

Nicaragua proposes peace plan to Honduras

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The government of Nicaragua has presented a proposal for the removal of all U.S.-organized mercenaries (*contras*) from Honduras in order to end the conflicts on the border between the two nations.

The proposal came in the form of a December 25 letter from Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega to Honduran President José Azcona. In the letter, Ortega said that the sharpened tensions between Nicaragua and Honduras are rooted in two things: "the armed attacks of mercenary groups from Honduran territory" against Nicaragua, and "the illegal policy of intervention and force by the Reagan administration against Nicaragua."

The Nicaraguan president also pointed to "the growing rejection" of the *contras* by the Honduran people and to reports that the Honduran and U.S. governments are themselves discussing removal of the mercenaries from Honduran soil.

Ortega proposed a three-point program to effect the withdrawal of the *contras* from Honduras:

1. Nicaragua will accept all those *contras* of Nicaraguan nationality who voluntarily return to their country under its Amnesty Law. The law permits mercenaries who lay down their arms to freely return to their communities. Ortega pointed out that since this law was put into effect in 1983, 6,000 *contras* have returned. "They have been reunited with their families and are dedicating themselves to honorable work," he said.

2. Nicaragua will collaborate with Honduras to find third countries that will accept those Nicaraguan *contras* who do not want to come back to their country.

3. Nicaragua will collaborate with Honduras and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to repatriate all Nicaraguans in Honduran refugee camps who want to go home. Ortega said the Nicaraguan government would cover any transportation costs that the UN commission cannot pay. Some 10,300 Nicaraguans have already returned from Honduran camps, he pointed out.



Militant/Michael Baumann
Peasant who deserted *contras* returns home under Nicaragua's amnesty program. Managua's proposal to remove *contras* from Honduras includes accepting back Nicaraguans who want to return.

3,000 march to protest racist lynching in N.Y.

BY MIKE SHUR

NEW YORK — "Howard Beach, haven't you heard, this is not Johannesburg!" echoed through the streets as more than 3,000 antiracist demonstrators marched and rallied in Howard Beach, Queens. The participants were responding to a call issued by a broad coalition of organizations that was initiated by the NAACP. They were protesting the lynching of Black construction worker Michael Griffith and the beating of two other Blacks in the predominantly white neighborhood on December 20.

The Blacks had left their disabled car on a nearby highway and walked into Howard Beach in search of a phone. They stopped at the New Park Pizzeria and sat down to

See editorial on page 14.

eat after being told there was no phone.

The police reports stated that 11 or 12 white youths armed with baseball bats and tree branches attacked the three as they left the restaurant, screaming racist taunts and beating them severely. Griffith, pursued by his attackers, ran out onto Shore Parkway, where he was hit by a car and killed.

The Queens district attorney charged three white teenagers, Jason Ladone, Scott Kern, and Jon Lester, with second-degree murder, manslaughter, and first-degree assault. As the accused were taken into custody, a group of 50 whites cheered them.

At a preliminary court hearing December 29, Queens Judge Ernest Bianchi dismissed the murder, manslaughter, and assault charges. He said the cops' testimony was not sufficient to establish "probable cause" for these charges. The charge of first-degree reckless endangerment was sustained.

Ladone and Kern were released after each posted \$15,000 bail. Lester, whose bail was set at \$25,000, was expected to be released soon.

During the hearing several of the cops revealed some of the racist epithets the white youths had admitted using during the attack when they had been interrogated. "There's some niggers in the pizza parlor — let's go kill them," Lester was reported to have said when rallying his friends to the attack. "They came toward us and we started swinging," the defendant was quoted as saying.

Neither of the two surviving victims,



Militant/Mike Lux

Howard Beach in Queens was site of murder of Black by gang of white youths

Cedric Sandiford and Timothy Grimes, appeared for the hearing. Sandiford's attorney said his client wouldn't testify unless Dominick Blum, the driver of the car, is also charged and arrested. They contend that Blum was involved in the attack and deliberately hit Griffith.

The police say that, while elements of Blum's account of the fatal crash are questionable, they do not believe he was an accomplice of the assailants.

New York Mayor Edward Koch, the editors of the *New York Times*, and many others are blaming the victims' refusal to testify for the continuing tensions. "They and their attorney now must bear a heavy share of responsibility for the reverberating tensions," the *Times* editors wrote the following day.

The district attorney's office can still bring the case before a grand jury without the victims' testimony, or could force the victims to testify under court order.

Leaders in the Black community are demanding that New York Gov. Mario Cuomo appoint a special prosecutor.

The outrage at this racist murder has prompted a weeklong series of protests in New York.

On December 22 Black community leaders led a 30-car motorcade to the Queens area where the attack occurred. "It is important that people understand that the days of Blacks being told where to go and where they belong are over," Rev. Alfred Sharpton told 150 Black and white demonstrators outside the pizzeria.

Rev. Herbert Daughtry of the African Peoples Christian Organization told the crowd, "We will not curtail ourselves back into pre-segregation days."

A small hostile group yelled racial slurs at the protesters. The commander of the 106th police precinct then demanded that the demonstrators disperse. The same request was not made to the counterdemonstrators. The police were forced to back down when the antiracist protesters refused to leave.

As protests continued in the city, a broad coalition was formed that called the De-

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Behind crisis rocking Washington

BY MARGARET JAYKO

The crisis shaking up Washington goes by all sorts of names: contragate, Iranamok, Irangate, Iran-contra scandal, Iranscam, Reagagate, and many others.

Despite whatever merits some of these labels may have, none of them quite captures what is occurring — a deepgoing government crisis, not simply a crisis of the Reagan administration.

The inability of the U.S.-organized *contras* to spark a civil war against the popular Nicaraguan government — despite five years of fighting and massive financial and material aid — triggered the profound dilemma currently facing those who run this country.

But the crisis didn't begin in Nicaragua and is not limited to the U.S. government policy fiasco in that region.

The problem is that the structure of the capitalist democratic government, as outlined in the Constitution, is increasingly

out of harmony with the ruling class' needs. This structure has become a hindrance today for using U.S. troops to defend Wall Street's interests abroad and to simultaneously attack working people's rights and living standards at home.

More and more of the powers of Congress are usurped and concentrated in the hands of the executive branch, especially in the area of foreign policy. A strong president who acts — and tells Congress about it later — is a long-term trend that is accelerating.

But this violates both the Constitution and laws that were passed in the 1970s in the wake of Watergate precisely with the purpose of slowing this tendency down.

The government's ability to wage wars against nations that refuse to toe Washington's line has been seriously eroded by the lack of public support for such moves.

There's an enormous and growing contradiction between the potential military

strength of Washington, with its massive arsenal, and its actual weakness in being able to use its bombs and troops to impose its will in the world.

The U.S. government's military defeat in Vietnam resulted in strong opposition among the majority of people in the United States to the involvement of U.S. troops in wars of conquest.

The other obstacle to direct U.S. intervention is the incapacity of the government and the employers to project social and economic policies that will improve the lives of working people at home.

To the contrary, they have been conducting a concerted drive to worsen the living conditions of working people.

No wing of either the Democratic or Republican parties has any credible alternative course to the one followed by the Reagan administration in the domestic and foreign spheres. Nor do they have a cohe-

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Sales teams talk with Kentucky Steelworkers

BY DAVID SALNER

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — When *Militant* sales teams first began visiting the Armco steel mill in Ashland, Kentucky, mem-

Steelworkers, as well as interest in major political issues. This mood has been demonstrated by lively sales. And the sales have continued to be successful weeks after

Steelworkers' expense. The result is that workers in the same industry, represented by the same union, are robbed of their collective strength and subjected to the inequalities of the bosses' profit drive.

USX, the nation's largest steel-maker, has locked out 22,000 Steelworkers, who have rejected a \$3.60-an-hour pay cut. Concession contracts have been signed at Bethlehem, LTV, Wheeling-Pittsburgh, and National Steel.

The Armco contract voting included Steelworkers in Ashland, Kansas City, and Baltimore. From our plant-gate sales, we learned that workers voted on the contract as a package — but that what it meant for each local was different. In Ashland, where business has been booming, no pay cuts were proposed. But in Kansas City and

Baltimore deep cuts were approved.

At our last sale, one Ashland Steelworker voiced anger over the fact that members of his local had to vote on a contract that might be harmful to Steelworkers in the other two locals. Other Steelworkers told us they were kept in the dark on the contract and that long after the vote they still don't know what's in it.

Many thought that their struggle wasn't over with the signing of the contract. Armco would probably tighten the screws as they plead poverty and the need to modernize in order to compete, they thought.

These Steelworkers have pointed out that workers have a right to know the truth about the contract they will be working under. And they also want to know about other issues facing

workers as well. In the weeks after the contract was signed, sales have not tapered off. Two of the more successful sales occurred in December, after the *contra* arms scandal broke.

Ashland Steelworkers were eager to read the *Militant's* viewpoint opposing the U.S. government's war against Nicaragua. Interest has remained high in Fred Halstead's pamphlet on the Hormel meat-packers' struggle. Remembering to mention this pamphlet and show it to workers pays off.

In five visits to the Armco mill, we have sold nine subscriptions, 78 single issues, and 55 pamphlets on the meat-packers' fight.

David Salner works at John Amos power plant near Charleston and is a member of USWA Local 8621.

SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

bers of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 1865 were involved in contract negotiations. Our visits to this mill over the last several months have given us an insight into how negotiations were viewed in an important basic steel production unit where 3,600 workers have been employed with relatively few layoffs.

We have found a strong "no concessions" mood among these

the USWA ratified its contract with Armco.

The USWA used to negotiate on an industrywide basis with the steel barons. This time around, the bosses demanded that contracts with each of the major steel producers be voted separately. Agreeing to this arrangement is one of many concessions the USWA national leadership has made to boost steel industry profits at

Broad march protests racist lynching in New York

Continued from front page

December 27 March Against Racist Violence. Initiated by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the coalition includes United Auto Workers District 65, Hospital Workers Union 1199, New York Civil Liberties Union, New York Urban League, civil rights attorney C. Vernon Mason, and many Black church officials.

While support for the December 27 protest grew, Mayor Edward Koch condemned the action and called on people not to attend. He said it would be counterpro-

ductive.

The evening before the march, more than 400 people attended Michael Griffith's funeral at Our Lady of Charity Catholic Church. Rev. Robert Seay, in his eulogy, said, "Michael is the victim of a system that perpetuates the inferiority of a certain group of people. When young teenagers commit a crime like this, it is not only their fault, but also their parents' and society's."

The march started a block away from the pizzeria, near the site of the murder. Moving up the wide lanes of Cross Bay Boulevard, protesters chanted, "We're

gonna beat back racist attacks" and "We're fired up, we're not gonna take it no more."

As the demonstrators neared the New Park Pizzeria, more than 100 counterdemonstrators confronted them, chanting, "Nigger go home," and "Animals."

The police watched from across the street as the counterdemonstrators taunted and threatened the marchers.

As protesters marched toward the rally site at the athletic field of John Adams High School, a mile away, the mob grew to more than 300 people, who continued to harass the rear of the march.

Large contingents from Hospital Workers 1199, UAW District 65, NAACP chapters in Brooklyn and Queens, and Columbia University Students against Racism and Apartheid participated in the action. Also represented were the Mobilization for Survival, Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence, November 29th Coalition for Palestinian Rights, Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, All Peoples Congress, Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, and Young Socialist Alliance.

The leaflet distributed by the organizers called for vigorous prosecution of those responsible for Griffith's death, appointment of a special prosecutor to conduct an independent investigation of incidents of police brutality, civilian control of the police, outlawing of vigilante patrols, and the elimination of stun guns.

March to precinct house

At the rally demonstrators urged the march to proceed to the 106th precinct. The organizers then led the protest back to the assembly point by way of the police station.

As the crowd reached the precinct

house, the chant "Cops and Klan go hand in hand" broke out. Addressing the crowd, civil rights lawyer C. Vernon Mason pointed out, "This is the station house where the cops tortured a young Black with stun guns last year."

As marchers reached the assembly point, a hostile band of 60 gathered again. But this time, the police, sensing the mood of the crowd, moved between them and the demonstrators. At a brief closing rally, Daughtry said, "We came back because no one can tell us to stay out of this neighborhood."

Socialist from India to tour 4 U.S. cities

Mihir Desai, a leader of the Revolutionary Communist Organization in India, will tour the United States January 3-14. He will speak on "The Political Situation in India Today."

Desai is a leader of the struggle for housing rights in Bombay. He has been active in the fight against pogroms that have taken a religious form, and has worked with trade unions, especially in garment factories and educational institutions.

He will speak in St. Paul, Minnesota, on January 3.

A meeting is being organized for him in Austin, Minnesota. Desai will also address the United Support Group — an organization of spouses, retirees, children, and other supporters of the meat-packers' fight against the Hormel Co. in Austin.

He will speak in St. Louis on January 10. A meeting will also be held in New York City.

'We are tired of being attacked'

Prominent speakers at the December 27 rally against the racist attack in Howard Beach, Queens, included Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP; Ben Chavis of the United Church of Christ; and James Bell, president of the New York Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and a coordinator of the march.

Bell said, "We are here today to say we are tired of being attacked. We are here to demand that racism not be condoned. We will continue to be on the firing line wherever racism raises its head, from South Africa to Howard Beach."

Diane Cavaliero, president of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, said, "We're here to condemn Mayor Koch's historic failure. The mayor's silence contributed to the murder of Michael Griffith. There must be no part of the city where our people cannot walk, work, or live."

Rev. Charles White, pastor of St. Helen Roman Catholic Church in Howard Beach, who is white, spoke. He said he was attending the march to represent a Howard Beach that has people who "aspire to be a loving people."

Other speakers at the rally were Cleveland Robinson, secretary-treasurer of UAW District 65; Georgina Johnson, president of Hospital Workers 1199; Stanley Hill, president of District 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; and Harold Mendlowitz of Amalgamated Transportation Union Local 1202.

Calvin Butts, minister of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem; Rev. Daughtry; Rev. Sharpton; city councilmen Archie Spigner and Enoch Williams also spoke.

—M.S.

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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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Union food caravan aids Hormel struggle

Thirty-five locals in the Twin Cities participate in solidarity effort

BY MAGGIE McCRAW
AND WENDY LYONS

AUSTIN, Minn. — Thirty-five Twin Cities unions contributed food and money to a Christmas food caravan in solidarity with the 850 meat-packers fighting to get their jobs back at the Hormel packing plant here.

The caravan was initiated by United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 789 in St. Paul. Thirty thousand pounds of food were distributed to the Austin workers and their families December 21.

Caravan participants joined in a full day of solidarity and celebration activities organized by the Austin United Support Group.

Workshops on the support group, the boycott of Hormel products, communications, and on the North American Meat Packers Union (NAMPU) were held. A rally and dance followed.

Meat-packer Cecil Cain chaired the rally and thanked Local 789 and the Twin Cities Hormel Support Group for their solidarity efforts.

Bud Schulte, a shop steward at the Iowa Pork plant in South St. Paul, explained how Local 789 — made up of 6,000 retail clerks, nursing home workers, and meat-packers — had agreed to sponsor the caravan.

He said that UFCW members are "going to keep supporting you. The thing isn't over until everybody gets their jobs back at Hormel."

He also stressed "the difference P-9 has made at Iowa Pork where I work. It has helped educate around issues and the history of the packinghouse movement, which has to be passed on to new workers."

Ed Allen from Corporate Campaign Inc. (CCI), an organization that helped organize support for UFCW Local P-9's struggle against Hormel, said word was spreading that "the struggle is alive here in Austin, and it is getting a tremendous response." He said that despite attempts by top AFL-CIO officials "to make CCI not succeed, we have stabilized our operation and will be here to help you as long as necessary, no matter what it takes."

Lorraine Young, from Women, Work, and Welfare; and John Dylan, a member of the Communications Workers of America and active in the New Jersey P-9 Support Group, also spoke.

'Why do you keep struggling?'

Jim Guyette, former president of UFCW Local P-9, said the caravan was an indication "that a UFCW local has broken through the slanders and lies put out about us."

He noted that many people ask the question, "Why do you keep struggling?" He listed the reasons, focusing on the attacks against meat-packers and other UFCW members across the country. He pointed to the lockout of meat-packers at the Iowa Beef Processing plant in Dakota City, Nebraska, after they refused to take a concession contract.

He described the situation of hundreds of Ottumwa, Iowa, Hormel meat-packers

now facing permanent job loss as a result of a partial plant shutdown. And meat-packers and store clerks in Texas are facing huge wage cuts.

Guyette said NAMPU will be publishing a position paper detailing its fighting stand for meat-packers.

Meat-packers, he said, are continuing their efforts to regain control over the Austin Labor Center, where Local P-9 was headquartered before it was put into trusteeship by the top UFCW officials. Speaking tours across the country and internationally will also continue, and the Hormel boycott will be stepped up.

Unions donate food and money

The effort to raise money for the caravan sparked considerable discussion and activity at a number of Twin Cities workplaces.

Oil workers at the Koch refinery collected \$800 on the job following a discussion in their union meeting. They also filled a pickup truck with food collected at the plant.

Machinists at Northwest and Republic airlines voted to contribute \$900 at their union meeting. Steelworkers at Northern Malleable Foundry set up a union committee to organize their efforts. Meat-packer Cain spoke to their union meeting the week before the caravan left.

At the Iowa Pork plant, the UFCW Local 789 members organized a two-week campaign to support their Austin sisters and brothers. Leaflets and other materials were posted in the plant.

Workers at Iowa Beef fight lockout

BY ANNIE PETERS

DAKOTA CITY, Neb. — The winter has been pretty mild in this part of the Midwest but it has taken on an extra chill for some workers here. A trash-barrel fire and a rough wooden shack protect a few locked out meat-packers from a damp wind blowing across the Nebraska fields.

Signs stuck in the ground and stenciled on the shack tell the story. "Local 222 locked out by IBP." The Iowa Beef Processors flagship plant sprawls across a piece of prairie unbroken except for an occasional grain bin or a rail car.

