

## Protests across U.S. hit aid to 'contras'

BY MARGARET JAYKO

"USA, CIA, out of Nicaragua!"

This was a popular chant at emergency protests against the U.S.-organized war on Nicaragua that took place in more than 45 cities and towns on December 13.

They were called in response to the recent revelations about the extent of secret U.S. government funding and support for the *contra* terrorists.

A theme of many of the actions was the need to start building the April 24-25 national antiwar demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and the West Coast that are being widely discussed by many organizations.

The December 13 actions were initiated by the Pledge of Resistance and supported by many other groups opposed to U.S. government intervention in Central America.

The national focus was a protest at Fort Walton Beach in the Florida panhandle. That is the site of Hurlburt Field, where the CIA is training 70 *contras*.

More than 250 demonstrators from many states, including as far away as California, showed up to demand an end to training and all other aid to the mercenaries.

Bill Gandall told the youthful crowd, "As a 19-year-old Marine, I participated in the 1927 U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. We committed many atrocities there. . . . The U.S. installed a puppet government there, a dictatorship. Now Nicaragua has a democratic government that the people support. This is what the U.S. government is attacking. Demonstrations by youth put an end to the Vietnam War, and youth can stop this one."

Eleven participants were arrested at the base for trespassing on military property. Charles Liteky and Duncan Murphy, two veterans who had participated in a hunger strike in Washington earlier this fall to pro-

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Demonstration at Florida's Eglin Air Force Base to protest U.S. training of *contras* at adjacent Hurlburt Field.

## Nicaraguans gearing up to resist aggression

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — More than 500 union leaders and vanguard workers met here December 12 and resolved to take immediate steps to strengthen the defense and security of factories and other workplaces.

The meeting followed the December 7 bombing attacks against northern Nicaragua by A-37 combat planes from U.S. bases in Honduras. The workers decided to establish 24-hour command posts for vigilance patrols in each plant. They projected strengthening civil defense and fire-fighting units in each plant and pledged to maintain the extra security throughout the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Meanwhile, citywide civil defense drills were held in Juigalpa, in south central Nicaragua, and in Puerto Cabezas, on the country's northern Atlantic Coast.

On December 10, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega gave a major speech on the military situation along the Honduras-Nicaragua border.

Nicaraguan troops have been fighting in the border area against the U.S.-backed mercenary forces that use Honduran bases to launch terrorist attacks into Nicaragua, Ortega said. "We will not give up one inch in the defense of our territorial integrity in preventing the mercenary forces from entering our country," he declared.

Responding to the charge that Nicaraguan troops had invaded Honduras, Ortega said, "We have no problem with Honduras. We are fighting against the mercenary forces that the U.S. government has established in Honduran territory."

The real invasion of Honduras "is the invasion of U.S. troops, who have occupied all of its territory, and the invasion of the mercenary forces, who have been put in the territory bordering Nicaragua by the U.S. troops," Ortega continued.

"All that [Honduran] President [José] Azcona has to do is decide to remove those mercenary forces that occupy his territory,

and the border area will cease to be a zone of conflicts," Ortega explained.

The next day, the Honduran ambassador in Nicaragua personally delivered an official statement from his government to the Sandinista daily *Barricada*, asking the newspaper to publish it. *Barricada* did so December 12, with a short introduction saying that the statement contained "inaccuracies and omissions," but they were printing it "to contribute to achieving a peaceful and civilized solution to the problems of Central America."

The statement denied that Honduran forces had bombed targets inside Nicaragua. It repeated Azcona's charges that Nic-

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## New crackdown in S. Africa

BY ERNEST HARSCH

Five days before the start of a new protest campaign against South Africa's repressive state of emergency, the apartheid authorities initiated yet another sweeping crackdown on political dissent.

Claiming the need to combat a "revolutionary onslaught," the Pretoria regime imposed severe press censorship and other restrictions December 11. It almost immediately began a round-up of political activists, trade unionists, journalists, and community leaders.

South African government commandos, meanwhile, launched a raid into the neighboring country of Swaziland December 12, killing two people and kidnapping four anti-apartheid activists.

The people of South Africa have already been living under a draconian state of emergency since June. Some 22,000 political activists have been detained in that period. Over the past two years of mass popular mobilizations, more than 2,300 people have been killed, the bulk of them Blacks shot down by the police.

Despite this, protests have continued in

## 'Contra' war provokes crisis in Washington

The steady stream of revelations about the White House's secret dealings with the Nicaraguan *contras* and with government figures in Iran has caused a gigantic crisis for the administration.

President Ronald Reagan is losing all credibility as each day brings new evidence that he and other members of the National Security Council are lying about their involvement in the illegal funding of the mer-

## EDITORIAL

cenaries waging a dirty war against Nicaragua.

Democrats and Republicans have closed ranks in an attempt to salvage the seriously eroded authority of the executive branch without having to opt for impeachment.

The congressional hearings and the appointment of a special prosecutor are designed to give the appearance of getting at the truth in order to "put the whole affair behind us." But the proclaimed goal of all the politicians involved is the same: to save the presidency. That can only mean putting the clamp on new revelations and attempting to concoct a credible cover-up.

What's at the root of the government's foreign policy disaster?

The key to the whole thing is what the Nicaraguan Sandinistas call the "strategic defeat" of the *contras*. The U.S.-organized war has shown again a lesson that history has taught over and over: mercenary troops can't win wars against an armed people who are fighting to defend their interests.

It is the failure of the CIA's bands that has led to the unraveling of the complex covert network that the White House constructed to provide resources for an increasingly unpopular war.

The new facts about the degree of *contra* dependency on U.S. funding, training, and military coordination of the mercenaries puts the last nail in the coffin of Reagan's claim that the *contras* are "freedom fighters" who get most of their money from private sympathizers.

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## April 25 action set for San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO — A "Call for a Western States Mobilization, March, and Rally in San Francisco on April 25, 1987" was issued December 17 by the newly expanded coordinating committee of the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

The call states, "The issues which brought tens of thousands to demonstrate in San Francisco in 1985 and 1986 have intensified."

"Now," the call continues, "a national coalition of unprecedented breadth — based in the religious communities, the labor movement, and in community, peace, and anti-intervention organizations — have come together with goals and a program that are in concert with two of the aims which unite our Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice: End U.S. intervention in Central America. End U.S. support for South African apartheid."

The call ends by urging people to "join us in a mass march and rally in San Francisco, California, and Washington, D.C. on Saturday, April 25, 1987."

A meeting has been called for San Francisco on Tuesday, January 13, to begin to organize for the march.

many parts of the country, including rent strikes, boycotts of schools and businesses, opposition to military conscription of white youths, labor actions, and campaigns for the release of political prisoners.

The United Democratic Front (UDF), an anti-apartheid coalition of more than 2 million members, called for the launching of a "Christmas Against the Emergency" campaign on December 16 to focus opposition to the regime's repressive policies. This call was backed by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other labor organizations.

December 16 is a significant date in South Africa. The governing National Party and its supporters celebrate it as the Day of the Covenant, the anniversary of a military victory by early white settlers against Zulu fighters in 1838.

Among Blacks, on the other hand, December 16 has become a traditional day of protest against apartheid. It was on that date, exactly 25 years ago in 1961, that the first armed actions were launched by Um-

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# D.C. election campaign got rail sales back on track

BY DEBORAH LAZAR

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rail-yard sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* got back on

seven copies of the *Militant* each week at the gate. About a half-dozen subscriptions were sold on the job. And hundreds of cam-

blew their horns, waved, and shouted, "You've got my vote!"

My campaign for mayor attracted a lot of attention on the job. Many coworkers watched a live TV debate with all the mayoral candidates or read articles in the *Washington Post*. (They posted these articles on bulletin boards at work.) Two rail workers attended campaign events.

The most excitement took place election eve, when a Channel 7 TV (local ABC affiliate) camera crew and reporter came to interview me on my lunch break at work. Word spread like wildfire. The bosses ordered the cafeteria to

be cleaned and made coworkers take their lunch before Channel 7 arrived.

After the interview, a half-dozen workers and I sat around talking politics. They read the Socialist Workers Party campaign platform plank by plank, and we had a lively discussion.

Getting a little media coverage has made a big difference in how coworkers see us. One Black coworker told me, "You know, you gave me a leaflet a couple months ago and I never read it." But now he was reading it.

Another coworker I had never

met before told me he had heard I was running for mayor of D.C. and thought, "Is she for real?" Then he saw me on TV and realized I was.

A much larger number of coworkers have been introduced to socialist ideas now. Nearly every day I'm approached by someone new who heard about the campaign and wants to know what socialism is all about. Now we need to sell them all subscriptions!

*Deborah Lazar is a hostler and a member of United Transportation Union Local 1522.*

## SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

track during our socialist election campaign this fall.

At Amtrak's maintenance yard, where I work, we had weekly sales teams during the last month of the campaign. Coworkers bought anywhere from four to

paign leaflets were distributed.

The response has been very good. Many coworkers recognized the *Militant* as the "Lazar for Mayor" campaign newspaper. As cars whizzed by leaving the yard during one sale, some coworkers

## U.S. spy captured near Nicaraguan air base

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — On December 12, Nicaraguan security forces captured a U.S. spy, Sam Hall, in the vicinity of the Punta Huete air force base near here. Hall has a long history of CIA-linked terrorist activities in Latin America and Africa.

When captured, Hall initially claimed he was a "writer" interested in learning about Nicaragua. But authorities found a hand-drawn sketch of the air base hidden in his socks.

According to Nicaragua's Ministry of the Interior, Hall then said he belonged to the "Phoenix Battalion," a "private" espionage group that passes spy information to the U.S. Air Force.

In addition to the sketch of the air base, Hall was carrying maps of Corinto and Tipitapa. Corinto is Nicaragua's major port and was the target of CIA-organized sabotage attacks in 1983 and 1984. Tipitapa is an important town on the northern outskirts of Managua.

Hall's U.S. passport showed that he had been in El Salvador, Israel, and South Africa during the past four years.

Press reports here, based on information from the U.S. news media, say that Hall was a member of Civilian Military Assistance, a "private" U.S. group that works with the U.S.-backed mercenaries attacking Nicaragua (the *contras*). The group is one of many linked to the CIA and used to cover up the extensive, direct involvement of the U.S. government in the mercenary war. Hall, himself, says he has trained Miskito Indians who have taken up arms against the Nicaraguan government.

Hall reportedly said, in 1984, that he was wounded while fighting alongside South African troops invading Angola. He described himself as a "counter-terrorist" in a 1985 interview with the Associated Press.

Jesús García, a right-wing Cuban terrorist currently in prison in Florida for illegal possession of arms, told U.S. reporters that Hall tried to recruit him in 1985 to a CIA plot to murder the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs. The plan was to blame the Sandinista government for Tambs' murder, using this to justify further U.S. intervention against Nicaragua. Contra leader Adolfo Calero and Colombian

drugrunners were also involved in the plot, García said.

As of December 16, Hall remains in detention and has not yet been presented to the media here. Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto announced that the government is continuing its investigation into Hall's activities, and that he would probably be brought to trial before the People's Anti-Somozaist Tribunals (TPA).

On December 17, the Nicaraguan government commuted the 30-year sentence of CIA mercenary Eugene Hasenfus and put him on a plane bound for the United States.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega explained that "we are giving Mr. Hasenfus to the U.S. people with the conviction that this will contribute to the fight for peace that the U.S. and Nicaraguan people

are waging."

Ortega said that prominent individuals who had expressed opposition to the Reagan administration's war policies had asked for Hasenfus' release. These included Gov. Anthony Earl of Wisconsin; U.S. Senators Thomas Harkin and Christopher Dodd; Joseph Lowery, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and several bishops. Ortega noted that no one from the Reagan administration had requested a pardon for Hasenfus.

Ortega announced the decision at a press conference here, where he appeared along with Sally Hasenfus, wife of the CIA mercenary, and Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto. The proposal went to the National Assembly, which approved the pardon by a vote of 69 to 2.

## Nicaraguans prepare to resist increased military attacks

Continued from front page

Nicaraguan troops had attacked a Honduran army post and three villages and that the Honduran air force bombed the "invaders" inside Honduras. And it claimed there were 2,000 to 3,000 Nicaraguan troops in Honduran territory and threatened to remove them "by force." The statement avoided all mention of the *contras* and of U.S. troops occupying Honduran territory.

Nicaraguan Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge, speaking to a meeting of Panamanian solidarity activists December 12, said the military conditions for a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua exist, but not the necessary political conditions. U.S. officials were visiting Latin American and Central American countries to try to line up support for further attacks on Nicaragua, he said.

Borge was in Panama for a meeting of the Permanent Conference of Latin American Political Parties. The 24 parties repre-

sented included the governing parties of Panama, Mexico, and Peru, as well as the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador, and the Puerto Rican Independence Party. They declared, "The escalation of the war against Nicaragua is seen with great concern by Latin America, above all because the Sandinista revolution represents the example of the continent." They resolved to send delegations to Honduras, Washington, and Nicaragua to speak in opposition to U.S. aggression.

Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan army began major military maneuvers December 16 in the northwestern provinces of León and Chinandega. More than 6,500 soldiers, reservists, and militia members are testing their preparation to confront a possible U.S. invasion, army officials said. The armed forces of Honduras and Panama were invited to send observers to the maneuvers.

## Philippine unionist tours Chicago

BY JOHN VOTAVA

CHICAGO — Leto Villar, director of the May 1 Movement (KMU) trade union federation for Metro Manila in the Philippines, told unionists in the Chicago-Gary area during a recent tour here that Philippine workers still need solidarity.

Villar spoke in place of KMU leader Crispin Beltran, who was denied an entrance visa by the State Department. Villar reported that there have been 512 strikes in the past two months alone and that about 20 strikers have been killed by the military. This is despite official restrictions on using troops to suppress strikes.

At Stuart-Warner, organized by the United Electrical Workers, Villar spoke to

a contract vote meeting of 500 people. Another 150 workers heard him at a meeting of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1010. He also attended the weekly meeting of locked-out USX workers who belong to USWA Local 1014.

Villar met with Jack Parton, director of USWA District 31, and International representative Oscar Sanchez. He also appeared before the Chicago branch of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Noah Beasley, regional director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, spoke at a news conference for Villar that was attended by representatives of both U.S. Senators from Illinois, the Catholic Archdiocese, and the Methodist Church.

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The *Militant* is written in the interests of workers and farmers. Every week it tells the truth about the war Washington and the employers are waging against working people at home and abroad. We provide firsthand coverage of important struggles in other countries, such as Angola, Haiti, and the Philippines. In addition, regular on-the-scene reports come from our Nicaragua Bureau.

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## The Militant

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# 'Tribute to Nelson Mandela'

## Meeting celebrates new books by South African leader

BY GEORGES SAYAD

SAN FRANCISCO — "I'd like to remark that this unity which you are manifesting here tonight parallels that unity which is coalescing among the South African people in their struggle against apartheid and for a free, united, nonracial, and democratic South Africa."

Neo Mnumzana, chief United Nations delegate of the African National Congress of South Africa, addressed those remarks to 200 people attending a December 13 "Tribute to Nelson Mandela" here.

Mnumzana was the featured speaker at the broadly sponsored meeting celebrating the publication of *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life* and the Spanish-language *Habla Nelson Mandela*. The Pathfinder Press books contain speeches and writings by the imprisoned South African revolutionary leader.

Seventy-five organizations and individuals, including several Bay Area union officials, sponsored the meeting held at International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's (ILWU) Local 34 hall.

In welcoming the audience to the meeting, Curtis McClain, secretary-treasurer of the ILWU, said, "The publication of this book, we hope, will make a substantial contribution to the education of the American people about the life of this great man and thereby increase the pressure on the government of South Africa to release him unconditionally."

San Francisco City Supervisor Willie Kennedy brought greetings to the meeting on behalf of the city's Board of Supervisors.

Dr. William Eisman from the San Francisco Bay Area Peace Council said, "The event tonight is one of many actions that must and will penetrate the fortified walls behind which Nelson Mandela and his colleagues are held in captivity." Eisman is also president of the U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Society.

"It's really important that this book has come out in Spanish," said Patricia Vatuone, a student senator from the University of California at Berkeley. "Now Latinos are able to read about Nelson Mandela's

life, about the struggle in South Africa, and will be able to make connections to our lives here," she said.

The evening's platform also included Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Central Labor Council; Rev. Jim Good of the St. Paul of Shipwreck Church; and Ying Lee Kelly, field representative for U.S. Congressman Ron Dellums.

The event was co-chaired by John George from the Bay Area Free South Africa Movement, David Reed from the San Francisco Anti-apartheid Committee, and Matilde Zimmermann representing Pathfinder Bookstore.

Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*, was introduced from the audience. Several groups and individuals sent written greetings to the meeting.

Among those receiving a warm welcome were a group of hospital workers on strike at Bay Area Kaiser Permanente health facilities.

The hospital workers set up an informational table in the hall. The Bay Area Free



Militant/Ernest Harsch

**Featured speaker Neo Mnumzana of African National Congress.**

South Africa Movement, Modern Times Bookstore, Pathfinder Bookstore, the San Francisco Peace Council, the U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Society, and the San Francisco Anti-apartheid Committee also had literature displays.

In his speech, African National Congress representative Mnumzana said, "I'd like to thank all the organizations that endorsed this evening's event."

He pointed out that the meeting was taking place against the backdrop of the deep and irreversible political and economic crisis of apartheid. He explained that the South African government has been forced by the advancing liberation struggle to drop any pretense of democratic rule. Instead, the government is resorting to the open and blatant use of force to maintain itself in power.

