

## Court broadens right to political asylum

The March 9 ruling by the Supreme Court on political asylum is a gain for the democratic rights of all working people.

In a 6-to-3 decision, the court rejected the Reagan administration stand that to win political asylum in the United States, foreign nationals must prove "clear probability" that they would be killed or otherwise

### EDITORIAL

harmful if forced to return to their native country.

The court decision said this policy contradicts the intent of the Refugee Act of 1980. That law says that persons are eligible for political asylum if they do not want to return home "because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

The Supreme Court ruled that "to show a 'well-founded fear of persecution,' an alien need not prove that it is more likely than not that he or she will be persecuted in his or her home country."

Anyone should be eligible for asylum if "persecution is a reasonable possibility," the decision said. It offered as an example someone with a "10 percent chance of



Salvadoran troops and their victims. New Supreme Court ruling aids refugees seeking asylum in United States from terror like this.

being shot, tortured, or otherwise persecuted."

Using the stricter standard of "clear probability," the U.S. government has denied political asylum to thousands of people coming here to escape repressive

governments in their native countries. Justice Harry Blackmun charged that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is guilty of "years of seemingly purposeful blindness" to the law.

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## Unionists rally behind Cudahy strike

BY BILL BREIHAN

CUDAHY, Wis. — Unionists from this area have been mobilizing to aid meat-packers on strike at the Patrick Cudahy plant here.

Over 500 strikers and their supporters joined a rally on March 7 to greet a food caravan arriving from Madison, Wisconsin. The caravan was organized by members of United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 538 at the Oscar Mayer plant.

Two dozen carloads of Local 538 members accompanied a semi and two pickup trucks loaded with 43,000 pounds of food.

Meat-packers also traveled from Austin, Minnesota, and Chicago to take part in the rally.

The Austin meat-packers who are fighting to get their jobs back at the Hormel plant there also brought down a pickup full of food.

The Milwaukee County Labor Council and other local labor organizations are planning a march and rally in support of the strikers on April 12.

Eight hundred and fifty members of Local P-40 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) were forced on strike by Cudahy in early January.

The last negotiating session on February 21 lasted 45 minutes. Cudahy officials refused to consider modifying their prestrike "final offer" that would have saddled the meat-packers with their third round of concessions in five years.

Local P-40 members began negotiations last year seeking pay increases that would have brought the hourly rate to \$10.70 over the life of the contract. That's the same amount agreed to last fall in contracts the UFCW International negotiated at several Oscar Mayer and Hormel plants.

Cudahy is demanding \$6.25 an hour.

The strikers' morale remains high even though the company has restarted production with scabs. Cudahy claims 600 scabs are working in the plant.

Several weeks ago the company sent strikers a letter telling them to resign from the union and return to work immediately or face termination. But only two dozen crossed the picket lines.

Machinists at Ladish Co., one of Milwaukee's largest plants, organized a fund-raising dance for the strikers on February 22 featuring Ed Asner, the well-known entertainer and former president of the Screen Actors Guild.

"When word gets out about the indignities by management being visited upon you, all of America will support you," Asner said. Several thousand dollars were raised at the event.



Militant/Sandi Sherman  
Oscar Mayer unionists donated 43,000 pounds of food to Cudahy strikers.

## Why FBI chief was picked to head the CIA

BY FRED FELDMAN

In appointing FBI Director William Webster to head the Central Intelligence Agency, President Reagan hailed him as a "man of honor and integrity ... who is committed to the rule of law."

Members of Congress from both parties chimed in. "The president could not have picked a better person," Rep. Don Edwards, a liberal Democrat from California, told Webster at a hearing in the House. "You've restored confidence in the bureau." "I've never once had to question anything he has told Congress," declared Delaware Democratic Sen. Joseph Biden.

CIA due for cosmetic surgery

"Webster Restored the FBI's Image," stated a headline in the *Washington Post*.

And now the rulers want him to perform some cosmetic surgery on the CIA as well.

The CIA is in hot water again as a result of the exposure of its role in covert dealings with Iran and illegal arming of the *contras*.

The rulers hope that Webster will be able to give the CIA a new look, while improving its capacity to carry out covert operations like assassinations and organization of terrorist gangs against Nicaragua and other countries.

When President James Carter appointed Webster to head the FBI in 1978, the political police agency had been widely discredited. The FBI's massive, illegal "Cointelpro" (Counterintelligence Program) operation, which was designed to disrupt the legal political activity of those who dis-

## Outlook good for spring subscription campaign

BY MALIK MIAH

Beginning March 27 the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* will launch a big subscription campaign. The spring drive will offer an opportunity for supporters of the two best socialist publications in the country to repeat our successful accomplishment of last fall and take another step in building up our long-term subscription base.

In the fall, *Militant* and *PM* supporters sold 11,000 introductory subscriptions. This included sales to unionists, farmers, and students.

The spring campaign will aim to build on the fall campaign's success, as well as the successful follow-up winter renewal effort that helped raise the *Militant's* long-term paid readership.

The national target for the spring campaign will be based on local goals taken by supporters. We urge all *Militant* and *PM* readers to meet and discuss local targets. By the time of the first scoreboard, which will appear in the *Militant* dated April 10, the national goal will be set.

YSA takes the lead

Supporters of the *Militant* and *PM* have already begun to discuss the spring circulation campaign.

At a meeting of the Young Socialist Alliance National Committee at the end of February, the YSA voted to throw itself into the spring subscription campaign and step up its sales of the socialist publications.

YSA units are discussing taking responsibility for obtaining a big part of the total goal for the drive. There are YSA members in 84 cities. Many YSA members are student leaders, trade unionists, and activists in antiwar and anti-apartheid coalitions, groups leading the counteroffensive against racist assaults, and other political organizations.

YSA members, like other *Militant* and *PM* supporters, plan to take the socialist publications to everyone they can.

National teams

As in the fall campaign, national subscription and sales teams will travel to many parts of the country and to the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. YSA members will spearhead many of the teams. There will be several teams going to coal mining regions of the country — from Utah to Kentucky, Alabama, West Virginia, southern Illinois,

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SWP, YSA lawsuit

The FBI's difficulties included the broad support that had been won for a lawsuit filed in 1973 by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against the government and its secret police agencies. The suit led to exposure of a 40-year FBI attack on the party, including burglaries and other illegal entries into SWP offices, extensive wiretapping, and the forging of letters and other documents, and

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## Students back San Francisco demonstration

BY SETH GALINSKY

LOS ANGELES — Actor Martin Sheen and Blase Bonpane from the Office of the Americas spoke to 800 students on the University of California campus here February 25. The meeting was billed as a "Dialogue on Central America."

Bonpane strongly defended the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, pointing to land reform and improvements in literacy and health care as advances registered by the Nicaraguan people since 1979.

At an open microphone, dozens of students spoke out against U.S. intervention. Bonpane strongly encouraged everyone to attend the April 25 antiwar, anti-apartheid demonstration in San Francisco.

More than 500 students attended at least part of a California Student Solidarity Conference in Santa Barbara February 20-22. Workshops were held on a wide variety of issues. An open assembly to begin formulating a Student Bill of Rights took stands against apartheid, U.S. intervention in Central America and against nuclear weapons. The April 25 demonstration was unanimously endorsed.

## N.J. Industrial Union Council endorses action

BY ROBERT DEES

NEWARK — The New Jersey Industrial Union Council (IUC) recently added its name to the growing list of endorsers of the New Jersey April 25 Coalition. The council is sending a letter to several hundred IUC-affiliated union locals in the state encouraging them to participate in the Washington, D.C., protest.

The IUC donated \$2,000 to hire a part-time staff person to help coordinate the action around the state.

United Auto Workers Region 9 and Hospital Workers' District 1199J have endorsed the action and are pledging to fill several buses.

## Protests held at 'contra' office in D.C.

BY IKE NAHEM

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Over a dozen organizations joined a two-week campaign of daily protests at the public office here of the United Nicaraguan Opposition. UNO is one of the *contra* organi-

zations created and funded by the U.S. government.

The campaign to "Make D.C. contra free" was organized by the Washington-Area Pledge of Resistance and involved different groups each day. The campaign began on February 16.

On February 25 students from Georgetown, American, and George Washington universities joined the spirited pickets. Earlier that day a dozen members of the Gray Panther retirees' organization picketed.

One afternoon a group of auto workers from Indianapolis in town to attend a conference on plant closings also participated in the picket lines.

## Toledo, Ohio groups build April 25

BY ROBBIE SCHEER

TOLEDO — Fifty unionists and community activists met at United Auto Workers Local 12 hall here February 21 to start a coalition to support the April 25 Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa.

Participants included Charles Hendrix, a regional director of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employ-

ees; Baldemar Velásquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee; and John Burkett from the Ohio Family Farm Movement. Several additional unions sent representatives.

Plans were made for a news conference announcing a local picket line at the Federal Building and the formation of the coalition. The International Association of Machinists has donated their mailing address and a phone to help build Toledo-area participation in the Washington, D.C., action.

## Coalition formed in New York's Capital District

BY GEORGE KONTANIS

ALBANY, N.Y. — Forty activists representing labor, student, community, and religious organizations met at the Albany Public Library February 17 to launch the Capital District Mobilization Coalition for the April 25 demonstration. Several working committees were established to begin organizing outreach and publicity.

The coalition meeting followed on the heels of a rally of 150 demanding an end to funding of the contras. Donna DeMaria, an activist in Pledge of Resistance, told the rally, "It's very important we put pressure on the Reagan administration not to give the contras

\$40 million more."

## National student subcommittee expanded

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "We are trying to bring as many national and regional student groups as we can onto the student subcommittee for their input on how to build the April 25 mobilization."

Matthew Countryman's comments were made at a March 4 meeting of the Student Subcommittee of the National Steering Committee for the April 25 mobilization.

"The major thing we have produced so far is the student organizing packet. We are going to conferences, spreading the word, and meeting lots of excitement," he said.

The National Steering Committee recently voted to expand the student subcommittee. A number of youth organizations have been invited to send representatives.

The subcommittee has decided to issue a special leaflet directed at students to organize a student contingent in the march and to encourage young people to wear red and black, the colors of the Sandinistas, on April 25.

# Nicaragua ambassador addresses crowd in N.Y.



Nora Astorga

Militant/Selva Nebbia

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

NEW YORK — Nicaragua's main priority remains the struggle for peace, said Nora Astorga, that country's ambassador to the United Nations. She was addressing more than 300 people March 2 at the headquarters of hospital workers union Local 1199.

The meeting, sponsored by the U.S. Peace Council, was the first in what is to be an annual series of Sandy Pollack memorial lectures. Pollack, a leader of the Peace Council, was killed in a plane crash while traveling from Cuba to Nicaragua two years ago.

Astorga said that through 1986, the U.S.-backed *contra* war and its effects have cost Nicaragua \$2.86 billion. The number of casualties has reached 37,594.

Despite the war, the Nicaraguan revolution "is setting the basis for democracy for the first time in our history," Astorga said. She pointed to the recently enacted Nicaraguan constitution and the democratic process that led up to it.

During an extensive question period, Astorga was asked about the mood of women in Nicaragua today. "We are in the mood for struggle," she declared to applause. The conditions for Nicaraguan women, she observed, are better in some respects than in other countries, but "we have a long way to go. We are building a new society. There is still a lot to do. But we are on the right road."

Astorga was also asked about the two conditions for peace proposed by Democratic Party presidential hopeful Gary Hart — that "foreign military bases" be removed from Nicaraguan soil and that the Sandinistas agree to "stop exporting" revolution.

There are no foreign military bases in Nicaragua, Astorga said, nor is the government willing to have any in the country. As for exporting revolution, "it is not like Coca-Cola," she said. "We are exporting only our example."

Astorga praised the work of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, U.S. vet-

erans of the Spanish Civil War, who have raised money for ambulances and other material aid for Nicaragua. She also commended the work of other organizations that send delegations as well as material aid to Nicaragua.

The meeting was chaired by Dennis Rivera, executive vice-president of Local 1199, who urged everyone to participate in the March on Washington for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa. "The time is right for massive indignation, and we have the date," said Rivera.

Rivera also announced plans for an 1199 delegation to Nicaragua, leaving March 23 and returning April 2. This delegation, he said, would help to "establish a permanent relationship" between the union and Nicaragua, "to show the other side of North America, the working class, which wants peace, friendship, and freedom."

A message was read at the end of the meeting from Cuba's Popular Movement for Peace. Michael Myerson, a leader of the Peace Council, also spoke briefly.

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# Philippine left debates stand on new constitution

BY RUSSELL JOHNSON  
AND DEB SHOOKAL

MANILA, Philippines — The constitution adopted by the recent nationwide plebiscite was the subject of a broad debate among organizations based on the Philippine workers, peasants, and other oppressed people. In the February 2 vote, about 76 percent of those casting ballots approved ratification of the charter, which was drawn up in mid-1986 by a panel chosen by President Corazon Aquino.

Most of those on the panel represented the ruling class of landlords and capitalists in the Philippines. The constitution they drafted is intended to help Aquino stabilize a capitalist government in the wake of the big popular upsurge that toppled the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos last year.

The charter confirms Aquino in office until 1992. It proclaims the Philippine army, now renamed "New Armed Forces of the Philippines," as the "protector of the people and the State."

It calls for the "just distribution" of agricultural land, while guaranteeing the "rights" of the landlords.

Right-wing opposition was centered among the politicians and military officers closely associated with Marcos, such as former defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile. They have sought to destabilize the Aquino government, which removed many of them from office.

On the eve of the plebiscite, elements in the military massacred 19 participants in a peasant protest in Manila and two people during a strike in the Bataan Export Processing Zone. And an attempted coup was staged in Manila.

The mass-based organizations that call for basic social change in the Philippines adopted a spectrum of positions on the plebiscite.

The National Democratic Front (NDF), a political coalition of 12 organizations backing the guerrilla struggle waged by the New People's Army (NPA), called for a "no" vote.

"We cannot betray the people who repose their trust in the NDF and its revolutionary program," the NDF declared February 8. "From the start we had rejected the 1986 Constitution as a proimperialist and anti-people document which can never serve as the framework for solving the fundamental problems at the root of the armed and political conflict."

## Hundreds killed under Aquino

MANILA, Philippines — Political repression took almost 400 lives in the Philippines in 1986, and more than 400 political prisoners were still in the country's jails at the end of the year.

The facts were made public in a report issued here February 12 by the church-based Task Force Detainees of the Philippines.

The report states that 195 people were killed in 48 attacks by police or private armed gangs on unarmed demonstrators, union picket lines, and peasant villages.

Another 197 people were "salvaged," a term referring to the kidnapping, torture, and murder of activists. Sixty-seven of the salvaging victims were reported to have been under arrest. In addition, 90 other activists have "disappeared without a trace." And 67 of these had reportedly been under arrest.

The document cited 438 cases of torture. The task force stated that 1,712 people were arrested on political charges, and that 291 were still in prison at the end of the year.

Together with 132 detainees imprisoned in the Marcos era and still held in violation of the amnesty proclaimed by President Corazon Aquino, the government held 423 political prisoners at the end of the year.

"Furthermore we believe that whatever positive policies or principles laid down by this Constitution would remain mere glittering phrases as long as their practical reality and effect are dependent on legislation, implementation, and interpretation by a government that does not admit sufficient and genuine representation of the masses of the people."

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the leading political force in the NDF and NPA, also called for a "no" vote.

The May 1 Movement (KMU) union federation, the Peasant Movement of the Philippines, and the League of Filipino Students were among the legal mass organizations that opposed the charter.

### Union federation's stand

In a resolution adopted at a national congress on Dec. 25, 1986, the union federation declared: "The KMU strongly believes that the way toward normalization and stability in our society is not merely based on the approval of a new constitution. Normalcy and stability is rather attained by ending poverty, oppression, and the absence of justice in Philippine society. This is also based on resolving the fundamental interests of the people like the implementation of a genuine land reform program, national industrialization, and a government that is representative of the majority and not a government of a few."

"The KMU further believes that this constitution is not the solution to the society's ills. It does not cater to the basic interests of the people. . . . Basically it limits the victory of the people in the February uprising to a few democratic rights. . . ."

"Because of the aforementioned reasons, this Congress resolves to reject this proimperialist and anti-people constitution by voting no in this coming plebiscite. This Congress marks the beginning of a vigorous campaign to propagate the aforementioned position of KMU and to further amplify the basic demands of the people."

The Party of the Nation (PnB), founded last August, initially took what it called a "critical yes" position. Initiators of the PnB include former CPP and NPA leaders Jose Maria Sison and Bernabe Buscayno, both jailed under Marcos.

In January the party's national leadership shifted its position. It called for deferment of the plebiscite to allow more time for discussion. The PnB in Central Luzon called openly for a "no" vote, while the PnB in Negros Occidental continued to advocate a "critical yes."

## Political strike hits Sri Lanka gov't

BY MALIK MIAH

More than 15,000 members of the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) held a general strike March 5 against the Sri Lankan government's antidemocratic and repressive policies. According to Bala Tampoe, general secretary of the CMU, "It was the first strike and public action by the CMU over government policies in more than 10 years."

The CMU is one of the largest industrial unions in Sri Lanka.

In 1979 the government adopted repressive legislation, such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in an attempt to crush the democratic struggle of the Tamil minority for self-determination. Since then, the regime has effectively prevented all public protests and strike action.

The last national strike over wages and working conditions was by public workers in 1980. It was brutally smashed by the government.

In a telephone interview with Tampoe, from Colombo, the country's capital, he explained that the main demand of the strike and an outdoor rally of 2,000 in Co-



Aquino and Gen. Fidel Ramos, armed forces chief of staff, review military cadets. Although army is widely hated for its brutality to workers and peasants, new constitution proclaims it "protector of people and State."

The February 11 *Manila Chronicle* reported that Alan Jasminez, PnB secretary-general, said that there was a strong drift to support a "no" vote but that the party had not placed its members under discipline in the voting.

Citing the massacre of peasant demonstrators and revelations of U.S. pressure on the drafting commission, Jasminez said, "Why continue discussing something that has already been compromised. History will make its critical judgement of the constitution."

