pina-Ruiz, were wounded.

He drove the police car to his grandfather's house, and then they drove to the police station where he turned himself in.

The San Diego cops taped three interviews with Penn for more than three hours before informing him of his constitutional rights. Penn had no lawyer present.

During the jury selection process, prosecutor Michael Carpenter has tried to exclude Blacks, Hispanics, and young people.

On February 24 Penn's lawyers won a victory when an appeals court upheld a decision to allow the defense access to police file photos. (Purportedly to "control street gangs," the San Diego Police Department has taken hundreds of photos of Black, Asian, and Chicano youth.)

The photos will be used by defense attorney Milton Silverman to prove that Penn was acting in self-defense to repel a police

attack. He plans to interview as many of the youths as possible to prove that the photographing and the file itself were illegal and were part of the racist attitude of the police toward Blacks and other minorities.

In another recent development, Sarah Pina-Ruiz, the civilian passenger injured during the shooting, has filed a civil suit claiming police broke regulations by putting her in a life-threatening situation.

The Sagon Penn Defense Committee has waged an active campaign since the incident to get out the facts about the beating. Three rallies, two candlelight vigils at the county jail, and an impressive float in the Martin Luther King Day Parade have helped solidify support for the case.

The committee has met weekly since its formation last May and has distributed thousands of fact sheets, Sagon Penn T-shirts, and Free Sagon Penn buttons.

Support for the case ranges from Muhammad Ali and the National Conference of Black Lawyers to Vernon Belcourt, the Chicano Federation, Congressman Ronald Dellums, Los Angeles Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, and many others.

An anniversary vigil at the jail is planned for March 31.

LETTERS

Injuries at Hormel

The *Militant* has repeatedly used the figure of 202 injuries per 100 workers at the Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota. When I heard Jim Guyette, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9, on ABC's "Nightline," I'm sure he said 202 per 1,000 per year. This might be something to double check.

Keep up the good work.
Ron Richards
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Editor's reply: In a special February edition of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 newspaper, *The Unionist*, an article headlined "Why we strike" says, "In 1984, the injury rate at Hormel's Austin plant was 202 injuries per 100 workers. Serious and major lost-time injuries are at a level that even the company admits are too high. These include injuries such as amputations, cuts and lacerations, tendonitis, back and shoulder injuries from slips, falls and strains, and the disabling wrist injury known as carpal tunnel syndrome."

Teachers for peace

On February 8 and 9 more than 100 teachers and supporters gathered for the first National Conference of U.S. Teachers for Peace in Central America.

The conference was held at the union hall of the United Teachers of Los Angeles. Educators came from Boston, New York, Chicago, Seattle, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, Canada.

Many participants were active in the teachers' committees in solidarity with Central America. These committees sponsored tours to Central America, sent a delegation of 29 teachers and unionists to the 19th congress of the Salvadoran teachers' union ANDES, and raised money for educational projects in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

This spring they plan to tour Julio César Portillo, general secretary of ANDES.

The conference also heard greetings from Marta Alicia Rivera, official representative of ANDES.

Sue Skinner
Los Angeles, California

Really got to me

The article, "Women in apartheid South Africa: triumphs and tears," I enjoyed very much.

It was such a good article, it really got to me, especially its description of the separation of children from parents. It's very hard for me to understand the government of South Africa. How do they sleep at night, knowing all

the suffering they're causing? Where is the conscience of these people? It's easy for some to say Blacks have too many chips on their shoulders, that they're hot tempered. But who put the chips there in the first place?

People have to stop thinking of each other as separate. Instead of each thinking color or race, they need to think in terms of human beings. If you hurt others, you hurt yourself.

Pati Whitley

Human skeletons

The newspaper here reported that a dealer in human skeletons will have to switch over to plastic ones even though they cost more and aren't as good. They warp. The skeletons are exhibited and sold at medical conventions.

The principal supplier, India, has passed a law banning the export of skeletons.

Until this fall, India had regularly shipped up to 15,000 skeletons and 50,000 skulls a year to Western medical schools.

Most of them are the remains of peasants too poor to be buried. Their families are forced to sell the skeletons for a pittance, sometimes less than \$5. Here, they go for \$425.

The irony of this really struck me. Under capitalism, these poor people may be worth more in

death even though their families see little of that \$425.

R.B.
San Diego, California

MOVE movie

The Philadelphia *Inquirer* reported that "several current and former city officials... are serving as advisors and 'technical consultants' for a made-for-television movie" about the May 13 MOVE bombing that killed 11 people.