On December 14 UFCW Local 222 members were locked out after they rejected a company contract proposal.

"I told my husband I pay my union dues, I have to walk the picket line, it's my union," a Native American woman explained. She said she had earlier worked in a nonunion packing plant in Texas for minimum wage.

A worker with five years in the shipping department at IBP told the *Militant*, "Things are pretty bad in the industry right now, if we could turn this around here it would help all meat-packers." He said he was participating in a "union truth squad" that explains the issues in the lockout to workers and farmers in the area.

A union leaflet states that the workers have not had a pay increase in five years

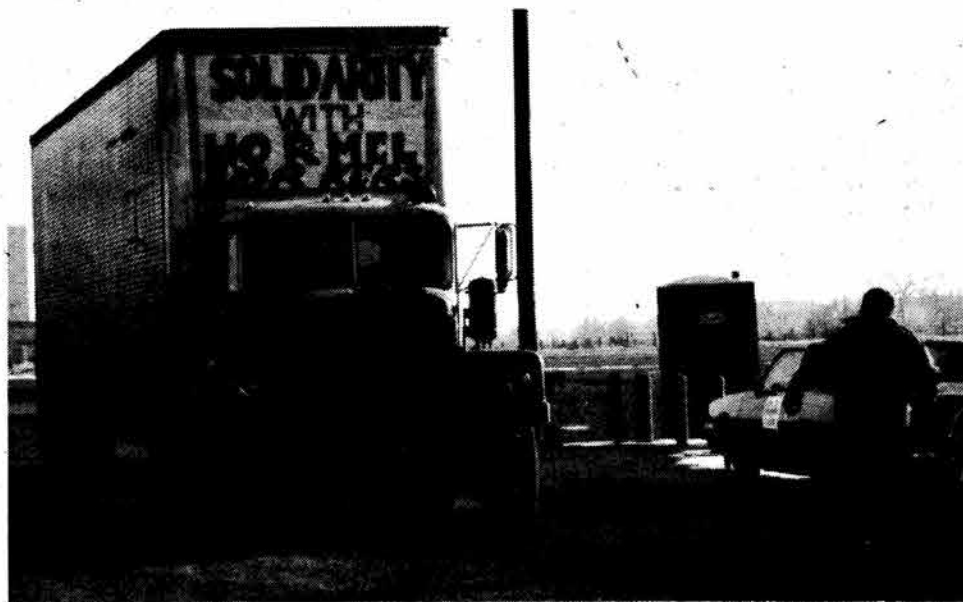
The meeting was chaired by Bill Jennings, president of Machinists Local 82. Jennings said, "After this meeting was set up, we got a telegram from Washington," from the IAM national president, William Winpisinger, saying the meat-packers should not be allowed to speak at IAM locals.

Joe Vereb, Steelworkers District 29 organizer, spoke on the USX lockout.

The next day Krueger got a standing ovation from 350 auto workers at a United Auto Workers Local 599 union meeting in Flint. That local voted to send \$600 to the Austin United Support Group's "Adopt-A-Family" program for the next three months.

At another meeting, Detroit teachers voted to send \$2,000 to Austin.

Krueger and Swank also spoke to several high school classes during their stay.



Militant/Adrienne Kaplan

After delivering food, unionists joined full day of activities organized by Austin United Support Group.

A meeting for Iowa Pork workers to meet and talk with meat-packers from Austin was held at a bar near the plant where many workers go to cash their checks. Nearly half the plant's workers attended. Meat-packers shared experiences and discussed how to fight the harsh conditions and takeback demands they face.

Much discussion and debate in the plant ensued the following week, centering on whether the Austin workers had gone too

far, whether it is possible to fight concessions, and how to make the union stronger.

A delegation of nine met near the plant the day of the caravan carrying signs reading, "Meat-packers support meat-packers — UFCW 789 says 'Happy Holidays.' Join the caravan!"

Maggie McCraw and Wendy Lyons are members of UFCW Local 789 at the Iowa Pork plant.

and that the company wants to freeze wages for another four. The same flyer points out that in 1985 at least 8,000 injuries in the plant required medical attention.

Three Vietnamese workers picketing at the plant's south end said the state is denying the unionists unemployment benefits. The feeling among many is that the lockout was a convenient way for IBP to do some plant remodeling without paying unemployment benefits. At the same time it can try to intimidate the workers into making concessions.

At the union's organizing center in the nearby Sioux City, Iowa, stockyards about 60 people sat around a long table waiting to

picket.

A couple of women said that they had been door-to-door leafletting in the community. They also talked about IBP's three-tier wage structure and about the plant's high rate of carpal tunnel syndrome, an injury that damages wrist and arm nerves.

Most of the work force is relatively new. However, several at the center were veterans of the 1969 and 1982 strikes. In 1982 National Guard troops came to Dakota City to help management get scabs into the plant.

The union is currently paying lockout benefits of \$64 a week and challenging in court the state's refusal to pay unemployment benefits.

Call issued for Washington antiwar action on April 25

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The April Action Committee has issued "an appeal to the people of the United States" to participate in a march and rally for "justice and peace in Central America and Southern Africa" to be held here April 25.

The committee released 5,000 copies of the action call on December 30. The organizers are also planning events on April 26 and 27, including a nonviolent civil disobedience action April 27.

Later this month the committee will hold a news conference to release a list of religious and labor leaders who are sponsors of the action.

"Our government is escalating its terrorism and war against the people and government of Nicaragua through CIA-directed Contra forces," the call states.

It also says the government is "continuing to support the South African apartheid government through a sanctions policy that contains major loopholes."

And it condemns U.S. government policy in Central America and southern Africa as violating "fundamental rights to self-determination, liberty, and justice."

The call for the Washington action comes on the heels of the announcement of a "Western States Mobilization March and Rally" in San Francisco, also on April 25.

Issued by the Mobilization for Jobs, Peace and Justice on December 17, that call urges tens of thousands to demonstrate

in the streets of Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

It points out "From the worksites to the campuses, from the places of worship to the homes of the people, a consensus is emerging which views the policies of the U.S. government as drawing our country into a deeper war in Central America."

San Francisco marches with similar demands as the upcoming one drew 25,000 last April and 50,000 in 1985. A 1985 march in Washington also drew over 50,000.

The co-chairs for the San Francisco action listed on the call are John George, a member of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors; Howard Gloyd, pastor of Bethel AME Church; Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco AFL-CIO; Albert Lannon, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 6; Pat Norman, director of the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Health Services; Mario Obledo, past national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens; Peter Sammon, pastor of St. Teresa's Church; and Charlene Tshirhart, San Francisco Nuclear Freeze Campaign.

Broad support was growing for the Washington action even before the call was released. Many organizations had endorsed the proposal and antiwar coalitions began forming in some local areas and were already printing leaflets urging people to come to Washington April 25.

Hormel meat-packers tour Michigan

BY JOANNE MURPHY

DETROIT — "You've got to fight. If you keep knuckling in they'll keep coming after you." That was the message Merle Krueger — a meat-packer with 42 years in the Austin, Minnesota, Hormel plant — brought to workers here.

In a one-week tour, Krueger and Paul Swank, both members of Original Local P-9, spoke to unionists in 20 area locals.

On December 13 they spoke at a citywide meeting hosted by International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 82. The meat-packers explained that more than 800 workers are fighting to get their jobs back at the Austin plant and they need financial help to keep going.

"I am not ashamed to beg for people who are real fighters and deserve your support," Krueger said. "It's going to be cold out there, the furnace will be running and the utility bills will be high."

Behind the crisis rocking Washington

Continued from front page

rent proposal for restructuring the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of the government.

Why hasn't Sen. Edward Kennedy, or some prominent Democrat who plans to run for president in 1988, jumped on this scandal to put forward a series of proposals on ending the war against Nicaragua, resolving the economic disaster facing working people, and restructuring the government?

The problem for Kennedy and other liberals is: What could they say that would be substantially different than what the government has been doing and saying about these things? Nothing.

That's why the Democrats haven't been able to propose any measures to rapidly defuse the crisis.

Rather, matters are getting more out of control as each day brings new damaging revelations and more administration officials are implicated. And there is no quick or easy solution in sight.

'Reagan doctrine:' wishful thinking

Much of the media commentary about the crisis has focused on what is called the "Reagan doctrine."

This is typically portrayed as "Ronald Reagan's passionate crusade against Communism," as an editorial in the Dec. 21, 1986, *New York Times* put it. "Out of this zeal," the *Times*' editors claimed, "the President fashioned what others call the Reagan Doctrine, a philosophy that seeks to justify global interventionism by irregular means. Even illegal means..."

But it's not only Reagan who uses anticommunism to justify intervening in other countries. Red baiting of freedom struggles is the stock-in-trade of capitalist politics in this country. U.S. military aggression against other nations is carried out by Democrats and Republicans alike.

The fact is, however, that the highly touted "rollback and containment" policy associated with the Reagan presidency has been more tough talk than action.

The Reagan administration has not been able to create the conditions whereby such a policy could be tried out.

To really give "Ramboism" a go at it, the reluctance of the U.S. people to allowing a new Vietnam would have to be overcome. And to do that, working people would have to be convinced that such a war was just and that it was worth making sacrifices for.

U.S. imperialism losing: 9-0

Those capitalist politicians who are most gung-ho about Reagan are frustrated by the limits imposed on the administration by the current relationship of forces between the imperialist rulers and the exploited and oppressed at home and abroad.

Jack Kemp, chairman of the House Republican Conference, complained in an opinion column in the Dec. 23, 1986, *New York Times* that in the decade before Reagan became president — that is, during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations — nine countries had been "captured" by the "Soviet empire."

Kemp doesn't say what countries he thinks fit under the rubric of those "captured."

Presumably it includes those that won their freedom from colonial domination, such as Angola and Mozambique; those where imperialist-backed regimes, such as in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, were overthrown; and those that abolished capitalist political rule such as Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Grenada, and Nicaragua.

But except for Grenada, none of these countries are close to being thrown back into the grip of imperialist domination.

Washington has been limited to giving funds to right-wing rebels, as in Afghanistan, and fielding mercenary forces, as in Nicaragua.

Because many of these operations were illegal or politically unpopular, they were kept relatively secret, thus further hamstringing Washington in what it could throw into them.

U.S. imperialism's weakness was particularly revealed in its murderous bombing attack of Libya last year.

Not that long ago, Washington wouldn't have hesitated to "teach Libya a lesson" with sustained bombing accompanied by marine divisions. We only have to recall



Militant/Lou Howort

Antiwar sentiment is fueled by employers' austerity drive. This makes it more difficult for the rulers to win support at home to deploy troops in other countries.

that it sent thousands of troops into the Dominican Republic in 1965. But that was impossible this time. After one air raid, killing civilians, there was a worldwide outcry that forced Washington to stop.

Smothered in an avalanche of antiracist rhetoric, the bombing initially won some support at home. But enthusiasm among working people began to wane as the facts about the brutality of the U.S. military action came to light.

Grenada: exception proves the rule

As for actually rolling back victorious revolutions, this administration has only one notch on its gun: Grenada. But Grenada is precisely the exception that proves the rule.

Why was the U.S. government able to invade Grenada? And why were the invaders able to win so quickly?

Because the Grenadian people had been disarmed, demobilized, and demoralized by a government coup two weeks before the U.S. Marines landed on the shores of that tiny Caribbean island.

But history has demonstrated that receiving a gift like Grenada does not happen very often.

What are the U.S. government's options in trying to roll back the Nicaraguan revolution?

One is to invade. But less support than ever exists for that in U.S. ruling circles today. The blows the Sandinistas have inflicted on the contras and the mass support for the revolution would make an invasion very politically expensive indeed.

A second option is to negotiate an end to the contra war; to let Nicaragua live in peace.

This was the course advocated by a wing of the ruling class as the Vietnam War wore on and the antiwar movement grew bigger. Some capitalist politicians started calling for negotiations with the Vietnamese as the lesser evil to continuing the war. A majority of the ruling class eventually came around to that point of view and it was implemented by the government.

But there is not yet any significant voice among those who run the country calling for negotiations with Nicaragua. There's a widespread recognition in Washington that the contras can't win. But there's no coherent idea of what to replace them with.

A third option would be massive economic aid to the region in order to show that countries remaining under U.S. domination can feed, clothe, house, educate, and cure their people better than the workers' and peasants' republic in Nicaragua can.

Such massive aid would help win support from the capitalist governments in Latin America for an invasion of Nicaragua.

Combined with a program of expanded job opportunities and social services at home, this package could begin to reverse the "Vietnam syndrome" among U.S. working people.

Caribbean Basin Initiative

But such a course is not in the cards today.

In the aftermath of the 1983 invasion of Grenada, the White House announced, with much fanfare, its Caribbean Basin Initiative.

This was supposed to turn 21 countries in the region into exporters of electronics and other assembled goods, which would allegedly lead to economic development in these impoverished nations.

Don't hold your breath. Three years later, exports from Central American and Caribbean nations to the United States — by far their largest market — fell in dollar terms by 22 percent last year. And they've dropped by another 13 percent this year.

The economic basis for a foreign policy that includes big economic carrots as well as a military stick has been demolished by the international capitalist economic crisis.

And this is true for domestic policy as well. There is no modern-day New Deal or refurbished War on Poverty in the offing.

The employers and their government are making big attacks on working people's living standards and rights, including outright wage cuts and union busting.

This is different than what happened during most of the years of the Vietnam War. The U.S. economy was still expanding. The living standards of the majority of working people were gradually rising.

Today, however, "guns and butter" are mutually exclusive.

This makes it more difficult to get U.S. working people to support another Vietnam war. And they're beginning to see that Washington's reactionary foreign policy is not so different than the government's mounting attacks on democratic rights, working conditions, and wages at home.

Patriotism, national chauvinism, and other reactionary ideas have less of a hold on workers when the government and employers can't guarantee them a decent job and more rights.

That's why many workers and farmers are open to seeing that the anti-Nicaragua propaganda emanating from the White House and Congress is not true.

Thousands of unionists, farmers, and students have been to Nicaragua and seen with their own eyes what a democratic, humane revolution it is. Many more have talked to friends who have been there.

They learn that there is no death penalty, that prisoners are treated far better than they are in the United States, that Blacks and Indians are winning their rights, that peasants are being given land, and unions are being encouraged by the government.

U.S. can't win or declare war

The U.S. ruling class will never win another war.

Nicaragua shows that mercenary forces are not strong enough to roll back popular revolutions. But Washington can't gather enough support among U.S. working people for the kind of military fight that, for example, a successful invasion of Nicaragua would entail.

To win such a war would mean big U.S. casualties, siphoning off massive economic resources, reinstituting the military draft, and broad restrictions on democratic rights. But this would be impossible to sell to workers, farmers, and others whose rights and living standards are under attack.

Only new economic growth and prosper-

ity, or smashing the working class, could turn this around. But neither are on the agenda now.

Not only can the U.S. rulers not win another war, they will never be able to declare another war. The last declared war was World War II. Vietnam and Korea were both undeclared wars.

According to the Constitution, only Congress can declare war. But the request for such a declaration would spark a debate, which would have to be carried out in front of the people of the United States.

More and more of what the U.S. government does, in its role as world cop, can't be openly debated, can't stand the bright light of public opinion.

This doesn't mean Washington stops pursuing military adventures around the world, or disruption operations against dissenters at home. What it does mean is that these actions are carried out unilaterally by the executive branch, behind the backs of the people.

Bipartisan agreement

The combination of an austerity drive and attacks on democratic rights at home and waging war abroad is not some peculiar feature of the Reagan administration. It is what the ruling class has to do in order to try to get itself out of the crisis it is in.

The liberals have no serious alternative. They agree that in order to make U.S. industry more competitive, working people have to tighten their belts.

For millions of working people, the crisis rocking Washington has revealed a great deal about how the government and its two parties are adversaries of democracy and the freedom of nations to determine their own destiny.

What it underlines most of all is the degree to which Democrats and Republicans have become Tweedledum and Tweedledee on all major issues affecting working people here and around the world. There is no satisfactory alternative within the two-party system.

Working people, more than any other class in society, have a stake in defending the Constitution against arbitrary rule by self-appointed leaders who represent monied interests.

It is the exploited and oppressed whose rights are the most restricted when the government seeks to stifle dissent over unpopular policies.

The only kind of political party that can really champion democratic rights is one that represents the exploited, who have every interest in expanding, not restricting, those rights.

A party of working people, based on the unions, would advocate peace and aid for Nicaragua, not war. It would be a proponent of equality for women, Blacks, and Latinos. It would guarantee working farmers the right to use their land.

It would be for jobs and higher wages for workers. It would be for open government and defense of the Bill of Rights.

A new party of the toilers — this is the kind of radical change in U.S. political life that is called for by the current controversy in Washington.

Multitude of inquiries probe gov't crisis

Investigators try to restore 'credibility' of presidency

BY ERNEST HARSCH

Hoping to bring a measure of direction to the White House's response to the unfolding crisis that has rocked Washington for the past two months, Reagan has created a special team to oversee administration strategy in the Iran-contra arms affair.

On December 26 he appointed David Abshire, the departing U.S. delegate to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to head the team. Abshire, who will hold cabinet rank, termed the move a "new and decisive way to deal with" the crisis.

But other administration and congressional officials are not so optimistic. One senior Republican senator told the *New York Times* that he and his staff did not know "what the devil" they should do to overcome the crisis.

'Get rid of this problem'

In fact no one in the White House or on Capitol Hill has been able to control the course of the crisis or effectively stem the stream of new disclosures.

Conservative columnist William Safire noted in the December 18 *New York Times*, "A relatively wide circle of Government officials and arms merchants knew about the secret arms-for-hostages dealings." The "paper trail" left by these figures, Safire observed, "is now easily being found."