On the other hand, Ines Olalia, widow of assassinated PnB and KMU chairman Rolando Olalia, spoke in favor of the charter to a huge Manila rally organized by the Aquino forces in the days before the vote.

### CPP, NDF criticized

The February 2 *Malaya* reported that Bernabe Buscayno, a founder of the NPA, had openly criticized the stance of the CPP and NDF. "Buscayno said the error resembles the decision of the left to boycott the snap presidential elections [in February 1986] despite the growing clamor of its ranks to support Mrs. Aquino," the paper reported. He noted, the report said, that the "left's base voted for 'yes,' especially in Mindanao."

The NPA and CPP have strong support in Mindanao.

According to the *Manila Chronicle*, a source in the NDF rejected the comparison between the call for a "no" vote in the plebiscite and NDF calls for a boycott in the 1986 election contest between Aquino and Marcos.

"After the fall of Marcos on February 25, the radical underground as well as open left organizations that adopted the boycott were wracked with dissent, the source said," according to the *Chronicle*. "The decision to reject the Constitution, he claims,

has not been seriously questioned by the NDF's membership."

### Among sugar workers

In its December 1986 issue, *Solidaridad II* quoted Jose Maria Sison, who has been sharply critical of the charter, as urging progressive forces not to be divided by a no or yes stance toward the constitution. It quoted him as saying, "The progressive movement [should] just concentrate on an educational campaign and launch massive mass actions on fundamental issues that go beyond the plebiscite."

The New Patriotic Alliance, a coalition that includes the May 1 Movement and the Peasant Movement of the Philippines, as well as groups based on the urban middle classes, was unable to reach agreement in its national council on how to vote. It called on its supporters to vote according to their consciences.

In the sugar-growing province of Negros Occidental, both the New Patriotic Alliance and the KMU-affiliated National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) called for a yes vote despite their criticisms of the constitution, NFSW secretary-general Serge Cherniguin told us.

Greg Patiño, a supporter of the New Patriotic Alliance, said this stand was necessary to avoid isolation from the big majority that was voting yes.

While most sugar workers did vote yes, a significant minority of NFSW militants we talked to on the sugar haciendas in Negros Occidental said they voted no. Some explained their vote by saying the economic situation has not improved under Aquino while the militarization of the province has increased.

Other sugar workers said they voted yes because they wanted to give Aquino one more chance to implement her promises of land reform and a negotiated peace in the countryside.

lombo was "Democratic and human rights and peace and justice for Sri Lanka."

"The strike was better than we expected," Tampoe said. "The government and progovernment media blacked out all mention of the strike. The police banned a planned procession. We could not put up leaflets and posters."

Nevertheless, Tampoe continued, "the strike was successful across the island, except in the North and East, where the military is carrying out the actions" against the Tamil people. The CMU organizes a major chemical factory in one northern town, for example, which the military occupied.

"In Nuwara Eliya — the heart of the tea country — women garment workers marched around the town despite a ban against processions," Tampoe said.

International unions from a number of countries, including Japan, India, Sweden, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States expressed support for the CMU protests. Most sent solidarity messages.

While Tamils are the primary target of

the repression, many Sinhalese unionists, radicals, and democratic rights' supporters have been picked up by the police for interrogation or even "disappeared." Sinhala are 74 percent of Sri Lanka's 16 million people.

A recent case involved a longtime political activist and leader of the Revolutionary Marxist Party, a sympathizing group of the Fourth International, an international Marxist organization.

In early February, T.N. Perera and Wijesundera, employees of the Community Resource Centre Press, were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Rattanapitiya, a town outside Colombo. The press had printed a leaflet for the Independent University Students Union. The leaflet denounced the murder of its president, who had been kidnapped and slain in December 1986.

Both Perera and Wijesundera, who had been employed as a printer by the CMU for 10 years, faced up to 18 months in jail without being charged or tried.

Immediate protests, including by Tampoe, who is also a prominent lawyer, won their release five days after their arrest.



# E.D. Nixon: working-class leader in civil rights fight

BY FRED HALSTEAD

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Services were held here March 3 in memory of E.D. Nixon, the Black railroad worker who organized the historic Montgomery bus boycott 31 years ago. He died February 25 of a heart ailment at the age of 87.

Present at the funeral was Rosa Parks, the seamstress who was arrested Dec. 1, 1955, for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus to a white man. Her action helped spark the Montgomery struggle, which marked the beginning of the massive civil rights movement that overthrew the system of legal Jim Crow segregation.

Parks was Nixon's secretary. Nixon, already a veteran civil rights and trade union leader in Alabama, made bail for Parks. He then began organizing a boycott of city buses by the Black community in protest of racial segregation laws.

It was Nixon who convinced Martin Luther King, Jr., then a young Baptist preacher relatively new in town, to become the major spokesperson for and chairman of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), which was formed to organize the protest.

E.D. Nixon — the letters stand for Edgar Daniel, but he was always called E.D. — was the MIA's treasurer during the boycott, which lasted 381 days. It ended after the Supreme Court struck down laws against segregation in local public transportation as unconstitutional.

Parks, who now lives in Detroit, returned to Montgomery for the funeral. Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., flew in from Atlanta. After the service at the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, she told reporters that E.D. Nixon had fought for "the improvement of life when this was a completely segregated society."

"We have come a long way, and his legacy will be there to inspire us for generations," King said.

Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford delivered the eulogy, declaring: "Alabama is not what it ought to be. It's not what it will be. But thank God and E.D. Nixon it isn't what it used to be."

"E.D. Nixon," said Ford, "didn't have much formal education. Sometimes he was called everything but a child of God, but that didn't stop him. Wherever a strong man was needed, he was there. He was oftentimes the man behind the scene."

## Union organizer

E.D. Nixon was a very tall, lean, raw-boned man who made his living as a sleeping car porter on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad's run between Montgomery and Chicago.

In the 1920s and 1930s he worked with Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters President A. Philip Randolph to organize fellow workers into the union. Later, he also helped many other workers, Black and white, organize to fight for union wages and conditions in Alabama.

At one point during the Montgomery bus boycott, Nixon told this reporter: "The South will never be free until the Negro frees himself and frees the white man. Big business has kept the poor white man fooled for years by telling him they could get Negroes to work for less."

Nixon had become a leading fighter for civil rights long before the boycott. He served as Alabama state director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at a time when holding such a post took a lot of raw courage. In 1944 he led 750 Blacks in a march to the Montgomery County Courthouse where they tried to register to vote.

Five years before the bus boycott, a prominent French radical journalist, Daniel Guerin, toured the South and met E.D. Nixon. In a 1951 book called *Negroes on the March*, Guerin wrote about the layer of Black leaders who had emerged out of the labor battles of the previous decades:

"A living example of this evolution was presented to me by E.D. Nixon of

Montgomery, Alabama, a vigorous colored union militant who was the leading spirit in his city of both the local union of Sleeping Car Porters and the local branch of the NAACP. What a difference from other branches of the Association, which are controlled by dentists, pastors, and undertakers! Nixon has both feet on the ground. He is linked to the masses. He speaks their language. He has organized the work of race defense with the precision and method of a trade unionist."

## Montgomery bus boycott

For a time, Rosa Parks had been Nixon's secretary in the NAACP. Her first call from jail was to E.D. Nixon, who sensed that the time had come when a mass movement could be organized.

"Some of us," Nixon later told the *Militant*, "had tried to get something done about those buses long before this protest. We tried to talk to the city officials, but they wouldn't even listen. When Mrs. Parks got arrested, that was the last straw. We decided to do something about it."

On Dec. 3, 1955, two days before Parks was to be tried, large numbers of mimeographed leaflets were distributed in the Black community. They called on citizens to stay off the buses in a one-day protest on December 5, the day of the trial. The overwhelming majority of Black riders did so. The judge convicted Mrs. Parks and fined her \$10.

A mass meeting was scheduled for that night at the Holt Street Baptist Church. But many of the local Black ministers were still hesitating to make the fight. "I almost lost patience with them," Nixon later recalled. "I told them what I thought about them and told them, 'Unless you accept this program to continue the boycott this evening, there'll be more than a thousand people at the church tonight. I'll take the microphone and tell the people that we don't have a program because you all are too cowardly to stand on your feet and fight.' So then they all decided to go along."

More than 4,500 people showed up at



E.D. Nixon at Dec. 11, 1965, dinner in New York City celebrating 10th anniversary of Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, which Nixon initiated and helped lead. At right is Farrell Dobbs, then national secretary of Socialist Workers Party, who chaired event. Dobbs helped organize solidarity with Montgomery fighters.

that meeting, which voted to continue the boycott with King as chairman of the MIA. A car pool was organized to provide transportation during the boycott for the Black community, which numbered 50,000 people at the time.

The Montgomery bus boycott was the first of the big mass actions of the civil rights movement. There were many others over the next 10 years before the Jim Crow system was broken in the South, but there was never one that was better organized. That was mainly due to E.D. Nixon, although he generally stayed in the background and never did become famous the way Parks and King did.

After retiring from the railroad in 1964, Nixon managed a public housing project and a playground in Montgomery. He organized a special Olympics now known as the E.D. Nixon Olympics.

## 'A model of struggle'

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the bus boycott, the

Militant Labor Forum held a dinner in New York at which E.D. Nixon and Arlet Nixon, his wife, were guests of honor. Nixon was actually excluded from the 10th anniversary dinner in Montgomery. (See accompanying article.)

Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, was toastmaster at the dinner in New York. One of the speakers was Clifton DeBerry, who had been the presidential candidate of the SWP in 1964.

"The Montgomery bus boycott stands as a model for struggle. I say that for many reasons. First, it shattered the myth that has been drilled into the minds of Negroes, the belief that Negroes always had to be led by someone else, that they were incapable of organizing themselves and leading themselves. The bus boycott was a verification in life of the falseness of this idea. It was Negro-led and Negro-controlled," said DeBerry.

He continued, "It was a model for struggle in another way. For the first time since

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# 1965 dinner honored boycott initiator

Following are excerpts from a report by Harry Ring in the Dec. 20, 1965 *Militant* on a dinner sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum in New York on December 11, the 10th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott. E.D. Nixon was the guest of honor.

Also speaking were Clifton DeBerry, 1964 presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party; Fred Halstead, staff writer for the *Militant*; and SWP National Secretary Farrell Dobbs.

Among those who sent messages to the gathering were civil rights fighters Carl and Anne Braden. Prathia Wynn, staff member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, attended as a representative of that organization.

Farrell Dobbs paid tribute to E.D. Nixon as "a pioneer leader in the freedom struggle in the South."

He told the audience: "This weekend in Montgomery, the 10th anniversary of the boycott is being celebrated. But unfortunately Mr. Nixon was not included in the program. We of the Militant Labor Forum felt that he should be included, that he before all others should be recognized as the pioneer, the founding leader, the initiator, the spark plug and principal man of the hour in the battle."

The high point of the evening was the speech by E.D. Nixon. A sturdy, stern looking man, his face relaxes as he indulges in his liking for a joke or humorous side remark. His simply worded speech warmed the hearts of the old timers present and was particularly inspiring to the young people. Many of them were hearing for the first time the kind of an authentic spokes-

man who emerges from the ranks of a working-class movement.

Emphasizing that the Montgomery Improvement Association, which was organized to lead the boycott movement, was the outgrowth of many previous struggles in the city, he described the organizations he had participated in and led prior to the MIA.

"So you see," he commented, "the Montgomery Improvement Association was not started just because someone came to town or someone felt it was the proper thing to do at this time. It was started because there had been a struggle of people for long years."

He told how Rosa Parks had been the third person to be arrested for defying bus Jim Crow, but he felt she was the first one who could be relied on for a test case. She had been his secretary in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations, he recalled, over a period of 12 years.

Describing how he organized the meeting to establish the protest movement, he said: "The first person I called was the Rev. Ralph Abernathy. He said, 'I believe you have the right idea. I'll go along.'"

The second person he called was Rev. H.H. Hubbard, who said, "Yes, I'll go along with it."

"The third person I called," he continued, "was the Rev. M.L. King, and he said to me, 'Well Nixon, I don't know. Let me think about it for a while.' So, to make a long story short, I called 15 other people, and I gave Rev. King time to pray over it or whatever he wanted to do. And I called him back and he was number 18 on my list and he agreed to go along with us."

On December 5 Rosa Parks was convicted and fined \$10. At that point, Nixon declared, "50,000 Negroes rose up and grabbed the 'Cradle of the Confederacy' and began to rock it!"

## 'Many people came'

"Many people came to Montgomery," he said. "People came from here — that was where I happened to meet the master of ceremonies here [Dobbs]. He came to my house, and we had a long talk. We had station wagons and automobiles that were given to us. And the number one station wagon came from the master of ceremonies here tonight in the name of his organization."

Nixon continued: "The 10th anniversary of the Montgomery Improvement Association is also being celebrated in my home town. It is being celebrated by people who I spent more than 25 years trying to service prior to the MIA."

"But as you know," he continued, "in every organization there are people who get carried away by big words. There are sometimes people who get carried away by how the words are said. But I would say to you that there are two things that are important in dealing with organizations. One of them is not how much you say but how much you do. The other thing is not just to say things but to tell the truth about the things you deal with. And that's what I have tried to contribute to the Montgomery Improvement Association and to any other organization I have dealt with."

"Consequently," he added, "in doing that I sometimes have to stand by myself. But if telling the truth makes me stand alone, then I'm a lone stander throughout my life."



# Sandinistas foil new arms drop to 'contras'

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

JUIGALPA, Nicaragua — Shortly after midnight the morning of February 20, a DC-6 aircraft flew into Nicaragua from the north and headed for a spot 25 miles south-east of the town of San Pedro del Norte. Its mission: drop arms and supplies to a band of 400 *contra* mercenaries operating in the remote mountains of central Nicaragua.

When the plane reached the drop zone, however, a battalion of Nicaraguan soldiers was waiting for it. In the darkness, they did not manage to shoot down the plane, but they did capture the 7,000 pounds of supplies dropped to the *contras*.

Lt. Col. Roberto Calderón of the Sandinista People's Army showed the captured supplies to reporters at an army base here in Juigalpa February 22. They included 50,000 rounds of automatic rifle ammunition; crates of hand grenades, dynamite, M-60 mortar rounds, and RPG-7 rockets; and dozens of pairs of U.S. army boots, still in the original shipping cartons from Bellesville Shoe Co., Bellesville, Illinois.

Calderón said that despite the CIA supplies, the *contra* forces in this region have not been able to mount significant military offensives. There have been 214 engagements in the area so far in 1987, more than 90 percent of them at the initiative of the Sandinista army. Nicaraguan troops killed 287 *contras* during this time, while suffering barely one-tenth as many casualties themselves.

However, *contra* attacks against civilians have continued.

At midnight on February 16, a group of mercenaries attacked the tiny village of Río Rama near Nueva Guinea in south-central Nicaragua. They killed seven peasants and destroyed a supply center and health clinic.

The previous night, a group of *contras* machine-gunned a small farmhouse in Jinotega province in north-central Nicaragua. Paula Ruiz Estrada and two of her sons, aged two and 11, were killed.

On February 23, *contras* attacked and burned a house in the township of Palacagüina in the northern province of Nueva Segovia. The two occupants, María Julia González and her seven-month-old son, were burned to death.

On the same day, a mercenary sabotage team blew up an electric power line three miles from the town of La Trinidad. The northern provinces of Madriz, Nueva Segovia, and Estelí were blacked out for five days until repair crews restored the line.

## Captured 'contras' tell of crimes

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Nicaragua's Ministry of the Interior presented three U.S.-trained *contras* to the press here February 17. One of the group had participated in the murder of a Swiss volunteer in northern Nicaragua last year, an act that prompted international protests.

Néstor Meza Rueda helped ambush a civilian pickup truck near Somotillo in February 1986. The vehicle was driven by Maurice Demierre, a Swiss agronomist. The other occupants were women and children. Demierre and five of the women were killed in the attack.

Meza told reporters here how his group set off a remote control mine as the pickup passed and then opened fire on the survivors.

"We heard the cries of the women and children, but we didn't stop," he said. "We machine-gunned them for three or four minutes more, and then we ran."

Last December Meza returned to Nicaragua to visit his family. Half an hour after arriving home, he was arrested by Nicaraguan security forces.

Francisco Rayo Morales told the press conference that he joined the *contras* in 1985, was trained in Honduras, and assigned to espionage and sabotage missions.

The third *contra*, Bernardo Izaguirre, participated in ambushes and sabotage. He deserted the *contras* after his commander, known as "the Buzzard," was killed in a *contra* shoot-out over the misuse of funds.



Militant/Harvey McArthur

Peasants survey damage after Washington's *contras* attacked this farm in south-central Nicaragua last December. *Contras* are dependent on U.S. arms drops to maintain their terror against farm families.

## Legislature renews state of emergency

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Nicaragua's National Assembly has approved the continuation of state of emergency measures here because of the U.S.-backed *contra* war.

Nicaragua's new constitution authorizes the president to decree a state of emergency "in case of war or when demanded by the security of the nation, economic conditions, or in case of national catastrophes."

The constitution specifies that certain rights cannot be suspended. These include the prohibition of the death penalty, prohibition of torture or abuse of prisoners, the right to have a lawyer of one's own choosing, and the right to appeal court rulings. Also inviolable are freedom of religion; the right to a job, education, health care, social security, and decent housing; and the equal rights guaranteed to women, Indians, and Blacks.

In a January speech enacting the new constitution, President Daniel Ortega renewed the state of emergency measures that have been in effect for some time. He pointed out that the U.S.-sponsored war against Nicaragua is not over, citing the current U.S. military maneuvers in neighboring Honduras, the ongoing effort to infiltrate large numbers of *contras* into northern Nicaragua, continued sabotage, and assassination plots against leaders of the revolution.

As long as the *contra* war continues, he said, state of emergency measures are necessary. "When the U.S. aggression ends, the state of emergency will be ended," he declared.

The president's decree lifted a range of rights guaranteed in the constitution: the right to individual privacy in one's home, written correspondence, and telephone communication; to an uncensored press; to unrestricted travel; to be tried promptly; to demonstrate and hold public meetings without government permission; and to strike. It also suspended habeas corpus for those accused of crimes against national security and public order.