Mnumzana said that by paying tribute to Mandela, the gathering was also honoring everyone struggling against apartheid in South Africa, as well as those fighting U.S. policies in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Mnumzana pointed to the "important initiative of making available to the American people the ideas of a person who has come to symbolize the finest aspirations of the South African people and to make these ideas available not only in English but also in Spanish."

## S. African freedom fighters: U.S. hands off Nicaragua!

The following statement was issued on December 11 in Lusaka, Zambia, by the International Department of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa.

The African National Congress strongly condemns the continuing acts of destabilization and aggression by the Reagan administration against the heroic and courageous people of Nicaragua. This has now taken a serious turn with the bombing of a number of Nicaraguan towns bordering neighboring Honduras on Sunday, December 7, resulting in great destruction of property and a large number of human casualties.

Having failed to weaken and overthrow the revolutionary Sandinista government through its fascist Somoza surrogates, the Reagan administration has decided to become actively involved in direct aggression against this peace- and justice-loving Central American nation.

The fact that this latest act of aggression against revolutionary Nicaragua comes in the wake of U.S. congressional investigations into the administration's clandestine military support for the Somoza fascist bandit gangs — the so-called contras — in violation of both U.S. and international law, shows the contempt it has for world public opinion.

This calls for strongest condemnation by all those who cherish peace, democracy, and the right of all nations to independence and to freely determine their own destiny.

Hands off Nicaragua!

### Attention readers

**This is the last issue of the Militant before our one-week holiday break. We will resume publication with the issue dated Jan. 9, 1987.**

## Cuba festival celebrates art from 3rd World

BY MIKE ALEWITZ

HAVANA, Cuba — With the opening of the Second Havana Biennial November 26, this city has been transformed into a festival of visual art.

Dozens of galleries, museums, institutions, schools, and neighborhood centers are hosting special programs from the Third World. This is the first joint exhibition of present-day work from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It will continue until December 31.

The red and white banners of the biennial are flying throughout the city. Their logo is formed from a drawing of primitive writing by the Cuban artist Wilfredo Lam.

The biennial was initiated and organized by the Wilfredo Lam Center, founded in 1983. Its primary task is the promotion of Asian, African, and Latin American art.

Although initiated in Cuba, the biennial is a truly international event, sponsored by artists and other individuals from around the world.

One highlight was the International Conference on Visual Arts of the Caribbean, which took place November 27-29 at the Convention Hall. Several hundred art critics, historians, artists, and administrators met for a three-day discussion and debate conducted in Spanish, English, and French.

Nineteen papers were presented, many dealing with the African influence in Cuban art.

The presentation by Robert Ferris Thompson of Yale discussed the African tradition in Caribbean and North American art. He called for an international refutation of chauvinist theories about Black art and culture.

Among those attending the conference from North America were New York art critics Lucy Lippard and Dore Ashton.

Because of the U.S. government's restrictions on travel to Cuba, the U.S. delegation was smaller than it would otherwise have been. U.S. artists, however, participated in "Beyond the Blockade," a collection of 63 works by North American artists donated to Cuba in a November 28 ceremony. The show is on exhibit here at Casa de las Américas.

More than 2,000 works of 690 artists from 58 countries are included in the central show. They give voice to the aspirations of the great majority of oppressed people of the world.

Most of the shows will remain for at least a month, and special programs will continue. At the Fine Arts Institute, the Cubanacan, which is housed in a former country club from the days of the Batista dictatorship, students have scheduled many special programs, including a display of the best of their work.

On one day, the students heard presentations on U.S. mural brigades in Nicaragua and on the painting of a mural celebrating the meat-packers' struggle in Austin, Minnesota.



Cuban Ministry of Culture/Antonio López

**Life, a work of performance art by Manuel Mendive from Cuba.**

## Virginia poultry workers confront speed-up, overtime, and harassment

BY GLENN ORLIC

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, Va. — Holiday times are the worst in plants that slaughter and process poultry. Increased demand for chickens and turkeys means extended shifts for the men and women who work in these plants. Most work between 12 and 14 hour shifts this time of year.

During the recent subscription drive, supporters of the *Militant* spoke with a number of poultry workers in this area of northwestern Virginia. Rockingham County, in the Shenandoah Valley, is predominantly a rural area made up of small farming communities. It is one of the poorest areas in Virginia.

The large poultry firms provide the only steady employment and some workers drive as far as 50 miles to get to their jobs.

The poultry companies take advantage of the high unemployment and keen competition for jobs to keep wages and benefits low.

A worker at the Rockingham Poultry plant told us that the top pay is less than \$6 an hour. The same worker explained that less than half the work force is in the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union Local 400, a regional local based in Richmond over a hundred miles away.

Workers we spoke with said they see the need to be members of unions to defend their interests, even though the unions have traditionally been weak here.

Working conditions in the plants are poor, and the poultry workers are subjected to line speed-up, mandatory overtime, sud-

den changes in work schedules, and constant harassment from supervisors.

At Rocco Turkeys, the largest supplier of turkeys in the world, conditions have become considerably worse since the company busted the union two years ago.

Even before the union was broken, workers were forced to work constantly changing hours. To avoid paying overtime, management would allow employees to work only a few hours at the beginning of the week, but force them to work 12 and 14 hour shifts at week's end. Workers would often be blamed for accidents that were the result of company neglect.

UFCW Local 400 is suing the company and maintains a small picket line of fired workers outside the plant gate.

Besides the difficulty of dealing with harassment, poultry workers suffer from other work-related problems. Poultry processing is highly mechanized and workers on the production lines carry out difficult, repetitive tasks that can be very dangerous.

Swollen joints, rheumatism, and injuries from sharp tools are among the ailments common to poultry workers.

Companies such as Rocco also exploit poultry farmers who operate "franchises" set up by the processing companies.

The poultry processors sell fertilized eggs, chicks, and supplies to the farmers, who in return must sell their entire stock to that company only.

The farmer assumes all the risk since he or she is liable for repaying whatever amount the company "invested" in the farm.

# Subscription renewal campaign builds on gains of sales drive

BY MALIK MIAH

Los Angeles. San Francisco. Boston. In recent trips to these cities I heard the same comments: "a great success"; "what a shot in the arm"; "a big victory"; "best political discussions I've had in years."

These were the reactions of participants in the fall circulation campaign that netted over 11,000 new subscribers to the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*.

*Militant* and *PM* readers sold subscriptions to workers, farmers, and students across the country and internationally. A total of 11,001 subscriptions (8,673 *Militant* and 2,328 *PM*) were sold — 10 percent above the national goal of 10,000.

Most new subscribers to the *Militant* bought a 12-week introductory subscription; or a five-month subscription to *PM*. As our letters page has reflected over the past few weeks, many of these first-time subscribers are extending their subscriptions by six months or a year.

But the bulk of new readers, those who began subscribing in October and November, are just beginning to receive renewal notices from our business office. *PM* subscribers will receive their first notices in January and February.

To build on the success of the fall campaign the *Militant* and *PM* are urging its readers to resubscribe. We want to especially appeal to new subscribers, so there will be no interruption in getting the publications.

## Seven-week effort

To facilitate this renewal effort, the *Militant* and *PM* are asking their supporters to meet and organize a seven-week campaign in January and February to contact readers about extending their subscriptions. This renewal campaign will run from January 10 through February 28.

No specific target (for example, getting 10 or 20 percent of the readers to renew) has been set. But there is a goal: locally contacting every new subscriber at least once, preferably more times — in person or by mail.

The fall circulation campaign offered an opportunity for political discussions with potential subscribers at plant gates, in factories, in working-class communities, on campuses, and at political demonstrations and events. These discussions, sometimes lasting 15 minutes or longer, convinced many working people and students to subscribe to the socialist publications.

Thousands of others bought single copies of the papers and Pathfinder Press books and pamphlets.

A collective effort was behind the success we had. And a similar approach will be necessary to convince subscribers to extend their subscriptions today. It will require weekly discussions by distributors on how best to organize this campaign.

We want to utilize the seven weeks to the fullest. We won't be talking to every subscriber the first week. Some subscriptions expire in early January; others in mid-February.

Trade union supporters of the *Militant* and *PM* can take the lead in systematically talking with coworkers who have subscriptions about renewing.

Steven Fuchs, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco and a distributor of the *Militant* and *PM*, told me that supporters there are planning to establish a renewal committee to help organize the campaign.

He explained that this "is a way to continue selling single issues and subscriptions, as well as winning renewals."

Supporters in San Francisco, as in many areas, set up a sales committee to organize teams during the fall campaign. The committee helped to organize the collective effort of all distributors — from plant-gate teams to Saturday literature tables in working-class communities.

"Now that the campaign is over," Fuchs said, "the aim is to continue selling single issues and subscriptions. So, we need a sales committee and a renewal committee, which, of course, will work together."

The renewal committee will focus on going through the list of subscribers in San Francisco and map out a plan to contact them about renewing their subscriptions, as well as let them know of *Militant* and *PM* sponsored or supported political events in the area.

## Continuing to sell

Since the fall campaign ended I was told that in Boston 7-10 subscriptions have been sold per week.

New York supporters recently sent out a mailing urging readers in the area to participate in a socialist educational conference.

Supporters in Greensboro, North Carolina, report that they've already begun organizing a follow-up campaign to meet and have political discussions with as many subscribers as possible. "Our goal," said



Militant/Bill Kalman  
Militant supporter shows paper to locked-out steelworker in Lorain, Ohio. Renewal campaign is chance to have further discussions with those who subscribed.

Yvonne Hayes, "is to sell renewals, get people into the bookstore, and win young people to the Young Socialist Alliance."

Greensboro supporters have organized themselves into three teams each with lists of names to contact.

Other areas are discussing how best to reach out to those subscribers who are many miles away and on college campuses.

Organizing renewal activity goes hand in hand with building and participating in antiwar, anti-apartheid, strike-solidarity, and other important political activities over the next few months. Many subscribers are

likely to join a protest or sign a sponsor card for the Political Rights Defense Fund, for example.

The response we've already received in the business office indicates that the prospects to significantly expand the *Militant*'s and *PM*'s long-term readership base among working people and students is realistic.

If you would like to join this campaign — by extending your subscription and helping to convince others to do so — contact the *Militant* and *PM* business office in New York, or a local distributor listed in the directory on page 12.

## Caribbean cane cutters leave U.S. after cops attack strike

BY CAMILO COCO  
AND LARRY LUKECART

BELLE GLADE, Fla. — Nearly 300 Caribbean cane cutters returned home rather than continue working under the conditions imposed by the Okeelanta Sugar Corporation here. The majority were from Jamaica. The rest came from St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Dominica.

The cane cutters are part of a work force of some 12,000 workers recruited each year with the collaboration of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association.

The FFVA, working with an outfit called the British West Indies Labour Organisation, contracts workers to harvest crops in Florida. More than 9,000 of the 12,000 migrant workers end up in the

sugarcane fields in southern Florida.

In mid-November, workers at the Shelton Land Co. and the Atlantic Sugar Association put down their machetes to demand higher wages. In both cases the British West Indies Labour Organisation intervened and negotiated higher pay for the cutters.

But when 300 workers at Okeelanta went on strike, the owners called in the local police. Hundreds of cops arrived at the labor camp and attacked the workers who were demanding higher pay. Several workers were hospitalized, some with dog bites. Two of the workers were arrested for "inciting a riot" and "resisting arrest."

Almost all of the striking workers decided to fly home rather than continue working under existing conditions.

A worker at the Atlantic Sugar Association here described to us the kind of conditions imposed on cane cutters in the area. Showing us his pay stub, he said, "We work eight hours and they pay us for four to five. Sometimes we get only \$15 or \$20 a day."

"We also have to pay for room and board," he added. "Some of the inexperienced cutters end up with nothing on their paychecks. Many of us feel it's not worth it."

The contract the workers sign states that the company will pay them \$5.30 an hour. One cutter explained that after eight days, the company starts paying by the row rather than by the hour. A "row" is two rows of cane one mile long.

One of the cutters explained, "If you complain they send you back home and you are not able to return."

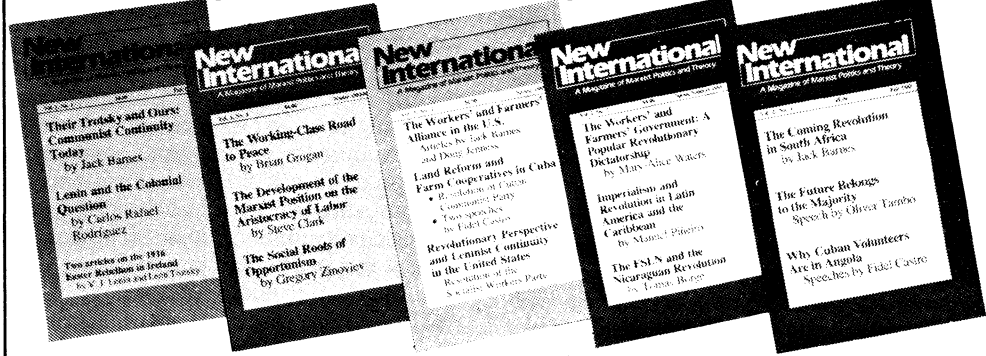
FFVA pays for the round-trip air fare only if the cutters complete their contract, which lasts for the six-month harvest season.

Cutters also have to pay for their medical expenses in the company clinic, although the company claims they will be reimbursed if they complete their contract. This will be a problem since the accident rate is increasing.

All of the cutters who work for the Atlantic Sugar Association, the plantation we visited, live in two long barracks with no privacy. Many of the other workers at other plantations live in similar housing, some with no running water.

The conditions are getting worse. "This is like slavery," we were told.

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Position on the Aristocracy of Labor" by Steve Clark.

- Vol. 1, No. 3 — "The Workers' and Farmers' Government: A Popular Revolutionary Dictatorship" by Mary-Alice Waters. "The FSLN and the Nicaraguan Revolution" by Tomás Borge.
- Vol. 2, No. 1 — "The Workers' and Farmers' Alliance in the U.S.," articles by Jack Barnes and Doug Jenness. "Land Reform and Cooperatives in Cuba."

- Vol. 2, No. 2 — "The Coming Revolution in South Africa" by Jack Barnes. "The Future Belongs to the Majority," Speech by Oliver Tambo. "Cuba's Internationalist Volunteers in Angola," Speech by Fidel Castro.

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# Miners discuss unemployment, apartheid

## Unionists from over 30 countries at international conference

BY KIPP DAWSON  
AND KATHY MICKELLS

LONDON — Representatives of miners' unions in more than 30 countries met here November 22-23 to discuss unemployment in the mining and energy industries. The conference was sponsored by the International Miners' Organization (IMO) and hosted by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in Britain.

Founded in 1985, the IMO brings together miners' unions that are affiliated to both the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, headquartered in Brussels, and the Prague-based World Federation of Trade Unions.

Official delegates or observers attended from miners' unions in France, Greece, Cyprus, the Soviet Union, and most of the East European countries; a dozen African countries, including South Africa; India; Australia; and Vietnam.

At the request of the South African National Union of Mineworkers, the conference adopted a resolution to "support the call by the African National Congress, South African trade union movement, anti-apartheid organizations, and the United Nations Assembly for comprehensive maximum economic sanctions to be imposed upon South Africa."

### Unemployment

Alain Simon, the IMO's general secretary, gave the keynote report on the struggle for jobs in the mining and energy industries.

Simon said recent miners' struggles in South Africa, Bolivia, France, and Britain

nents are intensifying" and that "a peace and disarmament-oriented policy" would "push forward growth and employment."

Much of the discussion during the two-day meeting centered on the Simon report.

IMO president Arthur Scargill, who is also president of the NUM in Britain, said, "Our task is to defend jobs because the alternative is to consign human beings to the indignity of unemployment — to a life at or below the poverty line."

Scargill said that 2.5 million jobs have been lost in Britain during the past six years. The figure includes 40,000 mining jobs over the past two years.

"The government, in order to push through this policy of mass redundancy [unemployment] and having failed to destroy the miners and their union in a 12-month historic strike, produced redundancy-severance benefits which in a large majority of cases are in excess of a person's wage," he said.

"Let us remember," Scargill continued, "that the real price of this policy is the fact that the sons and daughters of those redundant workers have no job and are destined

for a life of helplessness and hopelessness."

### 'Attack on one is attack on all'

Scargill said the IMO unions must recognize "that an attack upon one is an attack upon all" and urged the member organizations to give assistance to others "wherever it is required."

He called on "the socialist countries" to stop trading with the multinational corporations "when they are attacking working people and threatening unemployment."

"This conference," he said, "must record its support for our Black brothers and sisters in South Africa and salute the magnificent struggle of the [South African] NUM, its president James Motlatsi and General Secretary Cyril Ramaphosa."

He also urged the IMO to "pledge assistance to workers in Chile, Bolivia, El Salvador, and above all Nicaragua, who are having to withstand the might of the United States who seek to destroy the young fledgling socialist state."

Three women miners from the United States attended as guests of Britain's

Women Against Pit Closures. Libby Lindsay, from United Mine Workers of America District 17 in southern West Virginia, presented greetings for the delegation.

"We three women are coal-face workers in underground mines, among the 1,500 women who work side by side with our brothers on the same jobs," she said.

Lindsay pointed out that while the coal employers slash jobs, death and injury rates in the mines are going up.

"Just as the issues you have raised are familiar to us, so are your bosses, for they are our bosses too," she said. "Our bosses are multinational corporations who drive down the standards all over the world in their passion for profits."

The *IMO Journal* appears six times a year in English, French, and Spanish. Copies can be obtained by writing *IMO Journal*, 119 rue Pierre Semard, 93000 Bobigny, France.