The momentum of revelations has been reflected — and in turn, spurred — by the wide range of bodies now looking into the affair. Several congressional committees, the FBI, the Justice Department, a special prosecutor, and others are investigating various aspects of the controversy.

One purpose of this multitude of inquiries is to allay the popular distrust of the government and the widespread belief that the Reagan administration is trying to cover up its true role. Many officials have stressed that they are seeking to restore the "credibility" of the presidency. They want the furor to subside as quickly as possible.

"This nation's credibility and standing in the world is involved here," declared Sen. Robert Byrd, the incoming Democratic Senate majority leader. "The institution of the presidency is at stake."

Sen. Orrin Hatch, a Republican member of several of the investigative committees, said the goal was "to get rid of this problem and resolve it in the minds of the American people."

A bounty of inquiries

The first probes were set in motion by the administration. Initially, Attorney General Edwin Meese himself was given overall responsibility for looking into the controversy. But this caused such a stir — given Meese's own evident involvement in the affair — that Reagan was soon forced to approve the appointment of a special prosecutor.

Reagan also set up a three-man commission to investigate the functioning of the National Security Council, the agency

most directly involved in the diversion to the contras of funds from arms sales to Iran.

Meanwhile, three congressional committees launched their own probes: the House Foreign Affairs Committee (which conducted public hearings) and the House and Senate intelligence committees (which held several closed-door sessions). The last of these committees concluded their proceedings on December 23.

Witnesses stonewall

Although some new details came out, the committees' investigations were hampered by the refusal of three central witnesses to answer questions: Lt. Col. Oliver North, the key organizer of the contra funding operation; former national security adviser John Poindexter; and retired Maj. Gen. Richard Secord. All three invoked the Constitution's Fifth Amendment clause against self-incrimination.

Concerned that their refusals to testify have only deepened the popular view that the White House is hiding something, Reagan and Meese urged the congressional committees to grant the witnesses limited immunity from prosecution. Once granted immunity, a witness may no longer refuse to testify on Fifth Amendment grounds.

The immunity plea was rejected by the congressional committees, at least for the moment. Legal experts noted that granting immunity now, before other evidence has been collected, would make it virtually impossible to prosecute the witnesses for any related criminal activities. This is because none of their testimony, or leads developed from their testimony, could be used in evidence.

Congress hopes to 'send a message'

With the opening of the next session of Congress on January 6, two special select committees chosen by leaders of the Senate and House will begin a new round of hearings on the affair. These committees were set up to consolidate the investigations launched or contemplated by various standing committees of Congress. The House and Senate committees are each headed by Democrats, reflecting the Democratic Party's majority in both houses of the new Congress.

Senator Daniel Inouye, chairman of the Senate select committee, estimated that the investigation would last at least until the end of September 1987. Inouye also emphasized that his congressional committee will attempt to "send a message" abroad that the U.S. government remains "vital and viable [and] that we would not stand for any nonsense."

Rep. Lee Hamilton, the chairman of the House committee, made a similar point, stating that it was necessary to resolve the crisis so as to reassure Washington's foreign allies. Although Hamilton himself voted against providing \$100 million in open aid to the contras, a majority of his committee approved the contra aid.

Broad powers for prosecutor

When Meese, at Reagan's instruction, charged a panel of three judges to appoint a special prosecutor, he laid down a specific and limited mandate for the scope of the investigation. But when the judges announced Lawrence Walsh's appointment as prosecutor December 19, they rejected Meese's guidelines and gave Walsh much broader powers.

While Meese had urged that the investigation focus only on events beginning in January 1985, the judges empowered Walsh to go back to 1984, the year Congress banned any covert U.S. aid to the contras (a ban that has since been lifted).

And while Meese wanted the probe limited to the Iranian arms sales and the diversion of funds from those sales to the contras, Walsh has been mandated to investigate any U.S. support to the contras. He may also investigate whether any of the Iranian proceeds were given to other military forces (such as the counterrevolutionary guerrillas in Afghanistan and Angola).

Under law, Walsh will have all the powers of the attorney general over the areas covered by his investigation.

One of those areas may include several



Sen. Daniel Inouye (left) wants to "send a message" abroad that U.S. government remains "vital and viable." Attorney General Edwin Meese (right) is a target of several investigations.



inquiries now under way in Miami into illegal arms shipments to the contras. Both the FBI and a federal grand jury are looking into the activities of Southern Air Transport, the CIA-linked airline that has been involved in both the contra supply network and in the Iranian arms shipments.

Meese himself has emerged as a prime suspect. Several congressional committees, the FBI, and the Justice Department's own Office of Professional Responsibility are scrutinizing Meese's conduct over the past few months.

Meese, it turns out, ordered the FBI on

October 31 to suspend its investigation of Southern Air Transport, begun following the October 5 shooting down of one of the airline's planes over Nicaragua. The Justice Department initially admitted that the suspension was for 10 days, but it was later revealed to have been for 26 days.

Meese's justification for ordering the suspension was that the FBI probe could interfere with negotiations with Iran over the release of the U.S. hostages in Lebanon.

But that suggests that Meese was aware of the Iran-contra connection weeks before he has admitted knowing anything about it.

U.S. envoy to Costa Rica supervised 'contra' airstrip

BY HARRY RING

The fiction that the illegal running of guns to the Nicaraguan contras was the exclusive work of two White House aides and a network of private citizens was dealt another blow with the disclosure that the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica played a key role in overseeing construction of a secret airstrip there. It was used to ferry weapons to the Nicaraguan mercenaries.

State Department officials have argued that the illegal operation was strictly the work of private citizens and while the officials were aware of what was happening, they were not involved.

The role of envoy Lewis Tambs was leaked to the *New York Times* by "a senior government official in Central America" — probably a member of the Costa Rican government, which had been leaned on to permit use of the airfield.

The government of Costa Rica ordered

the field shut down last summer when it claimed that, contrary to an agreement, flights had been made without its permission.

The airstrip was built during the period when Congress had made it illegal to send arms to the contras. It was constructed by a Panama-based company, Udall Research, which was linked to the White House-created secret Swiss bank accounts. Udall Research has since been dissolved.

In early December reporters had queried Tambs about his reported links to the contra supply operation. He denied having anything to do with it. After the story of the illegal government operation broke, he unexpectedly announced his retirement.

Costa Rican police who checked out the airstrip found a mile-long runway with fresh tire ruts, a barracks to house 30 personnel, and a 5,000-gallon aviation fuel supply.

Meanwhile, it was also disclosed that the government of Brunei, an oil-producing country on the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia, had been solicited for \$10 million to help finance the contra operation. This is substantially more than the "several million" initially reported.

The sultan of Brunei deposited the money in one of Lt. Col. Oliver North's Swiss accounts at the suggestion of the State Department. The idea of hitting up Brunei reportedly had originated with Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs and one of the administration's point men in organizing the contra war.

Soliciting the contribution, and additional ones from Saudi officials, was defended by Secretary of State George Shultz as perfectly legal since, he asserted, it was for congressionally authorized "humanitarian" aid.

He didn't explain why, if it was a legal contribution to a legal cause, it was deposited in a secret account used to finance an illegal weapons operation.

Meanwhile, contra honcho Alfonso Robelo is insisting his outfit hasn't seen more than 25 percent of the Iranian arms sale take. The rest, he says, went for "large, perhaps illegal commissions" to people he can't remember.



Sultan of Brunei: Kicked in \$10 million for Nicaraguan contras.

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Conference sets up Iowa district of SWP

BY MARGARET JAYKO

DES MOINES, Iowa — Farming and related industries — meat packing and agricultural-implements production — are the economic and political heart of this city and state.

The workers and farmers here and throughout the Midwest — who produce the food, fiber, and manufactured goods — are waging important fights to defend their rights and living standards, which are under attack by the employers, bankers, and government.

It is these struggles that prompted the Socialist Workers Party to expand its presence in the region and set up the Iowa district of the party.

On the weekend of December 20-21, members of three new party branches — in Austin, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; and Des Moines — gathered here for a convention to establish the district.

Most of the delegates had been industrial workers and union activists in other cities before moving to this area and have begun getting union-organized jobs here.

Agricultural center

Iowa has the highest corn and grain production of any state; the second largest soybean production; and the fifth largest hay crop. Iowa ranks third, after Texas and Missouri, in the number of farms in the country.

The value of farmland here has plummeted 63 percent since 1981 and many farmers have lost their land. There have been farm protests in many parts of the state.

Iowa is a national center for farm-equipment manufacturing and the meat-packing industry, especially hogs. Nebraska and Minnesota also have many meat-packing plants.

The packinghouse bosses are on the prod, driving down wages, speeding up production, and attacking the unions.

The struggle of the meat-packers in Austin against the giant Geo. A. Hormel & Co. has been an example and inspiration to workers around the country.

Organized into Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), these workers were forced out on strike in August 1985.

Arrayed against the workers were the company, cops, courts, governor, Minnesota National Guard, and the big-business-owned media.

With the help of the National Guard, the company was able to reopen the plant with scab labor in early 1986.

To meet this formidable challenge, the workers reached out for support from other working people around the country and the world. Roving picket lines were sent to Hormel plants in Ottumwa, Iowa, and Fremont, Nebraska.



Mac Warren, organizer of newly founded Iowa district of Socialist Workers Party, is interviewed by local television station in Des Moines. District consists of recently formed SWP branches in Des Moines; Omaha, Nebraska; and Austin, Minnesota.

The international officialdom of the UFCW had done everything in its power to undercut the militant struggle led by P-9.

In September 1986, the company finally succeeded in getting its proposed contract adopted, which allowed Hormel to refuse to rehire 850 of the original 1,500 workers who went on strike.

Link up with other meat-packers

In a report to the convention on the perspectives for the district and the tasks of party members, the SWP's district organizer, Mac Warren, explained that even though the strike had been defeated, the workers in Austin are not beaten.

The large majority vote for the contract at the Austin plant, and the recognition that those strikers who had not been allowed to return to work would not be getting their jobs back quickly, was a turning point in the struggle, Warren said. It meant the focus of attention shifted to the battles of other meat-packers throughout North America — Marshalltown, Iowa; Arkansas City, Kansas; Dakota City, Nebraska; Rochelle, Illinois; Edmonton, Alberta; and many other places. In this way the fight for the goals that motivated the men and women of Austin, Fremont, and Ottumwa was continued on another front.

The Austin fighters can help change the relationship of forces in the meat-packing industry to the benefit of the workers by sharing what they've learned with other

meat-packers, Warren said.

Many Austin meat-packers are still out on the road, speaking to supporters all over the country. They are telling their story, extending solidarity to other workers in struggle, and seeking financial support for the families of Hormel workers who didn't get their jobs back.

Role of socialist workers

Socialist workers can make an important contribution to this struggle, Warren emphasized. The party's program is a generalization of the lessons learned by the workers' movement throughout its history. As they participate with coworkers in struggles and learn from them, socialist workers can help these fighters absorb the

lessons of previous battles. These lessons are crucial if the labor movement is going to successfully reverse the ruling class' offensive against working people.

In order to make this contribution in the new district, Warren concluded, it's important to have the three branches of the SWP carry out all the political work that other branches do.

Each branch will set up a public party headquarters in conjunction with a Pathfinder bookstore. And they will organize weekly public forums, sales of the socialist press, and run candidates in city and state elections.

By doing this, Warren concluded, the party is opening the door to winning a new layer of workers and farmers to the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance.

During the discussion on the report, delegates pointed out that many workers and farmers in the area are already familiar with the *Militant* as a result of the work of subscription teams that spent several weeks selling at plant gates and on campuses in the fall.

Educational conference

SWP and YSA supporters and people who wanted to find out more about socialism attended classes and a rally that took place over the weekend.

The classes focused on the landmark court decision in the SWP and YSA suit against government disruption and spying.

Jim Guyette, the president of UFCW Local P-9 before it was placed in receivership last summer, spoke at the rally. Greetings were read from Bob Langemeier, one of the meat-packers at Fremont who lost his job for honoring P-9's roving picket lines.

Joe Swanson, the Midwest spokesperson for the Political Rights Defense Fund, which is raising money for the SWP and YSA court case, spoke about the positive response he has gotten from unionists he's asked to become sponsors of PRDF. The other speakers were this reporter and Tony Dutrow from Austin.

Young socialists hold N.Y. reception

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN AND MIKE FITZSIMMONS

NEW YORK — On the evening of December 13, some 75 participants in a regional socialist educational conference here attended an open house at the new national office of the Young Socialist Alliance at 64 Watts St. in Manhattan. The YSA is a nationwide revolutionary youth organization with members in over 40 cities in the United States.

This new national office is financed

through the contributions of young workers and students. Maggi Pucci, a member of the Boston chapter of the YSA for eight months, told the *Militant* that her chapter had gone \$100 over its recent fund drive goal because "we had discussions with new members about the need for and importance of our new national office."

"When I first walked in and noticed the T-shirts and notices on the bulletin board, I thought this really is an office that young people would be attracted to and find out about things," said Priscilla Schenk, organizer of the Newark Socialist Workers Party.

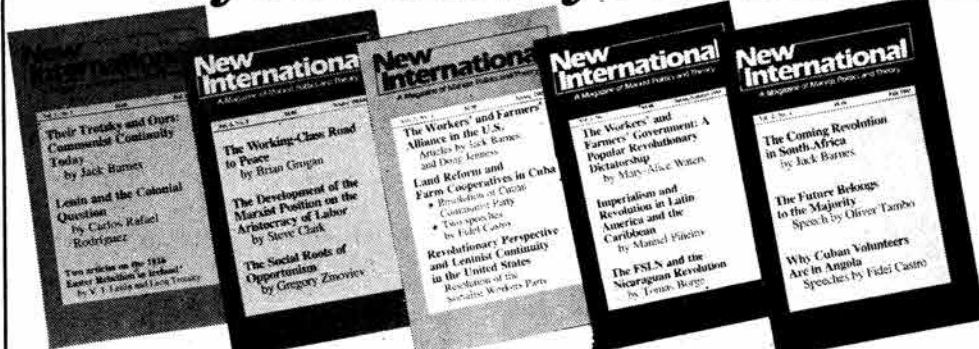
Amara Willey, a first-year student at Bard College and an at-large member of the YSA, explained that she joined "because I want to work toward real social change, and against things like the Ku Klux Klan posting racist literature around my former high school, and the U.S. war against Nicaragua."

"I saw a film about Nicaragua in my high school," she related. "It was inspiring to see the support, solidarity and love of the Nicaraguan people. Our government says we have to save Nicaragua from the Sandinistas. But the people support the Sandinistas; they are the Sandinistas."

Nathaniel Jackson, a young hospital worker in Philadelphia who just joined the YSA, discussed the racist character of the wars that the U.S. government wages. He said, "More soldiers from Edison High School in my neighborhood in the Black community died in the Vietnam War than from any other high school in the United States."

Rena Cacoullos, a national leader of the YSA, addressed the reception. "This is the first public meeting at our new national office. . . . And it's a good time to be young people in struggle. The Nicaraguans have said, '¡No pasarán!'; and we have said, hell no we aren't going down there. But we are going to organize for and attend along with thousands of others the national antiwar marches in Washington and on the West Coast April 25."

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Nicaragua revolution wins support of Atlantic Coast farmers

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

BLUEFIELDS, Nicaragua — Thousands of peasant families live in small villages and farms scattered throughout the area around Bluefields on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. The majority are Spanish-speaking people, called mestizos, but they also include English-speaking Creoles and Garifonos — both descendants of African slaves — as well as Miskito, Sumo, and Rama Indians.

The Nicaraguan revolution has faced a big challenge in winning the support and active participation of the peasants in this region. In a November 18 interview here, four young leaders of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) told the *Militant* about their recent progress.

Vincente Sevilla, UNAG's president here, explained that many peasants joined UNAG, and many formed cooperatives in the first years of the revolution.

"However, they did not really understand the revolution or the work of UNAG," Sevilla explained. "When the *contras* began to penetrate this area, they made initial gains among the peasants.

"The *contras* played upon anticommunist prejudices, telling the peasants that the Sandinistas would take away their land and cattle," Sevilla went on. "They said that the new government program giving loans to poor peasants was a trick to steal their land. They promised a quick victory over the Sandinistas, and said that large shipments of food, clothing, and other supplies would then arrive."

Washington also played upon the racial and cultural differences and early conflicts between many Sandinista officials and soldiers and the local Black and Indian peoples, Sevilla said. The *contras* were able to operate militarily in large parts of the coast countryside, launching attacks against many villages and towns. Peasants who wouldn't support them were killed or kidnapped.

"We lost whole cooperatives to the *contras* in 1983," Santos Escobar, UNAG's production secretary, said. "Perhaps a majority of our affiliates were influenced by the *contras*."

The revolution wins the peasants

By 1985, however, many peasants began to see through the *contra* propaganda. The supplies promised by the mercenaries were not arriving, and it was the Nicaraguan army, not the *contras*, that was winning military victories, Sevilla explained.

Furthermore, the Nicaraguan government was taking new steps to win the confidence and support of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast. The most important was the beginning of the autonomy process, Sevilla said. The determination of the government to overcome the historical discrimination suffered by the coast peoples and to guarantee them local self-government had a big impact.

"In the area known as La Cruz del Río Grande," Sevilla said, "the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front], the army, and mass organizations such as UNAG held talks with those who had taken up arms. Many decided to give up their arms, to support the autonomy process, and even to join the local self-defense militias.

"Along the Kama River," Sevilla said, "there are now only one or two Sandinista army officers. They give leadership in case of attacks, but it is the armed peasants from the cooperatives who fight.

"Along the Tortuguero River, which used to be a *contra* stronghold, the people themselves took up arms and drove out the mercenary bands, without any help from the army," he added.

More land distributed to peasants

One measure of the progress made in the province is the rapid increase in the number of peasants working with UNAG. At the end of 1985, there were only 907 peasants working directly with UNAG, and only 70 of these were formal members. By November 1986, UNAG was working with

more than 4,000 peasants, and more than 1,200 were official members.