On February 23 the National Assembly voted to approve the decree.

### National Assembly debate

In the assembly discussion, Sandinista deputies and one of the People's Social Christian Party representatives spoke in favor of the state of emergency. All the other speakers from opposition parties spoke against it.

Isidro Téllez of the Marxist-Leninist Party charged that the restrictions are applied only to workers and do not allow them to mobilize and struggle against the capitalists in Nicaragua.

Luis Sánchez, deputy of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), claimed that Ortega had not followed the proper legal procedure in issuing his January decree.

Democratic Conservative Party (PCD) deputy Augusto César Castillo declared that "the revolution is a failure," and that the economic problems facing the nation are due to "the bad administration of this government." He argued that the FSLN needs the state of emergency "to prevent the outbursts of discontent from the people."

Castillo and other PCD, PSN, and Independent Liberal Party (PLI) deputies asserted that the state of emergency is used to victimize peasants. Talk about war is just "a pretty phrase" used by the FSLN to justify curtailing rights, said Castillo.

"Those who claim that the aggression is [a Sandinista] invention should tell that to the mothers of the 19,000 who have died," replied FSLN deputy Angela Rosa Acevedo.

Rafael Solís, another FSLN deputy, added that given the war, the state of emergency is necessary "so that the actions taken by our authorities will be within the legal framework."

Nobody is arrested under the state of emergency because they belong to a particular political party, he continued, but for specific counterrevolutionary activities. Although the right of political parties to organize is restricted, in practice they have been permitted to hold meetings, assemblies, and protest marches.

The deputies then voted to restore three rights that had been suspended by Ortega's decree. These are the right to form unions, neighborhood committees, and other organizations; the right of families of arrested persons to be informed of their detention; and the right of peaceful assembly.

Motions by the Marxist-Leninist Party to

end press censorship and to restore the right to strike were defeated. The assembly also rejected PSN and PCD motions to restore habeas corpus for those arrested for counterrevolutionary activities.

Assembly President Carlos Núñez stressed that habeas corpus is suspended only for those accused of crimes against state security and public order. In all other cases, a prisoner must be presented and formally charged before a judge within 72 hours of arrest or else be released.

Núñez told the assembly that when a large number of *contras* or their collaborators are arrested in operations by Sandinista armed forces, the government is not always able to investigate and present charges against them in a short period of time. Thus, in the context of the war, "we cannot impose this type of rule on the judicial authorities," Núñez said.

After the assembly session, I asked FSLN deputy Dámaso Vargas why he thought it was necessary to suspend the right to strike. Vargas is also the Managua general secretary of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), the nation's largest union. The CST supports the ban on strikes because of the current wartime conditions.

"Of course, there are other union federations and parties that don't agree with us," Vargas said. "In normal conditions, they would have the right to strike, but these are not normal times. The state of emergency protects the revolution from parties and unions that would use the right to strike to disrupt the economy."

In its final business that day, the assembly proposed that 572 people currently in prison be pardoned for reasons of health, age, good conduct, or for not having been tried.

## Veterans urge protest of U.S. war

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — "As veterans we have a special power to bring a message to the U.S. people," Jim Bush said. "What the U.S. government is doing in Nicaragua is wrong."

Bush is one of nine U.S. veterans, members of Veterans Peace Action Teams, who left here February 24 to spend a month in the northern mountains of Nicaragua.

He and the other veterans will help build housing for peasants who have fled attacks by the U.S.-organized *contra* mercenaries. The veterans also hope to travel throughout northern Nicaragua, going into areas threatened by the *contras*.

"By willingly placing ourselves at risk in Nicaragua, living with people being attacked, maimed, and killed by mercenaries armed, trained, and paid by the United States, Veterans Peace Action Teams are standing against and exposing the lawless and immoral acts of aggression," they said in an open letter to President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. Congress.

The teams grew out of the 46-day fast

four veterans held on the steps of the Capitol last fall. Members of this team will return to the United States to speak out against the war and to organize more veterans to go to Nicaragua, Bush said.

"This is a very good time for those of us opposed to U.S. intervention to move forward, to speak out, and to protest," he said.

The veterans had arranged to meet with officials of the U.S. embassy here before going to the settlement in northern Nicaragua. When they arrived for the meeting, however, embassy representative Alberto Fernández refused to allow them in. He said he was authorized only to receive their written statement.

"Hey, we're Americans!" one veteran protested. "Why can't we meet with our own embassy?"

"Why don't you just stay in Nicaragua?" was Fernández's reply.

The Veterans Peace Action Teams can be contacted at P.O. Box 586, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95061. Phone (408) 426-7822.



# Tower report: What was really behind U.S.-Iran arms deal?

BY CINDY JAQUITH

U.S. working people are being told that the Iran-*contra* scandal all came about because the White House was trying to win the release of U.S. citizens held hostage in Lebanon. President Ronald Reagan approved the whole operation because of his "intense compassion for the hostages," according to the Tower Commission report.

That report goes on to argue that such actions "must necessarily be covert" because "[d]isclosure would directly threaten the lives of the hostages."

But in its chronology of the sale of arms to Iran — culled in large part from White House memos never intended to see the light of day — the Tower report actually tells quite a different story. What ended up as an exchange of weapons for some hostages began as a move by the White House to dramatically alter its relations with the Iranian government, after it became clear that the government was not about to be overthrown.

## Bargaining chip

The hostages and arms were mere bargaining chips in the operation. The secrecy had nothing to do with the hostages or their well-being.

The U.S. government must keep its real foreign policy secret — from U.S. working people above all — because Washington's actual activities around the world fly in the face of its public pronouncements about combatting "totalitarianism" and "terrorism."

The history of U.S.-Iranian relations are a good case in point. Until the 1979 revolution there, Iran was ruled by the corrupt monarchy of Shah Reza Pahlavi, enthroned by the CIA in 1953. The Shah's tyranny guaranteed that the majority-peasant population lived a life of abject poverty, illiteracy, and disease, while a handful of Iranian families raked in huge profits, and U.S. and Western European oil companies did the same.

With the help of the CIA and Israeli intelligence, the shah built the SAVAK secret police, one of the most notorious gangs of torturers and hit men in the world. He not only suppressed the protests of Iranian workers and peasants but lent his military forces to containing national liberation struggles in other parts of the Middle East.

But the shah's regime finally came crashing down in 1979, after massive mobilizations of workers and peasants that

often involved millions in a single demonstration. With the shah went the monarchy, and the landlords it was based on, the SAVAK system — and the cozy relationship between Tehran and Washington.

The revolution also sent shock waves throughout the Middle East, inspiring other workers and peasants.

## 'The Great Satan'

Washington sought to establish some kind of relationship with the new Iranian government, headed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, but failed. To millions of Iranians, confident and politicized by their victory over the shah, the White House represented what they aptly called "The Great Satan." They rejected anything that smacked of a return to U.S. political domination over their nation's destiny.

Washington tried other tactics. In 1980, then U.S. president James Carter sent a commando team into Iran to try to free CIA agents and others held hostage at the U.S. embassy. The team crashed in the desert.

That same year, Washington broke dip-

lomatic relations with Iran. An embargo on arms sales and other forms of trade with Iran had already been imposed. These failed to sufficiently isolate Iran or bleed the country dry economically.

In late 1980 the Saddam Hussein government of Iraq invaded Iran. Despite superior Iraqi weaponry, Iranian youth, many of them peasant volunteers, have steadily pushed the Iraqi military back.

## 'No cards to play'

So beginning in 1984, National Security Council (NSC) aides to Reagan started proposing a shift in U.S. government policy. This was summed up in one memo that recognized "the Iranian revolution as a fact."

As a 1985 memo put it, the U.S. government has "almost no cards to play" in Iran in terms of influencing either that government's domestic or its foreign policy.

A June 1985 draft policy paper was circulated among top U.S. government officials proposing a "sharp departure" from the policies then in effect. It suggested, among other things, selectively lifting the trade embargo, including on weapons; helping end the Iran-Iraq war; and "movement toward the normalization of Iranian-American relations."

The immediate goal was to somehow gain a foothold inside the Iranian government. The long-term goal, as the memo spelled out, was to "restore the U.S. position which existed under the Shah."

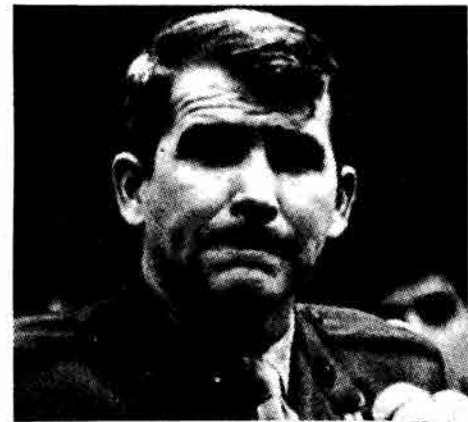
## 'Like inviting Qadhafi to lunch'

Both George Shultz, secretary of state, and Caspar Weinberger, secretary of defense, reacted strongly against the proposals. "This is roughly like inviting Qadhafi over for a cozy lunch," barked Weinberger.

The opposition of Shultz and Weinberger simply meant they would be cut out of future discussions and the whole project would be conducted by a more tightly knit group; which included Reagan, the NSC, the CIA — and the government of Israel.

The White House had begun drawing certain Israeli officials into the discussion of its Iran policy, particularly Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

In July 1985 the Israeli foreign ministry informed Robert McFarlane, then Reagan's national security advisor, that some Iranian officials would like to talk with U.S. officials. Israel said the Iranians



Oliver North and Richard Secord used air fleet secretly supplying contras to ship arms to Iran as well.



Iranians mobilize against Iraqi invasion. By 1985 White House was forced to recognize Iranian revolution "as a fact."

were open to helping release hostages in Lebanon in return for buying some U.S.-made arms. But, according to McFarlane, the Iranians "stated that the larger purpose would be the opening of the private dialogue with a high American official and a sustained discussion of U.S.-Iranian relations."

The arms-hostage deal appeared to be the most concrete way to open a dialogue, and the White House seized on it. In August and September, Israel sent 508 missiles to Iran, and the White House replaced the weapons in the Israeli stock. One hostage was released.

## Contra connection

Then the White House got more directly involved in the shipments. In doing so, it was natural that the secret operation would spill over into another covert operation Washington was running: the illegal supplying of arms to the contra terrorists fighting Nicaragua.

NSC staffer Oliver North, who was organizing the contra supply runs, was called upon to arrange cover for an Israeli shipment of Hawk missiles to Iran in November. The delivery had to be highly secret because it completely exposed years of propaganda by both the Carter and Reagan administrations that the Iranians were all "Islamic terrorists" with whom no civilized country would do business.

The November delivery was botched from start to finish. North assigned Richard Secord, an ex-Air Force general officer also involved in the contra war, to set up the flight of the Israeli plane. But at the last minute, an unnamed "third country" that was supposed to provide landing clearance refused to do so.

Finally, North decided to use a CIA plane registered under a fake company, Lake Resources. The plane had originally been scheduled for a supply run to the contras in Nicaragua.

North expressed not a little annoyance that this would disrupt the arms delivery to contras of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), the mercenary group led by Adolfo Calero. As he wrote in a memo to John Poindexter, Reagan's new national security advisor:

"[Secord will use] one of our Lake Resources A/C which was . . . to p/u a load of ammunition for UNO. He will have the a/c repainted tonight and put into service nlt [no later than] noon Sat so that we can at least get this thing moving."

"So help me I have never seen anything so screwed up in my life. Will meet w/Calero tonite to advise that ammo will be several days late in arriving. Too bad, this was to be our first direct flight to the resistance field . . . inside Nicaragua. The ammo was already palletized w/parachutes attached."

The delivery turned out to be more "screwed up" than North thought. When it arrived in Iran, the cargo contained the wrong number of missiles. Moreover, the weapons still bore Star of David insignia. No hostages were released.

(Next week: The White House begins direct arms shipments and talks with Iranians.)

# Why FBI chief was picked to head the CIA

## Continued from front page

the use of informers to spy on and disrupt the party.

In May 1977 Judge Thomas Griesa, who was hearing the SWP and YSA lawsuit, ordered Attorney General Griffin Bell to turn over files on 18 of the informers used to disrupt the organizations. Bell refused.

Webster was a federal judge at the time. As part of a three-judge panel hearing Bell's appeal on the issue later in 1977, Webster urged Griesa to drop the order to produce the informer files while reluctantly conceding the lower court's right to issue it. Webster stressed the importance of enabling the FBI's undercover men to operate in secrecy.

Despite the court ruling, Bell continued to refuse to turn over the files. Griesa held him in contempt of court in June 1978, but higher courts threw out the contempt citation, essentially saying that the "right" of the secret police to carry out illegal acts comes before the constitutionally guaranteed right of the people to freedom of association. Bell got away with his coverup of the informers' role in the crimes of the FBI.

A few months after doing what he could to help the government in this case, Webster was appointed FBI director.

## Webster's job

He gave the FBI a facelift. More Blacks, Hispanics, and women were hired as agents. Old-time operatives, who were

often too frank about their contempt for constitutional rights and other legal restrictions, were removed and smoother talkers took their places.

It is true, as Senator Biden indicated, that Webster's word has gone largely unquestioned in Congress. That says more about bipartisan support for the FBI's political cop operations, however, than it does about Webster's integrity. In fact, Webster has been lying like a bandit since he took the job.

"We are out of the business of investigating organizations simply because they say things that are unpopular in this country," he claimed soon after taking office.

While insisting that undercover informants were "the most effective tool in law enforcement today," he alleged that the FBI had only 42 informers operating in domestic intelligence and terrorism investigations.

The figure was a fake arrived at by shifting operations against groups such as the Communist Party from the "domestic security" to the "foreign counterintelligence" category.

"They're the same people and they're doing the same kind of work against the same group," explained one FBI agent to the *New York Times*.

## Carter gives a hand

In 1978 Carter issued an executive order giving U.S. intelligence agencies broad authority to carry out "special activities"

abroad, to use infiltrators and agents provocateurs in "lawful investigations," and to carry out operations against "international terrorist activities."

In 1981 as the U.S. government confronted growing popular opposition to its escalating military intervention in Central America, President Reagan modified this order. He authorized the FBI and other spy outfits to carry out activities at home, as well as abroad, "in support of national foreign policy objectives." The changes increased the agency's already extensive authority to infiltrate and disrupt legal political organizations in the United States.

Webster is shifting over to the CIA at a time when some facts about the dirty operations of the "new FBI" have begun to leak out.

## 'New FBI'

A growing body of evidence points to FBI involvement in some or all of the 50 unsolved burglaries at offices of antiwar organizations in recent years.

Former FBI spy Frank Varella has recently confessed to having been part of an FBI drive to disrupt the antiwar movement. Operations included infiltration and break-ins targeting the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES); surveillance of other groups, including the Socialist Workers Party; turning over Salvadoran refugees to the military in El Salvador; and direct collaboration with top leaders of rightist death squads in that country.



# Canada food workers demand union autonomy

BY TOM FISKE

TORONTO, Canada — The 300 delegates attending the convention of Region 18 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International union (UFCW) voted unanimously to demand autonomy for Canadian UFCW members. The UFCW organizes workers in the United States and Canada.

Unionists at the January 27-28 convention here adopted proposals that would place control of the everyday affairs of the union's largest Canadian district in the hands of Canadian officials instead of the UFCW International Executive Board.

Autonomy proposals adopted included the demand that the region's officers be elected by the Region 18 Executive Board instead of being appointed by the UFCW top officialdom; control by Canadian officials over Canadian UFCW assets, staff hiring, and union publications; and control over contract negotiations and strike authorization votes in Canada.

The Region 18 delegates vowed to continue their fight for autonomy within the structures of the UFCW International.

UFCW President William Wynn, however, told the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, "I will not agree to that, I'm not going to have a union within a union." Wynn said that the right to authorize strikes and to impose trusteeships had to remain in the hands of the union's officials in the United States.

There are 155,000 UFCW members in Canada. Region 18 has 85,000 members. Two-thirds of them are meat-packers, meatcutters, and fishermen. This region was part of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen's union before it merged with the Retail Clerks International Union to form the UFCW in 1979.

Region 19 is composed mainly of Canadian locals that were part of the Retail Clerks union before the merger.

According to the 1979 merger agreement, these two Canadian regions were supposed to go through a merger process that would fuse them by 1988. Though some meat-processing locals have been incorporated into amalgamated locals encompassing UFCW members in a variety

## Hormel announces plans to close Ottumwa, Iowa, plant

BY BOB MILLER

DES MOINES, Iowa — Geo. A. Hormel & Co. has announced that it will close its pork processing plant in Ottumwa, Iowa, in August.

The contract between United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 431 and Hormel expires in April. It requires the company to give six months' notice before closing the plant.

In early 1986 Hormel fired several hundred Local 431 members who honored picket lines set up in Ottumwa by striking meat-packers from UFCW Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota. An arbitrator later ordered the fired workers reinstated.

Hormel responded by laying off the 500 workers with the lowest seniority and announcing the shutdown of the Ottumwa slaughtering operation. Some 300 meat-packers continued to work in the pork processing section of the plant.

Bill Cook, one of the unionists who was fired for honoring P-9's picket lines, said the company's latest announcement might be a scare tactic. Cook explained that in 1984 Hormel laid off several hundred workers and threatened to close the plant unless the workers agreed to a substantial pay cut. When the workers balked at the cut, Hormel laid off another 114. Eventually, the company succeeded in forcing through a cut of \$2.44 an hour.

Cook said there is also considerable speculation that Hormel will sell the 11-year-old plant to its FDL subsidiary or to another packing company.

Local 431 President Dick Edwards expressed doubt that Hormel's decision would be reversed. "Hormel has a vendetta against its Ottumwa workers since most of them refused to cross picket lines in January 1986," he said.

Many workers are angered over the company's attempt to deny them the right to transfer to its other plants, including the Austin, Minnesota, facility.

of industries, negotiations over merging the two regions are on hold.