*Kipp Dawson is a member of United Mine Workers of America District 5. Kathy Mickells is a member of UMW District 4.*

## Aerospace workers walk off the job

BY SUE SKINNER  
AND DEAN DENNO

TORRANCE, Calif. — On December 16 more than 85 percent of the aerospace workers walked off the job for half a day after McDonnell Douglas arbitrarily began imposing a rejected contract at its plants here and in Huntington Beach.

Second-shift workers walked out to the applause of a group of first-shift workers singing "Solidarity Forever."

Members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 720 voted to reject the company's second offer and authorized a strike on December 7.

That contract contained many of the same proposals that they had rejected November 2. The company had dropped the worst union-busting provisions. But it was trying to force acceptance of an offer that included pay increases totaling only 5 percent over the life of the three-year contract. Lower labor grades were to get raises of only 2 percent.

Moreover, the proposed contract called for combining hundreds of jobs and expanding the multitier pay scheme already in effect at the plant.

As District President Mike Smith said, "We cannot go with a contract that takes seven years to reach the top of the pay scale."

Every IAM member had received a barrage of slick company propaganda with their paycheck charging, "Some of your IAM representatives are mistaken."

This was in response to a widely circulated letter from 60 unionists to their co-workers in the plant calling for a strike vote.

The unionists' letter explained that "all workers should get the pay increase. All of us should get the same pay for doing the same work. Everything important to us can only be won if we are united. Two-tier pay is like a knife slicing us in half."

An announcement that the company has new government contracts amounting to \$3.4 billion helped convince many workers that a strike could be won.

District 720 business representative, Bob McDonald, told the union meeting, "Defense work is paid for by your taxes. It's your money and your profits going to them [the company], not the working person."

In 1983 the Machinists voted not to strike when United Auto Workers (UAW) members began a strike that was to last 117 days at the McDonnell Douglas plant in nearby Long Beach.

"For years Douglas has pitted us against Long Beach," a leaflet distributed to the workers said. "We think all Douglas contracts should have common expiration dates in the new contract. We have to stop the divisions, because the company won't. Now we have a chance to show our UAW brothers and sisters that we're behind them

no matter what happened in the past."

The next day over 5,500 members of UAW Local 148 at the Long Beach plant staged a half-day walkout protesting the company's unilateral imposition of its "final contract offer" that the workers had rejected earlier.

Workers poured out of the plant wearing yellow ribbons to protest "the company holding their money hostage." The UAW members were also angered over the firing of shop steward Jim Wade.

Some Torrance IAM members joined an impromptu meeting at the UAW hall following the walkout and were given a rous-

ing welcome. UAW Local 148 President Bob Berghoff explained to cheers, "This is the first time we've ever been together."

The meeting was interrupted by a phone call from Tulsa, Oklahoma, announcing that workers at the Douglas plant there had also walked out.

At a December 16 rally, District 720 President Smith announced the IAM and UAW workers will hold a joint membership meeting early next month.

*Sue Skinner is a member of IAM District 720. Dean Denno is a member of UAW Local 148.*



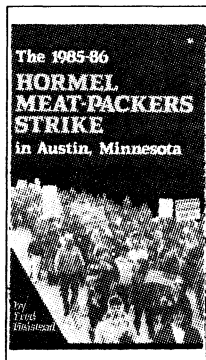
Militant/Norton Sandler

Arthur Scargill

show growing resistance of workers to shouldering the consequences of the capitalist economic crisis.

He also said that the "struggles to promote peace and disarmament which all peoples are engaged in on the five conti-

### A pamphlet on meat-packers' struggle



The 1985-86 Hormel Meat-Packers Strike in Austin, Minnesota presents the facts about the Geo. A. Hormel & Co.'s union-busting attack on the workers at its Austin plant, and about how the Hormel workers have fought back and won support

from unionists and farmers across the country.

Every unionist facing takeback demands and other attacks will want to read this story. 44 pp. \$1.00

Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12, or by mail from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please add \$.75 handling.

## Federal judge sentences Missouri farm activist to 8 months in prison

BY JEFF POWERS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — On December 2 Marvin Porter, a farmer from Kidder, Missouri, was sentenced to eight months in prison. Federal Judge Howard Sachs also sentenced Porter to three years' probation to be served after he is released from prison. The judge ordered him to turn over a tractor to the Production Credit Association (PCA), a federal farm lending agency.

The judge said he wanted Porter's sentence to serve as a "deterrent" to farmers who might be tempted to challenge the PCA.

Porter is a well-known farm activist. In 1985 he was one of the central organizers of two big protests against the foreclosure of Perry Wilson's farm in Plattsburg, Missouri. These protests helped draw national attention to the plight of working farm families.

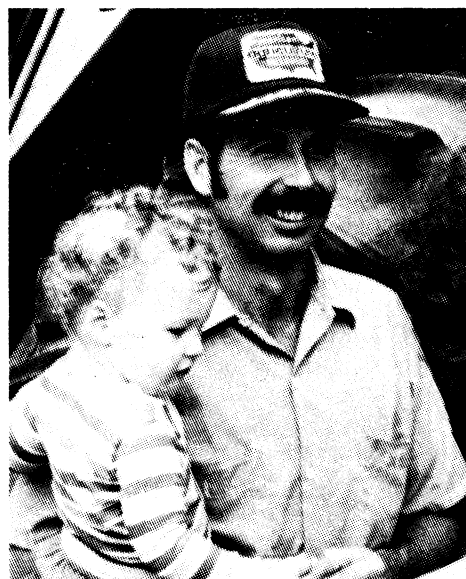
In 1986 Porter and his wife Teresa were indicted by the government. The first 19 charges were for "conversion" — that is, selling mortgaged property, in this case hogs. They were also charged with hiding a mortgaged tractor and with conspiring to defraud the U.S. government. The charges against Teresa Porter were later dropped.

The PCA had loaned the Porters hundreds of thousands of dollars. When the price of land and hogs plummeted, the Porters, like tens of thousands of other farmers, were unable to repay their loans on schedule. Eventually, the PCA foreclosed on their farm.

In an attempt to save the farm, Marvin Porter sold his hogs, putting the money back into the operation.

At the trial in July, the Porters' lawyers argued that they could not be held accountable for their actions, because the stress of trying to hold onto their farm put them in an untenable position.

The FBI spent the better part of three years preparing the indictments against the Porters. And an FBI agent sat with the government attorney, directing him during the



Militant/Jeff Powers

Marvin Porter and son Aron

trial.

The case attracted a lot of attention. Farmers, civil rights activists, and trade unionists came to the trial to show their support.

The government repeatedly attempted to brand Marvin Porter as a right-winger, trying to drive a wedge between him and other progressive farmers and their allies in the civil rights and labor movements.

The defense lawyers explained that Porter was initially attracted to right-wing groups like the Posse Comitatus, because it offered what appeared to be simple solutions to the problems facing farmers. However, once its anti-Black and anti-Semitic views became clear to him, Porter rejected the organization.

Porter is scheduled to begin the jail sentence on December 29. Donations to his legal defense effort and other messages of support can be sent to the North American Farm Alliance, P.O. Box 2502, Ames, Iowa 50010.

# The big lie about 'torture' of opposition prisoners in Cuba

## Armando Valladares vs. Amnesty International

**Against All Hope.** By Armando Valladares. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1986. Translated from the Spanish. 380 pages, cloth. \$18.95.

BY HARRY RING

(Last of three parts)

In this memoir of his Cuban prison experience, Armando Valladares rails against the common prisoners. They did the cooking and, he claims, their hatred of the "political" prisoners was so phobic that they would allegedly add rats to the dinner pot.

But if you accept Valladares' account of the starvation rations, they should have welcomed the added protein.

On page 75, he tells us, "We found out from men working in the kitchen . . . that 100 pounds of foodstuffs per day were allocated for 6,000 prisoners. . . . [T]hat worked out to less than a pound a day for every 50 prisoners. And that was the extent of our food."

At that point a reasonably conscientious copy editor would reach for a calculator. A pound of food divided among 50 prisoners comes to about three-tenths of an ounce apiece a day. That would, indeed, be a meager ration.

The book also features numerous accounts of really remarkable feats by the prisoners.

For instance, on page 267 the inmates are jammed — naked — 20 to a cell. There is only room for 19 to lie down, packed together like sardines. So one always has to stand up while the rest sleep.

Meanwhile, in preparation for an escape attempt, an "extraordinary" tailor among the 20 naked sardines is busy fashioning two sets of clothes from "rags and sheets." No doubt he used the fellow who had to stand up as the dummy.

### A remarkable saw

For another escape attempt, they were going to fashion a boat from palm lumber. This required, our creative author explains, a fast, silent way to cut the trees down. This was done with some remarkably fine steel wire they found abandoned near the rock pile. This wire, he continues, they braided into truly remarkable cutting instruments.

Thus braided, the wire "would cut through anything, even steel."(!)

The story gets even better.

"We tested it in the fields. It took less than a minute to cut through the trunk of a palm tree, and since the cut was so fine, if there was no breeze to move the tree, the

trunk would remain erect as though it had not been cut at all."

Yet somehow, despite such remarkable feats, the escape attempt failed.

There were smaller impressive technical accomplishments. When visitors were coming, Valladares tells us, the inmates would press their prison garb. How? By extracting starch from macaroni and, with cleverly devised hand irons, get some really sharp creases.

How did they extract starch from macaroni?

"It was a long, laborious process."

Some of the things the *plantados* (as the recalcitrant prisoners convicted of murder, arson, and other crimes against the revolution were known) did involved more than extracting starch from macaroni, at least according to our author.

The prisoners, he asserts, were forced to work regardless of their condition. One of them complained of an injured hand. The doctor growled, "Listen, for you to stay inside, you'd have to cut off one of your fingers."

What happened? You guessed it.

"Not long afterward, the prisoner came back. Dr. Agramonte saw something in the man's expression that frightened him. The prisoner raised his closed fist, opened it, and dropped on the desk before the horrified eyes of Dr. Agramonte, the thumb of his other hand, which he had somehow sawed off."

And that too was for openers. To avoid excessive labor, Valladares says, the prisoners devised a bone-breaking machine. In response, he continues, the guards determined to make the men work even with broken arms.

"There was one prisoner in Building 5 who responded to that by breaking both his arms. The squad leader . . . did what no one expected — he took him out to work with both arms broken. . . .

"The next day when the squad leader called the man out, they had to carry him in a wheelbarrow . . . he had broken both his legs as well."

At this point the most gullible reader will plead — no pun intended — "Man, gimme a break."

### Valladares undercuts his own story

Besides the preposterous tales, there are anecdotes which unintentionally undercut the attempt to paint Cuban prisons as hell-holes.

For example, Valladares describes the first prison he stayed in as having open cell blocks, with the inmates free to choose their own quarters and "stroll" throughout the block.

One of his pals chose a spot on the sixth floor of this "hellhole," because, "He liked to sleep late in the morning."

Nevertheless, Valladares insists life was harrowing. On page 161, we're offered a rather Freudian recollection of a mass search for contraband.

"The order was for us to form into files, each man standing [naked] with his chest, genitals, and thighs pressing against the back, and backside, of the man in front of him. . . .

"They threw the prisoners to the ground, face down and spread their thighs, and other guards rammed the barrels of their rifles between the cheeks of the men's buttocks. . . ."

Meanwhile — just two pages later, — it occurred to some of his buddies to start a club in one of their cells.

"We managed to collect several burlap bags . . . and we joined them all together to make a rug the size of the cell . . . then we took empty cans and . . . made tea cups. . . .

"The next step was to get hold of some teabags, which came into the prison with some regularity in those days.

"Then from 5 o'clock until 9 o'clock at night, barefooted (we always left our shoes in the hallway), we would sit yoga-style on the rug and sip tea and have readings from one of the few books that had been spared in the search. . . . We ended our meetings

at 9 o'clock at night, the hour the cornet was played for lights out, and each of us went back to his own cell."

No doubt to gird for the next day's beatings and torture.

### Amnesty International reports

To bolster his sweeping indictment of Cuba's penal system, Valladares cites the authority of Amnesty International, which concerns itself with prisoners worldwide.

"In its latest reports," Valladares asserts, "Amnesty International has denounced the executions of dozens of political opponents of the regime, the physical mistreatment and abuse, the beatings."

That's not precisely the fact.

In a 1973 report on torture in various countries, Amnesty International noted "a wealth of allegations of physical and psychological torture" by Cuban prisoners and their families.

However, the report conceded these allegations could not be confirmed. It added its own view that there were "strong indications" of prison torture in the early years of the revolution.

The organization's most recent report on the question, "Torture in the '80s," cites 66 countries in which there were allegations, and evidence, of torture of prisoners.

Cuba is not mentioned in the report.

Further, it's useful to check out the organization's annual international reports.

Most of the yearly reports on Cuba focus on the *plantados*, and Amnesty International's concern that they are being treated unjustly. But a key Amnesty International report on Cuba — the one from 1977 — provides a damning indictment of the campaign of lies about the Cuban penal system. That report flatly states:

"Amnesty International has received no information to indicate that prisoners have been tortured during the period covered by this report.

"Accounts by former prisoners about previous years claim that prison conditions were then poor, that there was some ill-treatment and, occasionally, fatal incidents; but on the whole they tend to corroborate officials' statements to the effect that torture is deliberately and systematically prevented under the present regime." (Emphasis added.)

True, that was 1977. What about since then? Read the nine annual reports that follow and, despite the deploring of the alleged unjust treatment of the *plantados*, there is not a single report suggesting any need to revise the 1977 finding that torture is "deliberately and systematically prevented."

In those subsequent reports, the issue of torture is not even raised.

Surprisingly, an important confirmation of that Amnesty International finding was offered recently by a top official of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, and reported in the *New York Times*.

The September 17, 1986, *Times* included a feature story related to the release to this country of 67 Cuban prisoners.

The report stated:

"Most of the Cuban prisoners released to the United States were members of the Cuban armed forces under Fulgencio Batista and fought against Fidel Castro's revolutionary forces, the American official who interviewed them said today."

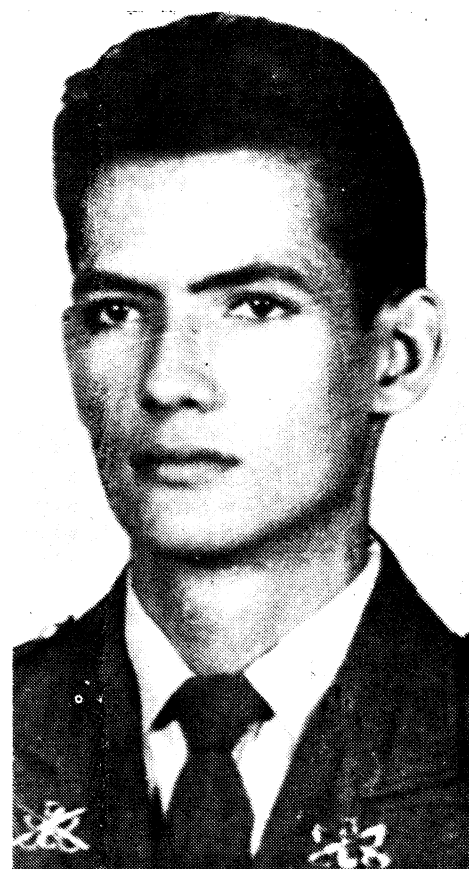
The paper quoted Perry Steele, district director of the INS for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Steele said, "Very few of them were in private business. Most of them were in the military, the police, or something like that."

The report said Steele spent three weeks in Havana interviewing the prisoners to be released, and was accompanied by a U.S. vice-consul and a State Department lawyer during the interviews.

In each case, the Cuban government provided a written account of the charges under which the prisoners had been convicted.

"My job primarily," Steele said, "was to establish that the information they had



Armando Valladares in 1957 when he joined Batista's police force and the military reserve.

given us was credible, or whether the person in front of us was credible."

The charges against the prisoners, he said, ranged from conspiracy to murder.

The *Times* reported: "He said he would tell people accused of murder of the charges and the specifics had been given, and then asked the prisoner what happened."

"He said that some explained that they were in ambushes in which forces on both sides were killed."

The *Times* added, "Mr. Steele said that in the interviews he found the prisoners in good health and spirits."

"We remarked among ourselves," Steele told the paper, "that none seemed in ill health or mistreated or emaciated."

That single report is sufficient to expose the Valladares book for the hoax that it is.

Valladares ends his book, with intended irony, by quoting a statement of Fidel Castro on Cuba's treatment of prisoners.

We take this same quote, made in answer to a question by a French reporter Aug. 6, 1983, from a pamphlet published by Editora Política in Havana.

"From our point of view, we don't have any human rights problem. Here we don't have people who've disappeared, people who've been tortured; people who've been murdered. Throughout the 25 years of the Revolution, in spite of the difficulties and the dangers we've experienced, there has never been a person tortured; there has never been a crime."

Nothing in the Valladares book refutes that statement.

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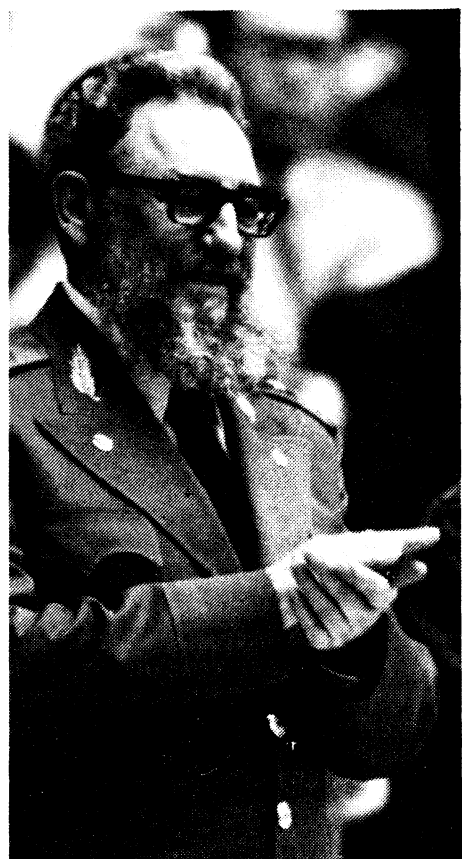
Fidel Castro  
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From the preface by Rep. Mervyn M. Dymally, who with Jeffrey M. Elliot conducted the interview. 276 pages, \$7.95

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Fidel Castro has refuted allegation that prisoners are tortured in Cuban jails. Report by Amnesty International says "torture is deliberately and systematically prevented under the present regime."