Former Police Commissioner Gregore Sambor, Fire Commissioner William Richmond, City Councilman Lucien Blackwell, and former District Attorney Edward Rendell have given their accounts to the creators of the movie.

The forthcoming movie for NBC will be named *City Under Siege*, and it is being filmed in Canada because the producers think it would be "too emotional" to film in the United States.

S.B.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Read the truth

I have enjoyed the intrepid articles and news of the *Militant* during the year of 1985 and have become aware of what it means to read the truth to one who has a revolutionary mind and outlook in "the now times."

The *Militant* is one of the most well-informed publications on both national and international news.

The *Militant* publications received last year were shared among many prisoners here at this institution and, together, we are most grateful because we now know what is really going on in the world in general.

We *Militant* readers have discussed the many articles in your publication and have a much more profound understanding of why socialism can provide a better government for oppressed people everywhere.

"Viva la Militant."

I intend to send a contribution to keep the *Militant* circulating, as soon as possible. Unfortunately, at the present, I am indigent and incarcerated.

The *Militant* helps free our minds from this oppression. "Keep on keeping on."

A prisoner
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

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.

L.A. 'March for Women's Lives'

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK
AND JOANNE TORTORICI PICADO

LOS ANGELES — Defying torrential rains, at least 25,000 marchers took to the streets here March 16 to express their support for a woman's right to choose abortion.

The National March for Women's Lives — West Coast was a follow-up to the previous week's march in Washington, D.C., where more than 100,000 turned out for one of the largest marches for women's rights in U.S. history. The demonstration here marked the largest such action ever held on the West Coast. The National Organization for Women (NOW) initiated the demonstrations.

The turnout was all the more remarkable because of the numbers who defied the driving rain to march. Such downpour is unusual in Southern California, where much lighter rain is liable to snarl traffic and send many to seek the safety of their homes.

Rather than putting a damper on spirits, the rain was seized upon by marchers as an opportunity to let it be known how strongly they felt — that no rain was going to hold them back.

NOW President Eleanor Smeal said, as the demonstration concluded, "We are just amazed at your stamina. There's just no way we're ever going to give up or give in."

Marchers came from every western state, including Alaska and Hawaii. Lines of buses — nearly 100 had been expected — rolled in to deposit demonstrators at Century City in West Los Angeles. There

they assembled for the approximately one-mile trek to Cheviot Hills Park for a rally.

At several points along the march route, the skies seemed to open up, releasing torrents of rain, accompanied by rolling peals of thunder. Demonstrators answered with stronger chanting, jeering, and catcalls, as if in defiance of the weather and any other obstacles that might stand in the way of free choice.

At the head of the march were banners demanding that abortion be kept safe and legal and honoring the thousands of women who have died from illegal, botched abortions.

Students made up a large component of the march, with delegations coming from nearly 50 California colleges and universities, according to organizers. Campus banners were visible throughout the march. Many came from out of state.

A contingent of more than 30 striking TWA flight attendants carried their union banner and picket signs proclaiming: "I am a breadwinner" and "TWA is antiunion and antifemale." One striker, dressed in uniform, told the *Militant* she was attending the march because women "have a right to determine our own future." As for the status of the strike, she said they were determined to stand firm. "There is no way we're going back to earning \$12,000," she said.

Members of International Association of Machinists Local 565 proudly displayed their banner, as did members of Service Employees International Union Local 660. Fourteen West Coast labor organizations

Continued on Page 15



Despite heavy rain, at least 25,000 turned out in Los Angeles March 16 to demand abortion rights as part of national "March for Women's Lives."

Union members discuss General Electric strike

BY RUSSELL DAVIS

LYNN, Mass. — During the four-week G.E. strike by 8,000 members of International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) Local 201, *Militant* supporters were able to interview a number of strikers on the picket line.

(As we go to press, the shop stewards voted 100 to 15 to accept a tentative agreement.)

Many of them told us how proud they were to be on strike because they weren't just walking the picket line for a few cents pay increase. Instead, they told us, they were standing up for the union, for justice, and for all the things they believe in.

The strike, which began February 21, has raised a broad discussion among Local 201 members about what the company's intentions are and what the significance of the strike is.

At the picket line at the main gate in Lynn, one worker commented, "This strike is about everything G.E.'s been doing for the past five years, from the 'factory of the future' to the 1985 contract."

The "factory of the future" is a new automated plant G.E. built in Lynn only after the union agreed to concessions on wages and work rules. Concern was expressed by several workers that the new automated systems G.E. has been installing make it easier for the company to continue production during a strike. As one picket put it, "The 'factory of the future' is coming back to haunt us now."