"During 1984 and 1985, there was almost no pressure for land distribution," Sevilla said. "The peasants' future was too uncertain. They were worried about the war and their lives."

"Today, however, as the peasants see the situation improve and they organize themselves with arms in hand, they are demanding more land to farm," he went on. "In La Cruz del Río Grande, for example, the government has already distributed 14,000 acres to 75 individual peasants — more than they distributed in all of 1984 and 1985 combined.

"This year, we chartered 10 new cooperatives in La Cruz," Sevilla said. "They involve 60 families who received 13,300 acres of land. Last year, there were no cooperatives chartered there."

UNAG advances in Pearl Lagoon

UNAG is working to educate and help the local people organize themselves, said Ernesto González, UNAG organizational secretary. "We are concentrating first on what the peasants need most: supplies and social improvement projects." Clothing and tools are especially scarce, so UNAG has established rural supply centers in all three villages. They serve everyone, not just peasants.

With one exception, UNAG is not now promoting cooperatives in the Pearl Lagoon



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Farm near Bluefields on Atlantic Coast. Nicaraguan revolution has faced big challenge in winning support and participation of thousands of peasants who live in this region.

area. "We are working with the peasants, winning their confidence, and trying to learn what they need and want," González said. "Many are still afraid to leave the village and work their land. But if we can keep the military situation stabilized, we expect that the peasants will demand the distribution of more land, and some may want to organize cooperatives."

The one cooperative in the area was in-

itiated by the Garifonos in Orinoco. Most there live from fishing, but they also saw the need to grow more vegetables and grains for their community. "The Garifonos are a tight-knit people and they have experience with fishing cooperatives," González said. "So they asked us to help them form an agricultural cooperative, and they now have 24 members working the land together."

Interview with Honduran labor leader

BY JON HILLSON

BOSTON — A mood of deepening opposition to U.S. troops, their military maneuvers, and the U.S.-financed *contra* mercenaries is touching ever wider circles of Honduran society, according to Honduran labor leader Leonor Meza.

Meza, who heads up organizing women for the United Workers Federation of Honduras (FUTH), the country's major union federation, talked with the *Militant* during a brief stay in Boston in early December.

"Because of the criminal activities of the *contras* against our people," Meza said, "many people have become much clearer on who they are.

"More and more people realize that the *contras* are selling drugs, are responsible for robberies, for the rape of women and young girls, for disappearances," she explained.

Such criminal activity takes place in and around *contra* bases in southern Honduras, near the Nicaraguan border, as well as in the nation's capital, Tegucigalpa, the union official said.

The inability of these Honduran-based mercenaries to get into Nicaragua has meant combat in the no-man's-land of the border area, which is rich in coffee. Fear of a widening war has pushed coffee growers, as well as coffee plantation workers, into opposition to the Honduran government's policy of providing sanctuary for the U.S.-financed cutthroats, Meza said.

Washington's militarization of Honduras and the threat of direct U.S. military intervention against Nicaragua, along with exposés of *contra* crimes in Honduras, she said, "has had the effect of weakening anti-Sandinista propaganda," which, in the past, "had confused many people."

"Now," the FUTH leader said, "there has been a big change."

On November 24, she explained, a sector of the ruling Liberal Party held a demonstration of 10,000 supporters in Tegucigalpa to celebrate its anniversary in power. "When one Liberal leader asked if the people wanted the government to expel the *contras*, the crowd shouted yes. There were speeches against war with Nicaragua and against the U.S. military presence," she said.

The previous month, 5,000 people demonstrated in the capital. "The majority were trade unionists, peasants, students, teachers, and housewives," Meza said.

The action protested the war in Honduras. A day later, on October 30, priests led 2,000 people in an antiwar march in the town of Santa Rosa de Copán.

"The size of these demonstrations, given the repression, is very significant," Meza said.

A reflection of this growing antiwar sentiment and action was the decision of Honduran national assembly deputy Nicolas Cruz Torres to file a motion calling for a Honduran policy of neutrality toward Nicaragua. The motion says Honduras should respect Nicaragua's right to self-determination and calls for the expulsion of the *contra* forces, whose presence "constitutes a violation of [Honduran] national sovereignty."

Developments like these have "provided the trade union movement with new politi-

cal space to fight for peace, national sovereignty, and oppose the use of our country for the *contras*," Meza said.

There is also, she noted, increased labor unity, marked by the growth of the Coordinating Committee of Peoples Organizations, a broad front of mass organizations that encompasses the country's major unions and peasant, student, and women's organizations.

A poster published by one affiliate of the coalition, the Honduran Women's Committee for Peace, symbolizes the developing militancy of popular opposition to the war.

Appearing on walls in the capital, it features a woman, draped in the Honduran national flag, her hand outstretched.

"Your homeland," it reads, "don't sell it, don't rent it, don't loan it."

Mercenaries say U.S. government backed plot against Ghana

BY ERNEST HARSCH

Several U.S. mercenaries who escaped from a Brazilian prison have revealed new details of a plot to overthrow the government of Ghana, in West Africa.

Like the recent revelations surrounding the U.S. supply lines for the Nicaraguan *contras*, their tale involves a network of mercenaries who have been involved in clandestine operations from Laos to El Salvador and who have nebulous ties to the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies.

The tale begins in March 1986, when a ship broke down near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. On board were 10 Argentine crew members, eight U.S. citizens, and six tons of weapons and ammunition.

During their subsequent trial in Brazil on arms smuggling charges, the defendants admitted they were mercenaries linked to a plot involving a rightist Ghanaian businessman, Godfrey Osei, who hoped to overthrow the Ghanaian government of Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings.

All eight of the U.S. mercenaries were sentenced to prison terms in Brazil, but four of them escaped in December.

Ever since the Rawlings government came to power in Ghana in December 1981, the CIA has given encouragement and support to various rightist opposition

currents there.

According to two of the U.S. mercenaries who escaped from Brazil, Steven Hedrick and Timothy Carmody, the CIA may also have been involved in Osei's plot. "I thought I had the blessing of my country," Hedrick told a reporter for the *New York Times*.

According to Carmody, they had been recruited by John Early and Robert Foti (both still imprisoned in Brazil). The recruiters were veterans of the Vietnam War and had previously fought as mercenaries for the Rhodesian white minority regime in what is now Zimbabwe.

Early had also been involved in clandestine activities in Laos in the 1960s and more recently in El Salvador. He was likewise convicted in a U.S. court in 1981 on drug smuggling charges. CIA officials intervened in that case to prevent Early's ties to the CIA from being mentioned in the trial.

Another figure named by Carmody and Hedrick in connection with the Osei plot, New York City businessman Solomon Schwartz, is currently being tried in Brooklyn on apparently unrelated arms smuggling charges. The judge in that case has accepted the defendant's contention that he "had a relationship with certain agencies of the United States government."

Vietnam assesses progress, problems, and

An afterword on developments since 1984 visit by 'Militant' reporters

The following is an afterword to the forthcoming Spanish-language edition of *Report from Vietnam: Lessons for the fight against Washington's new Vietnam War in Central America and the Caribbean*, by Diane Wang and Steve Clark. The pamphlet is based on a spring 1984 reporting visit by Wang and Clark to Vietnam and Kampuchea.

The new Pathfinder pamphlet, entitled *Reportaje de Vietnam y Kampuchea: Lecciones para la lucha contra la nueva guerra estilo Vietnam que Washington libra en Centroamérica y el Caribe*, will be available in February 1987. It will sell for \$2.50. The English-language edition was published by Pathfinder in November 1984.

The afterword was written prior to the December 15-18 sixth congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party. Reports in the big-business press so far do not provide sufficient information for an accurate news report and assessment of that gathering.

The existing accounts do report a substantial change in the top leadership personnel of the party. Three veteran leaders of the party resigned both from their Political Bureau positions and state posts: Truong Chinh, who had served as general secretary since last summer following the death of Le Duan; Pham Van Dong, Vietnam's prime minister; and Le Duc Tho. Other longtime party leaders stepped down from party leadership and government positions, as well.

The newly elected party general secretary is Nguyen Van Linh, who has been a leader of the party organization in southern Vietnam both prior to and since the 1975 liberation of the country from U.S. imperialist domination. The *Militant* will report further on the outcome of the Vietnamese Communist Party congress as reliable information becomes available.

* * *

BY STEVE CLARK

The articles in this pamphlet from the 1984 visit by Diane Wang and myself to Vietnam and Kampuchea provide an overview of both the progress and problems of these countries as their people rebuild following decades of imperialist-imposed economic backwardness and war devastation.

What has happened since our 1984 trip?

First, Vietnamese and Kampuchean government forces have continued to make gains against armed Kampuchean counter-revolutionaries based in Thailand.

At the beginning of 1985, Kampuchean and Vietnamese forces drove the rightist outfits out of all their military bases inside the Kampuchean border. While these groups have continued to launch terrorist operations inside Kampuchea, their military position has been weakened.

This setback has intensified the feuding among the three organizations that make up the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea: the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot, which is by far the strongest militarily; the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) led by Son Sann, prime minister of the U.S.-backed government in the early 1970s; and former

Prince Norodom Sihanouk's National Sihanoukist Army.

Sihanouk is formally head of state in this mercenary "government," which still retains the United Nations seat held by the murderous Pol Pot regime at the time of its overthrow by Vietnamese and Kampuchean forces in January 1979.

The tenuous character of this coalition was demonstrated earlier this year in statements by Sihanouk while he was attending the United Nations General Assembly session in New York. In an interview, he compared his coalition "partner" Pol Pot to Hitler and said that the three groups stay together only because the Peking regime — their major source of arms and funding — forces them to.

Together with these divisions among the three rightist outfits, the KPNLF underwent a major split this year.

To help offset these blows, the U.S. Congress voted in mid-1985 to provide \$3.5 million in open, "nonlethal" aid to the KPNLF and Sihanouk forces. Previously all such U.S. aid had been covert. It was funneled through the CIA or the Thai military.

In face of the improved military situation, the Vietnamese government has continued its annual withdrawals of troops from Kampuchea. The Kampuchean army has taken on growing responsibility for defense of the country.

The Kampuchean and Vietnamese governments have reaffirmed their willingness to hold negotiations to discuss a complete Vietnamese withdrawal, but only on the basis of the disbanding of the Pol Pot-led Khmer Rouge.

Even if no negotiated settlement is reached, the Vietnamese government has announced that, given the military progress inside Kampuchea, it will unilaterally withdraw all its troops by 1990. Events during the closing years of this decade will determine whether or not the Vietnamese government's goal is realizable.

Progress and problems in Vietnam

Reports from recent visitors to Vietnam confirm our assessment in 1984 that the government is making slow but important progress in bettering the lives and conditions of working people.

Correspondent Nayan Chanda, for example, writing in the April 10, 1986, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, a major Asian business weekly, had the following to say about his trip to Vietnam this year:

"Returning to Vietnam after an absence of five years, one is struck by the apparent improvement in people's standard of living in Hanoi and the northern countryside. While the country remains extremely poor, more food and consumer goods are available and housing is better than was the case in 1981."

In the liberated, southern part of the country, Chanda noted that Vietnam "has made significant progress in reviving the economy" there as well.

The most important gain has been Vietnam's expanding capacity to feed its population. Food output and agricultural productivity have grown substantially. This

has been achieved despite unusually cold winter-spring periods in 1983, 1984, and 1985, and a drought followed by devastating typhoons and floods in 1985.

Production of basic food grains rose from some 14.5 million tons in 1980 to nearly 18.5 million tons in 1985. This cut the need for food grain imports to some 200,000 tons last year, down from 2 million tons in 1979.

Government officials stress that the Vietnamese people still have an inadequate diet. This increase in farm output has nonetheless meant more food on the table.

Despite these improved conditions, life in Vietnam is far from easy. Nor has the progress been unmarred by serious problems and mistakes by the Vietnamese government and Communist Party.

These difficulties and errors have been virtually the sole focus of what little coverage of Vietnam appears in the big-business media. While imperialism's propagandists exaggerate these troubles to justify further punishment of Vietnam for successfully defying U.S. domination, the problems are nonetheless real and pressing.

War devastation and postwar errors

Decades of colonial domination and the French and U.S.-organized war left Vietnam in dire economic straits when its struggle for independence and national unification emerged triumphant in 1975.

The war had caused massive dislocation of agriculture, forestry, industry, and trade. Schools, hospitals, and other institutions had been destroyed.

Millions had been driven off the land by U.S. bombs, herbicides, and "free-fire zones" in the countryside. They swelled Saigon and other cities, living in wretched conditions and cut off from socially productive work. They were surrounded by the social ills of drugs and prostitution spawned by the U.S. occupation.

Following the war, Washington not only reneged on its 1973 promise of \$3.5 billion in reconstruction funds, but orchestrated an imperialist aid and trade embargo of Vietnam that continues to this day.

Urged on by the U.S. rulers in the years following the 1975 victory, the bureaucratic misleaders of the People's Republic of China halted all aid to Vietnam; encouraged military aggression against it by the murderous Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea; and — at the beginning of 1979 — launched a massive and destructive invasion of Vietnam's northernmost provinces.

Taken together, these objective difficulties and external sabotage made conditions very difficult throughout Vietnam.

In addition, the Vietnamese government in the second half of the 1970s implemented an economic and political course that created obstacles to efforts by peasants and workers to better their lives and join in reconstructing their country.

Immediate collectivization

The government, for example, launched a drive in 1978 to immediately transform all privately owned farms in southern Vietnam into cooperatives. For a country such as Vietnam — with an economy based on agriculture and a majority peasant population — this rapid collectivization was the single most damaging policy.

The political justification for this policy had been presented by Le Duan, general secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, in a 1973 article entitled, "Towards a Large-Scale Socialist Agriculture." Le Duan, who died in July of this year, acknowledged that "we cannot use force to compel" peasants to join cooperatives.

But he stressed that "the peasantry, acting on the call of the Party, has volunteered, together with the working class, to go forward to socialism and give up individual production, to move eagerly and rapidly along the path of agricultural cooperation and build a new system of socialist collective ownership."

"History," said Le Duan, "enables and compels us to go forward to these relations immediately." (Emphasis in original.)

The collectivization policy quickly

brought negative consequences throughout the south. Peasants, especially in the highly productive Mekong River delta, deeply resented this policy and its bureaucratic implementation. Their confidence in the revolutionary government was undermined.

Many peasants cut back output drastically, leading to serious shortages and rising prices.

As a result, the Vietnamese government soon pulled back from this course. It allowed cooperatives to be dismantled and peasants to return to individual farming. Since then, the government has encouraged intermediate forms of cooperatives such as ones based on credit, marketing, and limited joint labor. In this way the government hopes to move more gradually toward greater collective agricultural production in the south.

According to an article in the February 1985 issue of the Vietnamese CP's *Communist Review*, in the Mekong delta area 25 percent of peasant households have joined production cooperatives. This includes both full-fledged co-ops — where land and major equipment belong to the co-op — and the more common partial co-ops — where land, tools, and livestock remain in private hands, but members cooperate in field preparation, planting, and harvesting. (All cooperatives in the north operate on collectively owned land.)

In the southern half of Vietnam as a whole, about 50 percent of peasant households have joined farm production cooperatives of some kind, according to the March 1985 *Vietnam Courier*. Most peasants belong at least to a marketing or credit cooperative.

Contract system

Together with this pullback from rapid collectivization in the south, the Vietnamese government also adopted a major agricultural reform throughout the entire country. This reform gave greater weight to individual family production and marketing, even for peasants on long-established agricultural cooperatives in the north.

Peasant members of a cooperative now sign a contract to sell only a certain portion of their crop to the state at a fixed price; any surplus above that amount can be sold individually on the market or to the state at a higher price. This includes both rice and other crops harvested on cooperative property, and produce and livestock grown on small, privately cultivated plots.

When the Vietnamese government and Communist Party began applying this "contract system" on a nationwide basis at the beginning of the 1980s, party leader Le Duc Tho said that "this was not something from the sky or devised by the Central



Kampucheans waving goodbye to some of 15,000 Vietnamese soldiers departing in 1985 withdrawal. Gains against U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries allow for annual pullback to continue.



Rice co-op farm in northern Vietnam. Rapid establishment of collective farms in liberated, southern part of country caused dislocation in late 1970s. Communist Party has since pulled back from this policy.

errors

Committee." Some cooperatives in the North, he said, "began implementing [this policy] 'secretly' as early as 1977."

The contract system has contributed to the increased output of agricultural products in recent years. In this way, it has strengthened the worker-peasant alliance in Vietnam. But the contract system is not without its own problems.

The government has had difficulty establishing an effective apparatus and pricing policy to compete with private traders in buying agricultural products. Instead, middlemen have bought up much of the peasants' rice and other products, hoarded them, and sold them at inflated prices. The lure of these high prices, in turn, has led corrupt government officials to steal food from state-owned warehouses — sometimes on a very large scale — and resell it at big profits on the market.

Articles in the Vietnamese press have pointed to numerous examples of manufactured goods being stolen from factories and warehouses and resold by officials, as well.

Due to these factors, the government has faced shortages of food for the army. It has been hard pressed to meet ration requirements for millions of government and factory workers and their families. Under the rationing system, workers receive part of their wage in the form of food and other essentials at state-subsidized low prices.

High market prices particularly penalize urban working people with small fixed incomes and limited opportunities to grow their own food. It tends to restrict their diets to little more than their ration quotas.

The government has had to make up its own food reserve deficit by buying grain on the market at inflated prices, reselling it at enormous loss at subsidized levels.

This absorbs funds that could otherwise go to productive investment in agriculture and industry and to the improvement of education, medical care, housing, transportation, and other social services.

Management and wage reforms

Over the past six years, especially since 1985, the Vietnamese government has begun implementing some measures aimed at upgrading its efficiency in allocating investment funds, heavy machinery, and raw materials in factory production, and in setting prices for finished products.