# Washington not 'neutral' in Iran-Iraq war

## CIA gives satellite intelligence to Iraqi military

BY ERNEST HARSCH

For weeks, since the revelations that Washington has secretly sold arms to Iran, a virulent propaganda campaign against that country and its people has been under way in the United States.

In large part, this has been intended to blunt the outrage over the exposure of the secret U.S. funding to the Nicaraguan *contras* (mercenaries). It also flows from the hostility of the U.S. rulers to the Iranian revolution of 1979, which overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny of the shah.

Though it is clearly Washington that has been carrying out terrorist policies — against the people of Nicaragua and many other countries — officials in the White House and Congress prefer to slap that label on Iran instead.

"Iranians use terrorism as an instrument of their policy," an administration official told the *New York Times*. Iran, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger charged, is governed by "some lunatics."

Similar accusations have been made by those critical of the Reagan administration's policy, including many liberals in Congress.

To cloud things further, there have even been suggestions that the Iranian government knew that some of the proceeds from the arms sales were being siphoned off for the Nicaraguan *contras*.

Hojatolislam Hashemi Rafsanjani, the first Iranian official to confirm the arms shipments, denied this in a November 28 speech. The Iranian government has publicly spoken out in support of Nicaragua and in opposition to Washington's *contra* war.

### Aid to Iraq

Some congresspeople and media pundits have also maintained that the arms sales indicate a U.S. "tilt" toward Iran in its war with Iraq. But the facts point to the opposite conclusion.

The U.S. rulers — who welcomed the Iraqi invasion of Iran when it occurred in 1980 — have long feared an Iranian victory and the encouragement that could provide to the oppressed masses throughout the Middle East. "A victory by Iran," a senior White House official told the December 16



CIA Director William Casey urged Iraqi regime to step up attacks on Iranian installations. Young Iranian troops on their way to the battle front.



*New York Times*, "could have a great destabilizing effect on the region."

For at least two-and-a-half years — and possibly longer — the CIA has been providing the Iraqi regime with satellite photos and other sources of military intelligence on Iranian troop movements and installations, the *Washington Post* reported December 15 and 16.

In mid-1984, unidentified U.S. sources told the *Post*, Washington authorized a CIA "intelligence exchange" with Iraq. After the restoration of diplomatic ties between the two countries in November of that year, the provision of U.S. satellite intelligence mounted. This helped the Iraqi forces pinpoint bombing targets in Iran, as well as to more effectively use poison gas against concentrations of Iranian troops.

In addition, the *Post* reported, "CIA Director William J. Casey met twice this fall — once in October and again in November — with senior Iraqi officials to make sure the new channel was functioning and to encourage more attacks on Iranian installations, the sources said."

Since then, Iraqi attacks have stepped

up, including the bombing of Iranian oil tankers, power stations, and the capital, Tehran.

### French missiles, British maneuvers

The Iraqi regime has also received significant aid from other governments, particularly the French. Some of the recent attacks on Iran were carried out with new French-made, laser-guided missiles. The Saudi Arabian monarchy, a close U.S. ally, has provided Saddam with \$35 billion in aid.

At the end of November, some 5,000 British troops conducted military exercises in Oman. This was intended as a warning to Iran of the British ability to intervene rapidly in the region with large numbers of troops.

U.S. naval forces have often conducted such threatening military maneuvers in the Persian Gulf region as well. In April, Vice-president George Bush visited Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, and North Yemen, pledging to keep the Persian Gulf open and affirming continued U.S. military support.

The November 19 *Washington Post* reported that the CIA has also given millions of dollars in aid to monarchist and other right-wing Iranian exile groups seeking to overthrow the Iranian government.

### Hatred of revolution

Overall U.S. policy toward Iran is rooted in a determined opposition to the Iranian revolution. The overthrow of the shah was a big blow to U.S. imperialism. It deprived Washington of one of its most reliable regional allies. The U.S. bases in Iran were shut down, and some 45,000 U.S. advisers were expelled.

Although the Iranian workers and peasants initially made a number of important gains through the revolution, many of these have since been eroded, as a result of the policies of the Iranian regime itself. Composed of businessmen and figures in the religious hierarchy, it is dedicated to preserving capitalist rule. It has restricted the democratic freedoms of the Iranian working people, blocked a land reform, and limited labor rights.

At the same time, however, the Iranian government has refused to tailor its foreign policies to suit Washington, speaking out publicly in support of various anti-imperialist struggles. This has won it Washington's continued hostility. In addition to its provocations against Iran, the White House has probed for openings with any forces within Iran's capitalist government that might lean more toward accommodating U.S. interests there and throughout the region.

### Probes

That is where the arms shipments fit in.

The arms themselves can have little impact on the outcome of the war (the U.S. shipments were just a tiny fraction of the estimated \$35 billion in arms Iran has bought from other sources over the past six years). Their real significance for Washington was as an attempt to open lines to some individuals or factions within the Iranian government.

According to Attorney General Edwin Meese, the White House sought to identify those in Iran "who would provide a better relationship between the United States and Iran than we have at the present time."

And these attempts are not new. A report in the November 29 *Washington Post* revealed that then secretary of state Alexander Haig okayed an Israeli shipment of U.S. arms to Iran in 1981. "The arms shipment," the *Post* reported, "was intended to help Israel cultivate Iranian military officials who could be valuable in any government succeeding that of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini."

These probes complement Washington's more direct attacks on Iran. Whether the White House and Pentagon are giving military aid to Iraq or seeking contacts with Iranian government officials and military officers, the ultimate goal is the same — to bury the legacy of the Iranian revolution and reimpose U.S. domination over the country.

## Protests hit U.S. aid to contras

Continued from front page

test the *contra* war, were among those arrested.

Some 90 people from the Air Commando Association, a group of active and retired Green Berets who support the *contras*, held a counterdemonstration.

Well over 500 people picketed the federal building in Los Angeles on December 13. There were students from several high schools and members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, Service Employees International Union, United Teachers of Los Angeles, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The Fall Mobilization on Central America, the coalition that organized a successful antiwar protest in Los Angeles on November 1, has voted to support the April actions and is urging that the call for the actions be issued publicly as soon as possible.

In San Francisco nearly 300 people marched from the offices of the CIA through the busy Union Square shopping district. The previous day, 28 people were arrested in a sit-in at the CIA offices.

Nearly 100 people gathered at the federal building in downtown Pittsburgh on December 14.

### U.S. backs 'contras' in Africa

Dennis Brutus, a well-known exiled poet from South Africa who is chairman of the Black Studies Department at the University of Pittsburgh, pointed to the ties between Washington's aid to the Nicaraguan *contras* and to the counterrevolutionaries attacking Angola and Mozambique. He also hit Washington's support for the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Kay Tillow, vice-president of Hospital

Workers Local 1199P and president of the Pittsburgh chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, called on the labor movement to demand an end to all aid to the *contras*.

Many speakers pointed to the importance of the April 25 actions. A planning meeting was announced for January to discuss building them.

In Manhattan over 200 protesters marched from the United Nations to the Times Square army recruiting station on December 17.

Nearly 150 antiwar protesters marched from the Boston Common to CIA recruitment offices on December 11.

Nicaraguan citizen Frank Ramirez, a leader of the Lawrence, Massachusetts, Central America Solidarity Association, told the crowd, "None of the political goals of the CIA and the *contras* have been achieved."

### 'All out April 25'

In New Paltz, New York, 40 people marched from the army recruiting center to the post office in the freezing cold on December 13. The signs they carried included ones that read "All out April 25!" and "March on Washington April 25!"

More than 125 people picketed the White House on December 11 in the pouring rain. They chanted, "Stop the killing. Stop the lies. We know what *contra* money buys!"

The CIA front Southern Air Transport was the target of a Miami picket line on December 13. There will be another demonstration there on December 20, called by the Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Association (LACASA).

LACASA is a supporter of April 25 and intends to build it in the Miami area.

In Groton, Connecticut, 58 activists were arrested during a demonstration on December 13 protesting the launching of the Trident nuclear submarine *Tennessee* and U.S. intervention in Central America.

In Chicago a protest is scheduled for December 20. Meanwhile, the coalition that organized the October 25 antiwar protest in that city has called for a public meeting on January 24 at Columbia College to begin building the April actions in the Chicago area.

Ray Hudson, mayor of the Nicaraguan city of Bluefields, and Marina Jarquin de Peralta, a Christian base community leader from Matagalpa, Nicaragua, were the featured speakers at a fundraising event in Atlanta on December 13. De Peralta lost two sons to the *contras*.

The Atlanta Committee on Latin America announced that it was organizing a work brigade to Bluefields next October. ACLA has begun building the April national demonstration in Atlanta.

The breadth of antiwar sentiment in the country today is illustrated by the range of cities that held antiwar protests the December 13 weekend. They include: Trenton, New Jersey; Carbondale, Illinois; Tucson, Arizona; Indianapolis, Indiana; Philadelphia; Phoenix; Louisville, Kentucky; Milwaukee; Omaha, Nebraska; Charlottesville, Virginia; Burlington, Vermont; St. Louis; and Binghamton, New York. A demonstration was also held in Toronto, Canada.

*This article is based on reports from Sam Chetta, Kate Daher, Clare Fraenzl, Seth Galinsky, Jon Hillson, Jim Little, Ernest Mailhot, Ike Nahem, and Arnold Weissberg.*

# New Nicaragua constitution: advance for revolution

## Codifies gains of workers and peasants

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — In 1969 the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua issued a political program calling for a "Sandinista People's Revolution" to overthrow the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.

The FSLN declared that its goal was to replace the Somoza tyranny with "a revolutionary government based on the worker-peasant alliance and the convergence of all the patriotic, anti-imperialist, and anti-oligarchic forces in the country."

"The Sandinista People's Revolution," said the FSLN, "will establish a revolutionary government that will eliminate the reactionary structure that arose from rigged elections and military coups, and the people's power will create a Nicaragua that is free of exploitation, oppression, and backwardness; a free, progressive, and independent country."

It was to take another 10 years before Nicaraguan working people, led by the FSLN, would succeed in bringing down the Somoza dictatorship through a popular insurrection. Today, seven and a half years since the 1979 revolution, the progress they have made in constructing a new government and using state power to advance their interests has been codified in the adoption of a national constitution.

It is Nicaragua's "first legitimate, just, and realistic constitution, reflecting National Unity, and constituting one of the basic fronts of defense of the revolution," says the National Assembly's editing committee. The assembly is Nicaragua's legislature, which drafted the document.

What does the new constitution represent, and why do the Nicaraguans consider it so basic to advancing their revolution? To understand this, we need to look back at the kind of governments Nicaragua had before the 1979 revolution and the tasks posed to the Sandinistas when they took power in 1979.

### Struggle for national independence

Nicaragua won its independence from Spain in the early 19th century. But it was never free from interference by other countries. Nicaragua suffered U.S. military attack or outright invasion five times between 1854 and 1927, as Washington or its agents sought to impose servile regimes on the Nicaraguan people. The struggle for a government free of foreign domination became a central demand.

While some Nicaraguan merchants and landlords played an important role in early battles for national liberation, by the 1920s, Nicaraguan peasants and the small working class that was emerging began to take the lead in this struggle. Led by Gen. Augusto César Sandino, in 1933 a peasant-based guerrilla army drove out U.S. Marines occupying their country.

Washington responded by organizing the assassination of Sandino and installing the Somoza family in power.

### Somoza dictatorship

The Somozas ruled through the brute force of their National Guard, trained by the U.S. Marines. They used their state power to steal the land of small peasants and build an empire based on agricultural exports.

In order to maintain the class exploitation on which the Somoza family rested, democratic rights — such as the rights of workers or peasants to organize, the right to a free press, and freedom of speech — were ruthlessly suppressed. Workers' parties were illegal and even opposition capitalist politicians were denied full democratic rights.

In the arena of foreign policy, Nicaragua remained a pawn of U.S. interests and a military staging area for Washington's counterrevolutionary strikes against other countries in Latin America. The infamous

1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of revolutionary Cuba, for example, was organized from the Nicaraguan port of Puerto Cabezas.

The constitutions imposed under Somozaist rule served to enshrine a capitalist government dominated by a small clique of businessmen and landlords close to Somoza and loyal to Washington. It excluded working people from any meaningful political activity and restricted substantially the freedom of capitalist forces outside Somoza's tight little circle.

The Somoza gang stole elections through fraud, at gunpoint, or "legally." Somoza's 1950 constitution, for example, automatically gave his Liberal Party 66 percent of the seats in the national legislature. He later graciously reduced his margin to 60 percent.

Even Somoza's last constitution, adopted in 1974, maintained class inequality in citizenship rights. Nicaraguans with an education — the wealthy and some from the middle class — became citizens at age 18 while everyone else had to wait until they were 21.

Nicaragua, in other words, had never consolidated bourgeois democratic rights and national sovereignty. Thus, when they took power in 1979, the Sandinistas faced the task not only of carrying out the economic and social transformations needed to overcome Nicaragua's extreme poverty and end class exploitation, but also of carrying out the national, democratic tasks that decades of capitalist rule had failed to accomplish.

The Sandinistas declared the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction to govern the country until elections could be held. They also established an interim legislature, made up of representatives of the popular organizations that had arisen in the course of the fight to overthrow Somoza. This body also included representatives of those capitalist and landlord forces that had decided to back the tyrant's overthrow at the end. Some of these figures were brought into the government junta and ministries.

### Statute on the Rights of Nicaraguans

One of the new junta's first acts was to decree the Statute on the Rights of Nicaraguans to replace the Somozaist constitution. This statute has been in force ever since. It will now be replaced by the new constitution.

The statute struck down the blatant antidemocratic practices of the dictatorship and proclaimed broad rights for all the Nicaraguan people, including their right to organize both in the cities and the countryside, to publish their own newspapers, and to form political parties.

Issued barely a month after taking power, the statutes were skeletal, focusing on guaranteeing working people the right to struggle for social progress, and pointing to the basic purpose of the new state: to advance the social needs of the nation — jobs, food production, economic development, education, health, and housing.

Using their newly won state power, Nicaragua's working masses began to effect the most immediate changes needed to pull the country out of backwardness and defend the new revolution.

With Somoza's National Guard destroyed, a Sandinista People's Army and Sandinista Police were established. Civilians were also armed and organized into popular militias.

The government took over the banks and foreign trade, and confiscated the farms and companies of Somoza and his closest allies.

Land was distributed to poor peasants organized in cooperatives.

Health clinics, schools, and water lines were brought to the countryside. A massive literacy crusade was launched.

Organizing drives began to establish

trade unions, a national peasant organization, neighborhood defense committees, and women's and youth groups.

These measures taken by the government in the interests of the working masses alarmed capitalist and landlord forces, the Catholic church hierarchy, and, of course, Washington. With genuine democracy staring them in the face for the first time in Nicaragua, they began howling about "Sandinista totalitarianism."

### Role of mercenary war

But the Sandinistas couldn't be pressured or blackmailed into retreating from the course they were on. So Washington began a mercenary war against Nicaragua in 1981, carried out by ex-National Guardsmen trained by the CIA.

This war, which has now lasted more than five years, is today known as the *contra* war. Aimed at overthrowing the Nicaraguan government and destroying the revolution, it has forced the workers and peasants to subordinate everything else to defeating the mercenaries and their U.S. backers. It has slowed down efforts to expand the nation's meager productive forces and taken enormous human and material resources.

In the face of the war, the Sandinistas have called on all Nicaraguans — rich or poor, pro- or anti-FSLN — to carry out their patriotic duty and resist the U.S. aggression.

This includes military defense of the country and doing whatever possible to maintain and increase the productivity of land and factories.

The remaining capitalists and landlords in Nicaragua, who have important weight in some branches of agriculture and in trade, are included in this appeal for "National Unity," as are the political parties representing their interests.

### 1984 elections

In November 1984 Nicaragua held elections for president, vice-president, and for a national assembly whose first task would be to draft a new constitution. They were the freest elections ever held in Nicaragua.

The FSLN received 67 percent of the votes. Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramírez were elected president and vice-president.

Due to an FSLN proposal for proportional representation in the National Assembly, the six other parties that ran in the elections all received seats in the 96-member legislature.

Based on the votes, the FSLN won 61 seats. Three capitalist parties — the Democratic Conservative Party, Independent Liberal Party, and People's Social Christian Party — got 14, 9, and 6 seats respectively. Three ultraleft workers' parties — Communist Party of Nicaragua, Nicaraguan Socialist Party, and Marxist-Leninist Party — received two seats each.

### Drafting of constitution

The National Assembly began the process of preparing the constitution, establishing a drafting committee with proportional representation for all seven parties.

In February 1986 the commission presented its first draft, which then went to the people. The National Assembly organized 73 town meetings involving 100,000 people, across the country. This was a major feat, especially the meetings held in war zones and on the Atlantic Coast, where transportation barely exists and the meetings had to be translated into three other languages.