Delegates who spoke at the convention were, with few exceptions, staff officials. Retail clerks from Local 175, who are members of Region 18, walked out at the beginning of the convention because they disagreed with the autonomy proposals.

The discussion touched on some of the important issues facing North American meat-processing workers today.

### Union democracy

One such issue is union democracy. Meat-packers in Canada, like those on the U.S. side of the border, are being hit by employers' takeback demands.

Union members' ability to discuss the attacks, make decisions, and then act on them are crucial to mounting an effective resistance. This means having control over union policy decisions, including whether or not to strike and the right to choose your own leadership.

Delegates mainly attacked the dictatorial methods of UFCW President Wynn. Richard Cashin, the main spokesperson for the Region 18 Executive Board, denounced Wynn's recent appointment of one of his supporters as region president. "Why," he said, "would anyone fetter our right to elect our own officers in Canada?"

Leif Hansen, president of Local 2000 in British Columbia, blasted the UFCW tops for putting the local he heads in trusteeship January 14. That local has been involved in the organizing drive of workers at a grocery store chain. Wynn wanted the meatcutters to instead be represented by a local from Region 19. Officials from the United States and Canada physically seized the union offices. Because of the outcry over the thug action, Wynn was forced to lift the trusteeship.

As part of arguing for autonomy, Region 18 spokespeople said pro-Wynn officials were negotiating six-year contracts and sweetheart contracts. But they offered no alternative course. Although there was discussion on the six-month-long Gainers strike in Alberta last year, little mention was made of the series of meat-packers' struggles that have taken place in the United States and Canada over the last year. Many of these fights continue.

### Further provisions needed

Kevin Park, a delegate from Local 280P in Edmonton and a participant in the re-



Last year's strike by UFCW at Gainers in Alberta, Canada. While Region 18 convention criticized dictatorial methods of top UFCW officials, it didn't discuss Gainers strike as part of wave of packinghouse struggles in North America. Support of these fights is key to defending meat-packers' wages and working conditions.

cently concluded Gainers strike, stated that further provisions guaranteeing increased democracy for the union membership should be added to the proposals.

"I am an old packinghouse worker. The proposed constitutional provisions on trusteeship are very broad and can be used to replace an American dictatorship with a Canadian dictatorship," said another delegate.

Some discussion also took place on whether the union should be based on workers in a particular industry. Meat-packers need a vehicle for discussing and acting on their common problems. The same is true for retail clerks.

Because no alternative perspective was offered to the UFCW top official's course of collaborating with the employers and their government at the expense of the membership, many unionists were confused about what was actually being ap-

proved by the convention.

A few workers I spoke with said that while they supported autonomy they would have liked an alternative strategy to have emerged from the convention, one that could defend workers.

Mike Dalrymple, chief shop steward at Gainers, said, "the unions need to draw the line and start fighting."

A Black worker said the unions could be strengthened. "They should be working-class organizations. They should quit worrying about the profits of the bosses and start defending the workers," he said.

The thrust for union autonomy is not unique to the UFCW. In 1985 Canadian autoworkers split from the United Auto Workers Union and formed their own Canadian organization.

In January the delegates at the convention of the International Woodworkers of America approved dividing into separate Canadian and U.S. unions.

## Ohio meat-packers protest layoffs

BY SUSAN LaMONT

MASSILLON, Ohio — Close to 1,000 cheering meat-packers, their families, and supporters held a militant march and rally February 28 to protest layoffs at Superior's Brand Meats in this small northeast Ohio city.

Led by a big banner demanding "Jobs and justice," the spirited march began by winding through Superior's parking lot. Protesters headed through Massillon's small Black community and on to city hall, where a rally was held.

Chants of "Slaughter hogs, not workers" and "We're from the union, couldn't be prouder — if you can't hear us, we'll yell a little louder" filled the air as the march worked its way into town.

Hundreds of marchers were members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 17A, which organizes workers at Superior's and at Sugardale Brand in nearby Canton.

Hundreds of other area unionists also attended.

Worker after worker talked with this reporter about the need for union members to stand together to fight corporate and government attacks.

The current stage of Local 17A's struggle began in December. Superior's owner Neil Genshaft began shifting production to his nonunion plant in Salem, Ohio. There are now 450 workers laid off at Superior's. About 120 are still working, but the union expects more layoffs.

Genshaft owns four meat-packing plants. At the two that are nonunion, he has imposed worse wages and working conditions than in the organized plants.

Genshaft's strategy is to pit all four

plants against each other to force greater and greater concessions. Eventually he hopes to get rid of the union altogether.

This whipsawing between plants has been accompanied by a wave of arbitrary firings, aimed especially at union activists and stewards.

Another major theme of the march was opposition to Genshaft's misuse of federal job training funds.

These funds are supposed to be used to retrain unskilled workers or provide job training for young people who haven't worked before. The funds go directly to employers not workers, and can be used to pay up to one-half of a worker's wages for up to a year.

Genshaft acquired an old A&P food company warehouse and opened it as Carriage Hill Foods in 1985. He applied for and received nearly half a million dollars in job training funds and used the money to hire several hundred workers.

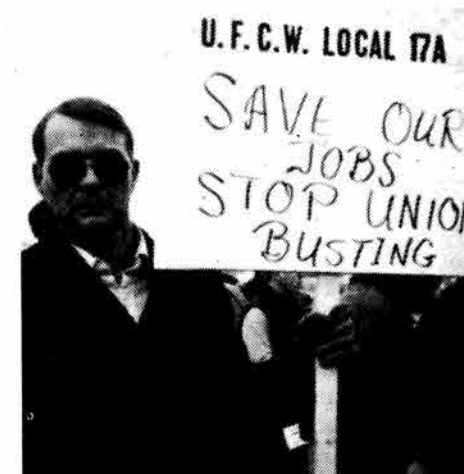
While workers at Superior's were being paid \$10 an hour, the newly hired workers at Carriage received \$7 an hour, half of which was paid with federal government funds.

A lively rally chaired by 17A President Gary Feiock concluded the day's events.

Roberta Irwin from Superior's laid-off workers' organizing committee said, "When these layoffs happened, I felt like I had been robbed. Genshaft has destroyed our homes and our families without a second thought. But as of today, we have taken a big step forward."

Officials from the steelworkers' and auto workers' unions also spoke.

Several meat-packers fighting to get



Militant/Marty Pettit  
Meat-packer protests at Superior's meat plant in Massillon, Ohio, after company began shifting production to nonunion plants last December.

their jobs back at the Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota, attended the rally. Carl Benson briefly described the current stage of their struggle and pointed to the need for working people throughout the world to stick together.

UFCW International Representative Jerry Gordon explained that Local 17A has gathered 5,000 signatures on petitions demanding an investigation of Genshaft's misuse of federal job training funds.

Susan LaMont is a member of United Auto Workers Local 122 at the Chrysler Twinsburg Stamping Plant.



# Boston supporters relaunch plant-gate sales

BY KIP HEDGES

BOSTON — "No thanks. I already subscribe to *Perspectiva Mundial*."

This was the response from one

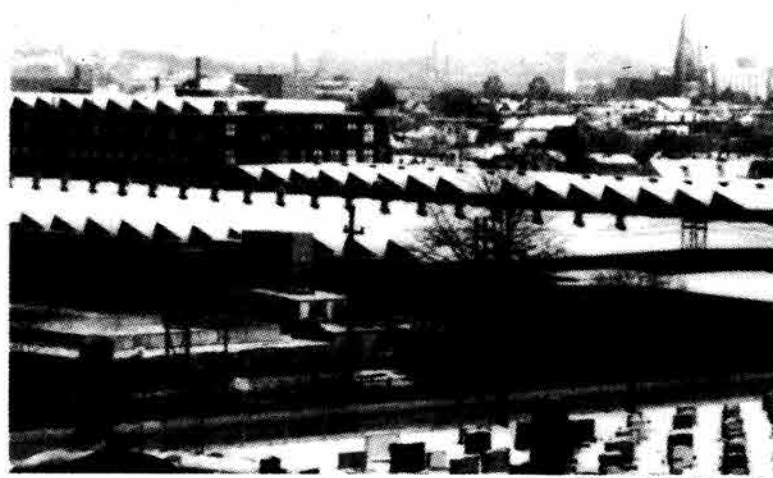
Also in Lawrence, at an Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union-organized shop of 800, supporters of the socialist publications have been able to sell

layoffs with salespeople at the gate. Although freezing temperatures and record snowfall have disrupted sales at GE (and elsewhere), at least one sales team per week gets out.

Sales of the *Militant* have been slow at Boston's Logan airport. But Eastern Airlines President Frank Lorenzo's announced intentions to cut the wages of the airline's workers by almost half should spur sales as Machinists union members and others discuss ways to fight back. A big advantage for sales at the airport is that they take place inside the terminal buildings, so sales can occur regardless of the weather.

Salespeople have also discovered that flight attendants and travelers at the airport often stop to buy the *Militant* when we sell to workers organized by the International Association of Machinists.

Most industry in eastern Massachusetts is located in smaller cities around Boston. However, the heart of the garment industry is still located around downtown Boston. There are thousands of



Militant/Ron Richards

Textile mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Despite lapse in sales, many workers remembered *Perspectiva Mundial*.

## SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

of a dozen new readers of *PM* at the Malden Mills, a textile mill organized by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) in the industrial city of Lawrence, outside Boston. Nearly half the people who live in the city and half who work in "the mill" are Latino.

Salespeople of the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant* have just resumed sales at the mill after a two-and-a-half-month absence. Five *PMs* and one *Militant* were sold at the shift change. Many workers remembered us from before and said they would bring money the following week.

between 5 and 10 *PMs* on the occasions when sales have been organized. Literature tables have also been set up at the gate, and Malcolm X and Fidel Castro books in Spanish were sold.

We've had quite a different experience at the large General Electric plant in Lynn, just north of here. For several years *Militant* salespeople would consider themselves lucky to sell one paper at a shift change.

But with GE's announcement of 3,000 layoffs over the next two years, the volume of sales and friendly remarks has increased. Some of the 20 new subscribers in the plant stop to talk about the

garment workers there, mostly unorganized. Recently *Militant* supporters launched sales in this area, selling three *PMs* and two *Militants* to workers at several shops organized by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the ILGWU. We plan to make this

part of our regular sales effort.

Efforts to relaunch plant-gate sales, after nearly three months of almost no sales, have begun to pay off. Last week nine *Militants* and one *PM* were sold at seven different plant gates.

## Angry New Yorkers demand curb on killer cops

BY HARRY RING

NEW YORK — Deep anger and discussion on how to respond effectively marked the reaction to this city's latest police killing — the gunning down of Nicholas Bartlett on a Harlem street.

In Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn's principal Black community, some 3,000 people jammed into a high school auditorium for a meeting on the case March 5. Two days later, a thousand people turned out for a similar meeting in Harlem. At this meeting, the speakers' platform included representatives of several Asian-American and Latino organizations.

In fiercely cold weather, March 10, 250 rallied at 1 Police Plaza, police headquarters, to protest what one speaker branded the "brutal, sadistic" behavior of the cops.

In addition to a heavy contingent of uniformed cops, a hundred of their off-duty brethren lined up in front of the headquarters as if to guard it from attack. Throughout the rally they stared stonily at the assembled protesters.

A street vendor, Bartlett was killed after he allegedly made an unprovoked attack on

a cop with a pipe. Eight cops chased him, surrounded him, and gunned him down.

The killing touched a particularly raw nerve in that it came some 48 hours after the acquittal of the cop who killed Eleanor Bumpurs. An elderly Black woman, she was shot while being evicted from her apartment.

The Bumpurs case, the attempted cover-up in the Howard Beach lynch attack, and a series of previous cop killings have fueled a growing determination to curb police lawlessness.

The depth of this sentiment was reflected in a statement by Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins, the city's ranking Black elected official. At a press conference that he called March 4, Dinkins branded the killing of Bartlett as a summary execution.

He declared that the killing "raises questions once again in the minds of the public about the conduct of the entire New York Police Department in minority neighborhoods."

Responding to questions, Dinkins firmly asserted, "You can't sell me that eight police officers, trained officers with weapons, with clubs, have an inability to disarm one man with a pipe without shooting."

Meanwhile, officials said witnesses to the killing are being questioned at closed sessions of a grand jury.

Spokespeople for the police department have given their version of how Bartlett died. But so far there has been no word from those who pulled the triggers. They initially refused to answer any questions without first being granted immunity from

prosecution.

This did not prevent a ruling by their precinct captain that the shooting was justified.

Nor did it prevent Deputy Police Commissioner Alice McGillion from offering a scenario of what purportedly happened.

Justifying the killing of Bartlett, she said, "He's encircled, but we can't say precisely what the distances were because the officers aren't talking. He then comes forward and they shoot."

The readiness to say this in the absence of proof simply confirms a practice of whitewashing trigger-happy cops.

## Spring subscription drive

Continued from front page  
and Pennsylvania.

There will be teams traveling to Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Maryland, Arizona, and other areas where meat-packing battles are taking place. Sales of subscriptions to meat-packers will be a national effort of all supporters.

All teams will sell at plant gates, as well as on college campuses. The coal field and meat-packing teams, especially, will center their sales effort on reaching workers at plant gates and mine portals.

### Big opportunities

The context of this spring campaign is the increased political openings for workers and farmers to defend their interests. The example of meat-packers who are resisting assaults and fighting back is of growing interest to all workers.

There is a rise in protests against cop killings and racist attacks.

The April 25 antiwar, anti-apartheid marches on Washington, D.C., and San Francisco are being built broadly on campuses and by churches, trade unions, and protest organizations across the country. Hundreds of readers will be selling subscriptions on the buses to the marches, as well as at the demonstrations.

There is growing distrust among workers and farmers of the government and its political police as the crisis in Washington unravels. The *Militant* provides weekly coverage of the Political Rights Defense Fund's effort to win support for the Socialist Workers Party and YSA case against the FBI and other police agencies. This case is a central battleground in the fight to defend the rights of all politically active people in the United States today.

The spring subscription campaign will run from March 27 through June 5. The national target will be based on the local goals and national teams.

The final goal will take into account the fact that hundreds of *Militant* and *PM* supporters will be involved in Active Workers Conferences during the first two weekends of the campaign.

Supporters are also urged to attend the YSA's national convention in Chicago on Memorial Day weekend at the end of May.

The national goal will take into account that many distributors will be reorganizing and stepping up sales to workers at plant gates. These sales are essential to reach out to workers in factories, rail yards, and mines where regular readers of the papers do not yet work.

Leading the organization of weekly plant-gate sales teams to targeted shops will take time and effort. A goal of the *Militant* and *PM* is to be read by and circulated to as many workers as possible.

Organizing local and national teams, making the drive a collective effort of all supporters — including those in the New York and New Jersey areas, who will also help process subscriptions — will allow us to take another big step forward in increasing the readership base of the *Militant* and *PM*.

Readers interested in taking a goal for the campaign can clip and mail in the coupon below.

- ☐ I would like to order a bundle of \_\_\_\_\_ *Militants* and \_\_\_\_\_ *PMs*.  
☐ I would like to take a subscription goal of \_\_\_\_\_ *Militants* and \_\_\_\_\_ *PMs*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: *Militant* Business Office, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Or phone: (212) 929-3486.

## Do you know someone who reads Spanish? FBI targets antiwar group

The FBI admitted it was investigating the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). This was a nationwide effort to infiltrate, discredit, and "break" this antiwar organization.

"Not once did I find, see, hear, or observe any illegal conduct of any nature," said Frank Varelli, the former undercover agent who revealed the operation.

The March issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* includes an article about the revelations by Varelli, which also connect the FBI to death squads in El Salvador.

"We will continue our work to change what is an unjust and immoral U.S. policy toward Central America," said CISPES national coordinator, Angela Sanbrano, as she demanded an end to FBI disruption.

*Perspectiva Mundial* is the Spanish-language socialist magazine that every month brings you the truth about the struggles of working people and the oppressed in the U.S. and around the world.

**Perspectiva Mundial**

**25 de abril:**  
**marchas**  
**nacionales**  
**antiguerra**  
**en S.F. y**  
**Washington**

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# International Socialist Review

Supplement to the Militant March 1987

## U.S. politics today: new openings emerging for workers and farmers

BY DOUG JENNESS

NEW YORK — Important changes in world and U.S. politics that give workers and farmers new openings were registered in 1986. This was the theme of the report adopted by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party at a meeting held here February 20.

SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes reported these shifts are reflected in the government crisis precipitated by the Iran-*contra* arms scandal.

The pace of retreat of unionized workers in the face of the continuing employers' offensive to weaken the unions and drive down wages and working conditions slowed down for the first time since 1981.

Labor Department statistics showed a much smaller decline in union membership in 1986 compared to the trend since 1980. In addition, the number of women in unions rose after a sharp drop the previous year.

"While these figures are very modest," Barnes said, "and may not represent a long-term trend, they do indicate a break in the scope of what employers have been getting away with the last half decade, and that merits our attention."

The employers are running up against limits in accomplishing all they need to with the methods they have used over the past five years.

### Crisis in liberalism

The far right has been dealt blows by the government crisis in Washington. But it is the liberals who are entering a period of crisis.

The fact is, Barnes noted, the basic stance toward war and peace, labor, fulfilling social needs, immigrant workers, farmers, and so on has been bipartisan. "The liberals have been hiding from responsibility for these policies by complaining that the problem was 'Reaganism,'" he explained.

Now, Barnes said, "They are beginning to go through a period in which that free ride will be challenged." Most working people have accepted the notion that not much could be done to get any progressive social legislation adopted with Reagan riding high in the White House. And that view still is widely held.

But a change is beginning to unfold, he said, now that the Democrats control both houses of Congress and Reagan is on the ropes. Many will increasingly think something can be won.

"But since the liberals basically support the same bipartisan policies as Reagan, they will come into conflict with the expectations of millions of workers and farmers," Barnes said.

### Myth of 'Reagan Doctrine'

Barnes contested the notion that there is a "Reagan Doctrine" that has guided U.S. foreign policy for the past six years. He referred to Congressman Jack Kemp's (R-N.Y.) recent assertion that during the decade before Reagan's administration nine countries had been lost to the "communist empire."