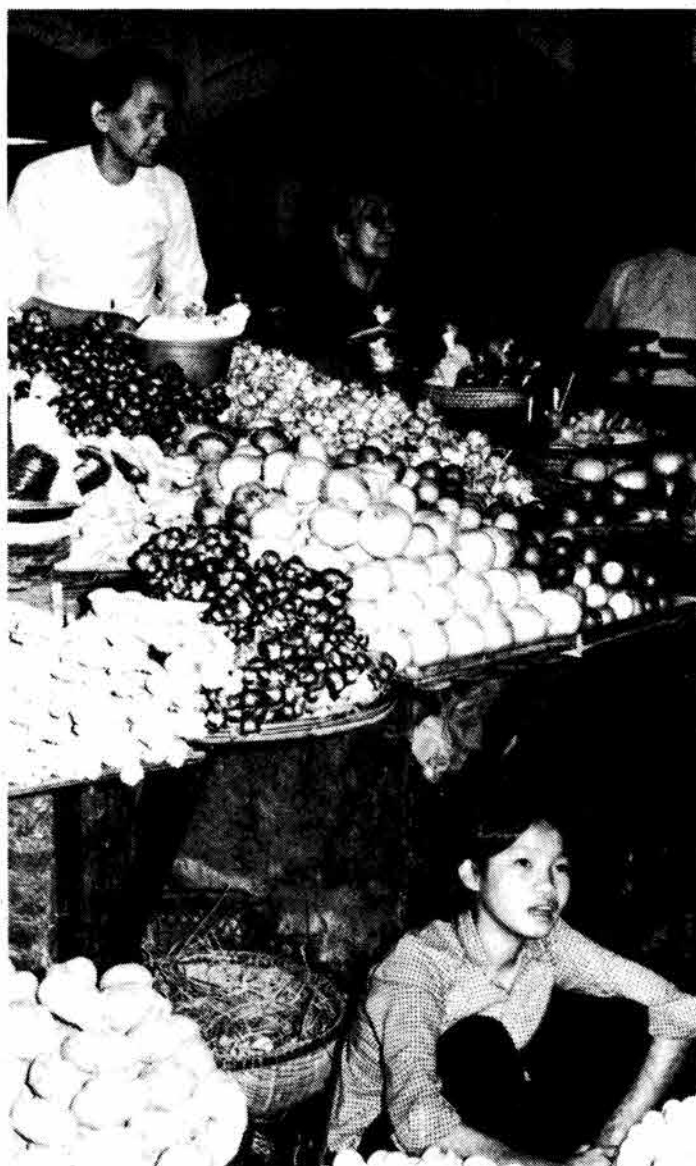
Initially this involved giving additional leeway to factory managers — within the guidelines of the state economic plan — to purchase raw materials on the market, establish production goals, and set prices for their commodities that better correspond to the costs of producing them and to anticipated sales.

The aim was to move away from the previous system whereby factories received government subsidies to make up for losses if management policies resulted in overstocked warehouses or in sales at prices that fell short of expenses. Production costs were often not even kept track of, let alone used to guide raw material purchases or to set final prices.

The government also began to alter the system of wage payments to factory workers. It encouraged managers in state-owned enterprises to peg workers' wages more closely to how much they produced. In mid-1985 rationing was abolished and replaced by increased cash wages. Prior to that, almost 80 percent of workers' wages had taken the form of rationed food and essentials.

The government also sought to stimulate industrial production and trade by loosening some restrictions on privately owned factories and decentralizing state control over exports and imports.

These measures were accompanied by a currency reform in September 1985. A major objective was to undermine the huge fortunes amassed by middlemen, speculators, and corrupt officials. One "new" dong (the Vietnamese currency unit) could be exchanged for ten "old" dong, but any deposits above 15,000-20,000 old dong were to remain in the hands of the state bank.



Left, market in Ho Chi Minh City. Vietnam has expanded its capacity to feed itself, yet diet is still inadequate. Right, textile mill in northern Vietnam. Recently, government has taken measures to alleviate bureaucratic fetters on industrial production.



Militant photos by Diane Wang

News of this currency measure leaked out several days early, however. As a result, those with large cash reserves — the very people that the reform was aimed at regulating — rushed to turn their dong into commodities and U.S. dollars.

Working people, however, did not fare so well. By the time the new currency policy was officially implemented, prices were already zooming upward. Inflation leapt from 50 percent to 350 percent over the following three months and has still not been brought to heel.

By mid-February the price of rice, the staple of the Vietnamese diet, had risen from .4 old dong per kilogram under the previous rationing system to 150-180 old dong on the open market. Even with the higher wages that accompanied the end of rationing, government and factory workers suddenly faced major hardships in maintaining their previous diet and living standards. Early this year, the government reintroduced subsidized food rations.

The March 1 issue of the Vietnamese CP daily *Nhan Dan* editorialized that the September wage and currency measures had led to "prices abruptly skyrocketing, the market plunging into a mess, the socialist trade sector being driven into a passive and awkward position, and production, circulation, and the people's lives encountering more difficulties."

The editorial charged top government and party officials with "subjectivity, hastiness, and a simplistic approach in making decisions."

Future prospects

These difficulties have been at the center of political attention in Vietnam over the past year, leading up to the sixth national party congress in mid-December.

Le Duc Tho wrote in the May 1986 issue of *Communist Review*: "At a time when millions of people are still ... experiencing privations, there exist cadre and party members guilty of corruption, bribery, smuggling, and amassing riches. Never before has there been, in our party, such a degeneration of virtues and lifestyle as there is now."

In a speech broadcast over Vietnamese radio in mid-October, party General Secretary Truong Chinh stated: "Prices fluctuate wildly and life is unstable. Negativism has developed, traditional ethical and spiritual values are eroded, and socioeconomic activities are thrown into prolonged chaos, causing widespread doubt about the future and lack of confidence in the party's leadership."

Vietnamese CP leaders say that the party congress will center on a balance sheet of the successes and failures since the last gathering in 1982, and how to go forward. Some have indicated that a number of aging Vietnamese CP leaders will step down from their current posts in the party and state.

The problems confronting Vietnam are not easy to solve — especially for a war-ravaged country burdened with very limited resources, a background of colonial domination, and a U.S. aid and trade embargo.

Unlike in the capitalist neocolonies throughout Southeast Asia, the economy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is not organized to enrich a tiny handful of imperialist interests and homegrown factory owners and landlords at the expense of the vast majority of superexploited workers and peasants.

Instead, Vietnam has a planned economy that is organized — within the harsh constraints of its imperialist-imposed poverty — to meet at least minimum economic and social needs of each citizen. Although still far from being able to accomplish this, Vietnam has made impressive progress in this direction, as documented in this pamphlet.

At the same time, Vietnam is still an overwhelmingly agricultural society, with little industry, very limited electrification, and poor transportation and communications. Its economy cannot possibly operate on the basis of complete egalitarianism, or of a supercentralized plan that reaches from the national level down to the details of each agricultural and industrial enterprise. That is utopian.

Material incentives continue to play an unavoidable role in both agriculture and industry. And the market remains a necessary complement to a state economic plan.

But there is no special economic mechanism or technique — whether the market, cost accounting, wage reforms, or whatever — that in and of itself can harmonize all problems, complications, and negative byproducts along the road to reorganizing production and distribution along socialist lines.

Political factors — the level of socialist and internationalist consciousness of the working-class and peasantry, the degree of their organization and mobilization, the capacities of the revolution's leadership — all of these come into play and condition how well or how poorly any given measure will serve its intended goals.

Combating profiteering middlemen, for

example, necessitates a politically mobilized peasantry organized to help enforce this goal. Expanding workers' control in the factories can put a check on corrupt or ineffective managers and government functionaries.

As indicated by the statements of Vietnamese CP leaders themselves, bureaucratic privilege and corruption have become a major factor in disorganizing production and distribution. Unchecked, it can seriously demoralize the workers and peasants. This, in turn, will undermine the key social classes whose growing involvement in administering their economy and state is decisive to any lasting solutions.

These are the problems and challenges that confront the Vietnamese revolution at the opening of 1987.

The challenge before all those of us who stand in solidarity with the Indochinese peoples is to do all we can to combat the U.S. imperialist-organized economic and military pressure. This is the major obstacle to the social progress and well-being of the workers and peasants.

We must demand an end to all U.S. support to the Kampuchean counterrevolutionaries; full diplomatic relations with the governments of Vietnam and Kampuchea; a halt to the trade and aid embargo on both countries; and massive reconstruction aid to the governments and peoples of Vietnam and Kampuchea.

Dec. 10, 1986

Report from Vietnam and Kampuchea

By Diane Wang & Steve Clark

The authors spent three weeks in Vietnam and Kampuchea in 1984 and wrote this compilation of articles that originally appeared in the *Militant*.

This pamphlet covers the advances made in the postwar reconstruction of these two countries, and Kampuchea's recovery from the devastation brought by the Pol Pot regime. Price: \$2.

Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12. Or by mail from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., N.Y., N.Y. 10014. Please include 75 cents for postage and handling.

West Papuans fight for independence

Free Papua Movement leads struggle against Indonesia's repressive rule

BY MALCOLM GAULT-WILLIAMS

Officially, West Papua — or Irian Jaya, as it has been renamed by the Indonesian regime — is Indonesia's 26th province. For the people of West Papua, however, Indonesia is an occupying power. Led by the Free Papua Movement (OPM), they have been struggling for independence since the late 1960's.

West Papua, which is the western half of the island of New Guinea, north of Australia, was a Dutch colony until it was formally transferred to Indonesia in 1963. Attempts by Papuans to press for an internationally supervised vote on self-determination were repressed by Indonesian troops.

In 1969 the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia formally annexed the territory under an "Act of Free Choice." Despite the widespread uprisings and political unrest that greeted the annexation, the Act of Free Choice was formally acknowledged by the General Assembly of the United Nations. West Papua henceforth ceased to occupy the attention of the world community.

Under Indonesian rule, the people of West Papua have been subjected to cultural and physical genocide. The Indonesian regime does not recognize the existence of a Papuan nationality or culture. Instead, the Indonesian language and Indonesian place-names and culture have been imposed.

Papuans living in forest communities have been subjected to forced labor schemes, with Indonesian government officials acting on behalf of the timber companies. In urban areas Papuans face racial discrimination in government offices and are being driven from the towns as Indonesians arrive to take over government jobs, commerce, and business.

A major part of the Indonesian regime's genocidal policy is the replacement of Papuans with Indonesian nationals. Communally owned tribal lands, considered inalienable, have been confiscated and the villagers driven off to make way for resettlement as private plots by Indonesian peasants — many of them forced to move to West Papua against their will.

Under the most recent resettlement plan, it is intended to settle more than one million Indonesians in West Papua by the end of this decade. This poses the possibility of the Papuans becoming a minority in their own land.

With bows and arrows

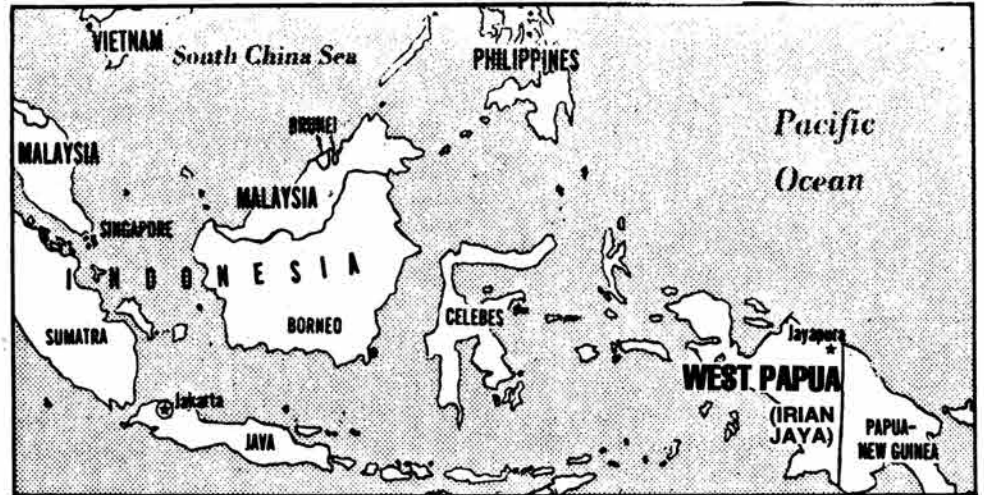
The first OPM units formed in 1965 in the central highlands. Armed resistance to Indonesian occupation spread to other parts of the country and intensified during 1969.

The guerrillas lack modern weapons, fighting mainly with bows and arrows, spears, and weapons made from long, sharp bones. OPM leader Seth Rumkorem has stated that his troops have a total of only 300 firearms. Most of these are World War II rifles or guns seized from Indonesian troops.

The Indonesian army, on the other hand, has modern equipment, including good air support. It has suffered defeats at the hands of the guerrillas, however, who are able to make use of West Papua's terrain, which is one of the most rugged in the world.

The OPM's victories against the occupying forces have enabled it to establish control over large areas of the rural countryside and the jungle highlands.

According to Rumkorem, the OPM is in effective control of 25 percent of the territory of West Papua, while the Indonesian



army controls 10 percent. In OPM-controlled areas, attention is given to education, organization of food production, and the basic training of personnel to provide simple medical services.

Questioned about the size of the OPM itself, Rumkorem said that 30,000 Papuans were active throughout the country.

Where the Indonesian military has been unable to establish control, it has often retaliated by bombing whole villages into extinction. Detention without trial, torture, and execution are common.

"Each strike by the rebels is immediately followed by reprisals," one observer noted. "The area is prohibited [to investigation by reporters], and it is impossible to know the number of victims on both sides. Rumors circulate, impossible to control, that for each soldier killed, a hundred [Papuans] will be shot, villages will be bombed."

Refugees

More than 10,000 West Papuans have crossed the border into neighboring Papua New Guinea (PNG), where they live in refugee camps. The PNG government has followed a policy of trying to persuade the refugees to return voluntarily to West Papua, but with little success.

There is widespread sympathy for West Papuans among the population of PNG, which is of the same ethnic origin. The PNG government, however, — both the government of Prime Minister Pias Wingti, which came to power last November, and the previous Michael Somare government — supports Indonesian rule in West Papua and strongly opposes the OPM.

This is in line with the stand taken by the Australian government, PNG's former colonial ruler, which continues to dominate that country. Australian aid accounts for about 24 percent of PNG's revenue.

In October 1985, 12 West Papuan refugees were forcibly deported from PNG to Jayapura, the capital of West Papua.

Relocation

PNG government plans to move the refugees away from the sensitive border region were announced in March. The plans call for the evacuation of 13 camps. Relocation sites would match each person's security classification.

The majority, known as "simple villagers" or "non-politicals," are due to move near Nomad to work in the rubber industry. Malnutrition at Nomad is 50 percent above the national average, malaria is common, and respiratory, gastric and dental problems (the last caused by the high mineral content of the water there) are rife. An average annual rainfall of 47 inches compounds the health risks.

Four hundred people — described by Trevor Downes, a senior official in PNG's Provincial Affairs Department, as "hard-core political refugees" — are slated to move to Wabo prison camp on the south coast. There, families will live in dormitory compounds inside security fences and be supervised from watchtowers equipped with floodlights. Living conditions at the Wabo site are even worse than at Nomad.

"The stigma of being moved to Wabo, to be known as a place for the 'hardcore' politicals," said one of the people working in the existing camps, "means that none of

these people could ever safely return to Irian Jaya even if they wanted to."

'Bunch of terrorists'

Earlier this year, PNG Defence Force Commander Tony Huai visited the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, the first ever visit of such a senior PNG military officer to Indonesia.

Speaking at a press conference in Port Moresby, PNG's capital, after his return, Huai said that it had been agreed that PNG and Indonesia would take the same steps on both sides of the West Papua-PNG border to ensure the elimination of the Free Papua Movement. He described the OPM as "a bunch of terrorists" that he was resolved to "wipe from the face of the earth."

Protests came from many circles. Some politicians accused Huai of declaring war on the OPM. Others complained that he was making pronouncements on aspects of government policy not within his authority. Several community leaders from PNG border provinces stressed that, whatever he might say, PNG nationals living along the border are and will remain deeply sympathetic to the OPM.

Prime Minister Wingti has since claimed that Huai's remarks were "misinterpreted." He stated that his government was constitutionally unable to agree to an Indonesian request for joint border patrols.

At the same time, Wingti has supported Huai's stance of closer cooperation with the Indonesian authorities and has sent the secretary of the Foreign Affairs Department, Hill Dihm, to Jakarta for negotiations on a treaty of mutual respect, cooperation and friendship.

On May 18-19, further talks were held in Jayapura between Huai and Gen. Benny Murdani, Indonesia's armed forces commander.

Guerrilla operations

Meanwhile, since late last year, there has been increased activity on the part of OPM guerrilla units throughout the district of Jayapura. Operations have also taken place in Fakfak, where there are oil installations. Operations have been directed against foreign companies exploiting the territory's natural resources, as well as against Indonesian military and police command posts.

Last year, army and police posts were attacked in various parts of the Tor Atas sub-district, well to the west of Jayapura. In Urum Guai (or Urunum Guai), the local army sub-district command was overrun and a number of soldiers taken prisoner, as well as the sub-district chief and his assistant.

The most spectacular operation in recent times occurred last January when OPM guerrillas attacked and took control of Waris, a post near the PNG border. The post was held for two weeks. The OPM flag was raised and bridges and roads destroyed, preventing Indonesian troops from entering the area to recapture the post. Bulldozers used to build the Trans Irian Highway were also burned.

Altogether, about 900 guerrillas were reportedly involved in the Waris operation. Once they had secured hold of Waris, the group divided into three units, with one moving south and another northwest.

Last summer also marked the healing of a nine-year split between two wings of the Free Papua Movement. A new structure and constitution are now being prepared.



Under Indonesian rule, the people of West Papua have been subjected to physical genocide at hands of military.