At the town meetings themselves, anyone could speak on the constitution, regardless of their political viewpoint or party affiliation. The big majority of those participating were workers, farmers, and youth. But the assembly went out of its way to guarantee capitalists the right to participate too. A special town meeting for



them was organized, but was canceled when only a handful showed up.

### Meetings strengthen document

A National Assembly editing committee made some substantial revisions of the draft document based on proposals from the town meetings.

The constitutional language concerning the rights of Indians and Blacks on the Atlantic Coast was considerably strengthened by the contributions of Coast residents. For the first time in history, the Nicaraguan people are defined as "multiethnic." The right of Coast residents to determine their own forms of land ownership, create their own organizations, receive bilingual education, and preserve their cultures is guaranteed. The new constitution declares that autonomous governments will be established on the Coast, elected by the people there.

The provisions on land reform were also strengthened. The purpose of land reform, says the final draft, is the "just distribution" of land. It pledges to "abolish the latifundio [big landholdings], the rent system, inefficiency in production and all forms of exploitation of the peasants." The earlier draft did not include these two points.

On women's rights, there were also important changes, including specific guarantees against sex discrimination in land ownership, political rights, and divorce.

New measures were added outlawing the refusal to hire, or attempts to fire, women because they are pregnant. The state's obligation to provide child care for working parents was strengthened.

Workers' right to participate in factory decision making was also strengthened. In the section defining the economy, a clause guaranteeing private entrepreneurs "reasonable profit margins" was dropped.

The town meetings allowed the workers and peasants to directly intervene in the drafting process and to put their stamp even more clearly on the final product. This made the constitution a more accurate reflection of the actual relationship of class forces in Nicaragua today. The town meetings improved the document because they brought to bear the weight of the advances that the toilers have made through their struggles.

These popular assemblies were also a real school for the Nicaraguan people. They were a place to learn about, debate, and discuss the burning political issues facing the country and how to solve them, as well as a broader discussion on the nature and goals of the revolution. Not only the





Left, Gloria Margarita Martínez Largaespada, mother of two martyrs of the revolution, speaks at constitution meeting for women in Managua. Above, two army youth in Atlantic Coast village of Orinoco. Town is predominantly Garífonos, one of Nicaragua's six ethnic groups. In new constitution, for first time in history Nicaraguan people are defined as "multiethnic."

Militant photos by Harvey McArthur

constitution, but the revolution itself has

The basic character of the constitution remained the same: a document codifying a democratic, independent republic with a government responsible for advancing the interests of Nicaragua's majority, the workers and peasants.

The document reflects the contradictory character of the current stage of the revolution. While working people hold political power, capitalist property relations continue to exist.

This is all summed up in the five "fundamental principles" at the beginning of the document.

The first principle establishes Nicaragua's right to "national independence, sovereignty, and national self-determination," rejecting "all foreign interference in Nicaragua's internal affairs."

Article 2 declares that the exercise of national sovereignty rests with the people, who freely decide "the construction of the economic, social, and political system that conforms to their needs."

In Article 3 the constitution says that Nicaragua is committed to the "struggle for peace and for a just international order," and therefore condemns "all forms of domination and colonial and imperialist exploitation."

The final two principles deal with the nature of the current Nicaraguan state. Article 4 explains that this state "is the principal instrument of the people to eliminate all forms of subordination and exploitation of the human being, to push forward the material and spiritual progress of the nation, and to guarantee that the interests and rights of the popular majority prevail."

The state, explains Article 5, "guarantees the existence of political pluralism, mixed economy, and nonalignment."

Defining these terms, the article explains that political pluralism is the right of political groups to exist and participate in political life "without ideological restrictions," except for those attempting to return to a Somozaist-type system.

Mixed economy is defined as "the existence of different forms of property, both public and private, and associative, cooperative, and communal." All this property, it continues, must be used to "contribute to the creation of wealth to satisfy the needs of the country and its inhabitants."

Nonalignment is defined as a commitment to peace, respect for the sovereignty of all nations, and opposition to all forms of colonial, imperialist, or racist oppression.

The constitution establishes four inde-

pendent branches of government — executive, legislative, judicial, and electoral. This government is responsible for assuring every Nicaraguan their right to an education, a job, health care, decent housing, recreation, and a host of other rights.

#### Democratic rights

The section on democratic rights is quite far-reaching, going significantly beyond the U.S. Constitution. In addition to guaranteeing freedom of speech, assembly, and religion, and other basic rights that are in the U.S. Bill of Rights, the Nicaraguan Constitution guarantees the right to political asylum, outlaws the death penalty, establishes the right to individual privacy, and declares that the goal of the prison system is to reeducate prisoners, advance their schooling level, pay them a decent wage for prison labor, and reintegrate them into society. No prison sentence may be more than 30 years and beatings or torture are completely prohibited.

Provisions for declaring a state of emergency — such as the one currently in force, under which certain civil liberties have been suspended in Nicaragua due to the war — are also in the constitution. But they have been moved from the section on permanent powers of the government to a final section outlining extraordinary measures for suspending or amending the constitution.

#### Washington pushed for boycott

The U.S. government did everything in its power to prevent the constitution from being completed and adopted. It placed heavy pressures on opposition parties to pull out of the constitution discussion in the hopes of delegitimizing the document and the Nicaraguan government as a whole.

Nicaragua's capitalist parties were divided over Washington's attempts to derail the constitution because they were also under the pressure of the Nicaraguan masses, who saw it as a patriotic duty of any serious political party to take part in the discussion.

Virgilio Godoy, the head of the Independent Liberal Party, was outvoted by his own party when he proposed boycotting the final constitutional debate in the assembly. The majority of the party leadership argued that it would better serve the party's interests to put forward their views, even though many would not get incorporated into the document.

The Democratic Conservatives also fought over whether to boycott. They too rejected that course.

In the end all seven parties participated

in the final debate. Forty-six of the 202 articles were approved unanimously.

#### Preamble

On the last day of the constitution debate, the Sandinistas managed to defuse a controversial debate over whether the name of God should be invoked in the document's preamble. This was insisted upon by the capitalist parties. The FSLN proposed, instead, adding to the preamble a clause hailing the role of Nicaraguans who are Christians and who "through their faith in God" fought to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship. The capitalist parties accepted the clause.

Assembly President Carlos Núñez, a member of the FSLN National Directorate, explained afterward that to have turned a deaf ear to this point would have only fed Washington's propaganda that the Sandinistas persecute religion. Moreover, he pointed out, it would have created an unnecessary rift between Nicaraguans who are religious and those who are not.

Rafael Solís, National Assembly secretary and an FSLN deputy, explained the Sandinistas' overall approach to the constitution. With its majority, the FSLN could approve any constitution language it wanted to. But "that would be a political error," he explained.

"Rather, we will seek consensus. It is essential that the constitution promote National Unity among Nicaraguans and strengthen the very defense of the revolution, in the broadest sense. If we approve a constitution by majority vote, that would only exacerbate the differences between the FSLN and other political parties, which also represent many Nicaraguans."

#### Party divisions

Many times, the various party fractions did not vote as a bloc. In the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), for example, a hardline rightist group of three deputies known as the Sicilian faction, was dead opposed to land reform being in the constitution. (One of these was Enrique Sotelo, the lawyer for CIA man Eugene Hasenfus, the sole survivor of the plane shot down over Nicaragua last October.) Other PCD members were embarrassed by their behavior.

One People's Social Christian Party deputy from a peasant background, Leoncio Rayo, began voting with the FSLN on some questions. He said PPSC leaders were not representing his class interests. PPSC head Mauricio Díaz angrily branded him a "Sandinista infiltrator."

The FSLN fraction voted as a bloc on major political questions, but its deputies

also expressed some different viewpoints and occasionally voted differently. When Sandinista deputy Danilo Aguirre, assistant editor of the daily *El Nuevo Diario*, proposed that the constitution say the state "promotes marriage," quite a few other FSLN deputies strongly disagreed with him. The proposal was not included in the final language on the family, with Aguirre's agreement.

#### Mixed economy debate

The most active of the ultraleft groups in the debate was the Marxist-Leninist Party. It offered proposals on virtually every article and drew respect for its consistent, serious participation in the town meetings and drafting commissions.

But while PML deputy Carlos Cuadra voted in favor of many FSLN motions and collaborated with the Sandinistas in drafting some of them, he voted against the constitution as a whole, objecting to the "political pluralism/mixed economy/nonalignment" axis.

The PML argued that this "establishes capitalism" and that by including it in the constitution, the FSLN "renounced the construction of socialism in Nicaragua." The constitution, in the PML's view, thus became a roadblock to the workers' fight against exploitation.

But as Carlos Núñez explained in the debate one day with the PML, "Socialism is not established by decree."

The constitution codifies that which has already been conquered by the Nicaraguan masses. It recognizes the fact that the revolution remains — first and foremost — in a war for its life against the largest military power in the world.

It does not and cannot decree into reality what has not yet been won in the unfolding class struggle or in the consciousness of the masses. Nor can the constitution try to leap artificially over the current level of productive forces in Nicaragua, still one of the poorest countries in Latin America, with a tiny industrial base.

At the same time, the document firmly establishes the kind of state needed to lead the transition to the economic transformations that will end class exploitation.

The next step in the constitution process will be for each party to sign the final edited document. Then, as the constitution mandates, municipal elections will be organized. In addition, some 30 laws currently on the books — including the divorce law, and parts of the labor and penal code — have been made obsolete by the new constitution and will have to be redrafted by the assembly.

# West Bank protests defy brutality of Israeli occupiers

BY HARRY RING

Spurred by brutal repression, Palestinians have been conducting major protests throughout the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan River.

The actions were touched off December 4 when Israeli soldiers killed two students and wounded at least 11 more at the Palestinian-administered Bir Zeit University, north of Jerusalem.

With 3,500 students, the university has long been a center of opposition to the Israeli occupation of the area.

The West Bank demonstrations have also registered solidarity with the guerrilla fighters of the Palestine Liberation Organization. In Lebanon, PLO forces are offering stubborn resistance to a military drive against them.

In a five-day period, Israeli troops killed four young people on the West Bank. Some two dozen more have been wounded and scores arrested. Seventy were jailed in a single day of protests.

But the trigger-happy troops were unable to quell the protests. In the city of Nazareth inside Israel several thousand Palestinians participated in a protest rally. In communities throughout the West Bank, protesters marched and rallied, threw up street barricades, and in several situations had nothing more than stones to defend themselves against the Israeli occupiers.

Despite the threat of victimization, a general strike of Palestinian merchants shut down the shops of East Jerusalem for at least several days.

The initial attack on the Palestinian students December 4 occurred when an Israeli roadblock set up near the university sparked a campus protest.

A direct provocation, the checkpoint created hours of traffic delays as Israeli soldiers studiously examined ID cards and checked cars, assertedly for contraband.

After several days of this, an angry group of students staged a sitdown among the troops. When the soldiers moved to arrest one of the students, others tried to protect him. The soldiers responded with tear gas.

A larger number of students then rallied on campus and were charged by the Israeli troops who fired directly into the gathering, killing the two and wounding 11 others.

Now in its 19th year, the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank has been strongly opposed by the Palestinians all along. But recent moves to tighten the military repression has further stiffened their resistance.

Some 900,000 Palestinians, and 60,000 Israeli colonial settlers, now live in the West Bank.

In a 1980 concession to the Palestinians, the Israeli government formally suspended arbitrary deportation of Palestinians deemed subversive, as well as arbitrary jailings.

But in 1985, both deportations and arbitrary jailings were reinstituted.

Since then a reported 35 people have been deported and more than 120 jailed under a law that authorizes imprisoning people for up to six months without charges.

Two recent deportation orders have generated particularly strong protests in the West Bank, and among citizens of other countries.

One of the most widely reported is the case of Dr. Mohammad Shedid, a Palestinian professor who was commissioned by *Newsday* and other publications to do a poll in the West Bank of attitudes toward the PLO and its leadership.

The poll showed that 93 percent of the Palestinian people support the PLO and 71 percent look upon PLO leader Yassir Arafat as the leader of the Palestinian people.

With publication of the poll, Shedid was banned from his teaching post and ordered to get out of the West Bank.

A second case that has created much anger has been the ordered deportation of

Akram Haniyeh, a noted poet and journalist.

An Israeli military official conceded there was no evidence of any illegal activity by Haniyeh. But the journalist is an avowed partisan of the PLO.

"What Amnesty International would call 'political activity,' we consider hostile activity," an Israeli occupation military official told a reporter. "You can never point your finger at the moment where so-called political activity stops and real terrorism begins."

## Palestinians resist attacks in Lebanon

BY HARRY RING

Since the end of September, Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon have been under fire from a Lebanese militia force known as Amal. The aim of the murderous attack is to drive out guerrilla fighters of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In mid-December a peace plan was announced, but it was not clear how long it would last.

Led by Nabih Berri, a Shiite Muslim and Lebanon's minister of justice, Amal has close political and military links to the government of Syria.

Thousands of Palestinians live in the impoverished Lebanese refugee camps. They have been driven from their homeland over the past 40 years by the Israeli settler regime.

The camps are a major base of support and recruitment for the PLO liberation fighters pledged to regain their homeland in what is now Israel. The main PLO grouping is Fatah, led by Yassir Arafat.

In 1982 an Israeli invasion of Lebanon succeeded in driving some 12,000 PLO fighters from the country. Dispersed over the Mideast and North Africa, the PLO has been slowly reassembling its forces in Lebanon. Some estimates place the number returned at more than half.

During 1986, Israeli fighter planes conducted some two dozen bombing raids over Lebanon. Many of these targeted the port city of Sidon, with the claimed intention of destroying PLO ammunition dumps. But homes have been flattened and Lebanese and Palestinian civilians killed.

Then, at the end of September, Amal opened a sustained barrage of shelling and gunfire against the refugee camps, with the aim of forcing the PLO out.

Like its Syrian mentor, Amal uses fear of a new Israeli aggression to justify its attempt to drive the Palestinian fighters out. The Syrian regime sees Lebanon as a buffer against Israeli attack.

Despite a terrible toll, the PLO and its supporters in the camps have defiantly resisted Amal's attack.

According to news accounts, more than 600 people, mostly civilians, died in the first 10 weeks of the fighting. And more than 2,000 were wounded.

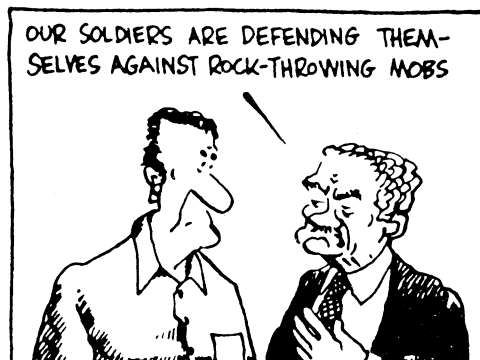
Two of the targeted camps — Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh — are on the outskirts of the Lebanese capital, Beirut. The third principal focus of attack has been the Rashidivah camp near Tyre in southern Lebanon.

Four years ago, during the invasion ordered by Tel Aviv, Israeli officers cleared the way for the Phalange, a Lebanese fascist force, to enter the besieged Shatila camp, and a nearby one, Sabra. In an orgy of bloodletting, the Phalange slaughtered more than 900 Palestinians.

Now it is reported that nearly two-thirds

### Labor news in the Militant

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Dan Wasserman

of Shatila has been destroyed in the Amal attack. And at the camp near Tyre, it was reported that food and water were low and fever spreading.

Yet the stubborn resistance continued, with the PLO capturing the town of Maghdousheh, after a fierce battle. This was said to be the biggest military operation carried out by the PLO since it was driven out of Lebanon in 1982.

The hilltop town has strategic importance because it overlooks the area of the Rashidivah camp and permits an effective PLO response to the Amal forces that have been shelling the camp.

The proposed Amal-Palestinian peace plan was said to have been negotiated with representatives of Iran, Libya, and Syria.

Earlier, the Soviet ambassador in Beirut announced that his government was also trying to help mediate an end to the fighting.

Dispatches from Lebanon indicate that the Amal onslaught has served to bring various factions of the PLO together in a united defense against the attack.

After the 1982 defeat, dissident groups in the PLO — encouraged by Syria — waged an armed revolt against the majority of the PLO, headed by Arafat.

The Associated Press reported a statement by the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) branding Amal's assault on the camps as a "massacre" similar to the

one committed by the Phalangists in 1982. The PNSF was involved in the earlier armed revolt against the PLO majority.

The AP dispatch said: "The Front, a coalition opposed to PLO leader Yassir Arafat, has joined forces with Arafat loyalists to defend the camps in Beirut and South Lebanon."

The *Christian Science Monitor* added that all of the Palestinian factions united in the battle to win control of the town of Maghdousheh.

Meanwhile, as Amal focused its firepower on the Palestinian liberation fighters, working people in Lebanon have been confronting worsening conditions.

In a war-torn country that depends on imports for nearly 90 percent of its needs, a drastic drop in the value of the Lebanese pound has brought further slashes in living standards.

A December 2 dispatch to the *New York Times* reported the workers' response:

"Amid the battles, a one-day strike brought Lebanon to a standstill today.

"Shops, banks, businesses and schools were closed, and only emergency services operated.

"The strike, the second in six months, was called by the Federation of Trade Unions, representing both Moslem and Christian workers, to protest inflation and a continuing decline in the value of Lebanese currency."

Do you know someone who reads Spanish?

## Interview with ANC youth

Che Ogara is the pseudonym used by a young member of the African National Congress, the organization leading the fight against apartheid. In his native language, it's an approximation of the name of guerrilla commander Che Guevara. The young ANC fighter adopted this name while taking part in the historic Soweto uprising.

"This was one of the many expressions," explained the young activist, "of how South African youth have been inspired by the Cuban revolution, in particular after Cuban internationalist combatants, together with the Angolan Armed Forces for Popular Liberation, defeated [apartheid's] racist occupation forces in Angola."