Kemp didn't name the nine, Barnes said, "but my guess would be the nine he has in mind are Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Grenada."

Reagan's accomplishment, according to Kemp and other supporters of the president, is that under Reagan no more countries have been "lost" and a revolution in one of the nine, Grenada, has been reversed.

This gives a false impression of what happened, Barnes said. For one thing, Grenada "wasn't taken by Washington, but handed to it." When Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and many government officials supporting him were murdered in 1983 by supporters of Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard's clique, Barnes said, that destroyed the revolutionary government and broke the spirit of the Grenadian people. It made it possible for Washington to send in troops and "conquer" Grenada in a matter of days. Without Coard's coup, the price for an invasion of Grenada would have been too high for Washington to pay.

Moreover, the Reagan administration, Barnes noted,



Unionists march in support of striking Cudahy meat-packers in Wisconsin. Expectations of U.S. workers are beginning to rise. They are likely to become more emboldened to press their demands. Militant/Sandi Sherman



Sandinista army reserve unit in Bluefields, on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. U.S. government's *contra* war against Nicaragua is suffering big defeat. Militant/Harvey McArthur

wasn't able to carry out anything substantially different in foreign policy than what had been done by the administrations preceding it. It ran up against the same limits.

"The Reagan gang talked big," Barnes said, "but it couldn't alter much. It couldn't get Cuban troops and civilian volunteers out of Angola, it couldn't return colonial rule to Mozambique or reestablish monarchy and landlord rule in Ethiopia or Iran. Nor could it reverse the revolutionary overturns in Indochina. And in South Africa it has been unable to prevent the popular upsurge from decisively shifting the relationship of forces to the detriment of the capitalist class backed by Washington."

Most decisive of all, the Reagan administration's *contra* war has suffered a big defeat in Nicaragua, Barnes said. Washington never considered the *contra* army itself capable of overthrowing the Sandinista government. If successful, however, the *contra* army would have opened the door to direct use of U.S. military forces. "The *contra* war was simply the most the administration could get away with to try to take some steps toward the goal of overturning the revolutionary regime," he said.

"But even that move has failed. The Nicaraguan revolution is stronger than ever. And it has bought time to put together a well-trained, professional, and disciplined army and has organized and armed the people."

### 'War weary by anticipation'

The main factor hogtying the U.S. government, Barnes noted, is the American people. He referred to a

recent letter to the editor of the *Nation* by Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.) who said that the population is "war weary by anticipation."

Schroeder aptly describes the situation, Barnes said. "People are resistant to the war even before it begins. This resistance is not expressed in mass action or a political movement," he said, "but it's nonetheless very real." Since the Vietnam War, he pointed out, the ruling families have been unable to reverse the resistance to using U.S. troops in another war.

And now with the events shaking the Soviet Union, "the image of the USSR is changing among U.S. workers and farmers. It's more positive. Consequently, it's harder to convince Americans that Moscow poses an immediate threat that would justify U.S. troops becoming involved in foreign wars."

The launching of "Project Democracy," with its necessarily incompetent, underground, and illegal apparatus, was a product of the administration's weakness, Barnes said, not its strength. It was an attempt to get around its inability to win the U.S. people to supporting its objectives.

All administrations must lie to the American people about what they are doing, Barnes said, because they can't win the people to their real aims. And their need for secrecy and undemocratic methods has increased in the wake of their defeat in Vietnam and their offensive to drive down the living standards and job conditions of working people. The rulers then turn around and spy on

Continued on ISR/4



# Socialists chart course to strengthen work in coal-mining regions

BY MALIK MIAH  
AND DOUG JENNESS

PITTSBURGH — More than 100 activists from the country's coal-mining regions gathered here February 21-22 to discuss new political opportunities opening up for workers and farmers throughout the United States.

The conference brought together members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance from many cities, including Price and Salt Lake City, Utah; Collinsville, Illinois; St. Louis; Birmingham, Alabama; Morgantown, Charleston, and Van, West Virginia; Athens, Ohio; and Pittsburgh and Indiana, Pennsylvania.

The participants included members of nearly a dozen unions. Among them were activists from more than 15 locals of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and from the Coal Employment Project.

On Saturday evening February 21 the conference participants, along with many people from the Pittsburgh area, attended a public forum sponsored by the YSA, where SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes spoke on "Malcolm X Today."

The gathering was the first of seven similar conferences being held throughout the country over a seven-week period. (See ad below.)

During the two days of discussion, the participants agreed that some shifts in the U.S. political situation had been registered in the past year. And these changes are creating new opportunities for working-class activists.

SWP leader Mac Warren, summarizing a report on the political situation in the United States adopted by the national committee of the party (see article on *International Socialist Review* page 1), described these changes and the openings they provide. He said the entire labor movement has been in retreat, and because members and supporters of the SWP are part of the workers' movement, they have taken part in this retreat. The most obvious consequence, he said, was a continuous decline in the size of both the SWP and the YSA over the past decade. That stopped in 1986, he said, with an increase in the rate

of winning new members.

But there have also been other adverse effects of the retreat, he noted. "We in the SWP began drifting away from making the industrial unions the axis of our political activity. There was a tendency for our involvement in the unions to be reduced to just another area for activity, like antiwar and antiracist committees, anti-apartheid groups, defense of women's rights, etc., and not the underlying framework for our political activity."

One result, Warren noted, is that the thinking out and leadership for the work in each union has tended to be left more and more just to the party members active in those unions.

There has been a growing separation between the work of the party branches — which are made up of all members in a particular geographical area — and the party fractions, which are made up of party members active in a particular union or workplace.

At the same time, participation in political activities such as the fight against U.S. intervention in Central America, the struggle against racist attacks, farm protests, and struggles for democratic rights has tended to become separated from work in the unions. The same is true for other activities, including election campaigns, public forums, and sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Moreover, Warren said, there has been a significant erosion of weekly sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at plant gates and mine portals, which are essential for maintaining regular contact with a broader layer of workers. These sales are connected to using all the resources of SWP branches to meet and talk to union members and work with them in political activities.

This drift was an unplanned result of the retreat, Warren said. But, in fact, after awhile it "even began to seem normal rather than a manifestation of the retreat."

He also noted that it had had serious consequences for the SWP's orientation to the coal industry and the UMWA. This, he noted, is of particular concern to "the participants at this conference because you all come from



Left, 1977-78 coal strike. Miners beat back two "bali ar

coal-mining areas."

Warren emphasized that the miners have a very important place in the North American labor movement today. "The UMWA is substantially different than other industrial unions in the country," he said. "In the 1980s it was the only national union not to give major concessions to the employers. It hasn't signed a big takeback contract."

Kipp Dawson, a Pennsylvania miner, described another important development, which is the growing international connections of coal miners who are looking for a fighting perspective. She particularly pointed to the international conference of miners held in Britain last November. Sponsored by the International Miners' Organization and hosted by the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain, it drew miners from 30 countries, including South Africa.

Dawson was one of three women miners from the United States who attended the conference as guests of Britain's Women Against Pit Closures. The fight of women in the United States to become miners has inspired women from other countries, she said. And in Spain women are beginning to be hired as underground miners.

Kathy Mickells, a West Virginia miner, explained the challenges in front of the Coal Employment Project. The CEP is an organization of women coal miners and women fighting to get more women hired in the mines. It has close links to the UMWA.

The CEP now faces the task of mobilizing the support of all coal miners and the UMWA to prevent the current layoffs from eroding these gains. This fight not to let the percentage of women and Blacks in the mines decrease can put the UMWA in the vanguard of the labor movement in the fight to stop discriminatory layoffs, she said.

Another woman miner from Pennsylvania added that the UMWA has in many ways "played a vanguard role in

## Socialists to Host Conferences in 6 Cities

The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance will be hosting active workers conferences in six cities in March and April.

Members and friends of the SWP and YSA and supporters of the *Militant* will discuss U.S.

and international politics.

Each conference will feature a public talk by an SWP leader and reports on "U.S. Politics: New Openings Emerging for Workers and Farmers" and "Organizing the Revolutionary Party."

Participants will discuss the SWP and YSA lawsuit against the FBI and Attorney General Meese and the upcoming campaign to increase the circulation of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

### March 21-22

**Host city**  
New York  
**Participating**  
Amherst, Mass.  
Annandale, N.Y.  
Baltimore  
Boston  
Capital District  
Newark  
Norfolk  
Philadelphia  
Rome, N.Y.  
Stonybrook, N.Y.  
West Haven, Conn.

**Reports:**  
"U.S. Politics":  
Craig Gannon  
"Organizing the  
Party": John Gaige

**Host city**  
Los Angeles  
**Participating**  
Carmel, Calif.  
Fresno  
Gualala, Calif.  
Oakland  
Olympia, Wash.  
Phoenix  
Portland  
San Diego  
San Francisco  
San Jose  
Seaside, Calif.  
Seattle  
Stockton

**Reports:**  
"U.S. Politics":  
Mac Warren  
"Organizing the  
Party": Pat Grogan

### March 28-29

**Host city**  
Houston  
**Participating**  
Austin  
Baton Rouge  
Dallas  
Edmond, Okla.  
Kansas City  
Kennedy, Texas  
Lubbock  
New Orleans  
San Antonio

**Reports:**  
"U.S. Politics":  
Mac Warren  
"Organizing the  
Party": Joel Britton

**Host city**  
Atlanta  
**Participating**  
Birmingham  
Greensboro  
Low Gap, N.C.  
Miami  
Montgomery  
Morganton, N.C.  
Tampa  
Tallahassee  
Washington, D.C.  
West Palm Beach

**Reports:**  
"U.S. Politics":  
James Harris  
"Organizing the  
Party": John Gaige

### April 4-5

**Host city**  
Chicago  
**Participating**  
Austin, Minn.  
Cleveland  
Columbus  
Detroit  
Hudson, Wis.  
Madison  
Milwaukee  
Oberlin, Ohio  
Toledo  
**Host city**  
St. Louis  
**Participating**  
Ames, Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa  
Cincinnati  
Denver  
Des Moines  
Fremont, Neb.  
Iowa City  
Lawrence, Kan.  
Louisville  
Northfield, Minn.  
Omaha  
Twin Cities

**Reports:**  
"U.S. Politics":  
Mac Warren  
"Organizing the  
Party": John Gaige  
**Reports:**  
"U.S. Politics":  
Craig Gannon  
"Organizing the  
Party": Pat Grogan

## Malcolm X Today Hear Jack Barnes

National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party  
Los Angeles, Sat., March 21, 8 p.m. at New Olympian Hotel,  
Chariot Room, 1903 W. Olympic Blvd.

Atlanta, Sat., March 28 Chicago, Sat., April 4

For information on the times and locations of the conferences contact the SWP and YSA. See directory on page 16.

## The Nicaraguan Revolution Today: Hear Cindy Jaquith

Nicaragua bureau director of *Militant* and PM New York City, Sat., March 21.

## The Nonaligned Movement and the Revolution in Southern Africa: An Eyewitness Report

Hear Sam Manuel

Reporter for *Militant* and PM Houston, Sat., March 28 St. Louis, Sat., April 4





Militant/Nancy Cole

Militant/Stu Singer

“chain” contract proposals and Taft-Hartley injunction. Right, miners at 1981 anti-nuclear power march. They struck again that year to defend rights and working conditions.

the labor movement,” including in the fight against nuclear power plants.

Many speakers during the conference explained that the pullback from coal had adversely affected the work of their branches and that a turnaround in this could only help shift the framework of all the party’s activities.

Louise Halverson, a steelworker from Pittsburgh, for example, explained that the notion that moving away from an orientation to coal miners would make it possible to better focus on steel had proven false. She said that for the entire Pittsburgh SWP branch to orient toward coal would help make the party’s work in the United Steelworkers of America union more effective and increase the leadership attention it got.

Bill Henry, an auto worker from St. Louis, said socialist activists there had been conducting activities in many arenas, including the anti-apartheid movement, among farmers, solidarity for meat-packers, and so on. But this, he said, had been divorced in a growing way from an orientation to the UMWA, one of the most important industrial unions in the area.

Dave Marshall from Charleston said the coal orientation developed by the party over the past nine years had been “close to being abandoned.” This, he explained, had led to a real retreat from the industrial-union axis in Charleston.

Jim Gotesky, who works at a Union Carbide chemical plant in the Charleston area, said that the coal industry dominates political and social life in West Virginia. “Every social question ultimately is connected to the UMWA,” he noted. “And every other union is deeply affected by what the UMWA has accomplished and what it is going to do.”

The conference participants agreed that the orientation to the UMWA needed to be reaffirmed, and whatever steps are necessary to reinforce the SWP branches in the coalfields should be made. Three activists at the meeting from Newport News, Virginia, were already on their way to Salt Lake City and St. Louis.

#### Not just a job of miners

John Hawkins, a miner from Birmingham, pointed out that orienting toward coal miners “can’t just be the job of the party activists currently working in the mines. It must be the task of the entire branch to follow developments in the miners’ union, to work with and talk to miners, and to sell socialist literature to miners.”

Susie Beck from Salt Lake City described her experiences over the past eight years as an activist in three of the party’s branches in the coal-mining regions. She had worked in several industries but not in the mines, she explained. But she had always been part of the party’s activities among coal miners. “You don’t have to be working in the mines to be part of the party’s UMWA perspective,” she said. “We’ve got to reestablish that concept.”

Warren emphasized that politicized workers do not become part of the socialist movement by joining a union fraction, but by joining a party branch. “That’s as true for miners as for workers in steel, auto, rail, or other industries,” he said. “And the shift we’re making now means that young people who are coming around us will join branches with an industrial-union framework.”

Juliette Montauk, a YSA leader and electrical worker, described the possibilities for working with coal miners in antiwar activity. She cited an experience of student antiwar activists in Charleston. Last fall she had helped organize some students to go to an antiwar demonstration in Washington, but many of them couldn’t afford the transportation. So the students called a local UMWA leader who then helped get his union to put up money for the transportation. “This was sort of a last minute thing,” she said. “But if we were to take a more systematic orientation to coal miners, there’s no telling what can be done to get the UMWA involved in the April 25 antiwar action.”

A number of participants addressed the decline in *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* sales to miners. In most areas weekly sales at mine portals had stopped, they reported. And there was wide agreement that increased ef-

forts to sign up new subscribers in the coalfields during the subscription drive this spring would pay off.

In response to a report by *Militant* circulation director Malik Miah proposing a national drive to win thousands of new readers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* this spring, a number of activists urged that *Militant* supporters in the coalfields organize teams of sellers to talk to coal miners.

The SWP branch organizer in Salt Lake City challenged *Militant* supporters in other cities to sell more subscriptions to miners than supporters in Salt Lake City.

Joe Allor, an auto worker from St. Louis, pointed out that the proposed subscription campaign would fit right in with getting sales going again at mine portals. Another participant said that stepping up mine sales would give a boost to plant-gate sales in other industries, which had also declined.

John Gaige, the SWP’s national farm director, reported that a number of national subscription teams will soon be hitting the road across the United States and in Puerto Rico. “We plan to have some of them go into the coalfields,” he said. “We expect that the YSA will play a big role in leading these teams as they will during the drive as a whole.”

The proposed subscription drive is to begin March 27 and run until the June 6-7 weekend.

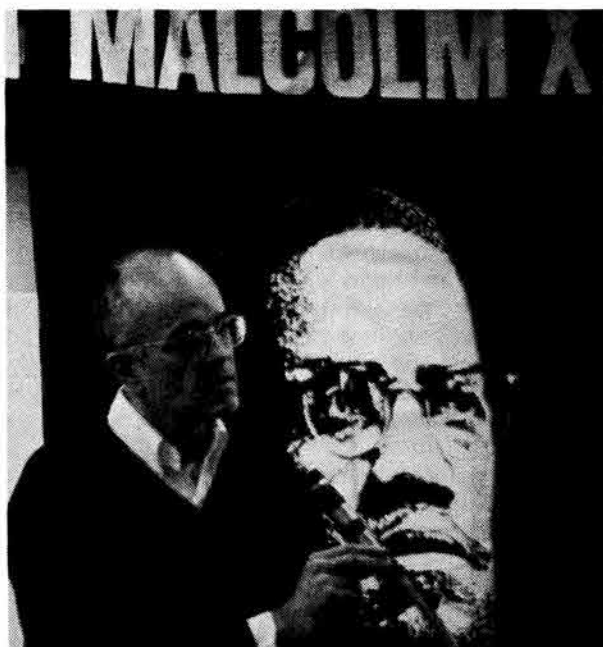
#### Why UMWA is different

A big part of the discussion centered on the particular importance of the UMWA in the U.S. labor movement, the employers’ offensive against it, and the prospects for coal miners in the coming year.

John Hawkins explained that the gains won by miners as a result of the fight waged by Miners for Democracy in the 1960s and early 1970s have been the main obstacle to the operators wrestling takebacks from the miners. As a result of that fight he pointed out, miners won significant self-confidence and a great deal more democracy than exists in other unions. “This puts the miners in a more favorable position to fight the employers’ attacks and defend themselves,” he stated.

Doug Hord from Morgantown said that a direct confrontation between the miners and the coal bosses is more likely in the coming contract discussions than those in 1984.

Most UMWA contracts with the Bituminous Coal Operators’ Association (BCOA) and other owners expire in 1987 and 1988. More than 90 percent of UMWA members currently working are covered by the BCOA



Militant/Michael Pennock

Jack Barnes, national secretary of Socialist Workers Party, spoke on Malcolm X at public forum during conference.

contract or contracts modeled on it.

“We don’t know the exact form of the confrontation or whether or not there will be a strike,” Hord noted. “But it’s important to follow the discussion in detail and to be part of the struggle as it unfolds.”

Several speakers described how the coal bosses have stepped up their attacks on miners since 1984. Safety and working conditions have been seriously undermined.

Tens of thousands of miners have been laid off. For example, there are 23,000 miners working in West Virginia today compared to 68,000 in 1978.

About 40 percent of the coal mined in the country is done by UMWA members compared to 80 percent 10 years ago.