Do you know someone who reads Spanish?

The fight for land in Peru

The January issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* features an article by the well-known Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco.

Blanco describes the history of peasant struggles for land in Peru. These battles won the elimination of semifundamental landlordism in the early 1970s. But the government-sponsored land reform created a new layer of rich capitalist landowners at the expense of working farmers.

Peasants today are fighting the unjust land distribution, as well as government repression. Faced with growing social discontent, the Peruvian regime has militarized parts of the countryside and put the capital, Lima, under a state of emergency. Peasant organizations have denounced the torture, disappearances, and massacres carried out by the army.

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Women in Angola

take on new roles

Seek to overcome colonial legacy

BY SAM MANUEL

LUANDA, Angola — Luisa Gaspar is secretary for education and culture of the Angolan Women's Organization (OMA). She is also a deputy in the National Assembly of People's Power, the national legislative body of Angola.

The OMA's purpose is to facilitate the integration of women into all aspects of Angolan life and to carry out education in general on the role of women in the new Angola. It has nearly half a million members, but its influence far surpasses that.

"The condition of women has changed much since colonial times," Gaspar explained. "Under the Portuguese, we were oppressed as women, and we suffered from the exploitative conditions of colonialism. This double exploitation could be measured in all aspects of the lives of Angolan women — in terms of health, education, and economic conditions."

She continued, "In the area of political education and attitudes, we have made some progress. We understand that to win rights we must continue to organize. We held our first congress in 1983. It reinforced our propaganda work and strengthened the organization. In Angola's constitution," Gaspar said, "the law gives women equality with men. There is a women's department of the government and the party to ensure that women are involved at all levels."

"We also do work on international relations," she said. "The sixth congress of Pan-African Women was held here. We are also members of the International Federation of Democratic Women."

Gaspar emphasized that some groups of Black women from the United States have also visited Angola. "We want to broaden and develop relations with women in the U.S. who are fighting against the war policies of the Reagan administration and with those women in the U.S. who are fighting against the apartheid regime in South Africa."

Difficult conditions

"While we have made progress in these areas," Gaspar explained, "our ability to make significant changes in the day-to-day conditions faced by women is tied to the development of the country as a whole."

Company must pay for poisoning wells

BY CHARLIE ROSENBERG

BALTIMORE — Trans-Tech Inc., a firm located in Frederick County, Maryland, agreed in an out-of-court settlement to pay \$875,000 over the next six years to homeowners and in civil penalties. It was charged with contaminating 35 private wells in the Adamstown area with cancer-causing chemicals.

The December 19 settlement was a result of a threatened suit by a neighborhood group against the company. The Carroll Manor Civic Association prepared the suit in order to prod state officials to speed up enforcement of the Clean Water Act.

Some \$775,000 of the money will be used to build a public water system in Adamstown, which has no public utilities. Nearly half of the private wells in the area have been shown by tests to be contaminated. Trans-Tech will also pay \$100,000 in civil penalties for more than 100 days of violation of the federal Clean Water Act.

Under the terms of the settlement, the company, which makes ceramic parts under military contracts, has agreed to finance a cleanup operation to eliminate the contamination. It will commit up to \$100,000 in additional funds.

Trans-Tech has refused to admit guilt in the case even though no other industry in town uses the two solvents, trichloroethane and trichloroethylene, which were found to be prominent in the groundwater around the plant. Company officials said they may pursue action against owners of factories that used the site previously.

This can be seen vividly in the economic conditions of women. Angola is an agricultural country. As is most of the population, the majority of women are engaged in subsistence farming. They also play a vital role in the distribution of agricultural goods. Hundreds of women can be seen selling food in markets throughout Angola. In recent years OMA has emphasized reaching these women.

But it is in the countryside where the lack of basic services is critically felt, a result of hundreds of years of Portuguese colonialism. Developing these services is further burdened by the South African war against Angola. The war has a direct impact on basic aspects of the daily lives of all Angolans, especially women.

For example, it is a common sight in areas I traveled through to see women and children walking the roads early in the mornings carrying large containers of water, firewood, and other necessities. Sometimes they must walk miles to get a day's supply of water. With the heavy burden of the war, piped water cannot be supplied to many areas. In fact, water is pumped for only a few hours a day even in the capital city, Luanda.

Gaspar stated, "As you know, we are also at war with South African and UNITA bandits who are in our country." (UNITA is the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, which is backed by the apartheid regime and attacks Angolan villagers.)

"The war," Gaspar said, "demands sacrifices on the part of all our people, workers, farmers, youth, and women."

Women participate in the armed forces of Angola in non-combat positions. Military service for women is voluntary. Women receive military training in the People's Defense Organization, the country's militia. "Should the South Africans invade, everyone will fight them, including the children," stated Gaspar.

Training for midwives

The following day I was taken to a pregnancy and infant care hospital in Kakwako, just outside Luanda, by an OMA member.

Though this hospital was set up to handle pregnancy and infant care, it must also service the broader medical needs of the 20,000 people who live in the area. It is able to do so largely because only a small percentage of women give birth at the hospital, around 10 percent. The majority of babies are delivered at home, in most cases by midwives.

While providing basic education and services for mothers, the OMA does not discourage the traditional practice of using midwives. It has instead encouraged the government to provide the midwives with training.

The doctor present explained, "They all receive a certificate after their training. They are required to keep a record of the births they perform. They are also trained



Militant/Sam Manuel
OMA encourages training of midwives



Militant/Sam Manuel
Women and children in Luanda market. Angolan women's organization reaches out to market women and other women to integrate them into all aspects of social life.

to be able to recognize the signs of any serious complication and can get in touch with us immediately."

The most common infant illness is diarrhea. Measles is still a killing disease. There is about one serious case a month, although there have been no cases here in the last three months. There are many cases

of malaria due to the surrounding swamp lands. The children are the first to be infected.

One of the nurses explained that the infant mortality rate in the area is around 19 percent. But she added that it was worse before independence and before this hospital opened.

— WORLD NEWS BRIEFS —

French transport workers strike across country

For several weeks, a series of overlapping strikes by subway, airline, rail, bus, and maritime workers has seriously disrupted transportation in France.

The workers' demands have ranged from higher pay to cancellation of planned layoffs.

These strike actions have shown considerable rank-and-file militancy. Railway workers, for example, have blocked train tracks in Chambéry, and there have been clashes between strikers and French riot police. Some French union leaders have expressed surprise at the strikes' duration and extent.

Many press and political commentators in France have noted that this new resurgence in labor action has come in the immediate wake of the massive student strikes and demonstrations that swept France throughout late November and early December. The students' victory in forcing the government to drop an unpopular university reform bill has inspired other sectors of the population to press their demands as well.

Students in Spain take to streets

Encouraged by the recent upsurge of French student protests, hundreds of thousands of students in Spain shut down most of that country's high schools December 17. Tens of thousands marched in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, and more than 20 other cities.

The students' main demand has been for open admissions to the country's universities — at a time when the government is seeking to make admission more restrictive. They have also called for a reduction in tuition fees and the allocation of more government funds for the education budget.

"No to selectivity; more budget," read a typical banner carried by student marchers.

Spain's main trade unions have declared their support for the students' demands.

U.S. offers allies easier military loans

Cairo, Tel Aviv, and 36 other governments that are closely allied with Wash-

ington are being offered a new plan for repaying their U.S. military loans.

As outlined in a December 18 letter by President Reagan to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government would be allowed to postpone paying as much as \$3 billion in interest on such loans until the year 2009.

Although the offer was first presented to Egypt, it will next be made to the Israeli regime and then to the other 36 governments, which include those of Spain, Greece, Thailand, Turkey, and South Korea. These governments now have a combined debt to Washington of \$16 billion under the U.S. foreign military sales program.

Meanwhile, such U.S.-dominated institutions as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have been much less flexible in the terms of repayment they demand for economic loans.

Chadian regime gets new U.S. and French arms

The U.S. and French governments have sent plane loads of arms and other assistance to the proimperialist regime of Hissène Habré of Chad, in central Africa.

As a justification, the U.S. and French authorities pointed to claims by the Chadian government that heavy fighting is under way in the northern part of the country between Libyan troops and Chadian forces that until recently were allied with Libya.

There has been no independent confirmation of the fighting. But there was a split several weeks earlier in the coalition of Chadian rebel groups that had previously received Libyan support. Some of the northern-based rebels continue to look to Libya for aid, while others back former Chadian president Goukouni Oueddei, who is under house arrest in Tripoli, Libya's capital.

Taking advantage of this situation, the French Defense Ministry announced December 17 that French warplanes based in Chad's capital, Ndjamena, had air-dropped food and military supplies to Goukouni's supporters in northern Chad.

The next day, the U.S. State Department announced that President Reagan had ordered \$15 million in military equipment sent to the Chadian army. This includes rifles, machine guns, and antitank rockets.

Space cadet — John Pike, space analyst for the Federation of American Scientists, says the U.S. response to the Soviet response to Star Wars might require altering



Harry Ring

international law and even "delegating to machines the authority to start World War III."

Ask the experts — Our favorite

contragate stories of the week: Attorney General Meese confiding to a congressional committee that Ron may not remember okaying the Iran arms deal because he was on postoperative medication. And Bush saying he saw no contradiction between his urging North and Poindexter to come clean while declining to do likewise. "I don't discuss the inner workings of the White House," the veep said.

Eh? — It would be pointless for Bush to take his distance from Reagan after supporting him so long, an aide said. "If he was to go now and claim independence," he explained, "it would reflect on his character, and nothing is more im-

portant in politics than character."

Pretty good analogy — Explaining to a congressional committee why antiabortion centers try to swindle people into thinking they are abortion clinics, one con artist said, "We need our centers to look like abortion clinics to reach people." He added, "A car dealer, when advertising, doesn't list the things his auto won't do. So why should we say we won't do abortions?"

Need some good gringo brains — Former Agency for International Development official Lawrence Harrison says he rejects the "dependency" theory "which blames the United States for the

poverty, tyranny, and chaos to the south. Instead, I believe that Latin underdevelopment is largely a state of mind; the Latin mind."

Situation normal — A railroad car hauling nuclear waste to a dump in Washington state apparently took a wrong turn in Minnesota and was finally found near Minneapolis. A Burlington Northern Railroad official said, "I don't know" what happened, but "it's under investigation."

Peace, good will — We didn't want to lay it on you during the holiday festivities, but some stores had rent-a-cops hidden in decorative columns watching for shoplif-

ters. Others were more sophisticated. Like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" artfully cloaking the subliminal sound of a slammer door slamming.

What price destruction — We haven't seen them, maybe because they're available "at fine stores everywhere," but Marithé & François Girbaud are offering "Destroyed Jeans — 5 hours stone washed."

Thought for the week — "There is a spectrum — the whole truth, the truth, a white lie, and a lie — and each has a justification at a certain level." — Former CIA director William Colby.

—CALENDAR—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

Benefit Concert for the African National Congress of South Africa. Celebrate the 75th anniversary of the ANC. Featuring Gil Scott-Heron and trio. Speaker: Neo Mnumzana, chief representative of the ANC observer mission to the UN. Sat., Jan. 10, 8 p.m. Oakland Tech High School, 42nd and Broadway. Donation: \$10 in advance, \$12 at door. Ausp: ANC 75th Anniversary Committee. For more information call (415) 232-8503.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

The Freedom Struggle in Central America and the Caribbean, 1979-1986. Speaker: Don Rojas. Sun., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. Roxbury Community College, Room 307K. Kennedy Bldg., corner of Huntington and Longwood Ave. S. Ausp: Don Rojas Tour Committee. For more information call (617) 522-1104.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

India: the Struggle for Housing and Human Rights. Speaker: Mihir Desai, president, United Organization of Building Dwellers, Bombay, India. Sat., Jan. 3. Reception, 7 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

1987: Year of the 75th Anniversary of the Af-

rican National Congress of South Africa. Speaker: August Nimtz, Socialist Workers Party, professor of political science at University of Minnesota. Sat., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

The Coming Revolution in South Africa. A class series sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance.

What Is Apartheid? Sun., Jan. 11, 4 p.m.

The Liberation Struggle in South Africa. In two parts. Sun., Jan. 18, 4 p.m. and Sun., Jan. 25, 4 p.m.

The Anti-apartheid Movement Here and Abroad. What Way Forward? Sun., Feb. 1, 4 p.m.

Classes held at 508 N Snelling Ave. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

The Wrath of Grapes: The United Farm Workers Campaign Against Pesticide Use. Speaker: Ed Garcia, Socialist Workers Party, member Mailhandlers Union Local 323; representative of Centro Legal. Showing of video on UFW campaign. Sat., Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

Book reception for Nothing Can Stop the Course of History. Meet Dr. Jeffrey M. Elliot, who conducted interview with Fidel Castro on which book is based. Slideshow on Cuba today presented by Maggie Perrier. Sat., Jan. 24. Cuban dinner, 6:30 p.m.; reception, 7:30 p.m. Donation: dinner, \$3; reception, \$2. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

How to Solve the U.S. Farm Crisis. A panel discussion. Speakers: Maggie McCraw, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789; others. Sat., Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

TEXAS

Dallas

Affordable and Decent Housing Is Everyone's Right. Speakers: Gwain Wooten, vice-president, Committee to Save Public Housing; Janet Brown, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 336 W Jefferson. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (214) 943-5195.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Film: The Global Assembly Line. A documentary on the lives of working women in

the "free trade zones" of developing countries. Translation to Spanish. Fri., Jan. 9. Preforum dinner, 6:30 p.m.; film, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: dinner, \$2; film, \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

The Impact of 'Contragate': New Opportunities for United Antiwar Movement. Panel discussion. Sat., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 402 N Highland Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

Nelson Mandela and the Liberation Struggle in South Africa. Speaker: Dennis Brutus,

Victims' families speak out against killings by Miami cops

MIAMI — In response to police shootings in the Black community over the past three months, family members of victims spoke out against police brutality at a public meeting here.

Linda Spikes told the meeting, organized by the Militant Labor Forum, that her brother Willie, a young unemployed construction worker, was "gunned down by the cops" in October.

She said that her brother had pulled into a shopping plaza and was parking his car. A cop drove up and parked his car alongside the driver's side of Spikes' vehicle, preventing Spikes from leaving the car. The policeman then walked to the passenger's side of Spikes' car. Later claiming that the youth had tried to run him over, cop Howard Shoelson opened fire. Spikes died from multiple bullet wounds.

More recently, Stephen Tillman was shot by a cop and paralyzed from the neck down.

Hattie Crews, another speaker at the forum, described an earlier case of police brutality. She recounted how her son, Anthony Nelson, was murdered by the cops in 1982. Crews has initiated the Coalition Against Racist Murders of Black Youth.

During the discussion, Jean Marie, a Haitian and a representative of People United to Lead the Struggle for Equality

(PULSE), explained the connection between the repression of Haitians and police brutality in the Black community.

PULSE is a Black community group that was organized in the aftermath of the Liberty City rebellions in 1980. It was instrumental in demanding that Blacks be put on juries that judged the few cops prosecuted for killing Blacks.

Blacks, who make up 30 percent of the population of Dade County, were kept off these juries.

Jean Marie announced a PULSE meeting for January 12 to address the issue of police brutality.

Fidel Castro Nothing Can Stop the Course of History

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What Sakharov's release means for workers throughout world

BY DOUG JENNESS

On December 16 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev phoned physicist Andrei Sakharov, who had been living in exile in Gorky since 1980, to inform him that he was free to return to Moscow and resume his scientific work. Gorbachev also said that Sakharov's wife, Yelena Bonner, who had been restricted to Gorky since 1984, was pardoned and could return with him.

Gorky, 240 miles east of Moscow, is closed to foreign visitors.

The two exiles arrived in Moscow on December 23, where they have been permitted to conduct interviews with reporters from other countries. In an unprecedented move, the Soviet State Television and Radio Committee provided the use of its facilities, including satellite transmission, to U.S. television networks to interview the well-known dissident.

Sakharov also appeared at the Physics Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences where he participated in a seminar.

Government authorities have apparently placed no restrictions on the Soviet scientist's expression of his dissident views. He has publicly urged the government to release more political prisoners. And he has told reporters that Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan was, in his opinion, "the most painful point" of Moscow's foreign policy.

In response, Yuri Kashlev, a Kremlin official, said, "I do not see anything bad in this comment of Sakharov's. Our leadership has stated on many occasions that we are seeking a solution to the problem in Afghanistan as soon as possible."

Dzhemilev released

A few days after Sakharov's and Bonner's banishment was ended, Mustafa

Dzhemilev, a prominent Crimean Tatar activist, was freed from a Siberian labor camp. Dzhemilev had served 12 years in jail and exile for his activities in promoting the cause of the Tatar people, deported from their homeland in the Crimea by the Soviet government during World War II.

In the past year, several other political prisoners have been released.

These releases have occurred in the context of a broader relaxation of restrictions on writers, artists, and journalists that began after Gorbachev replaced Konstantin Chernenko in March 1985.

The ending of Sakharov's and Bonner's forced exile and the release of other prisoners will be rightly cheered by working people in the Soviet Union and throughout the world. The victimization of Sakharov and Bonner, who were not charged with committing criminal acts or organizing sabotage against the Soviet workers' state, was not in the interests of working people.

By repressing Sakharov and the others for their views, the Kremlin was issuing a warning to every Soviet citizen that no expression of differences with the government would be tolerated.

Moreover, it unnecessarily gave the imperialists ammunition for their propaganda against the Soviet Union and against communism. Sakharov is a particularly attractive figure for the capitalist ruling circles and their apologists to rally around because his procapitalist, proimperialist, and anti-Soviet views have been well-publicized.

For example, a few months after he was exiled, Sakharov managed to get a letter out of the Soviet Union that was publicized in the June 8, 1980, *New York Times Magazine*. In it he outlined his anti-work-

ing-class positions on the major issues in world politics.