The December issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* features an interview with Che Ogara about the student movement and the current upsurge in South Africa.

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# Angola's peasants make gains despite war

BY SAM MANUEL

UÍGE, Angola — In the northern province of Uíge (bearing the same name as its capital city), some 430,000 people live. Most of them are subsistence farmers, growing food for their own consumption.

The main commercial crop is coffee. The vast plantations were nationalized when their Portuguese owners fled the country in 1975, when Angola won its independence from Portugal.

In an effort to increase coffee production for international markets, the government has established two processing plants in the area. The director of the plants explained that they now have the capacity to process 3,000 sacks of coffee per day.

Much of the coffee is supplied by state-owned farms. There are some 500 workers at the Dange III farm, which I visited. The director had spent several years in Cuba, which has similar soil and climate conditions, studying coffee production.

Housing is provided for the workers and their families. There is also a school and nursery for the children. A full-time nurse provides medical attention, and a doctor regularly visits. None of this existed under Portuguese colonial rule.

## Gains for farmers

In addition to the state farms, the coffee is also supplied by cooperative farms and smaller peasant farmers. The changes since independence have greatly benefited the small farmers.

Under Portuguese rule, if you were lucky enough to have a good crop, it was very difficult to get it to the market. What roads existed were geared to serving the large plantations. The African farmers were mostly at the mercy of Portuguese traders who paid little for their products, thus ensuring the traders hefty profits. Now the farmers sell directly to the government at a fair price.

More and more small farmers are joining cooperatives. Membership is voluntary.

Some 790 families farm the land on the Banza-Kinguagua cooperative. In addition to corn, coffee, yucca, potatoes, and other crops grown here, they have developed projects for the production of milk, eggs, pigs, and other nutritional sources of food. The cooperatives enable the government to provide technical and financial assistance more efficiently to the farmers.

Most of these, however, remain subsistence farms. Over time, the government hopes to increase production and incorporate them into the commercial markets.

Big efforts are being made in education here as well. Eleven years after independence, Angola still faces a shortage of teachers. Before the revolution, most of them were Portuguese. Lusiano Bernardo Doblano, assistant director of the Lenin Institute for Teacher Training, explained, "Most of these teachers were in the urban

areas. The purpose of education during colonial times was to assimilate the African. Today, we are concentrating on providing teachers for the rural areas." Education in Angola is free and compulsory.

## Amnesty program

An important political campaign in Uíge is the reintegration of former combatants and supporters of the right-wing National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) into Angolan society.

Uíge is the homeland of the Bakongo people, who had long provided the FNLA's main base of support. That base has all but disappeared due to the collaboration of the FNLA with South African troops and the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko in neighboring Zaire in efforts to crush the Angolan revolution in 1975.

In 1978 the late president of Angola, Agostinho Neto, announced the decision of the Angolan government to grant amnesty to all those in the FNLA and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), another reactionary group, who would lay down their arms and rejoin Angolan society. This amnesty is unconditional and applicable to all combatants of the FNLA and UNITA, except UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, who is considered a traitor due to his collaboration with the South African regime and the terrorist campaign he is leading against the Angolan people.

Here the amnesty has been very successful. One thousand former combatants of the FNLA have been reintegrated into the Angolan army, many of them in command positions. An additional 20,000 civilian supporters of the FNLA have been resettled in Angola.

## 'UNITA is the enemy'

In the municipality of Dange-Quitexe I met and talked with several of these individuals.

Carlito Jose Carlos, 32 years old, spent 10 years in the field as a commander of 127 FNLA troops. They were largely armed with weapons of Belgian origin, with some from South Africa. Carlos explained that he operated in the area of Cuanza Norte. Their objective was to carry out attacks on economic projects and isolated peasants. When he left the FNLA, he brought 520 people with him.

Jose Mário da Silva worked as a teacher for the FNLA in one of its encampments. He explained that he taught basic math, science, and some Portuguese history. They survived by smuggling goods between Zaire and Angola. Da Silva explained, "One day I heard about the amnesty on the radio we had. I agreed with it. Myself and 180 others made our way here to this reintegration station."

Angelo António Varga was a medic for the FNLA. "The conditions were harsh and



Militant/Sam Manuel

Peasants in the Banza-Kinguagua farm cooperative in Angola's Uíge Province. Co-ops enable government to more easily provide technical and financial aid to farmers.

supplies were few," he said. "Often I would improvise traditional medicines and give injections to those who were sick or wounded. Many died due to the lack of adequate medicines."

Juan Distinto Alves was a former FNLA commander. He is now a commander in the

Angolan army, assigned to a commando unit. He told me, "UNITA is the enemy of our people. They have refused the amnesty offer and continue to massacre defenseless people. For us, there can be no negotiation. We will fight them step by step until they are destroyed."

## —WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

### U.S. missiles sent to Afghan rightists

Unidentified "United States officials" revealed to the *New York Times* December 12 that the counterrevolutionary guerrilla forces fighting to overthrow the government of Afghanistan have begun using U.S.-supplied Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. They said that the missiles have been provided for several months now.

These officials claimed that the missiles have enabled the rightists, who operate from bases in neighboring Pakistan, to shoot down more Afghan and Soviet planes and helicopters than before. There are an estimated 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, helping government forces combat the U.S.-backed guerrillas.

When several Afghan rightist leaders met with Reagan in June, they asked for "effective weapons for air and ground defense," according to White House spokesperson Larry Speakes. The gift of the Stingers was Reagan's response.

Washington has been giving these terrorist groups between \$300 million and \$500 million annually in covert assistance.

In addition, according to several reports on the secret U.S. arms sales to Iran, the proceeds from those sales had been funneled not only to the U.S.-backed contras in Nicaragua, but also to the Afghan guerrillas.

### American Samoa workers lose pay increases

"With the stroke of a pen, President Reagan reduced the wages of some 2,300 American Samoan workers," began an article in the November *Pacific Islands Monthly*.

The action came in late August, when Reagan signed into law the Omnibus Territories Bill, which covers several U.S. colonial possessions, including the South Pacific island colony known as American Samoa, which has a population of about 34,000.

In July a committee appointed to review wage rates in the territory recommended that 2,000 tuna-plant workers, plus about 300 others, be granted in-



U.S. colony of American Samoa, along with other South Pacific islands.

creases in their hourly wages from \$2.82 to \$3.35 — bringing them up to the minimum wage in effect in the United States itself.

But this was opposed by the colonial government of American Samoa and the tuna industry, including Star-Kist Samoa and Samoa Packing Company. They succeeded in attaching a clause to the Omnibus Territories Bill rolling back the proposed wage increase.

### General strike paralyzes São Paulo, Brazil

In the first coordinated labor action in Brazil since the end of military rule last year, a 24-hour protest strike shut down most of the industrial city of São Paulo December 12. Rio de Janeiro and other cities were also affected by the strike, to a lesser extent.

The strike was called by the United Workers Federation (CUT) and other major unions to protest new gasoline and other price increases imposed last month. When the price hikes were first announced, thousands of workers and students filled the streets of Brasília, the capital, in late November.

To prevent the December 12 strike from being more effective, the regime of President José Sarney mobilized tens of thousands of police and troops. In several cities they attacked strike pickets, leading to clashes. More than 100 people were arrested.

## U.S. Supreme Court decision deals blow to ballot rights

BY DAN FEIN

SEATTLE, Wash. — The United States Supreme Court has upheld a Washington state law restricting the right of parties other than the Republicans and Democrats to appear on general election ballots.

The law, adopted in 1977, required other parties to gain 1 percent of the vote in a primary election to qualify for the general election ballot.

In 1985 a federal appeals court had ruled the requirement unconstitutional as applied to statewide offices. It declared that this law "unnecessarily restricts fundamental liberties by making it virtually impossible for any but the two major parties to achieve ballot positions for their candidates."

The state government appealed this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that the law bars "frivolous candidates," "overcrowding of the ballot," and "voter confusion."

Justice Byron White, writing for the majority in the December 10 decision, stated, "We think the state can properly reserve the general election ballot 'for major struggles.'" This he said will condition "access to that ballot on a showing of a modicum of voter support."

U.S. Supreme Court justices Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan dissented from the majority opinion. Marshall said the majority had "a fundamental misconception of the role minor parties play in the constitutional scheme. Their contribution to diversity and competition in the marketplace of ideas cannot be realized if they are unable to participate meaningfully in the phase of the electoral process in which policy choices are most seriously considered," he wrote.

With one exception, only Democratic and Republican candidates have appeared on the general election ballot under the 1977 law.

The law was challenged by the Socialist Workers Party after its candidate was barred from the November 1983 ballot for U.S. Senate.

The Washington State Fair Ballot Law Fund was set up to publicize the issues in the case. Endorsers included United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1105, Washington Federation of State Employees Local 435, the Seattle-area American Postal Workers Union, Seattle chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and other organizations and individuals.

**Progressive education, USA** — "WASHINGTON (AP) — American schools should be teaching high school students more



**Harry Ring**

about the evils of Communism and less about the consequences of nuclear war, William J. Bennett, the Secretary of Education, said today." — News item.

How idealistic can you get —

"Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi Arabian arms dealer who has been described as an intermediary between Israel and Iran in the delivery of U.S. military parts to Iran, wanted to become an agent for peace in the Middle East by supplying information about Iran and Saudi Arabia to highly placed Israeli friends." — News item.

**The judges** — Farrah Fawcett and nine other "top 10" beauties really aren't, according to two New York cosmetic surgeons. A "perfect" woman's face, they explain, is symmetrical, with three millimeters of teeth showing when the lips are at rest. For instance, they say, like Nancy Reagan.

No Swiss bank account? —

Attorney General Meese ruled there was no grounds for prosecuting Faith Whittlesey, ambassador to Switzerland, who used a fund earmarked for entertaining foreign dignitaries to buy a guitar, four bicycles, and two curling irons — plus \$385 for an embassy dinner party for Meese when he dropped by.

**P.S.** — Was that \$385 tab for the entire party, or just Meese's dinner?

**Our sane society** — The ranks of the homeless and hungry are increasing worldwide? Forget it. Put those bucks to work on useful projects. Like, in 1987, U.S. companies will spend \$200 billion on advertising at home and abroad.

**Street cleaners** — Boston officials canceled a contract with a company which was paid to remove abandoned cars from the street and was so enthusiastic about the piece-work project that it hauled off, and crushed, cars that weren't abandoned.

**History dep't** — Concerned that it might incite students against a school ban on beards, Brigham Young University ordered an artist to redo a portrait of founding principal Karl Maeser — sans beard.

**Tired of the old jalopy?** — Try battery-powered roller skates. Up to 20 m.p.h., \$479.50. Or, if you'd rather get a horse, one mail order catalog offers a spiffy saddle with a pigskin seat, \$3,500.

**Role model** — *Forbes* magazine, the "capitalist tool," points with pride to real estate shark Henry Crown. He bought the Empire State building with borrowed money in 1951 and sold it in 1961 for a \$31 million profit.

**Neat, different, inexpensive** — With a nickel pack of gum going for as much as 50 cents, we were impressed to learn that you can pick up a leather chewing gum case for but \$75.

**In-depth analysis of the week** — "In the rich and mainly industrial countries farmers are paid too much, so they produce too much. In the poor and mainly agricultural countries farmers are paid too little, so they produce too little." — The London *Economist*.

## —CALENDAR—

### ALABAMA

#### Birmingham

**South Africa: The Freedom Struggle Today.** Speakers: Sita Mathiba, South African student; representative of Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Dec. 21, 6 p.m. 1306 1st Ave. N. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (205) 323-3079.

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Jose

**Crisis in the Philippines. Workers and Farmers Press Their Demands.** Speaker: Joel Rocamora, director Philippine Resource Center. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 46½ Race St. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (408) 998-4007.

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

**General Motors Plant Closings: How to Fight Them.** Speaker: Maceo Dixon, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers Local 10. Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW. Donation: \$2.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

### MARYLAND

#### Baltimore

**Immigration Laws: Attack on Workers' Rights.** Speakers: Felipe Arnoldo Diaz, Salvadoran refugee who recently won four-year fight for political asylum; Héctor Marroquín,

member of Socialist Workers Party facing deportation for his political ideas. Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

### MISSOURI

#### St. Louis

**Behind the Secret Arms Deal: U.S. Escalates War Against Nicaragua.** A panel discussion. Sat., Dec. 20, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**Open House and Reception for Dr. Jeffrey Elliot.** Dr. Elliot interviewed Fidel Castro for the recently published book *Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the Course of History*. Fri., Dec. 19, 4:30-7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Ausp: Pathfinder Books. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

**Celebrate the 28th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.** Grand year-end dance. Wed., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. Casa de las Américas, 104 W 14th St. Donation: \$12.

## Socialist Regional Educational Conferences

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

##### War and Crisis in the Americas.

Forum. Keynote speaker: Margaret Jayko, coeditor of the *Militant*. Sat., Dec. 20, 7 p.m. Two classes: Sat., Dec. 20, 3 p.m. and Sun., Dec. 21, 11 a.m.

Events at Belton Inn, 11001 University Ave. (University exit just north of I-35 and I-80). Donation: \$2 per event. Ausp: Socialist Workers Party. For more information call (515) 280-9604 (Des Moines); (402) 553-0245 (Omaha); (507) 437-8077 (Austin, Minnesota).

### UTAH

#### Salt Lake City

##### Decline of the American Empire and the Role of the Working Class.

Two-part class: 1. **Lockouts, Union-busting, and Concession Contracts: How Can Our Unions Fight Back.** Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Dec. 20, 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Forum. **Contragate: A Glimpse of How the Capitalists Rule America.** Speaker: John Gaige, SWP National Committee. Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m.

Events held at 767 S State. Translation to Spanish provided. Donation: \$5. Ausp: SWP and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

Two-part class: **The State of the U.S. Trade Unions Today.** Speaker: Chris Horner, chairperson, Seattle Socialist Workers Party, member International Union of Electronic Workers Local 1002. Sat., Dec. 20, 3 p.m. and Sun., Dec. 21, 11 a.m.

Forum: **The U.S. Political Situation Today.** Speaker: Mark Severs, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m.

All events at 5517 Rainier Ave. S. Donation: \$5 for conference or \$2 per event. Ausp: SWP and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

## New gov't crackdown in South Africa

### Continued from front page

khonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC).

Seeking to preempt a further rise of popular resistance, Pretoria moved to clamp down even harder than before. As a justification, President Pieter Botha claimed that the ANC, working through the UDF, was preparing to launch an extensive campaign of "sabotage and mass actions."

The regime's new restrictions outlaw a wide variety of activities: organized boycotts of any kind; participation in "illegal" strikes; opposition to military conscription; taking part in local popular bodies such as street committees or "people's courts"; and calling for the re-

lease of political prisoners.

The press restrictions are the most severe yet imposed in South Africa. They forbid any reporting on outlawed political actions or on the conduct of police and troops. The activities of Black right-wing vigilante groups, which have often beaten and murdered government opponents in the Black townships, may also not be reported.

Newspapers can be seized or banned for three months and reporters face stiff fines or imprisonment of up to 10 years if they violate the new rules.

The UDF condemned these moves as dictatorial. Other groups and many South African newspapers likewise blasted them.

Though the censorship obscures the extent of the new arrests, some names have

become known: Zwelakhe Sisulu, a prominent anti-apartheid figure and editor of the *New Nation*; and Molefe Tsele, Vusi Khanyile, and Bill Jardine of the National Education Crisis Committee, which coordinates opposition to the apartheid school system. Leaders of COSATU and other groups have also been picked up.

On December 14, the apartheid authorities admitted that police killed a suspected ANC guerrilla in the northern Cape Province and fired on a crowd of protesters in Bloemfontein.

What other police brutalities are being carried out under the cover of the press censorship may not become known. The South African authorities prefer it that way.

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**WISCONSIN:** Milwaukee: SWP, YSA, 4707 W. Lisbon Ave. Zip: 53208. Tel: (414) 445-2076.



# Behind media campaign for marriage and motherhood

BY MARGARET JAYKO

Singing the praises of marriage and motherhood — or bemoaning the fate of women who are single and childless — is the topic of a large and increasing number of newspaper articles, magazine stories, television shows, and sociological studies.

They range from the ridiculous to some that are slicker and more carefully presented.

On the ridiculous side of things were articles in the *New York Times* and runners' magazines last year that promoted the notion that childbearing improves the performance of female runners.

Mary Decker Slaney, who set the women's world record for the mile in 1985, was quoted in the Aug. 4, 1986, *Times* as saying that having a baby "will make me stronger."

The March issue of *Runners World* featured a story suggesting that the Soviet Union may be encouraging its female runners to have babies halfway between Olympic years.

Another example is a "scientific" study released last month, which supposedly found that women over 50 who have been married but are childless may face an increased risk of dying suddenly of heart disease. An author of the study suggested that the alleged phenomenon might be caused by "the stress of not having children" according to an article in the Nov. 20, 1986, *New York Times*.

## 'Feminization of loneliness'

"Are These Old Maids?" asked the cover of the March 31, 1986, *People* magazine over photos of four women celebrities. And the June 2, 1986, *Newsweek* ran a graph on its front cover with the headline: "The Marriage Crunch: If You're a Single Woman, Here Are Your Chances of Getting Married."

Both had feature stories on a "study" about the marriage prospects for white, college-educated women born in the mid-'50s. If you're still single at 30, it said, you have only a 20 percent chance of marrying. If — god forbid — you're still single at 40, you're more likely to be killed by a terrorist than get married.

Another study, coming out of the University of California, Berkeley, was titled "The Feminization of Loneliness."