Warren stated that the coal bosses see those developments as a basis for softening up the UMWA for the upcoming contract negotiations.

Several speakers said the UMWA is weaker than it was five years ago. But, they emphasized, that doesn’t mean the operators can easily impose a takeback pact. The amount of democratic control exercised by miners in the UMWA is an obstacle to that course.

The union leadership maintains a “no concessions” stance, Warren stated, because “it can’t talk the miners into concessions as other officials in the labor movement have done in their unions. The battle hasn’t been joined yet in the coal industry. And when it is it will be very different than what’s happened in auto, steel, and other industries.”

#### Revolution in the UMWA

Several participants described the “revolution” that has made the UMWA so different than other industrial unions in the United States, a revolution in which the membership gained considerable strength that it still exercises.

Ellen Haywood, who used to be a miner and is now a garment worker from St. Louis, urged participants to go back and read a series of articles on how the Miners for Democracy began and what it achieved, that appeared in the December 2, 9, and 16, 1983, issues of the *Militant*.

The origins of the Miners for Democracy goes back to a struggle that began around health and safety in the 1960s. Tens of thousands of miners participated in that historic struggle, which led to the passage of national health and safety laws and later to the formation of the Miners for Democracy movement. In 1972 this movement ousted the entrenched bureaucracy headed by Tony Boyle.

At the UMWA’s 1973 convention miners institutionalized this victory by incorporating two key conquests into the UMWA constitution. The first was the right of the membership to elect all leaders from the local to national level. The second was the right to vote on contracts, including the provision that every member has the right to a copy of the actual contract — not a “summary” — and the right to discuss it with others. Forty-eight hours is required between the time members receive the contract and the vote.

It was these democratic measures that allowed the miners to effectively fight the bosses in the 1974, 1977-78, 1981, and 1984 contract rounds.

During the 1977-78 contract battle, for example, the members rejected two proposed “ball and chain” contracts and conducted a 111-day strike. They ignored President Carter’s Taft-Hartley antilabor injunctions.

In 1981 miners again rejected a contract proposed by the coal operators and supported by the union leadership. The strike lasted for more than two months.

Frank Pavelko, a Utah miner, pointed out that the miners can’t be tricked into a contract. Nor can their conquests be taken without a head-on fight. “They will read it and decide,” he said. “The UMWA is not a housebroken union. The members still have their say. That’s why the miners will not be passive observers of the coming contract negotiations.”

Several participants said that other unionists in their

Continued on ISR/6



# U.S. politics today: new opportunities

Continued from ISR/1

the people — and on each other — because they are afraid of their covert aims and actions being exposed. "That's what led to the 'contra-gate' scandal, and what led more than a decade ago to Watergate," he said.

The recent crisis, Barnes explained, has shown that little connection exists between the right-wing ideological posturing of members of the administration and the results of the policies the White House has actually been able to carry out.

Moreover, Reagan's basic approach to foreign policy, including toward Nicaragua, has enjoyed bipartisan support. Liberals have harped on the personnel and methods the White House has used. But they make no challenge to the assumptions and interests underlying those policies.

There is no voice in Congress or among liberal journalists, Barnes noted, that simply says Nicaragua is a sovereign nation with the right to determine its own affairs and live in peace. And there is no voice among them that says Nicaragua deserves aid from this country for the progress it has made in raising the living standards and culture of Nicaraguans more than ever has been done before.

Barnes cited an editorial in the February 20 *New York Times* urging Congress not to hold up the remaining \$40 million approved for the contras last year in order to give contra leader Arturo Cruz time to show "what reform he can launch" in the next few months.

Washington would be in a stronger position to use U.S. troops in Central America or elsewhere if the capitalists could promise a major economic expansion and a rising standard of living at home, or begin a New Deal or even Great Society-type social reform program. "But that's not in the cards," he said. "They don't have the economic leeway to do that. And as long as working people are under attack at home, it's not likely they can easily be motivated to send their boys to fight somewhere else."

Barnes cited Sen. Edward Kennedy's February 19 announcement, on behalf of a bipartisan coalition, to make two civil rights bills top priority in the current session of Congress. Kennedy said, "The lights went out on civil rights" in 1981 when Reagan entered the White House. "But now the Senate is under new management and we intend to try again."

But both bills are "remarkably modest in what they propose," Barnes commented. "There's really nothing new in them." One would add a few things to the 1968 Fair Housing Act, and the other aims to remove some restrictions on enforcing several civil rights statutes already on the books.

The employers and their government, Barnes explained, don't have the option of making the kind of big economic or social concessions that can prevent the widening gap between demands of workers and what will be offered by the employers and their government.

Barnes pointed out that Washington, likewise, doesn't have the alternative of launching a new Marshall Plan to try to create stability in the Third World. It can't, for example, attempt to isolate Nicaragua by launching an ef-

fective economic aid program to other countries in the region that would improve the conditions of the people of Central America.

"If anybody had any doubts," Barnes said, "the balance sheet of the Caribbean Basin Initiative has proved this. Announced in 1982, this answer to the Grenada revolution was so modest in its actual goals that it seemed to many that they could be accomplished. But it was a total failure — at least for the people of the Caribbean Basin."

A big hunk of the money went to prop up unpopular U.S.-backed regimes like Jean-Claude Duvalier's tyranny in Haiti.

Its promise to open more trade doors between the Caribbean countries and the United States ran right into a rising tide of protectionism in the United States.

The program's assurance that an influx of capital into the Caribbean would lead to more jobs proved to be empty. Few companies wanted to open up factories if the market for their goods in the United States was restricted. Unemployment has continued to be a major problem in all of the countries that were slated to be helped.

Barnes added that the problem of the foreign debts burdening nearly all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean remains unresolved. They don't even have a net inflow of capital to build their own home markets. The outflow of capital even in a country as strong as Brazil, he said, is greater than its inflow — \$33 billion in the last five years!

## Unbridled rule of capital

In 1980-81 the employers' offensive against the working class in the United States, particularly the big industrial unions, escalated. This has marked the past half decade.

But it would not be accurate, Barnes added, to describe this as the "Reagan period."

The stepped-up attacks did not come primarily in the form of government initiatives, but rather by the bipartisan agreement to allow the "unbridled rule of capital to force concessions out of workers and devastate farmers," Barnes noted.

This was the first serious assault against organized labor since the 1930s, and it revealed the weakness of the unions. "Within the existing mode of functioning and guidelines that the unions have inherited from decades of retreat and class collaborationism," Barnes explained, "they have a leadership not only incapable of launching a counteroffensive against the employers, but incapable of organizing even a modest self-defense."

This weakness has imposed on the union membership the framework of seeing how little they could keep from losing, rather than how much they could win and how to link up with other unionists to do it.

Labor officials, Barnes said, have been hiding behind their liberal "friends" in Congress "who are hiding behind the cover of blaming all problems on 'Reaganism.'"

At the same time, the SWP leader said, the crisis of the Reagan administration, including its defeat in the 1986 congressional elections and the revelations around the Iran-contra arms deal, is beginning to give working people greater expectations. "Their hopes are beginning to rise, and we can expect that they will become more emboldened to press for their demands," he said.

## Racists on defensive

Barnes cited the recent protests against the racist killings in Howard Beach, and against the segregated policies and Klan violence in Forsyth County, Georgia. These are examples of struggles that are also giving added confidence to workers, particularly Blacks.

Neither case shows a new wave of racism, he said. To the contrary, the racists' attempts to keep Howard Beach, Forsyth County, and other enclaves like them all white are rearguard actions. They are defensive actions that are being met more and more by a counteroffensive.

In spite of all their reactionary talk, Barnes explained, White House officials and others have been unable to reverse the gains won by the civil rights movement in the mid-1960s, and those won during the following decade of economic expansion and big increases in jobs. They haven't been able to erode the civil rights conquests in the same way the unions have been weakened over the past 45 years.

Barnes cited the victory won through struggle to establish Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday.

In spite of continuing attacks on affirmative action for Blacks and women, this gain hasn't been pushed back either. Proof of this was shown a few days later when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the State of Alabama must promote one Black state trooper for each white state trooper.

One of the conquests of the civil rights movement, in addition to defeating Jim Crow segregation, Barnes explained, was breaking down the myth of Black in-



Liberals like Sen. Edward Kennedy have basically supported Reagan administration policy. They, too, are now entering a period of crisis.

feriority. This opened the minds of millions of whites to an acceptance of the legitimacy of demands for Black rights and of joining with Blacks in struggle.

Thousands of whites mobilized with Blacks in Forsyth County — where hundreds of Blacks were driven off the land early in this century. This is another demonstration of the fact that right at the beginning of the social struggles that are coming, whites will be marching with Blacks, and often under their leadership.

Barnes pointed to the impact the television series, *Eyes on the Prize*, is having on millions of people across the country. "It is an important part of the education of the American working class," he said. "Whatever incompleteness, it shows that the history of the civil rights movement is the history of mass struggle, and that liberal politicians are less trustworthy than the average viewer ever guessed."

And the pathetic action against abortion rights in Washington in January, he said, shows that the "right to lifers" are further than ever from reversing the victory registered by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1973.

Barnes noted that the shifts of the last year pose a dilemma for the employers. "Their problem," he said, "is finding methods that can keep on weakening the unions, reducing union membership, lowering real wages, and worsening working conditions."

They have to do this, Barnes said, because international capitalist competition keeps intensifying. To maintain profit levels, they must find ways of squeezing more out of their employees. There will be no letup in the pressures on working people.

But we've entered a transitional situation in which the employers may well begin to have more trouble getting another round of concessions from the union membership than they have had in the past few years. In addition to increased expectations, many unionists are learning after a decade of concessions, that concession contracts are not an effective way to guarantee a secure future.

All of this will open up a few "possibilities for resistance through the unions that haven't existed for the past five or six years," Barnes said.

## Farm depression

Barnes noted that farmers are in their second decade of depression — with no letup in sight. The highly touted farm bill adopted by Congress in December 1985, far from offering relief, has worsened conditions.

Farm foreclosures continue to mount. The roller coaster of prices for land titles continues to undermine the amount of credit working farmers can get using their land as collateral. And it makes them vulnerable to real estate cultures.

In desperation, many farmers are being forced to sell the water rights on their land to urban areas rather than farming.

Barnes also pointed out that last year for the first time, the United States imported more food than it exported, despite its position as the world's largest food producer.

The relative monopoly on cheap farm exports the United States has enjoyed in the world market, he said, is being challenged by cheaper agricultural commodities from other countries. This is accelerating international

## For further reading . . .

"Revolutionary Perspective and Leninist Continuity in the United States." Resolution of Socialist Workers Party contained in *New International*, Vol. 2, No.1. Issue also contains articles on worker-farmer alliance in United States and land reform in Cuba. \$3.

*Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the Course of History.* 276 pages, \$7.95.

*Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution: 1979-83.* 352 pages, \$7.95.

*Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution.* 412 pages, \$8.95.

*Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is My Life.* 278 pages, \$6.95.

*The 1985-86 Hormel Meat-Packers Strike in Austin, Minnesota.* 44 pages, \$1.

Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 16 or by mail from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include 75 cents for postage and handling.



price competition for farm products in a way that hasn't existed for a long time. It will increase speculation and working farmers are the victims.

An entire layer of pariah farmers is being created whose return for their work on the farm is well below the cost of their labor power. They are forced to get off-the-farm income in order even to feed and clothe their families.

Despite the devastating attacks, farmers are far from being beaten, Barnes noted. He cited a couple of recent conferences, including one of 500 farm women held January 16-18 in Des Moines, Iowa. At this gathering farmers discussed and thought through their problems and how to most effectively fight back.

Activists from several labor struggles participated, which helped forge further links between the farm protest movement and fighters in the unions.

## Two examples of labor resistance

Barnes noted two examples of resistance in the labor movement that went against the general trend in the past few years — the meat-packers in Austin, Minnesota, and the coal miners.

"What the meat-packers in Austin have done," Barnes said, "is repeatable by other unionists — not just in the distant future, but today. The conditions and possibilities that led the members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 to take over their union, organize a movement to wage a fight against their employers, and change themselves in the course of that struggle exist throughout the labor movement."

"P-9 advanced the understanding of thinking workers around the country," Barnes said. "It was something different than anything we've seen in the unions for decades, even the movement led by Ed Sadlowski in the United Steelworkers union more than 10 years ago, or the Miners for Democracy in the 1960s and 1970s."

The difference, he said, was the determination of the P-9 membership to take their local organization, to make it theirs, to strive to use it as best they could, and to reach out and build a united support committee to win broader support in their fight against Hormel. "That is the main lesson of P-9. That's what P-9ers and veteran fighters from Ottumwa, Iowa; and Fremont, Nebraska, have been explaining to other workers."

The framework of the fight has changed, Barnes noted. Before the contract was signed in September 1986, the focus was on winning the strike — that is, to win a better contract than what the employers offered and to get the fired strikers back to work.

This phase of the fight centered on mobilizing support from other unions across the country to help P-9.

Although the strike was lost and the contract signed by a rump union set up by the UFCW officialdom in Washington, the fight continues. But it has a different and broader focus. It is now centered on getting those who went through the P-9 experience to link their futures to the struggle of packinghouse workers as a whole, where wave after wave of assaults are occurring and the resistance continues.

The criteria of P-9ers now is how to help fellow packinghouse workers, and in the course of doing that lay the groundwork for creating a fighting democratic union of North American meat-packers.

The battle has just begun, Barnes noted, for those who have been through the P-9 experience to help win the fight for a broader class view of the struggle.

And the fight will continue because the struggle of meat-packers against the big packinghouses owners'



Current U.S. government crisis is revealing weakness of Reagan administration, both on international and domestic fronts.

drive to lower their wages and worsen working conditions is continuing.

Barnes noted that the United Mine Workers (UMWA) is the only industrial union that has not been deeply set back by the employers' offensive. It has not been saddled with the same kind of big takeback contracts.

The Miners for Democracy won a major shift in the relationship of forces inside the union 15 years ago, which has not been reversed, Barnes explained. That victory gave miners greater confidence, and more democracy in the union meant they had a tool they could use in united resistance.

Although the UMWA has not been immune from the pressures of the past five years, Barnes said, the fight for takebacks hasn't been posed in the same way in coal as in other industries yet. And when the employers decide to pose it, they'll have a different kind of fight on their hands than what faced them in auto and steel. The fight in coal hasn't yet been fought.

## Lying and spying

Reagan's "Project Democracy" has been accompanied by a step-up in covert actions against antiwar groups, unionists, and others. Barnes pointed to the recent revelations by former FBI informer Frank Varella that the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador had been spied on and disrupted by the FBI.

"The U.S. rulers can't openly declare their goals and mobilize the resources of the population to fight for them — as, for example, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua can. That's why they must continually lie about their aims and spy on those who oppose them. That is not a peculiar penchant of the Reagan administration, and as we have discovered, it's a necessity for the ruling class."

Barnes said that the lawsuit of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against Attorney General Edwin Meese, the FBI, and other federal police agencies, which scored a major victory last August, will be at the center of the renewed fight that is shaping up against the secret police. Moreover, this fight occurs in the context of the revelations around the Iran-contra arms scandal that shows secret government operations outside the law.

The long struggle behind the suit, which began in 1973 and continues today, puts those who have been involved in and supported it in a good position to contribute to the struggle against government spying and disruption.

"We have a lot of experience and a good record," Barnes said.

"Unlike the government, we don't lie to the American people, and we don't spy on them or their organizations. And, as our case has established beyond challenge, we never have."

## Communist regroupment

Barnes said that the political changes in the United States coincide with the acceleration of possibilities for political convergence among communists in the Caribbean, Central America, and North America.

He pointed to the formation of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America, which has united a broad range of groups. The recent U.S. tour of Grenadian activist Don Rojas on behalf of the anti-imperialist organization, Barnes said, was particularly important. "The meetings were united efforts in which forces from many organizations participated," he said.

Barnes also cited the broad spectrum of speakers at the recent meeting in New York sponsored by Pathfinder Press to celebrate the publication of *Nothing Can Stop the Course of History* by Fidel Castro.

The Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions and the legacy

of the Maurice Bishop leadership of the Grenada revolution, Barnes said, continue to be a pole of attraction for communists and other revolutionary workers.

Barnes was part of the delegation from the United States that went to Nicaragua in November to participate in the 25th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. "I was especially impressed," he said, "with the fact that all communists and liberation groups who support the Nicaraguan revolution were treated as equals."

The defeat of the Grenada revolution in 1983, he said, has sparked a particularly sharp debate in the radical movement.

Barnes reported that *New Internationalist* is publishing in its next issue a major article by Steve Clark, "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop." It assesses the political differences between Bishop and the supporters of Bernard Coard, and the factors that led to the defeat of the Grenada revolution.

"This will be an important contribution to the discussion," Barnes said, "and we plan to conduct an energetic drive to see that it gets into the hands of as many people as possible."

Barnes noted that the convergence of communists in the Caribbean and Central America also has an African connection. The struggle led by the African National Congress in South Africa, he said, has especially made a big impact.

The current shake-up among communists is occurring at the same time as a historic crisis is rocking the Soviet Union, he pointed out.

This also opens up many opportunities for political discussions among communists in different organizations in the United States, particularly as more and more censored chapters of communist history are allowed to be discussed publicly in the Soviet Union. He cited the recent example of a top Soviet editor who opened a discussion in *Moscow News* on V.I. Lenin's fight against Joseph Stalin during the last months of Lenin's political life in 1922-23.

Barnes reported that Pathfinder Press has announced plans to publish a collection of Lenin's writings on this fight. "This," he said, "can be the basis for a broad discussion among all those who consider themselves communists. It can contribute to breaking down old lines."

## End of retreat

Barnes reported that one reflection of the political changes in 1986 is that for the first time in nine years the SWP's membership stopped declining. "It's not that we've increased our size," he said, "but our growth has kept up with our losses. Our size has remained steady for the past year. It has also become somewhat younger on the average," he added.

At the same time, Barnes said, the size of the YSA is increasing for the first time in nearly a decade. Over 40 percent of the YSA membership has joined in the past year. He particularly singled out the importance of the expanding geographical spread of YSA units to 84 cities in the United States.