Echoes capitalist politicians

Echoing the familiar claims of capitalist politicians and pundits, Sakharov warned of "covert and overt Soviet expansion in key strategic and economic regions of the world. Southeast Asia (where Vietnam was used as a proxy) and Angola (with Cuba as the proxy), Ethiopia and Yemen are only some of the examples."

The same article endorsed U.S. aggression against Iran, hailed the Camp David Middle East accords designed to perpetuate the oppression of the Palestinian people, attacked the West European protests against NATO nuclear missiles, and called for the expansion of nuclear power in the capitalist countries to safeguard against an alleged Soviet threat to world oil supplies.

Such reactionary positions clearly show that Sakharov is not the shining prince of "human rights" the newspaper publishers, television broadcasters, and capitalist politicians make him out to be.

Hypocritical

Moreover, their praise is hypocritical. At no time have they given the appeals of thousands of political prisoners and torture victims held by capitalist dictatorships in El Salvador, Turkey, South Africa, Chile, South Korea, and other countries even a small fraction of the attention they have given the Sakharov case. In fact, by whipping up a campaign against Moscow, they've tried to divert attention from their own bestial and flagrantly unjust policies.

Sakharov doesn't speak for or represent the interests of working people in the Soviet Union or anywhere else in the world. By repressing his views, the bu-



Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov. Sakharov's exile by Moscow provided propaganda weapon to imperialists, who posed as defenders of human rights and gave undeserved credibility to his reactionary views.

reaucratic caste that dominates political life in the USSR only serves to enhance Sakharov's reputation and to increase the prestige of his reactionary ideas. Its action weakened the position of the Soviet workers' state in defending itself from imperialism. It in no way helps to advance the struggle of working-class fighters and oppressed peoples throughout the world.

His release from exile, therefore, opens a bit more space for workers, peasants, and other progressive-minded people to express their views in the Soviet Union. And it takes away a weapon the imperialist propagandists can use.

USX ordered to pay \$3 million for job bias against women

BY CLARE FRAENZL

PITTSBURGH — A significant victory for affirmative action was won here December 5 when Judge Alan Bloch ruled that the USX corporation must pay \$3.3 million in damages to women who were denied coal mining jobs because of their sex.

The ruling found that USX was guilty of discriminatory hiring practices in its Gary (southern West Virginia) and Cumberland (southwest Pennsylvania) mining districts. More than 300 women who applied for jobs in the Gary district between 1977 and 1979 and in the Cumberland district for five months in 1977 will share the money.

Suits were originally filed against USX by Linda Butcher and Joan Bondira in 1978. Their suits, plus a third, were merged into a class action case that produced the \$3.3-million settlement. Butcher, who now works as an electrician, will receive \$50,000, Bondira, \$8,000. Attorney Roslyn Litman, who represented the women during their eight-year battle, told the press that efforts are being made to locate all women entitled to damages.

Kathy Mickells, who works at the Cumberland mine in Pennsylvania, told the *Militant* that miners at her mine were trying to help locate the women whose names were posted on the mine bulletin board.

"The settlement covers only a small fraction of the women who have been denied jobs by USX," Mickells said. "But despite government attempts to undermine affirmative action, this right, won by the Black and women's movements through years of struggle, has not been eradicated."

"It's a big boost for everyone involved," Betty Jean Hall, director of the Coal Employment Project (CEP), told the *Militant*. "Even in this day and time, we are still going forward."

The CEP launched the first sex discrimination suits against 153 U.S. coal companies in 1973. It helped lawyers find and interview hundreds of women miners who had applied for jobs at USX. Hall stated that the USX decision will help win favorable settlements in the many suits now

being litigated by the CEP and others.

"One of the main reasons women have been so successful in taking on the coal operators," Mickells said, "is that women miners have organized ourselves with the help of the CEP and the support of our union."

Life of Tim Thomas honored at meeting

BY RAY PARSONS

CLEVELAND — Fellow activists and friends of Tim Thomas met December 21 to celebrate his life and activity in the Young Socialist Alliance. Tim was killed December 15 while selling the *Militant* at a Cleveland-area plant gate.

His death was the result of an unrelated traffic accident. A worker driving into the factory parking lot was struck by an oncoming car. The force of the collision pushed the first car into Thomas, who was off to the side of the entrance.

Tim had joined the YSA two months earlier. He had worked with the YSA while at Edinboro College in Pennsylvania several years ago and had met Cleveland YSA members during the *Militant* subscription drive. He was 27.

Speakers at the meeting told of Tim's enthusiasm and the seriousness with which he approached his political activity. He had been working on solidarity with Nicaragua, including organizing participation in the local December 13 emergency protest against the training of *contras* in Florida.

Thomas played a leadership role in helping to circulate the *Militant*. He saw the importance of getting the truth out, especially to industrial workers. It was in the course of putting his beliefs into practice that he died.

He strove to learn as much as possible about revolutionary struggles and theory, but was hampered by a lack of funds to buy books. At the meeting, the YSA established the Tim Thomas Memorial Library to provide books for new YSA activists.

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE 25¢

(The *Militant* did not publish in the first week of January 1977. Below is an announcement of the launching of our Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial* that appeared in the Jan. 14, 1977, *Militant*. To obtain a subscription to PM, which is now a monthly, see the ad on page 10.)

The socialist movement in the United States will take an important step forward on January 24, the publication date of the first issue of a biweekly magazine in Spanish.

The new publication will be called *Perspectiva Mundial*.

That such a publication can now be launched reflects the growth of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in the past few years, especially coming out of the recent socialist election campaign. One of the areas in which socialists have strengthened their units and built new ones has been the Southwest.

Interest in socialist ideas is on the rise among the oppressed Spanish-speaking peoples in the United States — one result of their radicalization in recent years. More Spanish-speaking people are joining the SWP and YSA as we become more deeply involved in these struggles.

Perspectiva Mundial will be an important next step toward the goal of constructing a bilingual socialist movement in this country.

The new magazine will present international news, analysis, and information that has not been available in Spanish before. It will, in addition, contain reprints from the Spanish-language revolutionary socialist press.

Such a magazine will be of interest not only in the United States. It will help build the socialist movement in Spanish-speaking countries throughout the world.

And, for those who are studying Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial* is a must!

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interests of the Working People

January 8, 1962 Price 10¢

The unpublicized entry last month of U.S. troops into the civil war raging in South Vietnam apparently was just a small down payment on bigger troop commitments to come.

The size of U.S. forces already involved in the campaign against the South Vietnam guerrillas is estimated at about 2,200.

Though the American public has not yet even been informed by the Kennedy administration of U.S. entry into this Southeast Asian country's civil war, last month's ordering of U.S. troops to accompany the South Vietnam army into combat and "to shoot back if fired upon" has already produced American casualties. It is known that in the first few days of this military participation one GI was killed and three wounded. Now it appears that a U.S. sergeant, originally listed as AWOL, was actually taken prisoner. Viet Cong guerrillas are reported to be touring him through villages as a live example of "an American imperialist trying to conquer South Vietnam."

So far those U.S. troops being sent to South Vietnam are said to be mostly air force and specialized units, but it is improbable that, having got involved, the Kennedy administration can long refrain from shipping large numbers of infantry. It should be recalled that U.S. involvement in the Korean War also began with promises of sending only air force and specialist units.

The fact is that the corrupt and brutal Diem dictatorship is universally hated by the people of South Vietnam. The Viet Cong guerrillas are so strong not only because the population is on their side but because many of them are fighters by night and peasants by day. Moreover, the soldiers of Diem's army have little stomach for laying down their lives for the hated government.

Behind Howard Beach lynching

With pretended dismay, New York's Mayor Edward Koch says the lynch attack that occurred at Howard Beach is the kind of thing that happens in the deep South, not in a city like New York.

That's pure demagoguery, designed to cover over the real source of the murderous assault — racist segregation and discrimination.

Segregated housing and schools, job discrimination, denial of social and political rights, police brutality — all of this adds up to making Black people the ready target of victimization and violence.

Howard Beach is simply one example. New York's police commissioner describes it politely as an "ethnic enclave." Local officials assert that a "scattering" of Blacks and Asians live there. But, they concede, most of the 18,000 residents are white.

And it's not by accident. No effort is spared to make it clear to Blacks that they are not welcome. As if the local cops weren't enough, residents chip in for a private patrol that cruises the streets in at least two areas of town, with "strangers" getting a careful once over. Blacks in nearby neighborhoods try to avoid even driving through Howard Beach.

The day after the angry Black-led protest march against the beatings and killing, Koch went to a Howard Beach church service to talk with the parishioners. Racists in the audience gave him an angry reception. If they had listened to what he was saying, they'd have realized they don't have that much to argue with him about.

The mayor tried to assure them that he wanted to talk to them about their "anxieties, fears, and frustrations."

Such "fears" are the endlessly repeated justification offered for the racist violence in Howard Beach. They "fear" Black people, they claim, because Blacks are "murderers and muggers."

The mayor did nothing to dispel such racist "fears." He asserted that most robberies are committed by Blacks, gracefully adding that "most" of such alleged crimes are committed against other Blacks.

Later, speaking at a Black church, Koch repeated this racist smear, adding the question: if three white men were to walk in Harlem after midnight, "Do you believe they would be absolutely safe?"

That apparently disposes of the murder in Howard Beach. Blacks aren't safe in white neighborhoods, and whites aren't safe in Black ones.

But if the problem is, as the mayor suggests, a racial contest, it's not a very even one at all.

We haven't seen any reports of lynchings of whites in Black communities, but in 1982, Willie Turks, a Black transit worker, was beaten to death by a gang of whites in Brooklyn. Two of his friends were also severely beaten.

In May 1986, in Coney Island, Samuel Spencer, a Black man riding a bicycle, got into a minor collision with a car. Whites got out of four cars and beat him to death.

Two years earlier, in December 1984, the notorious subway vigilante, Bernhard Goetz, shot four Black youths in cold blood after one of them allegedly asked him for \$5.

Cops have done their share of the killings.

In 1983, a Black man, Michael Stewart, was arrested by transit cops for writing graffiti on a subway wall. He too was beaten to death.

And in 1984, cops came to the home of Eleanor Bumpers, a 66-year-old Black woman, to evict her for being behind on her rent. When she resisted, one of the cops shot her dead.

That's a scanty, partial record of racist violence against Blacks in New York, and it's part of a nationwide pattern.

Throughout the country, racist officials join in efforts to preserve white "ethnic enclaves."

There was a recent outcry when the sheriff in the area of Metairie, a prosperous suburb of New Orleans, announced that "if there are some young Blacks driving in a predominantly white area, they will be stopped."

The sheriff's jurisdiction embraces a population of half a million. It's 84 percent white.

And there was the recent scandal when cops in Tampa, Florida, pulled over baseball star Dwight Gooden, who is Black, and gave him a savage beating. Gooden's nephew was also worked over.

Today there is a drive by the government to chip away at many of the civil rights gains of the 1960s. To aid this effort, the rulers are also conducting a concerted ideological offensive against busing, affirmative action, and other pro-equality measures.

The Reagan administration has led a drumfire propaganda attack on affirmative action — enjoying the support of Mayor Koch, among others, for this.

Hard-won gains in school busing, the most effective weapon in desegregating schools, are being pushed back. In Boston, where a major busing victory was won 12 years ago, the local school board has now voted for new measures that go a long way toward scrapping the busing program.

In Kansas City, the courts have struck a crippling blow at a school desegregation plan.

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, a 26-year court fight to end school segregation was thrown out by a judge who contended school officials had done their duty in the matter even though school segregation remains substantial.

And in Topeka, Kansas, where a desegregation fight brought the historic 1954 Supreme Court ruling that outlawed segregation, civil rights lawyers have been forced back into court, trying to achieve what was ordered 32 years ago.

It is the institutionalized discrimination in our society and the rationalizations for it by leading Democratic and Republican politicians that fuel racist attacks like the one in Howard Beach. These attacks are not only a blow to Blacks, but to all working people, whose fight for a better life is set back by every divisive act of racism.

The strong protest march at Howard Beach was a salutary response to a cowardly, dangerous act. Those responsible for the attack should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Continuing protest is essential and deserves the full support of all working people and the organized labor movement.

Barring Cubans evokes protests

With few exceptions, U.S. citizens are barred from traveling to Cuba, and Cuban visitors are barred from this country. Now, in a sharp escalation of the practice of barring Cubans from coming here, specially invited Cuban guests previously admitted are being denied visas.

Large numbers of Cubans have been prevented from attending recent international gatherings in this country or from participating in exchange programs.

The list is long. Cubans denied entry, or who had their visas delayed beyond departure time, include mathematicians, pediatricians, economists, bank officials, baseball coaches, filmmakers, engineers, musicians, sports writers, and fashion models.

Former President James Carter was denied permission last spring to have four Cuban health officials attend a meeting at the Carter Center at Emory University in Atlanta.

Stalling on issuance of visas was used to block the arrival of a Cuban delegation invited to participate in a South Bend, Indiana, conference planning the next Special Olympics games.

Denial of visas to Cuban educators served to effectively cripple three exchange programs financed by the

Ford Foundation, including a joint program by the universities of Pittsburgh and Havana.

The Latin American Studies Association protested when it had to cancel panels for which invited Cuban participants were denied entry. Similar protest has been made by the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies, where visa denials have disrupted an exchange program with the University of Havana.

Denial of visas is based on an Oct. 4, 1985, proclamation by President Ronald Reagan denying entry to Cuban government employees and members of the Cuban Communist Party, as well as those considered as such by the U.S. State Department.

An open letter to Reagan by former U.S. representative to Cuba Wayne Smith and colleagues at Johns Hopkins asserts that the entry ban blocks "the free flow of information and ideas between Cuba and the United States."

That's its purpose. To prevent people in this country from getting facts about Cuba. And to prejudice them against Cuba and its social and economic achievements.

This banning of Cuban visitors should be immediately lifted, along with the ending of Washington's restrictions on travel of U.S. citizens to Cuba.

The curse of private ownership of the land

BY DOUG JENNESS

In the previous three columns, I dealt with several aspects of the housing problem. And I figured that was plenty for the time being. But in going over my notes during the holidays, I realized I hadn't covered an important question that deserves treatment. And it's one that has relevance beyond the housing situation. This is the private ownership of land that prevails today in this country.

Landlords are one of the propertied classes that profit from what working people produce. They receive their income, at least in part, simply by dint of their ownership of land. A great many of them are also industrialists and

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

bankers, and the largest are the handful of ruling families who dominate economic and political life in this country.

Land ownership is highly concentrated; only 1 percent of the landholders own about half of the privately owned land in the United States.

For these landowners, their land is not a place to live or make a living farming with their own labor; it is a source of profit. They rent the land, sell it (either as a whole or in parcels), or set up factories, railroads, farms, shopping centers, or apartment buildings on it. Many of them are speculators, taking advantage of changes in market conditions by purchasing a piece of land at a relatively low price and selling it at a higher price.

Under capitalism the commodity character that comes to dominate the use and transfer of land through its rental, purchase, and sale on the market is its key feature — and for working people its biggest curse.

For one thing, it means higher rents and house payments. A portion of the rent paid by tenants in apartment buildings and leased houses goes to pay for the use of the land on which the dwellings sit.

A family that buys its own home also pays for the cost of the land. Moreover, since the only way most people can afford to buy a home is by mortgaging it, they run the risk of losing it when they can't make the payments.

The "ownership" by working farmers, who have to put up their land as collateral for loans, is not a source of profit derived from exploitation as it is for capitalist landowners. Rather, it becomes a form of their own exploitation. Interest payments to the bankers holding the mortgages on their land is the principal way they are robbed by the exploiting class. Moreover, the very fact that land can be put up for collateral is how farmers can be deprived of their land. Hundreds of thousands of farmers have learned this bitter truth the past few years as they have been forced off their farms, which were then put on the auction block.

To lift this curse, abolishing private ownership of land is necessary.

The federal government should issue a decree making all land public property. This should be followed with an order to halt all buying and selling of land, or its use for collateral.

The result of these measures would be the expropriation of the big capitalist farmers and landholders. Where land is being rented by working farmers, they would gain title for its use as long as they work the land. They could be guaranteed low-interest loans on the basis of need, with no collateral required.

Where land is now worked by big capitalist farm-factories, state farms could be established. In many cases, however, these lands would be turned over to the agricultural laborers who worked them, to farm either on an individual basis, as members of a cooperative, or in some combination of the two.

Tenants, no longer required to pay parasitic landlords for the use of the land, would get a substantial rent reduction. And homeowners' monthly payments would also be reduced.

Since the benefits of these measures to the great majority seem so obvious, why doesn't the government immediately implement them?

The answer is that the government at all levels advances the interests of the capitalist profiteers. Private property in all of its forms is placed ahead of any human needs. The laws are set up to enforce this.

Representatives of land developers, construction companies, property owners, bankers, real estate brokers, etc., compete with each other throughout every rung of the government bureaucracy to press for laws and funds to back their particular projects.

The government's policy is also shown by how the 40 percent of the U.S. land area that is government-owned is used. Big mining and timber corporations are encouraged to fleece public lands at no or only minimal cost. Likewise, big cattle ranchers are permitted to graze their cattle on government land for a song with little regard for conservation measures.

What's clear is that the fight to make all the land public, and to have it used only for the common good, has to be linked with the struggle to overturn the government of thieves and replace it with workers' and farmers' rule.

Do workers have a stake in who owns the company?

BY SUSAN LAMONT

If someone is trying to take over the company you work for, should you and your union support your boss's effort to resist the takeover attempt? This question was posed sharply for tens of thousands of Goodyear workers

UNION TALK

in November, when Anglo-French financier and "corporate raider" Sir James Goldsmith tried to gain control of the giant corporation.

Goodyear Tire and Rubber is the world's largest tire manufacturer. Headquartered in Akron, Ohio, it ranks 35th on the Fortune 500 list of top corporations, with 102 plants in 29 countries. Thirteen thousand of the company's 130,000 workers are in Akron, making Goodyear by far that city's largest employer.