A three-hour-long ABC news show, "After the Sexual Revolution," which was aired last July, was less crude. But it made sure to include lots of scenes of women crying about how lonely they were because they don't have a husband.

And "supermom" — who tries to do the "impossible" (which is defined as working and having children) — has been debunked

## N.Y. abortion clinic targeted in attempted bombing

NEW YORK — In the latest violent attack on a clinic that provides abortions, a dynamite bomb was planted at Planned Parenthood's Margaret Sanger Center in Manhattan.

On December 14 a man with a gun forced his way into the clinic and deposited a bomb that later misfired. No one was injured. It was one of the largest and potentially most damaging bombs yet to be placed in an abortion clinic.

Minor damage was caused to the building when the blasting cap exploded and set off the building's sprinkler system. The administrative offices of Planned Parenthood of New York City are in the same building.

"Had the bomb gone off, it would have absolutely destroyed the front of the building," said one of the cops from the bomb squad. The clinic has been the target of bomb threats in the past.

Officials of Planned Parenthood asked the police to station officers around the clock at their three abortion clinics. The cops refused, saying that if they did it for Planned Parenthood all the other clinics would want the same protection. The cost, they said, would be prohibitive.

by just about everybody. *Fortune* magazine had a feature story titled: "Why Women Are Bailing Out" in its Aug. 18, 1986, issue. Next to the headline was a woman smiling from ear-to-ear holding her child. The caption read: "Having left IBM, Janie Witham, MBA '76, is happier at home and working part time."

The marriage and motherhood push has meant big bucks for those with enough capital to take advantage of it.

Supermarkets are beginning to hold lucrative "singles nights." As described in one account: "In Cherry Hill, N.J., the local meat market has literally become the meet market. Every Tuesday night at the Shop-N-Bag, as many as 2,000 men and women wearing name tags check each other out over the broccoli and detergent, hopeful that a magic encounter in the aisle could lead them down the aisle."

Dating businesses are also flourishing. Personal Profiles, a Chicago dating service, says that for \$4,600 they guarantee you'll be engaged or married in three years.

## Bottom line: profits

What's behind this zealous promotion of births and weddings?

The answer is contained in one word: profits. Billions of dollars are made as a result of the discrimination that women face in this society.

Employers get away with paying tens of millions of women workers less than men. Women, on the average, earn 60 cents for every dollar a male worker makes. Jobs that are performed mostly by women tend to be those that have the lowest pay, worst benefits, least unionization, and poorest working conditions.

The biological differences between men and women are used by the exploiting class to justify economic, social, and political discrimination against women.

Since women can bear and nurse children, home and hearth are naturally the focus of their lives, we are told. Politics, education, career — all are of much less importance to women than to men. And since women supposedly have a man to support them financially, they don't really need a job. And if they do work, they certainly don't need the same wages as a man.

It's not only women workers who suffer from this second-class status. All working people's wages and conditions are dragged down by the existence of a category of workers who are discriminated against. The low wages women workers are forced to accept are used as a club against all workers.

Another way that the employers profit from women's oppression is that working-class women take care of children and do housecleaning for free. If women didn't provide this unpaid labor, workers' paychecks would have to be large enough to allow them to purchase such services, which would have to be organized socially.

The declining profit margins facing many capitalists in the United States, as a result of increased competition from abroad, has led the employers to launch an austerity drive against working people. The goal is to qualitatively reduce that portion of what workers produce that they get back in the form of wages and fringe benefits. This is done in order to increase the amount the bosses keep for themselves.

## Case of TWA flight attendants

An example of how the employers attempt to use long-standing and deep prejudices about women to increase their profits and weaken the labor movement is the case of the TWA flight attendants.

In mid-1984 the contract between TWA and the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA) expired.

International Association of Machinists members at TWA had taken a 15 percent pay cut and agreed to some work-rule changes. Most of the IAM's membership is male.

The IFFA leadership offered to take the same cuts that the IAM officials had agreed to. But management demanded from the flight attendants a 22 percent pay cut and drastic changes in work rules.

The justification? "You stewardesses and girls aren't breadwinners." As for the 15 percent of flight attendants who are male, TWA bosses told them to "look for a real job."

The flight attendants' response says something about the increased difficulties the employers face in using prejudices against women to advance their austerity drive against working people.

The flight attendants were unwilling to accept less because of their gender. They went on strike in March 1986 and sought broad support in the labor movement.

The increased hiring of male flight attendants in recent years has helped reinforce the resolve of IFFA members to reject second-class status. It helped break down job segregation, making it more difficult for TWA and other carriers to depress the price of flight attendants' labor power below that of other airline workers.

## Wives and mothers first and foremost

The ruling circles whose ideas are disseminated by the mass media are pushing marriage to undermine working-class women's new-found self-confidence and measure of independence from men.

The more dependent women are, the more likely they are to take any job, at any pay, under any conditions. The more that women are convinced that finding a mate is their overriding goal in life, the more likely they are to adopt the submissive, passive attitudes that can make the hunt more successful. The rulers seek to convince women that they want to be dependent on a man with the second-class status that entails.

Likewise, the ruling class applauds the virtues of motherhood as part of convincing women that their real worth springs from their childbearing and rearing capacities. The employers hope to make women workers less likely to stick up for their rights by convincing them to view themselves not primarily as workers but rather as mothers who are only "marginally" workers. And they want to keep women workers out of union activity and out of politics.

The employers' efforts to reintroduce homework in several industries, and to increase the already large number of temporary workers, are being sold partly on the basis that they are good for mothers. Both



Goal of increased propaganda in favor of childbearing and marriage is to push view of women as mainly wives and mothers so that employers can increase exploitation of women workers.

homework and temporary work yield large profits because they mean low wages, few or no benefits, and difficulties for union organization.

This simply underlines the urgent need for the union movement to champion the rights of women on and off the job as a necessary part of undercutting the employers' offensive against the entire working class.

Waging a serious fight to defend and extend affirmative action programs, for federally funded child care, paid parental leaves, raised wages for women workers, and defense of women's right to abortion is all part of counterposing a working-class solution to the problems facing women to the reactionary propaganda and actions of the employers and their government.

## — 10 AND 25 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 24, 1976

On December 7 the Supreme Court told employers they don't have to give working women disability pay during pregnancy.

A front-page *New York Times* article called the ruling "a major setback to the women's rights movement." The *Wall Street Journal* heralded it as "a big victory for employers."

Both were right on target.

The case was simple enough. Forty-three women employees of General Electric sued the company demanding that it add paid maternity leaves to its disability plan.

As it stands, GE's plan compensates men for 60 percent of wages lost for such special male surgery as circumcisions, vasectomies, and prostate surgery. Treating pregnancy differently is flagrant sex discrimination, right?

Wrong, said six of the justices.

Justice William Rehnquist stated that it doesn't matter if the ruling strikes "more heavily upon one gender than upon the other." What is involved "is nothing more than an insurance package which covers some risks but excludes others."

The six prevailing justices weren't blind to the evidence of discrimination. They simply focused their eyes on a higher concern — profit.

### THE MILITANT

Published in the interests of the Working People

December 25, 1961

Price 10¢

Fidel Castro's December 2 nationwide television speech declaring his adherence to Marxist-Leninist doctrine is now the subject of a major campaign in this country, pivoting around the assertion that Castro declared he had been a "communist" since his university days but had concealed his views in order to gain power. This is a flat lie. The running theme of the speech is that his experience since coming to power had convinced him of the correctness of Marxist-Leninist theory and that he was convinced that the united revolutionary party now in process of formation in Cuba must be based upon a Marxist-Leninist program.

The three principal organizations involved in the creation of the new party are the July 26th Movement; the Communist, or Popular Socialist, Party (PSP); and the Revolutionary Directorate.

"All the members of the various revolutionary organizations are eligible to enter the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, with equal rights and considerations," Castro declared.

A government "based on a revolutionary party, democratically organized, and working through a collective leadership" is best, he said, because such a government "does not aspire to be eternal, but simply transitional."

# 'Contra' war behind U.S. crisis

Continued from front page

Washington began preparing the contra war soon after the Nicaraguan people threw out the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza on July 19, 1979. The U.S. rulers had installed the Somoza dynasty and had supported its oppressive rule for more than 40 years.

The tyranny was replaced with a popular workers' and peasants' government led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front. When Washington found out that the Sandinistas couldn't be bought, bullied, or blackmailed into following U.S. dictates, it turned to the torturers of Somoza's National Guard, who had fled into neighboring Honduras.

Their first attack was carried out five years ago. It was called "Red Christmas." The contras murdered, raped, and tortured dozens of people who lived along the Río Coco. And that's been their pattern ever since — terrorist attacks on unarmed civilians.

Washington hoped the contra attacks would spread enough terror and economic destruction to undermine support for the revolution and sow demoralization and divisions.

If the contras could have taken a town long enough to raise the flag of a "liberated" Nicaragua, Washington could have sent in its own troops and those of neighboring countries under the guise of defending the new "government."

Soldiers of fortune, CIA operatives, and other U.S. personnel aided the contra killers.

The Pentagon poured arms and military aircraft into Honduras, which borders Nicaragua on the north. Contras based in Costa Rica, to the south, also got U.S. aid. And the frequent use of military bases and personnel in El Salvador as part of the war effort has been further exposed in the latest round of revelations.

Despite all this, the contras have never won even one significant battle with the Sandinista People's Army, never mind capture a town or some territory.

Many peasants who joined or were kidnapped by the contras are now taking advantage of the Nicaraguan government's amnesty program, which lets contra deserters who turn themselves in return to their families and farms.

And the Somozaist mercenaries have gained no popular support. The pro-contra opposition inside Nicaragua is small, isolated, and divided.

The past few years have seen a qualitative weakening of the contra forces as the increasingly effective Sandinista Army pushed most of the raiders out of the country and shut down their infiltration routes.

Although the contras have murdered more than 150 Nicaraguan civilians this year, they have been unable to launch large-scale military attacks. From January to October, some 3,700 contras were killed in the fighting compared to 800 Sandinista soldiers killed or missing.

The attempt by some 1,500 mercenaries to enter Nicaragua from Honduras in late November was a debacle. The Sandinistas repelled them, inflicting heavy losses.

The contras aren't the only thing that hasn't panned out for Washington in its attempt to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. The more the CIA tries to push and shove the Honduran military into the middle of its war against Nicaragua, the greater the opposition of the Honduran people to the contras and the U.S. troops who occupy large parts of their country.

On December 7 five combat planes dispatched from U.S. bases in Honduras bombed northern Nicaragua for the first time in the war. And U.S. troops began ferrying Honduran soldiers to the Nicaraguan border.

Though the big-business media here tried to portray this as a popular move by the Honduran government, later reports showed Honduran peasants who live in the border area were upset about the fighting.

The Pentagon has armed Honduras to the teeth and run more than 70,000 U.S. troops through the country for an unending series of military maneuvers. Despite its vastly superior firepower, however, the Honduran military is not capable of winning a war against Nicaragua. And the Honduran government and military brass know it.

The Nicaraguan army is fighting to defend a government that has led the workers and peasants in securing real economic, social, and political gains in the past seven and a half years.

The Honduran army fights to defend an unpopular, military-dominated regime that does Washington's bidding. Honduras is the poorest country in the hemisphere, after Haiti.

Hondurans have protested the occupation of 171 square miles of their country's territory by the contras. The abuse of the Honduran people by U.S. GI's and by the contras has also spurred protests.

The workers and peasants of Honduras, who make up the Honduran military, have no interest in waging war against their sisters and brothers in Nicaragua or in allowing Washington to walk all over them. In fact, the gains that the Nicaraguan toilers have made as a result of throwing out Somoza and putting a revolutionary government in place is a persuasive example for the impoverished Honduran people.

Far from being a reliable proxy, Honduras is an unstable and unwilling pawn in Washington's regional plans.

Under this pressure, the Honduran president and several top generals recently demanded that Washington vacate the contra forces from Honduras by April.

Nor is there any good alternative to Honduras in nearby countries. The Salvadoran generals are fighting a costly civil war against popular rebel forces. The Guatemalan government has its hands full trying to pacify the radicalized peasantry. And Costa Rica has no military forces to speak of.

It's become crystal clear that the only military power capable of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government is the one in Washington. Increasingly, the U.S. ruling class is confronted with the choice of using U.S. troops to overthrow the Sandinistas or facing a major setback in the drive to crush the Nicaraguan revolution.

But the obstacles in the way of a U.S. invasion are greater today than they have been since Washington started this war.

Why, then, doesn't the U.S. government — the mightiest military power in world history — simply bomb tiny, impoverished Nicaragua into submission? Why hasn't Washington sent in a couple hundred thousand Marines to do the job?

Part of the answer is that the Nicaraguans have used the time they bought with their revolutionary victory to build a professional, combat-tested, patriotic army that is second to none in Central America.

The inability of the contras to wage any serious offensives against the Nicaraguan military is an enormous obstacle in the way of using U.S. troops. Sending in the Marines to aid a successful army that can claim some popular support is an entirely different kettle of fish than invading Nicaragua on behalf of discredited and demoralized contra units that have been sitting in Honduras for a year.

And Nicaragua is not Grenada, where U.S. troops were able to occupy the country quickly because the population was disarmed, demobilized, and demoralized by a prior coup. There is no quick way to occupy Nicaragua, where the workers and peasants are armed and active supporters of the government.

Another reason Washington can't simply rush in where contras have failed is that there is widespread opposition in Latin America to traditional imperialist gunboat diplomacy. An invasion of Nicaragua would become a regional conflict the same way that the U.S. aggression against Vietnam did. And it would have the same outcome for Washington: military and political defeat.

Since Vietnam, the U.S. rulers face another problem which has serious ramifications for them — the massive sentiment of the people in the United States against the use of the Pentagon's arsenal to wage wars of plunder.

This has precipitated disputes in the ruling circles about the best way to accomplish the commonly agreed upon goal — getting rid of the Sandinistas. And it is because of the antiwar sentiment at home that some of the truth about the character of Washington's war has come out.

It's working people — of Nicaragua, Latin America, and the United States — who make the political and military price Washington will have to pay for any invasion very high indeed.

The job of antiwar activists in the United States is to make it too high, to make it impossible for Washington to send troops to Nicaragua as it did in Vietnam. And to force Washington to dump the contras, who are carrying out terrorist attacks on the Nicaraguan people.

The crisis rocking the White House is an unprecedented opportunity for antiwar fighters. Millions of working people, angry about being lied to, are more open to arguments against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. And many can be convinced to participate in antiwar activity.

Emergency protests have been held around the country to demand an end to the contra war.

The most effective next step will be national antiwar demonstrations where thousands and thousands of working people and students — representing millions and millions — can get together, in the same place at the same time, from all over the country, and demand an end to the war.

Such actions have the maximum educational impact and can help build a truly massive, truly effective movement to stop this dirty war.

This is the perspective that antiwar activists around the country are beginning to act on — national demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco on April 24 and 25. Coalitions are being formed and leaflets printed.

The call for a Western states mobilization in San Francisco has been made. The next crucial step is for the coalition that initiated discussion on these actions, the April Action Committee, to issue a public call for the D.C. action.

Such a call can be taken to the labor movement; organizations that fight for the rights of Blacks, women, and Latinos; student groups; and anti-apartheid fighters so that the voice of working people in the United States can be heard loud and clear across the country and across the world: Stop the contra war! Stop the lies! Let Nicaragua live!

# Affordable and decent housing is everyone's right

BY DOUG JENNESS

Now that cold weather has come to much of the country, local governments are under increasing pressure to find some kind of shelter for the tens of thousands of people without homes. The homeless and their defenders are pressing to establish their legal right as aggrieved citizens to safe and suitable shelter and other immediate assistance, such as food, clothing, and medicine.

## LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

sistance, such as food, clothing, and medicine.

Armories, vacant buildings, churches, and other facilities are being put to use as temporary sleeping quarters and soup kitchens. In general, the aid is stingy and inadequate. Moreover, it is not linked to meeting the longer-term housing needs of the homeless.

How can displacement of low-income people from their homes be halted and adequate housing found for the homeless and those living in substandard buildings?

For one thing, the government should immediately commandeer all vacant housing for as many of the homeless as possible.

Then, rents should be reduced to no more than 10 percent of a tenant's income. And all evictions ceased. That would give immediate relief to millions of low-income people, many of whom are now paying more than 30 percent of their monthly budgets on rent.

If the scrooges living off the rents they collect complain that they can't keep up with the expenses on their buildings, the government should take them over. It should subsidize them to make it possible for low-income people to live in them.

But this doesn't mean following the lead of New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, which has become the city's biggest slumlord. In the last decade, the city government has taken over 10,000 run-down buildings abandoned by owners who are no longer willing to fix them up or pay taxes on them.

While the city continues to collect rents, it makes only enough repairs to prepare the buildings for sale to private landlords, who will jack up the rents even more if they can.

A just housing policy would use public funds to fix up or renovate old structures, maintaining them as low-income public housing. And it would replace those beyond repair with new dwellings.

A program to build tens of thousands of new public housing units must be part of any housing program that will benefit working people. Today, however, public housing is a minuscule part of the country's housing, and the number of units being built has declined in the past 15 years. In 1983 and 1984, public housing was only .5 percent and .3 percent, respectively, of the total new housing starts, the lowest figures since 1947. In the peak years of 1939-42, the figures were between 11 and 15 percent. This was in the wake of the labor upsurge that led to the organization of millions of industrial workers into unions.

A good share of the public housing built more than 25 years ago is deteriorating because it hasn't been maintained.

The material and human resources exist to launch a major drive to construct affordable and decent housing for everyone. It will cost money, but the funds are there. There is plenty in the Pentagon's budget. It's expected to get more than \$290 billion next year. Even a portion of that would go a long way toward providing everyone affordable and adequate housing.