Barnes also noted that the success of the last *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription campaign and follow-up renewal effort has reversed the decade-long decline of the publications' subscription bases.

Another big subscription campaign is being projected for this spring, which will offer an opportunity to take another step in building up the long-term subscription base. This will also help to increase sales to unionists and at plant gates and mine portals and to farmers.

Barnes explained, "It's clear that a break has occurred in the retreat we've been in for over half a decade. And that the first signs of a transition in the political situation is occurring. We can anticipate that the situation we are entering will be contradictory."

"Moreover," he said, "we don't know when big struggles will occur, or how fast growth will be. But we do know that opportunities exist for the working class as a whole and its most determined fighters now that haven't been there the past few years, and we should organize to join with others to make the most of them."

He referred to the SWP's decision made a couple of months earlier to establish branches in Omaha, Nebraska; Des Moines, Iowa; and Austin, Minnesota.

The national committee also approved a proposal that the seven party branches in the country's coal mining regions — Pittsburgh; St. Louis; Birmingham, Alabama; Price and Salt Lake City, Utah; and Charleston and Morgantown, West Virginia — be reinforced. This, Barnes said, will put socialist workers in the best position to be involved in the coming discussions and struggles among coal miners. (See article on *International Socialist Review* page 2.)

"Both of these steps, and others that we'll be making," Barnes said, "are part of readjusting the party's resources and energies to most effectively participate in the new openings."



Militant/Mike Lux

New York protest against lynching of Black in Howard Beach. Racists are on defensive today.



# Prospects pick up for building Young Socialists

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

NEW YORK — Leaders of the Young Socialist Alliance met here February 28–March 1 to discuss new shifts in U.S. politics and the situation facing the working class and the openings they offer to young socialists throughout the country.

High priority was placed on the opportunities for organizing protests against Washington's intervention in Nicaragua. The blows dealt to the U.S.-organized *contras* by the Nicaraguan armed forces and the crisis in Washington provoked by the Iran-contra arms scandal have given momentum to the fight to let Nicaragua live in peace.

The meeting reaffirmed the YSA's commitment to help make the national antiwar, anti-apartheid actions in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco on April 25 as big as possible. "Helping to bring as many workers, farmers, and students to these demonstrations, will be our central task in the next seven weeks," YSA National Secretary Rena Cacoullos stated.

The YSA leaders also decided to make the spring drive to sign up thousands of new readers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* a major effort of all members. "YSAers will set the pace for the entire drive," Cacoullos said.

## Growth of YSA

One proof that there's been some favorable political shifts, Cacoullos said, is the growth of the YSA in the past year. "Nineteen eighty-six was the first year in about a decade," she reported, "that we've grown."

Some 140 people joined the YSA, an organization of young workers and students, last year. Ninety-seven of them joined in the last five months of the year.

Cacoullos emphasized the geographical spread of the YSA membership — 84 cities and towns in 34 states and Washington, D.C. "This both shows the scope of the possibilities for winning new members and gives us added advantages for reaching new people," she said.

Twenty high school and over 100 college students were among those who joined last year.

In addition to 20 YSA national committee members, 32 chapter organizers or other chapter leaders attended the meeting here. For many of them it was their first such meeting.

The discussion reflected the recent expansion of the YSA and the new prospects opening up for it.

## 'Seven more in two months'

Ben Fiering, organizer of the newly chartered Mid-Hudson, New York, chapter, reported on the progress in building the YSA there. "Of the nine members, one joined less than a year ago, another joined less than six months ago, and seven more joined within the last two months," he said.

Jordy Rockowitz, a YSA member who attends the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, reported on student mobilizations to protest SUNY's de-



Militant  
Selling *Militant* outside entrance to coal mine in Utah. Young Socialist Alliance members will spearhead subscription teams this spring, including in western coalfields.

nial of tenure to professor Fred Dube. Dube, from South Africa, is a spokesperson for the African National Congress.

Estelle DeBates, a garment worker, described the activities of youth in the Omaha, Nebraska, area, where five new members have joined the YSA since October. They are active in Youth for Peace, a citywide group of junior high, high school, and college students. Among its many activities is supporting working farmers in the area who are fighting farm foreclosures.

Recently, DeBates said, Youth for Peace helped organize speaking engagements for Steve Argue, a Minnesota high school student and YSA member who participated in the first student harvest brigade to Nicaragua in January.

Suzanne Auger reported that in Portland, Oregon, a member of her chapter, Robert Scafe, also participated in the student brigade. He has shown a slide show on Nicaragua to 250 students in his high school.

Argue and Scafe are among thousands of young people who have visited Nicaragua in the last couple of years to see for themselves the revolutionary developments there and to offer assistance. Most have been politically inspired by the experience, and many are looking for an organization like the YSA to join when they return.

Youth have also been part of solidarity activities for the meat-packers throughout the Midwest who are fighting an all-out assault from the packinghouse bosses. One

example described at the meeting was a group of young people in Cudahy, Wisconsin, who have formed Students Against Scabs. The group is supporting United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-40, which is fighting takeback demands from the Cudahy Co.

## Building April 25 actions

Much of the discussion at the meeting focused on building the April 25 Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa.

Katy Karlin from New Orleans reported the efforts of students at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge to organize support for the demonstration. When administration officials told the students they could not distribute an announcement for an antiwar meeting, since it had not been previously "approved," students responded the next day by circulating copies of the Bill of Rights. Written on the top of each copy was, "LSU administration doesn't want you to read this."

The YSA is participating in student and youth outreach committees of the coalitions set up in many cities to build the April 25 demonstrations. The YSA is also represented on the national student subcommittee of the national steering committee for the April 25 mobilization.

YSA members — both unionists and students — are participating in the effort to get word of the demonstrations out to workers in the factories, packinghouses, rail yards, mines, and farms throughout the country.

Several people reported that there are many opportunities to obtain union funds and resources to produce leaflets, buttons, and other materials to advertise the demonstrations; to have speakers come before union meetings, high school classes, and campus forums; and to organize hundreds of buses to bring people to Washington and San Francisco. Thousands of young people will be marching in their first demonstration on April 25.

## Spearheading subscription drive

The proposed plans for YSA participation in the spring subscription drive for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* sparked an enthusiastic response from the YSA leaders. YSA units will set goals and take responsibility for obtaining a big part of the total goal for the drive.

Several people pointed out that the sales of the YSA's newspaper, the *Young Socialist*, would fit right into this perspective, and reported high sales of the February-March issue. This issue reprints the 1965 interview that Malcolm X gave to the *Young Socialist*.

YSA members will spearhead a number of national teams that will be fielded during the drive. The teams will sell at plant gates, rail yards, and mine portals, as well as on college campuses. Special efforts are planned to get teams into the Appalachian and Western coalfields.

Greg Jackson, a member of the International Association of Machinists from Los Angeles, described the results of a special two-week sales team that he was part of. The team had just completed a tour of Georgia and South Carolina that covered the areas from which the most people mobilized for the January 24 antiracist march in Forsyth County, Georgia.

The team, Jackson said, sold at many plants, including in the textile, meat-packing, poultry-processing, and aerospace industries. It also sold at shopping centers and at an average of one college campus a day.

Cacoullos pointed out that sales at plants and mines are a good way for YSA members to learn about the conditions and struggles of workers in a wide range of industries. Twenty-nine YSA leaders at the meeting signed up to participate in spring subscription teams.

Francisco Picado, a member of the National Executive Committee of the YSA, reported on the new stage in the lawsuit of the Socialist Workers Party and YSA against government spying and harassment. He particularly pointed to the role the YSA can play in the drive to sign up 4,000 new endorsers to the Political Rights Defense Fund.

## YSA convention in May

This reporter initiated the discussion on the proposal for a YSA convention May 23-25 in Chicago. The report noted that well over half the membership of the YSA will be participating in their first national convention.

"Our convention will come a month after the April 25 antiwar, anti-apartheid mobilizations," the report noted. "We will have three more months of plant-gate sales under our belts. The idea is to bring with us to the 25th convention of the YSA the hundreds of young people we are working with to build the April 25 demonstration and those we will meet in selling thousands of subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*."

Two young socialists from Canada also attended the YSA leadership meeting.

A highlight of the weekend was the presentation at the New York Militant Labor Forum by Jack Barnes, SWP National Secretary, on "Malcolm X Today."

# Socialists strengthen work in coal regions

Continued from ISR/3

localities will be following closely the contract discussions in coal. Because of the clout the miners have and what they have achieved, they have set an example for other workers.

## Sharing experiences with meat-packers

Other activists also noted that the experience of the Hormel meat-packers in Austin, Minnesota, had many lessons for miners. Betsey Farley, a poultry worker from Birmingham, described the experience of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 spokespersons touring Alabama last year and their discussions with miners. "Miners were intently interested in the P-9 experience," she said. "The P-9ers also learned a lot from the miners."

A former miner from Utah said she was convinced that it would be very useful to urge UMW locals in Utah to invite a P-9 representative to come and tell about their ongoing fight and its connection to the fight in meat-packing throughout the Midwest. "Their concrete knowledge about, and description of their participation in, the current packinghouse fights will make even more authoritative than before the struggle they are involved in to organize a fighting North American meat-packers' union," she said.

## Fight for democratic rights

The conference invited Joe Swanson, Midwest field representative of the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF) and a longtime member of the United Transportation Union, to explain the current stage of the SWP and YSA's lawsuit against government spying and harass-

ment. Swanson is one of 10 national PRDF representatives organizing support and raising funds for the case in the labor movement and elsewhere.

"The current government crisis and recent revelations about FBI break-ins into offices of Central American solidarity and antiwar groups," Swanson said, "means enhanced opportunities to explain the lessons of the SWP and YSA case against Attorney General Edwin Meese and the FBI, and to win broad working-class support for the PRDF. We just have to go out and talk to as many workers, farmers, and students as we can."

Swanson reported that the PRDF is on a "national campaign to sign up 4,000 new endorsers by March 31. As of February 20, 1,377 people had signed," he said. "We are confident we can get the 4,000, with a majority being unionists."

Several speakers emphasized that unionists will best understand the issues in this case. "Working people have, through their struggles, done the most to win the rights that are codified in the Constitution's Bill of Rights," Kipp Dawson pointed out. "And we are the ones who have extended those rights to Blacks and women and, in recent court decisions, widened the right to privacy."

The results of the weekend's discussions were best summed up by Dave Salner, a member of the United Steelworkers from Charleston. He explained, "The retreats we've made were inevitable given that we are part of the working class and unions that have been retreating."

"But the work we've done in the unions over the past years has helped prepare us to make a shift to new opportunities today. It feels real comfortable to be making this shift," he said.



# Farm workers strike for union contract in Yakima Valley

BY MATT HERRESHOFF

GRANGER, Wash. — A battle is beginning between farm workers and wealthy growers in the fields and orchards of the Yakima Valley.

On February 10 some 60 workers struck at Pyramid Orchards near Wapato, Washington. The workers are members of the United Farm Workers of Washington State (UFWWS). They are demanding that Pyramid recognize and negotiate with their union.

The strike was sparked when Pyramid arbitrarily cut wages for tree pruners from the \$2.50 per tree they paid last year to \$1.75 per tree. Workers told the *Militant* they couldn't earn minimum wage at that rate.

When workers spontaneously stopped work in protest, the company raised the rate to \$2 a tree. But after one day back at work, the farm workers suffered so much abuse from management they decided to strike.

## Broad support for strike

The Pyramid strike has won wide support among farm workers here. More than 225,000 farm workers and their families labor in the apple and cherry orchards, vineyards, and asparagus and vegetable fields concentrated in this part of the state.

Unemployed farm workers and workers from other orchards, fields, and vineyards have joined in daily picket lines at Pyramid, which at times have grown to more than 300 people. Other farm workers and their families have given food to sustain the strike.

At a special UFWWS state convention in February, every working union member pledged \$5 a week to support the strike.

Locked-out unionists from the Lockheed shipyard in Seattle have made the three-hour trip to Wapato twice to help picket and have contributed food and clothing. Churches and other unionists have also given money and food to the strike.

Despite high unemployment, farm workers have refused to scab on the strike. "Other growers tried to force their workers to prune at Pyramid," UFWWS Vice-president Bill Nicasio, Sr., told the *Militant*. "But only four or five foremen have crossed the line." Pyramid is now offering \$4.75 a tree in an effort to break the strike, he said.

Farm workers are seeking ways to fight back. Since it was formed in September 1986, some 600 have joined the UFWWS, and the number is growing.

Two hundred farm workers discussed

the Pyramid strike at a meeting in Granger March 8. The day before, a court had issued an injunction restricting picketing at the orchard. The workers decided to obey the court order and limit picketing, but to continue organizing protests a short distance from the orchard, and to mobilize for the court hearing on the injunction March 12.

Three guests from Nicaragua attended the meeting. One of them, Gabriel Alvarez, told the group: "This reminds me of the struggle of Nicaraguan farm workers. Before the victory, the bosses were very belligerent. Now, the government is giving us land."

The meeting also heard a report on efforts to stop the government and growers from defrauding farm workers of their unemployment benefits. State regulations encourage growers to underreport the number of hours worked by farm workers. Two hundred farm workers and their supporters rallied in Olympia, the state capitol, February 25 to press this demand.

Many farm workers are anxiously awaiting the asparagus season. From early April to mid-June, 5,000 workers labor in the asparagus fields in Washington.

Asparagus cutters are among the lowest-paid farm workers here, and for that reason, asparagus has been a special target for union organizing. Last spring, a boycott was launched against Washington asparagus. Workers here are preparing for a strike against the asparagus growers this spring.

The UFWWS has called for a march on April 5, from Granger to Toppenish, Washington, just before the asparagus season begins. Last April César Chávez led a march of 2,000 farm workers for 22 miles through the Yakima Valley.

The March 8 meeting is one of many the UFWWS has held in towns throughout the Yakima Valley. UFWWS President Tomas Villanueva told the *Militant* it was one of the smallest meetings. And at each meeting, more workers sign up to join the union.

To continue this struggle the farm workers need help. Contributions and messages of solidarity should be sent to: United Farm Workers of Washington State, P.O. Box 899, Granger, Wash. 98932.

## E.D. Nixon, fighter for rights

Continued from Page 4

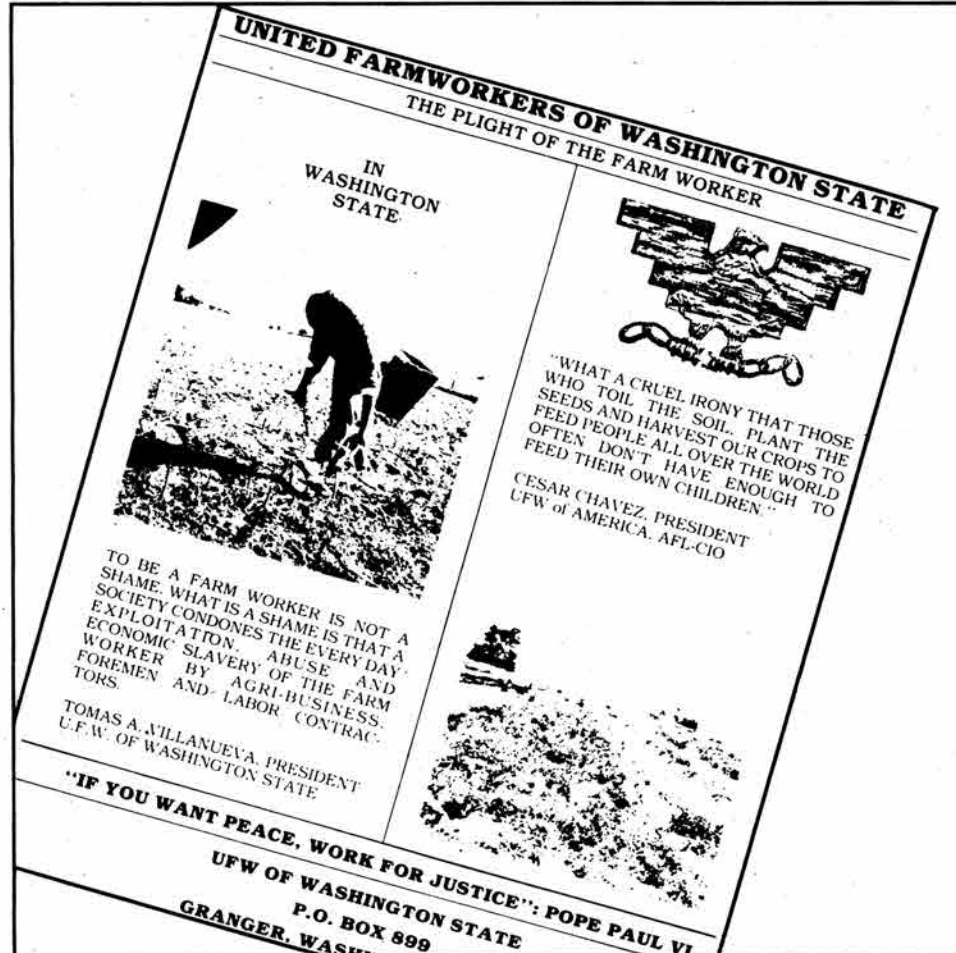
the Reconstruction period, an entire Negro community stood as one for over a year...

"It drew in the ministers and enabled them to participate without violating any of their religious principles and utilized the talents of the ministers to do some of the necessary things for the movement, such as raising money.

"There was another side to this movement, the side that very little is told about... the young men, the ex-GI's, who repaired the cars, who repaired the station wagons, who manned the posts and were responsible for transporting Negroes from one part of the city to another. The real workmen, the real participants, who also recognized the need to protect their leaders. They recognized the need for self defense....

"This is the kind of leadership that built the Montgomery bus boycott movement. This leadership demonstrated its worth in life, which is the acid test of leadership. This is the kind of leader we are talking about when we talk of E.D. Nixon."

A message sent to the funeral on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party, signed by DeBerry, SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and myself pointed out that Nixon's courage, strength, and wisdom "should be studied by all those interested in the continuing struggle for social progress, especially the new generation of young fighters coming on the scene today."