When Goldsmith's takeover attempt became known in early November after he had acquired 11.5 percent of Goodyear's stock, the company's management, headed by board chairman Robert Mercer, mounted a campaign to "Save Goodyear."

Predicting that a Goldsmith takeover would result in the dismemberment of the corporation, plant shutdowns, and massive layoffs, Goodyear rallied state and local politicians, the media, the public school system, and officials of the United Rubber Workers (URW) and the United Auto Workers (UAW) behind its effort.

Many union members, concerned about the possibility of losing their jobs and offered no other perspective for fighting to save them, were also involved in this "campaign."

The fight over control of Goodyear occurred when corporate bankruptcies, buyouts, restructuring, and takeovers seem to be happening at an increasing rate.

Recently, workers in northeastern Ohio have witnessed the giant LTV steel corporation filing for bankruptcy, General Motors announcing the closing of 11 assembly plants, and the USX lockout against steelworkers. They also remember that Carl Icahn's takeover of TWA resulted in the demand for a 40 percent cut in wages and benefits for flight attendants, a hard-fought strike, and the replacement of union members by scabs.

Small wonder that Goodyear workers were concerned about what this takeover might mean for their jobs and futures.

Goodyear management — given a massive, free PR job by Ohio's media — portrayed the campaign to "save" Goodyear this way: Goldsmith is out for one thing only, profits. Goodyear's owners, on the other hand, have been running the corporation more or less as a public service, to provide jobs for workers and good tires for drivers. They didn't make profits; they "served the community." Now, their charitable operation is going to have to end, having been "introduced . . . to a new and not very pretty world in which we are now forced to operate." (From Mercer's November 11 letter to employees.)

Another theme was opposition to Goodyear being taken over by a "foreigner." Of course, Goodyear itself is a "foreign" company in 28 countries outside the United States.

At the end of November, Goodyear management struck a deal with Goldsmith, buying back his shares for about \$619 million.

What was the payoff to Goodyear's workers for helping to "save" the company? On November 21, Mercer

announced that Goodyear would have to be restructured. For starters, tire plants in New Toronto, Ontario, and Cumberland, Maryland, will be closed, throwing 3,232 workers out of jobs. (Rubber Workers President Milan Stone remarked that these were only "marginal plants"!)

A few days later, it was announced that 680 workers in Akron would be laid off. Mercer confirmed that three divisions of Goodyear would be sold off, including Goodyear Aerospace in Akron, which employs more than 5,000 UAW members. These are expected to be the first steps in a company restructuring effort designed to pay off its debt and to make it more profitable and supposedly less vulnerable to takeover attempts in the future.

Meanwhile, the UAW filed a lawsuit to require whoever buys Goodyear Aerospace to honor the existing union agreement. The judge ruled against the union.

Goodyear workers are stuck between a rock and a hard place. The notion that "what's good for the company is good for the workers" has been the stock-in-trade of the union leaderships for so long that the idea of Goodyear workers having their own interests in this battle between contending capitalists never entered the picture.

The reality is that workers cannot stop this kind of competition — not until the capitalist system itself is replaced. And until we are strong enough and organized enough to replace the capitalists, we should look after our own needs as best we can and not help one or another capitalist look after theirs. Goodyear workers found out the hard way that Goodyear, crying crocodile tears all the way, in the end did exactly what Goldsmith was threatening to do.

Susan Lamont is a member of UAW Local 122 at Chrysler's Twinsburg, Ohio, stamping plant.

LETTERS

A new friend

I'm in the midst of my 12-week trial subscription. I would like to also send a new subscription to a good friend.

The *Militant* found me at the October march in Washington, D.C. Thank you for all the information you have provided me since that meeting.

A new friend,
J.B.
Norfolk, Virginia

Reports from Managua

I recently participated on a *Militant-Perspectiva Mundial* sales team to Iowa.

In addition to the interest in Nicaragua and antiwar activity, we found that the students had a lot to say about the farm crisis and the situation in their communities. Many of them had stories about relatives and neighbors who had lost or almost lost their farms. They were quite interested in the *Militant* coverage and the team members' ideas on this crisis.

We also met a lot of students who were from Marshalltown or Ottumwa, Iowa, or the northern border near Austin, Minnesota, and were very interested in the strikes and the fight of the Hormel meat-packers.

Both at the campuses and at the plant gates, I found that the most impressive thing about the *Militant* for potential readers was its bureau in Managua, and the fact that we print firsthand reports and information.

A.B.
Des Moines, Iowa

Cuban revolution

It is absurd that after the acclaim that Armando Valladares' book *Against All Hope* has received from well-informed people across the whole political spectrum, Mr. Harry Ring in his review [December 12, 19 and 26] still blindly insists on defending the government of Fidel Castro in Cuba as if it were the most perfect political system on earth.

Regardless of one's political views, any well-informed Latin Americanist can objectively say that there are some very good achievements in the Cuban Revolution and some very serious problems with it.

As progressive individuals,

let's try not to be so blind in our defense of the Cuban revolution.

Frank Resillez
Buffalo, New York

Especially stimulating

Of course the *Militant* has always been a beam of truth penetrating the murky capitalistic muck that threatens to swallow us all up. But since the so-called Iran arms scandal details have been leaking through, your invaluable newspaper has been especially stimulating, truly informative, and inspiring.

Please extend my subscription for another year and use the small additional sum for whatever you see fit.

R.M.
Westport, Connecticut

Biased

A student at Florida State University in Tallahassee recently wrote the campus newspaper attacking the *Militant*.

In his letter to the *Florida Flambeau*, John Raymaker said, "When I ordered a subscription to the *Militant* newspaper recently at the Union Green I was told it offered alternative viewpoints to the conservative ideology that has engulfed our nation. This was fine with me, as college should be a time of intellectual enlightenment."

But, according to Raymaker, the *Militant* is "devoid of any attempt at unbiased reporting, offering nothing but repugnant socialist anti-U.S. propaganda."

He is right — the *Militant* is biased, but in the sense that it does take sides on important social issues. The masthead proudly proclaims "A socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people." I find this kind of "bias" a refreshing change from the phony "objectivity" of the bourgeois media.

He is wrong, however, to equate uncompromising opposition to the employer-government assault against workers and working farmers at home and abroad with anti-Americanism.

The *Militant* represents the best traditions of American trade unionism and progressivism. These traditions date back to the dawning of the republic. Let's not forget that the American revolution was an anti-imperialist revolution.

lution.

I find it extremely ironic that at the same time as Raymaker laments the *Militant's* "anti-Americanism" he also expresses fear of being placed on a "communist blacklist" for having subscribed to it. This comes at a time when socialists are in the front lines of the battle to defend and extend democratic rights in this country.

The Socialist Workers Party and its youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance, have recently won a lawsuit against the FBI, CIA, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. A federal court in New York has ruled that investigation, harassment, and disruption of these organizations by government agencies is blatantly illegal and unconstitutional. The plaintiffs were awarded \$264,000 in damages.

This is clearly the most important victory for democratic rights in many years. Government documents made public during the course of this litigation have encouraged further legal action by other Black rights' and women's rights' organizations.

The *Militant*, which has reported extensively on this case, is a political weapon for people who are serious about fighting for democratic rights at home and against U.S. imperialism abroad.

W.T. Peterson
Tallahassee, Florida

Iran

In the November 28 issue of the *Militant*, in the article "Secret U.S. talks with Iran reveal no shift in policy," by Ernest Harsch, this writer tried to tell the readers that Khomeini's fascist regime is still an anti-imperialist regime.

For your information, I have to say Khomeini's regime came to power by U.S. imperialism in 1979, and this regime not only is not an anti-imperialist regime, but is an imperialist puppet that has so far executed 50,000 people and imprisoned 150,000 communists, revolutionary groups, and progressive organizations. This inhuman regime has received arms from Israel and the United States since 1979. So this arms deal is not a new story.

In Iran today, Khomeini rules by terror. Nobody is safe from his guards' attack. No one can hope tomorrow to be alive.



Dana Summers

In recent decades, or maybe in the history of mankind, no government like Khomeini's regime has done such bad things to its people.

Khomeini's fascist regime must go and will be overthrown by the Iranian people very soon. And then the world will know what this criminal regime did to the Iranian people.

An Iranian student
Edmond, Oklahoma

Montana, too

In a recent issue you noted that your highly successful campaign for readers managed to solicit subscriptions from a person in every state in the nation except for Montana.

Although I signed up for your publication in Ohio, I am a resident of Montana. So congratulations are due for going 50 for 50!

Although I do not plan to resubscribe at this time, I wholeheartedly support your publication and its devotion to establish a system that promotes fairness towards all.

J.G.
Oberlin, Ohio

Sikhs

I'm shocked at the article "Behind conflict between Sikhs and Indian government" in the December 5 *Militant*.

Do you realize that the Sikhs are funded by the CIA and Sikh terrorists are trained in Birmingham, Alabama, at CIA training camps?

Are you aware that the holy temple was a munitions dump containing weapons paid for by the

CIA? Do you know that many people believe the CIA planned the assassination of Indira Gandhi and used Sikhs to accomplish this?

Perhaps you'd better study the situation a little more so you can give more accurate information.

What aim does the CIA have? To prevent the fall of and demise of the capitalist system, to keep wealth and power in the hands of the wealthy, and to regain a border area with the Soviet Union for spy bases and military installations.

J.W.
Columbus, Ohio

Intriguing

I'm an indigent inmate incarcerated at the Ferguson unit. Recently, I read one of your papers and found it to be very intriguing.

The articles are exactly what one seeks to read. The *Militant* to me is a very important newspaper. It is a very valuable source of information for the people and it is indeed both knowledgeable and educational.

I would appreciate it very much if you would consider sending me a subscription to the *Militant* to my cell door.

A prisoner
Midway, Texas

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

Students protest across China

Demand right to participate in country's political life

BY NORTON SANDLER

Attempting to halt student protests that have spread to a dozen cities the past month, Chinese government officials have issued new regulations restricting demonstrations.

Tens of thousands of students have participated in the protests demanding increased democratic rights. Fifty thousand participated in the largest demonstration December 21 in Shanghai.

While they were clamping down on street demonstrations, government officials in the capital city, Peking, announced that for the first time more than a single candidate would be allowed to run for seats in future local elections there.

The current protest wave began in early December. Students angered over how candidates were selected for an election to the district-level National Peoples Congress began organizing for a demonstration at the University of Science and Technology in Hefei. The students said local Communist Party officials had selected candidates for an election to fill the university's four seats on the local legislative body without letting the students know who the candidates were.

On December 9, some 3,000 students demonstrated in Hefei. That same day several thousand demonstrated at Wuhan University.

Following the Hefei protest university officials agreed to reschedule the election with more candidates.

Wall posters praising the demonstrations in Wuhan and Hefei appeared a few days later at Peking University.

One poster said, "Democracy is our standard. Under this flag let tens of thousands of Chinese awaken and start to think about problems apart from filling our bellies."

By December 19 protests had spread to six cities in several different regions of the country.

The *Washington Post* acknowledged that the students were "not calling for a rejection of the communist system" but seemed "to be taking seriously the authorities' recent declarations that there can be no modernization without democracy."

Growing political ferment

Political ferment has been on the rise in China for over a year. Students protested in September 1985 against Japan's military build-up and against the increased distribution of Japanese goods in China. Other demands raised then included a call for improved student living conditions.

Protests over China's nuclear weapons testing took place at Peking University in December 1985. In April 1986 two Peking students were sentenced to seven years in prison for distributing a manifesto accusing Communist Party leaders of being "undemocratic" and "not true Marxists." Workers' strikes and protests have also been reported.

During this same period Communist Party officials aligned with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping have been urging greater democracy. In numerous speeches and articles they have called for increased academic freedom and the recruitment of intellectuals into the party as part of helping the country toward economic modernization.

Protests in Shanghai

As the current protests mounted, the government at first refused to report on them in the media. On December 19, however, the protests spread to the country's largest city, Shanghai. Thousands poured through the streets and began a sit-in at government buildings.

They presented the city's mayor with a demand that the media begin to cover the actions. They also demanded government toleration of wall posters and demonstra-

tions, and guarantees that the rights and safety of those participating in the street actions would be protected.

The *New York Times* reported that the police attacked the sit-in in the early hours of the next morning, arresting some of the students.

As the protests grew to 20,000 during the day, the official New China News Agency issued its first public comment. It quoted a government official acknowledging the protests in several cities, stating they were legal under China's constitution.

Fifty thousand demonstrated in Shanghai on December 21. The number of workers participating in the actions grew over the three days. Some young workers were particularly noticeable in the December 21 action and several expressed anger over rising prices for food and other goods.

The veneer of government toleration quickly shattered. The official media attacked the demonstrators for disrupting "stability and unity" and accused the students of having beaten up 31 cops during the sit-in two days earlier.

Shanghai officials issued warnings against further demonstrations and police presence was increased on city campuses. Students who then applied for permits to demonstrate were denied them.

Protests continue in other cities

Sporadic smaller protests continued in Shanghai the next few days in spite of the crackdown, and demonstrations extended to several other cities, including Peking.

City officials in Peking quickly issued new rules that had the effect of banning demonstrations. The following day, on December 27, the city government announced the changes in the way future local elections will be held.

An official said, "In order to promote democracy and in order to give the people the opportunity to select candidates they



Demonstration in Shanghai's People's Square. Workers have also joined actions in some cities, expressing their anger over rising food costs.

will be satisfied with, this time the election will have more candidates than slots available."

Local Peking elections are supposed to be held within six months. While it is not clear how candidates will be chosen, in all previous elections the single candidate was selected by the Communist Party.

Meanwhile the national media continued to campaign against further demonstrations.

The official Chinese Communist Party newspaper, *People's Daily*, quoted sociologist Fei Xiaotong as saying, "Our means of expressing criticism should be in the interests of stability and unity. Otherwise things will turn out badly."

Xiaotong was one of the intellectuals widely quoted by government officials last summer when they were making state-

ments about the necessity for increased democracy and intellectual freedom.

The government is also trying to pit the students against workers and peasants. One newspaper accused the Shanghai protesters of making people late to work. Another labeled the students as violent.

But the discussion about democracy in China is not likely to go away soon. The Associated Press reported December 27 that workers and students in the industrial city of Nanjing have been gathering for six straight nights of political discussion. The dispatch said that up to 10,000 had participated in an open-air discussion on December 24.

On December 28 the *People's Daily* attacked the Nanjing actions, accusing some of the protesters of challenging the rule of the Communist Party.

School busing under attack in Boston

BY JON HILLSON

BOSTON — The Boston School Committee dealt a blow to the historic court decision that mandated school desegregation here 12 years ago, voting to remove some 2,600 high school students from yellow school buses and put them on public transportation.

About 10 percent of the public school students using the school buses are affected.

This attack on the 1974 busing plan was the focus of a heated public hearing December 20. Some 120 students, parents, and unionized school bus drivers turned the meeting into a protest against the proposal and the student dislocation and bus driver layoffs it will produce.

The hearing itself was the object of anger. It was poorly publicized on short notice — in letters to parents in English only (nearly 25 percent of the system's students are Hispanic, Asian, and Haitian). And it took place on the last Saturday before Christmas.

The board voted 10 to 3, with three of four Black school committee members rejecting the change. A precedent was set for removing from the school system legal responsibility for providing the easiest, safest, and most direct transportation of students to their schools.

This right is a key aspect of court-ordered desegregation, which was based on federal district Judge Arthur Garrity's 1974 finding that the school committee had illegally and unconstitutionally segregated Boston's schools, racially discriminating against Black students.

Mandatory, citywide busing was the method ordered to overcome decades of discrimination. It was seen as the way to get around housing segregation, which had helped create the all-white schools the school committee favored. These schools had better materials and buildings, more qualified teachers, and more specialized educational programs.

Ever since the desegregation order was won, there have been efforts to reverse it. The *Boston Globe*, which has assumed a leadership role in this drive, calls for the "overhaul" of the school system.

Under the demagogic demand for "fiscal responsibility," Laval Wilson, the city's first Black superintendent, has been probing for ways to roll back major elements of the desegregation plan since he assumed office two years ago.

Wilson claimed that the school department would reduce its \$335.1-million budget by \$313,000 by putting high school students on the MBTA, Boston's public transit system.

"This is chump change, and you know it," Susan Moir, a white bus driver and member of United Steelworkers of America Local 8751, shouted as the school committee vote neared. "This is a joke, and it's got nothing to do with saving anything," she said to cheers. "You're talking about 'saving' less than one tenth of 1 percent of the budget while you cut out part of the system — the drivers whose job it is to bring the children to school safely." The crowd roared its approval.

The board's decision will result in the layoff of 40 or more drivers. As such, it represents a blow against USWA drivers,

who have been the target of union-busting efforts for the past decade.

The bus drivers' union, which favors desegregation, busing, and bilingual education, has been a thorn in the side of those attempting to "overhaul" school desegregation.

Union President James Barrett blasted the school committee plan at the hearing and pledged legal efforts to halt it.

Latino, Black, and white leaders of the Citywide Parents Advisory Council united to denounce the plan as well.

Half a dozen Black students took the floor to condemn the proposal. They explained that an MBTA bus route from Black neighborhoods to their school meant taking a subway, two further bus transfers, and walking a quarter of a mile, starting before sunrise. A yellow school bus ride is a single direct route to the school door.

A dozen Chinese parents, represented by an interpreter, also objected to the plan, as did members of the citywide student council.

Not a single person who testified at the hearing — Black, Latino, Asian, or white, parent or student, bus driver or teacher — favored the plan.

And many of them spoke directly of the blow to desegregation this step would mean. Every action by the school committee, said Jean McGuire, a Black board member long associated with the fight for equality in Boston, "must serve the [desegregation] plan."

"What we have not had here is an impact study on desegregation," she said to cheers, preceding her no vote.