To help individual homeowners, the federal government should declare a moratorium on all foreclosures. Taxes on homeowners' property should be abolished and interests on mortgages drastically reduced.

The above proposals for dealing with the housing problem are neither very complicated nor unreasonable. Nor are they new.

But the government refuses to carry them out. The reason is simple. The banks, landlords, insurance companies, construction firms, and other capitalists don't want to solve the housing problem. They profit too much from it. And what the individual capitalists don't want, the government doesn't want. Because the government is nothing more than the organized collective power of the exploiting classes against the exploited classes, the workers and farmers.

As long as the capitalists remain in political power, the housing problem will not be resolved. Periodic economic downturns will continue to displace workers with little or no income from their homes. And the moneyed interests will continue to concentrate on building luxury housing and office buildings, which are more profitable than low-income dwellings.

Only by waging a struggle to replace the exploiters' government with one of their own can working people finally establish decent housing as an elementary right of everyone.



# Auto workers discuss implications of GM closings

BY MACEO DIXON  
AND JEFF ROGERS

There has been plenty of discussion among auto workers at the General Motors Doraville assembly plant near Atlanta about the recent announcement that the company will close 11 plants over the next three years. Twenty-nine thousand jobs will be lost.

The main reason GM gave for the closings was its need to be "more competitive." The company's owners im-

company might decide fewer plants are needed to build the new model?

Although there is no way to answer these questions, it has become clear to many of us that GM is going to reduce the work force as much as possible at the same time as it tries to weaken the union.

The company is going to try to dilute provisions for job protection won by the union over the years.

One worker said, "Sub pay ran out quick in the last recession. I bet it won't last even that long next time around."

The Job Bank program, which is supposed to help retrain workers laid off because of new technology or plant conversions, will in all likelihood also run out of money because of the number of workers in the program. If the company shuts down a plant for "market" or "economic" reasons, no one there is eligible for the "bank."

We are all feeling the effects of more harassment on the job. Line speed has been increased and seniority weakened as job assignments become more and more arbitrary. Sexual harassment of women workers has become a serious issue. The punitive attendance program has been stepped up at a time when workers need a break from stressful working conditions. The wrist support strap worn by victims of carpal tunnel syndrome has become a familiar sight.

We know that more of the same can be expected when the plant resumes production at the end of next summer under a new local agreement. Although we've been told

we will be able to vote on the new rules, there will be tremendous pressure to accept more concessions.

Most workers, on the surface, are not expressing a great deal of concern. "Our plant isn't on the list," or "They're just using this to soften us up for the next contract" are comments often heard.

But a few are truly angered at the long list of concessions already imposed and feel we should do something about it. "This is crazy," declared one longtime union member. "Not too many years ago, if GM closed this many plants, we'd have closed the rest!"

No one expects the union to call a national strike over the proposed loss of jobs, but the strike at the Delco parts plant in Kokomo, Indiana, not only saved 900 jobs, it demonstrated the importance of fighting back. We shared the latest news of the strike up and down the line.

The proposed plant closings were the main topic of discussion at the last round of union meetings. Unfortunately, the local leadership could report nothing in the way of a fightback from the International union.

As unionists, we need to stick together and tell GM we've paid enough. We should begin now to hold meetings in every local to discuss the best way to organize a fight for our jobs and to figure out what allies we need to help us win. Other workers facing the same problems and working farmers would be at the top of the list.

*Maceo Dixon and Jeff Rogers are members of United Auto Workers Local 10 at the Doraville, Georgia, GM plant.*

## UNION TALK

plied that there will be additional layoffs and plant closings in the future.

Layoffs are a fact of life for auto workers. Many of the 5,000 at the Doraville plant have lived through them before.

In fact, four months of "down time" is planned next year when the plant is scheduled to be retooled to produce the new "GM-10" car.

Building the new car may have kept Doraville off the company's "hit list" for the time being. But many workers feel less secure because of the recent announcement. Such a broad job-chopping operation will be felt throughout the industry.

The restructuring and automation involved in producing the new model is supposed to result in the loss of 900 jobs here. If business is so bad now, shouldn't we expect additional down time or cancellation of a shift at the plant? And isn't it possible that by next summer, the

## LETTERS

### From our readers behind bars

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

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

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

#### Get on the ball!

I've never written to any newspaper. However, as a subscriber to and supporter of the *Militant*, I was agitated at a brief item in the letters section of your November 28 issue. The title was "Gall," signed N.W., St. Paul, Minnesota.

I want to respond to the blatant ignorance of N.W.

It is said that ignorance is kind to the heart and mind. Don't fool yourself!

Every newspaper, media apparatus in circulation is one-sided. Either it lies or presents you with illusions and subversion tactics, or it tells you the flat-out uncensored, not-so-pretty truth.

Personally, I prefer a one-sided presentation of the truth to a four-sided lie or half-truth. By the way, I also read and compare my hometown based (San Francisco) capitalist newspapers.

With regard to the need for a full page "update" on the growth of subscriptions. I consider it to be a basic principle of socialism, which is constantly updating the masses as to the growing mobilization, and unifying of their beliefs, aspirations — to see the fruit-

tion of their efforts, struggles materializing.

Don't remain on stall, alleviate the gall and get on the ball!

*A prisoner  
Mojave, California*

#### Myself, I love it!

While reading the November 28 *Militant*, I became more than outraged with the letter appearing in the letters column by N.W. from St. Paul, Minnesota.

It behooves me to comment on N.W.'s opinion of the *Militant* publication. N.W. really is the one who holds a biased attitude and is "one-sided."

If N.W. thinks it is a waste of time for the *Militant* to print a full page on its subscriptions, then I think it is more of a waste of time for N.W. to read it, because it is very evident that N.W. is either a satisfied capitalist, right-wing, flag-waving, pro-oppressor of the proletariat or just an ignorant, self-centered, preposterous fool altogether!

It is not my nature to be a namecaller, however, someone must educate people like N.W. and/or put them in their place. There are too many working people who are on the front lines and fighting for a socialist way of life and who have enough sense and political enlightenment not to tolerate such ignorance as N.W. conveys while taking up important space in the *Militant*.

Wake the hell up, N.W.! The *Militant* is the most exclusive socialist newspaper and the most informative, with both national and international events. Myself, I love it.

In defense of the best,  
*A prisoner  
Boston, Massachusetts*

#### Socialism

In regard to your article in the *Militant* on socialism and religion, I can say that your socialist teaching is very dogmatic as well. There is no way that socialism can put all religions in the same boat.

I am a Moorish-American and my religion is Islam, and it is on earth for the sole purpose of uplifting fallen humanity.

Whether in church, state, or the social community, any attempt to

do anything out of the usual way seldom fails to receive criticism. And it is a sad weakness in us to oppose our fellowmen for their religious beliefs.

Socialism is only the worthless baubles of the day. It rises and sinks like empty bottles in a stream. It's an illusion and will pass away. Socialism is only a noise that people make. But I am not fooled by the noise of your socialist teaching, for you do not have humanity at heart.

All times are not alike, and there is nothing new under the sun. There is a time for "casting stones" and there is a time for "gathering stones." And you have no time to gather any stones, for you are too busy casting them.

Peace!  
*A prisoner  
Jefferson City, Missouri*

#### Nice girl like you

"What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Joint Like This" is the title of a new book, now in progress, about women behind bars.

It will tell of convicted women, both innocent and guilty; cases where the punishment doesn't fit the crime; histories of youth offenders, lifers, death row convicts, psychiatric inmates; and many others whose stories simply need to be told for public enlightenment.

The purpose is to portray the total experience of prison and prisoners, and to shed light on justice and injustice by shattering stereotypes of prostitutes, drug dealers, runaways, child-abusers, kidnappers, forgers, burglars, madams, and murderers, revealing them as individual human beings.

We also invite statements on the justice system from prison guards, street police, wardens, sheriffs, lawyers, judges, and family and friends of convicts to present to the public a well-rounded view of prison from both sides of the walls.

If you, as a woman prisoner or former prisoner, want to tell your story-behind-bars, please send a summary of your crime and your time, as well as any related writings, art, poems, cartoons, and a recent photo, if you can. (You may remain anonymous, if you



wish.)

Send to "What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing," 2144 Shattuck Ave. #504-2077, Berkeley, Calif. 94704.

*Prisoners  
Frontera, California*

#### True side of the story

I'm presently in jail and am for the struggle. People must come to see we need a paper that can tell us the true side of the story.

At this time, I don't have any money to send, but can you still send me your paper and any free revolutionary books?

Can you also send me copies of back issues on Malcolm X?

*A prisoner  
Elmira, New York*

#### Would like to get paper

The reason I am writing to you is to see if you will be so kind as to send me one of your *Militant* newspapers.

At this time, I am a Texas inmate here in the "Texas Department of Corrections." They are not paying us for our work or anything. They, therefore, make me indigent, without any money to send to you for your kindness in this matter.

*A prisoner  
Midway, Texas*

#### Fervor to fight

I am held captive at Attica Correctional Facility in the State of New York, and I wish to receive the *Militant* as an adopted prisoner.

I'm an indigent person, possessing a fervor to fight against the racist oppression of the neocolonialist Europeans. I evolved to this consciousness of self-determination, which I will prohibit from regressing back to the conformity of imperialism — consciously or unconsciously.

*A prisoner  
Attica, New York*

## Iowa meat-packers end Swift strike

### Company to recall unionists 'as needed' as 250 scabs continue working

BY KATHLEEN KELLY  
AND CURTIS MARTIN

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa — Meat-packers here have voted to end their 10-week strike against Swift Independent Packing Corp.

On December 14 members of Local 50 of the National Brotherhood of Packing-house and Industrial Workers (NBPW) approved a contract offer similar to the one that had been rejected in two earlier votes.

Although no vote totals were announced, union leaders told the media that the vote on the pact had been close.

Under the contract, wages will be cut by 80 cents to an average of \$8.00 per hour. The three-year agreement also lowers the number of guaranteed hours in the work-week from 36 to 32 for 13 weeks out of the year.

Pension payments to retired meat-packers will be cut and workers will now have to pay \$600 in medical-care deductibles out of their own pockets.

Swift dropped the demand to institute a "flexible workweek" that would have given the company the right to force the meat-packers to work on Saturdays and Sundays without overtime pay.

But the new contract does not guarantee that any of the striking meat-packers will get their jobs back. Two hundred fifty scabs have been working at the plant since shortly after the strike began on October 2.

Swift officials say the strikers will be called back "as needed" and that the recalls will not be based on seniority. Instead the company will pick and choose who it will allow back.

Swift had been saying that 20 or 30 of

the strikers would be recalled in the next few weeks if the contract was ratified.

The strikers were not receiving any benefits during their more than three months on the picket line and many were facing extreme hardships.

At the union meeting where the vote was taken, some meat-packers told *Militant* reporters that they felt they had no choice but to try to return to work. Others, however, did not want to settle until all the workers got their jobs back.

NBPW Local 50 President Jim Aalfs thanked unionists and community supporters who had aided the strikers.

Union Secretary Rita Lewis spent a week with Hormel meat-packers in Austin, Minnesota. Lewis said she would have liked to have seen more of the Marshalltown strikers get up to Austin.

More than 800 of the Austin workers were prevented from getting their jobs back at the Hormel packing plant there under terms of a contract settlement in September. But the Austin meat-packers and their supporters "are still optimistic and are going to win," Lewis said. "They made a helluvan impression on me," Lewis added.

Austin United Support Group members brought a truckload of food to their union brothers and sisters in Marshalltown December 10. "It just dumbfounds us that people already on strike in Austin and Ottumwa [Iowa] would come here to give to our struggle," Lewis said.

A hardship fund has been set up for the Marshalltown strikers. Contributions can be sent to P.O. Box 143, Union, Iowa 50258.



Marshalltown workers unloading pickup full of food brought to them by meat-packers fighting to get their jobs back at Austin, Minnesota, Hormel plant.

## Packinghouse strike remains solid

BY JEFF POWERS

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. — "We haven't had anyone cross the picket line in several weeks. We still have 320 of the original 400 out on strike."

Ike Clark was describing the situation facing meat-packers who have been on strike for six months at Ark City Packing here. He is the shop chairman of striking United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 340.

Clark and other meat-packers told the *Militant* that they won a victory in October when the state was forced to begin paying the strikers unemployment benefits. As soon as the strike began, John Morrell Co. (the owners of Ark City Packing) brought scabs into the plant.

"We argued that because they had replaced us, we were entitled to have the benefits and the unemployment people said we were right," a worker explained.

The strike began when Morrell management made sweeping demands for changes in work rules, as well as pay and benefit cuts. Under the old contract, the workday was limited to 10-hour shifts. But the company wanted unlimited hours at the plant, which already had a high injury rate. It also wanted to slash wages to \$6.50 an hour.

The contract expires in January at the Sioux City, Iowa, Morrell plant and similar givebacks are being demanded there.

"If John Morrell goes ahead with their plans, I wouldn't be surprised to see a strike up in Sioux City," one worker explained. "You just can't live on \$6 an hour."

In July, Local 340 sent roving pickets to the Morrell plants in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and St. Louis. More than 3,000 Sioux Falls workers honored the picket lines. The company rapidly obtained a court injunction against the picketing. Recently, however, an arbitration ruling overturned the injunction.

"We were waiting to see what happens

in Sioux City," Clark said. "If they go out on strike, we can both go to Sioux Falls. If we do that, we will close down the whole John Morrell operation. Sioux Falls and Sioux City are the only cut-and-kill plants left in the chain. They supply meat to all the rest of the facilities," he said.

At the moment, the Ark City plant is producing as much as it did before the strike.

Most of the scabs the company has hired come from nearby Oklahoma, where the state government was forcing people who apply for food stamps to go to Ark City Packing and fill out job applications.

"Because Oklahoma is an oil state and there is a lot of unemployment, many people are forced to apply for benefits," Clark said.

After protests by the union, Oklahoma officials claim they are no longer forcing food stamp applicants to fill out job applications.

From the beginning, Arkansas City cops helped the company get scabs in and out of the plant and conveniently looked away when scabs attacked strikers. Police and local judges are becoming more vicious as the strike goes on.

One striker is serving a 12-year sentence and another a two-year sentence after being charged and convicted of "acts of violence" against the scabs.

Several workers said that more solidarity is needed from other unions.

"We've had problems with Teamsters and rail workers," a striker said. He said Teamsters drive their trucks right up to the picket line and then get out. Supervisors then drive the trucks across the line. The same thing is happening with rail cars. Both Teamsters and rail workers try to justify this by saying they aren't scabbing. The meat-packers disagree.

"People better wake up and smell the coffee," one worker said. "If we don't stick together, they will pick us off one by one."

## Workers locked out after rejecting contract

BY MARK MICHAELS

DAKOTA CITY, Neb. — Again the bosses are using a lockout as a weapon against workers. This time the victims are meat-packers at the Iowa Beef Processors, Inc. (IBP) plant here.

The members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union Local 222 were locked out December 14 right after they voted 2,250 to 50 against a contract proposal from the company. The offer included a four-year wage freeze and a lower pay scale for workers hired in the future.

The unionists had voted to continue negotiating with the company. They had not decided to strike.

There have been four strikes at the plant since it opened in 1969, the longest lasting 14 months. The meat-packers were out for four months in 1982 when the company imposed a \$1.07 an hour wage cut.

Lewie Anderson, director of the UFCW's Packinghouse Division, stated, "There has been no wage increase in five years for the Dakota City IBP workers and they are being starved to death. Now IBP wants them to go another four years without a wage increase."

Anderson said IBP management was refusing to address plant safety during negotiations. Some 8,000 injuries requiring medical attention have occurred at the plant, he noted.

### Around-the-clock pickets

Local 222 immediately set up an around-the-clock picket line following the lockout. Spouses and children held a march and rally in front of the plant on December 15. Signs were carried reading, "IBP says no Christmas this year" and "IBP are Santa-busters."

The meat-packers on the picket lines explained why they had rejected the company's proposal.

Three women who had been in the plant from 12 to 15 years emphasized that giving in to IBP has got to stop.

"In 1982 we took a big pay cut," one of them said. "It's time they gave some of it back for they could not have made all that profit without us."

IBP's parent company, Occidental Petroleum, reported profits of \$53.6 million for its agri-business division in the first nine months of this year.

One woman said that while wages have been frozen, food bills, rent, "and everything our families need to survive" all went up since the last contract.

"Now IBP wants us to pay our own health insurance and for the work clothes we use in the plant. That means another \$40 or more a month out of our paychecks on top of the four-year wage freeze," she said.

A young worker with two years' seniority explained that since he has been in the plant the company has fired seven foremen because they wouldn't push the workers fast enough.

He said the company is forcing the meat-packers to come to work on crutches and with stitches in their hands and arms for "light-duty work to avoid IBP having to pay higher workers' compensation insurance."

### 'Ready for long fight'

"Most of us are ready for a long fight, you can only be shoved around so much," he explained as he was being relieved on the picket line.

His replacement — Lanny Schulz, a Local 222 shop steward — explained that the lockout fits into IBP's plan to slow down production for up to three months while it remodels the plant. The company then wants to raise the production quota to 220 heads per hour from the current rate of 90 to 110 heads.

IBP wants to "eliminate our seniority," he continued. "There will be no more bid jobs. That way they can shove workers to certain jobs to get rid of them."

Then, he said, IBP "can hire more new workers for under \$5 an hour if they get their way on a cut in pay for new workers."

In the 17 years IBP has been in Dakota City, Schulz estimated, "over one-half the northeast Nebraska and northwest Iowa working people have been through that plant at one time or another. A lot of the communities in the area are going to help us," he said.