A common view was that G.E. forced a strike on Local 201 because it voted down the 1985 contract despite its passing in every other major G.E. plant. At the Fairchild Street gate, one younger worker said, "They're out to get us because they think 201 is too militant."

Others saw the strike as part of a broader campaign against the unions. "This isn't a G.E. or Lynn thing. It's happening all across the country, like at Hormel," said an older worker. "Ever since Reagan broke the air traffic controllers [in 1981], the unions have been getting kicked around," he continued. "When PATCO went out, we all should have gone out and backed them up."

Identification with other unions on strike has greatly increased since the G.E. strike began. Many IUE members sport "P-9 proud" buttons and stickers on the picket lines. Two workers from Local P-9 of the meatpackers' union in Austin, Minnesota, got a warm reception when they visited Local 201. Several strikers the *Militant* spoke to cited P-9 as an example of how labor needs to fight back.

Other ongoing strikes also drew a lot of comments. Many airport workers live in and around Lynn, so the TWA flight attendants' strike seems a lot closer. Finally, two days after the Local 201 picket lines went up, the rail workers on the North Shore went on strike. The Lynn *Daily News Item* ran a big headline reading, "Strike three," referring to the G.E., TWA, and rail strikes. One worker said, "What's going on here? This is like the '30s."

The rail strike shut down the commuter rail service to the G.E. Lynn Riverworks plant. The rail line is referred to as the "scab express" because it's used by management to avoid picket lines when entering the plant.

Interest in broader social issues also increased among strikers. The beginning of the strike coincided with the fall of Marcos, and many identified with the Filipino people. Several Local 201 members also attended the March 9 abortion rights march on Washington. Their bus tickets were subsidized by the National Organization for Women. Interest in the *Militant* has also increased. Sales and subscriptions have gone up.

Reagan's request for \$100 million for the Nicaraguan *contras* was unpopular with just about everyone the *Militant* spoke with on the picket lines. "The country is going broke, and he wants to give \$100 million to those people" was a typical reaction.

G.E. workers don't often deal with the fact that most of the production at the Lynn and Everett plants is for the military. When a visiting P-9 member raised the need to cut the military budget to create jobs, it raised a lot of questions and discussion

among Local 201 members.

The fact that Lynn and Everett are war-industry plants means that the government is already involved in the strike. One worker, for example, told the *Militant*, "G.E. and the government are working together to break the union."

Dozens of cars marked "U.S. government" passed in and out of the plant daily. Though people in them pretended to be neutral, few strikers have illusions about what side they are on. Pressure from the government is constantly cited by G.E. as an excuse to crack down on the work force and increase production.

Picketing continued around the clock, and the lines have been peaceful despite G.E. provocations aimed at getting an in-

junction to ban picketing. In response to this, a shop steward in charge of organizing picketing observed, "We have to run this strike like they ran the civil rights movement."

Strike morale was good as many 201 members got jobs and were digging in for a long strike. One aircraft worker told me he had cashed in all his G.E. stock and would never buy any more. One veteran of the 101-day G.E. strike in 1969 said, "It's good for the younger ones to go through a hard strike like this. Hopefully we'll come out stronger."

Russell Davis is a member of IUE Local 201 and works at the Lynn Riverworks plant.

San Francisco NOW, unionists back TWA flight attendants

BY DIANA CANTÚ

SAN FRANCISCO — Support for the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA) began in the Bay Area before they were forced out on strike by TWA on March 6.

On March 3 members of the AFL-CIO, Teamsters union, and the National Organization for Women joined IFFA members in a rally at San Francisco's Union Square to protest TWA's outrageous concessions demands.

Before the strike the flight attendants had agreed to take the same concessions agreed to by other unions having agreements with TWA. These included a 15 percent wage cut and some changes in the work rules favoring the company.

TWA countered by demanding wage cuts up to 22 percent and drastic changes in work rules. Under these new rules, flight attendants would have to be in the air 83 hours and away from home 320 hours a month. Before the strike, flight attendants

were in the air 70 hours and away from home 240 hours a month.

In demanding these deep concessions, TWA President Carl Icahn has stated that flight attendants should give up more than other unions at TWA because 85 percent of their union are women who are not "breadwinners."

Many IFFA supporters at the March 3 rally wore buttons saying, "I'm a breadwinner, not a loaf."

After a march around the square, union representative Anamarie France spoke. She pointed out that despite company claims, flight attendants are skilled workers and bear a lot of the responsibility for the safety of the flying public. The wage cuts are not necessary for the company but merely another example of corporate greed.

Other speakers included Art Pulaski, president of the San Mateo County Central Labor Council; Walter Johnson, president

Continued on Page 20