Cover of United Farm Workers brochure on issues in Yakima Valley struggle

## —WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

### 7,000 Syrian troops dispatched to Beirut

Syrian President Hafez al-Assad asserted March 8 that the 7,000 troops he had dispatched to West Beirut in Lebanon were accomplishing their declared aim of ending armed factional struggle



Wreckage of Palestinian camp in Beirut after attack by Syrian-backed Lebanese militia.

between Moslem militia forces there.

An undeclared but key reason for the Syrian move is to thwart a resurgence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon.

The Syrian troops also struck at members of the Party of God, a militia force that politically supports the Iranian government.

The decision to send the Syrian troops to Beirut came after six months of a murderous siege of Palestinian refugee camps by Amal, a Lebanese militia force closely linked to Syria. The camps have been a major source of strength for the PLO.

Strong protest forced a partial lifting of the Amal siege February 15. A week later, the Syrian troops moved into Beirut.

New York Newsday's correspondent in West Beirut noted in the March 9 issue that while Syria's declared aim was to end the factional strife, it had other motives.

"They came," he wrote, "partly because their Lebanese militia allies had failed to clamp down on the return of Yassir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization fighters to the city."

Within hours of the arrival of Syrian troops, their commander cold-bloodedly announced that 23 members of the Party of God had been "dealt with" for allegedly wounding a Syrian soldier. (Earlier, Amal had zeroed in on the Lebanese

Communist Party. Nine party leaders were reported assassinated, 32 killed in combat, and 17 kidnapped.)

### U.S. takes direct control of Liberia's economy

In a naked display of power, Washington has dispatched a team to Liberia to take over the operation of that nation's economy.

The military junta that rules the country, situated in West Africa, agreed to the takeover in return for resumption of a now frozen U.S. loan program. Liberia is a year behind in payments on a \$434-million debt.

Seventeen U.S. representatives will move in on such key areas as banking, exports, and tax collections. All decisions by affected government departments will have to be cosigned by them.

Formally independent, Liberia has been a U.S. semicolony for more than a century. Firestone plundered its rubber resources and Republic Steel its iron ore deposits.

Imperialist plunder has left Liberia impoverished. Its illiteracy rate is 76 percent, and its infant mortality rate is 152 per 1,000 live births.

### Pakistan's nuke director says they have A-bomb

The director of Pakistan's nuclear research was quoted as saying his country has the atom bomb. This was reported March 1 in a New Delhi, India, weekly. It quoted nuclear researcher Abdul Qadeer Khan as saying, "They told us Pakistan could never produce the bomb... but they know we have done it."

Bordered on the west by Afghanistan and Iran, and to the east by India, the Pakistani regime is Washington's major ally in the region. It is a conduit for the flow of U.S. weapons to the right-wing guerrillas in Afghanistan and a sanctuary for these forces.

In Washington there was some consternation at the admission. Congress is considering \$4 billion in Pakistani aid on the basis of a certification made by Reagan that it did not possess the bomb.

In the wake of the response, Khan said he had been misquoted and that Pakistan's nuclear research was intended to cope with a shortage of electricity.

In the interview, he had said, "The word 'peaceful' associated with a nuclear program is humbug. Once you know how to produce plutonium... it becomes rather easy to produce nuclear weapons."

## By Malcolm X



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## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**Kick Off for Western States Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa.** Speakers: Mario Obledo, co-chair, West Coast Mobilization for April 25, past president of League of United Latin American Citizens; Rev. James Lawson, president, L.A. Southern Christian Leadership Conference; speaker from Free South Africa Movement. Translation to Spanish. Mon., March 16, 7 p.m. Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Hall, 2501 S Hill St. For more information call Mobilization on Central America (213) 225-6136 or write P.O. Box 57337, Los Angeles, Calif. 90057.

### Oakland

**Abortion Rights Under Attack: What Is Needed to Defend a Woman's Right.** Speakers: Linda Baker, representative of Planned Parenthood; Diana Cantú, chairperson of Oakland Young Socialist Alliance; others. Sun., March 15, 6 p.m. 3808 E 14th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (415) 261-3014.

### San Francisco

**The Philippines in Crisis.** An eyewitness report by Joel Racamora, Philippines Resource Center. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 14, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (415) 282-6255.

**The Myth of the Happy Japanese Worker. How U.S. Corporations Use It Against U.S. Workers.** Speaker: Ken Honda, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Auto Workers, NUMMI. Translation to Spanish. Fri., March 20, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (415) 282-6255.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**Grenada: Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Caribbean.** Speakers to be announced. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

**Malcolm X: A Tribute to the Man and His Ideas.** Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 21, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

## MARYLAND

### Baltimore

**The Legacy of Maurice Bishop and the Grenada Revolution.** Film: *Maurice*. Speaker: Elizabeth Wittaker, Socialist Workers Party, member of Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Local 176, visited Grenada during second anniversary of the 1979 revolution. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: dinner, \$3; forum, \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

## MICHIGAN

### Detroit

**Grenada: What Went Wrong.** Speakers: Michelle Gibbs, writer, artist, worked in revolutionary Grenada for three years; Andrew Pulley, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., March 15, 6 p.m. 2135 Woodward. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

**Will Youth Curfew Stop Crime?** Speaker: representative, Young Socialist Alliance. Sun., March 22, 4 p.m. 2135 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

**Stop U.S. intervention in Central America!** Detroit Area March and Rally. Sun., March 29.

Assemble 1 p.m. at New Federal Bldg. (Michigan and Cass); rally 2 p.m. at Kennedy Square. Sponsor: March 29th Coalition. For more information call (313) 965-5724.

**Open House, With Showing of Slides from Nicaragua.** Sun., March 29, after demonstration against U.S. intervention in Central America, 3 p.m. 2135 Woodward Ave. Refreshments served. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

## MINNESOTA

### Minneapolis

**We Say No to U.S. Intervention in Central America and No to Apartheid!** Speakers: Steve Argue, Young Socialist Alliance, student at St. Paul Open School; others. Sat., March 21, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

**Autonomy for Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.** Speaker: Bill Means, executive director of the International Indian Treaty Council, recently returned from Nicaragua. Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

## MISSOURI

### St. Louis

**The Freedom Struggle in Central America and the Caribbean.** A panel of antiwar activists. Tape of a speech by Don Rojas, representative of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America. Sat., March 14, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

## NEW YORK

### Albany

**How Can Working People Support the Family Farmer: Lessons from the New York Dairy Strike.** Speakers: Jo Bates, New York dairy farmer activist; Jon Flanders, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers Local 8247. Translation to Spanish. Fri., March 13, 7:30 p.m. 114E Quail St. Donation: \$2.

Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (518) 434-3247.

**The Working Class Road to Peace.** A class on "Cuba and Nicaragua: the Center of the Class Struggle Today: the Fight Against the U.S. War Drive in Central America and the Caribbean." Sat. March 14, 3 p.m., 114E Quail St. Sponsor: YSA. For more information call (518) 434-3247.

## OHIO

### Cleveland

**The Struggle of Meat-Packers Against Corporate Attacks.** Speakers to be announced. Sat., March 21, 7:30 p.m. 2521 Market Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (216) 861-6150.

## OREGON

### Portland

**Film: South Africa Unedited.** Followed by presentations by Christopher Phelps, member of Reed Against Apartheid; and David Jerome, Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 2732 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

**Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women.** Film: *Killing Us Softly*. Speaker: Kathryn Lynn, Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., March 28, 7:30 p.m. 2732 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Pittsburgh

**Nicaragua: Myth and Reality.** Hear Nora Astorga, Nicaraguan ambassador to the United Nations. Tue., March 17, 7:30 p.m. University of Pittsburgh, Moot Court Room, Law School, Forbes and Bouquet Streets. Sponsors: Pittsburgh-San Isidro Sister City Project, University of Pittsburgh Law School, Center for Latin American Studies.

# Texans demand freedom for Black facing execution

BY JOHN SARGE

CONROE, Texas — A thousand people, mostly Black, converted a traditional Black History Month parade here February 28 into a march and rally demanding freedom for Clarence Lee Brandley.

Brandley is a 35-year-old Black man whose family has lived in this town, 45 miles north of Houston, for many years. He is scheduled to be executed on March 26 for a crime he did not commit. Brandley was convicted of the 1980 murder of a student who was visiting Conroe High School, where Brandley was a supervisor of the janitorial staff.

Brandley is the victim of a racist frame-up. He was tried twice, both times by all-white juries after the county prosecutors struck every possible Black from the jury panels.

The prosecution's case was based on the fact that Brandley had keys to the room where the murder occurred, that he was alone in his office at the time of the murder, and that of a few loose hairs found on the body, two were judged to be "Negroid" by the police. Reddish-brown hair also found was ignored and then destroyed by

the cops.

Witnesses who came forward after the trial who said that two other janitors (both white) were involved in the murder were deemed unreliable. These included the wife of a janitor who left Texas right after the murder. She testified that her husband had confessed to her that he committed the crime.

The parade began at Conroe College and wound through the business district and the Black community for about two miles, ending in a rally at Washington School.

The march grew steadily as people were drawn in by the spirited chants: "Conroe, Conroe, haven't you heard? This ain't Johannesburg," "Free Clarence Lee Brandley," and "Fired up — can't take it no more!"

Speakers at the rally — including Rev. J. Don Boney, chair of the Houston Black United Front, and Brandley family members — projected a campaign to force Texas Gov. William Clements and Attorney General Jim Mattox to meet with the Brandley family and supporters who are demanding a full pardon because all state appeal channels have been blocked.

## TEXAS

### Dallas

**Grenada: Struggle for Justice and Freedom.** Speakers to be announced. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 336 W Jefferson. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (214) 943-5195.

### Houston

**Free Clarence Lee Brandley!** A panel discussion on a racist frame-up and the death penalty. Speakers: representative of the Committee to Free Clarence Lee Brandley; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

## UTAH

### Salt Lake City

**Working People Take on Corporate America.** Panel discussion featuring Paul Swank, member Original Local P-9; Scott Breen, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 767 S State St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

**Soviet Union: Its Real Role in World Politics Today.** Speaker: representative, Socialist Workers Party. Video of speech by Mikhail Gorbachev. Sat., March 21, 7:30 p.m. 767 S State St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Morgantown

**Violence Against Women: What Is the Cause? How Can We End It?** A panel discussion. Sat., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

**Imperialism vs. Revolution in the Mideast.** Speaker: Barry Sheppard, National Committee of Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 21, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

Defense activities are being organized in Conroe and Houston by the Committee to Free Clarence Lee Brandley, as well as by the Houston chapter of the Black United Front. The Houston committee is meeting every Tuesday, 7 p.m., at the Ingrand House, 5151 Martin Luther King Boulevard. For more information call (713) 521-0629, 631-3777, or 526-8476.

## Scientists warn of toxic fog

Concerned about polluted air? Acid rain? Add another item to the list — toxic fog.

According to a report in the British magazine *Nature*, scientists have found that toxic fog forms over various parts of the United States. It's made up of microscopic water droplets containing unexpectedly high concentrations of pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals.

They said the toxic fog resembles the "killer fogs" that caused the deaths of so many people in 19th century London.

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**CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles:** SWP, YSA, 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. **Oakland:** SWP, YSA, 3808 E 14th St. Zip: 94601. Tel: (415) 261-3014. **San Diego:** SWP, YSA, 2803 B St. Zip: 92102. Tel: (619) 234-4630. **San Francisco:** SWP, YSA, 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255. **San Jose:** SWP, YSA, 46½ Race St. Zip: 95126. Tel: (408) 998-4007.

**COLORADO: Denver:** SWP, YSA, 25 W. 3rd Ave. Zip: 80223. Tel: (303) 698-2550.

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**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** SWP, YSA, 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd Floor. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-

4065. **ILLINOIS: Chicago:** SWP, YSA, 3455 S. Michigan Ave. Zip: 60616. Tel: (312) 326-5853 or 326-5453.

**IOWA: Des Moines:** SWP, YSA, 2105 Forest Ave. Zip: 50311. Tel: (515) 246-1695.

**KENTUCKY: Louisville:** SWP, YSA, 809 E. Broadway. Zip: 40204. Tel: (502) 587-8418.

**LOUISIANA: New Orleans:** SWP, YSA, 3640 Magazine St. Zip: 70115. Tel: (504) 895-1961.

**MARYLAND: Baltimore:** SWP, YSA, 2913 Greenmount Ave. Zip: 21218. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** SWP, YSA, 107 Brighton Ave., 2nd floor, Allston. Zip: 02134. Tel: (617) 787-0275.

**MICHIGAN: Detroit:** SWP, YSA, 2135 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48201. Tel: (313) 961-0395.

**MINNESOTA: Twin Cities:** SWP, YSA, 508 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

**MISSOURI: Kansas City:** SWP, YSA, 4725 Troost. Zip: 64110. Tel: (816) 753-0404. **St. Louis:** SWP, YSA, 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Zip: 63113. Tel: (314) 361-0250.

**NEBRASKA: Omaha:** SWP, YSA, 140 S. 40th St. Zip: 68131. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

**NEW JERSEY: Newark:** SWP, YSA, 141 Halsey. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

**NEW YORK: Capital District (Albany):** SWP, YSA, 114E Quail St. Zip: 12206. Tel: (518) 434-3247. **New York:** SWP, YSA, 79 Leonard St. Zip: 10013. Tel: (212) 219-3679 or 925-1668. **Pathfinder Books,** 226-8445.

**NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro:** SWP, YSA, 2219 E Market. Zip: 27401. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

**OHIO: Cincinnati:** SWP, YSA, 4945 Pad-dock Rd. Zip: 45237. Tel: (513) 242-7161.

**Cleveland:** SWP, YSA, 2521 Market Ave. Zip: 44113. Tel: (216) 861-6150. **Columbus:** YSA, P.O. Box 02097. Zip: 43202. **Toledo:** SWP, YSA, 1701 W Bancroft St. Zip: 43606. Tel: (419) 536-0383.

**OREGON: Portland:** SWP, YSA, 2732 NE Union. Zip: 97212. Tel: (503) 287-7416.

**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** SWP, YSA, 2744 Germantown Ave. Zip: 19133. Tel: (215) 225-0213. **Pittsburgh:** SWP, YSA, 402 N. Highland Ave. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

**TEXAS: Austin:** YSA, c/o Mike Rose, 7409

Berkman Dr. Zip: 78752. Tel: (512) 452-3923.

**Dallas:** SWP, YSA, 336 W. Jefferson. Zip: 75208. Tel: (214) 943-5195. **Houston:** SWP, YSA, 4806 Alameda. Zip: 77004. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

**UTAH: Price:** SWP, YSA, 23 S. Carbon Ave., Suite 19, P.O. Box 758. Zip: 84501. Tel: (801) 637-6294. **Salt Lake City:** SWP, YSA, 767 S. State, 3rd floor. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

**VIRGINIA: Tidewater Area (Newport News):** SWP, YSA, 5412 Jefferson Ave. Zip: 23605. Tel: (804) 380-0133.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** SWP, YSA, 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 797-7699, 797-7021.

**WASHINGTON: Seattle:** SWP, YSA, 5517 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118. Tel: (206) 723-5330.

**WEST VIRGINIA: Charleston:** SWP, YSA, 116 McFarland St. Zip: 25301. Tel: (304) 345-3040. **Morgantown:** SWP, YSA, 221 Pleasant St. Zip: 26505. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

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



**Catch 22** — The army is pondering joining the lottery industry. Overseas troops would be offered \$1 scratch-off tickets. Top prize



**Harry Ring**

would be limited to \$5,000. An officer explained this would enable a GI to have fun without getting "rich enough to get out of the service."

**One day it will** — According to a recent poll, many in this country

are not informed about the purpose or contents of the Constitution. One purported example of such ignorance: nearly half believed the Constitution includes Marx's statement, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

**At least they can't put him in jail** — Douglas Plumley, a prisoner at Lumpoc, California, was fired from his bookkeeping job for complaining about prison chemicals. He's appealed, but the Justice Department argues the whistle-blower law was never intended to cover prisoners.

**In her shredmobile?** — A D.C. model booking agent says Fawn Hall, secretary and assistant

shredder to Oliver North, has been besieged with offers, including one from *Playboy*.

**Gangbusters** — A six-year-old boy was booked in Winter Springs, Florida, for allegedly pocketing a 35-cent pack of bubble gum.

**No flagpole?** — "It has parquet floors and red, white, and blue curtains with a matching red, white, and blue bedspread." — A D.C. interior designer describing the White House doghouse occupied by Rex Reagan.

**Theology dep't** — What with the boom in "electronic churches," some newcomers in the lucrative field are facing problems. Says

Ben Armstrong, director of National Religious Broadcasters, "Many clergymen who have not been trained in management and financing are faced with challenges in this area."

**Praise the Lord and pass the biscuits** — We were concerned when Oral Roberts said he would fast until he either made that \$8-million fund drive or went home to his Maker. But an aide explained he doesn't intend to starve to death. "He believes that you fast until you feel yourself in the presence of the Lord."

**A star is born** — Freddy Krueger, who rips up youngsters with his steel fingernails, is be-

coming big box office, with teenagers reportedly seeing him as the ultimate authority figure. To ensure his status, his studio will be letting loose with Freddy T-shirts, posters, pillow cases, and bubble gum.

**Good conditioning** — If you're looking to yuppify the tot, you can order an 1890s-style wicker high-chair. Be sure to leave the price tag on: \$550.

**How fitting can you get** — Richard "I'm no crook" Nixon, who didn't resign until he got a pardon, was given a "humanitarian" award by New York cops, who cited his "support for law and order and the police."

## Amnesty Internat'l documents Sri Lanka repression

**Sri Lanka: 'Disappearances', Amnesty International, 332 8th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001. \$6. Published September 1986.**

**BY MALIK MIAH**

Few people in the United States have ever heard of Sri Lanka — a small island-country off the southern coast of India.

Those who have, generally know it as a beautiful place for a vacation — to enjoy the lush interior, sandy beaches, and a year-round tropical climate.

This Sri Lanka, however, is nothing like the one workers, farmers, and others live in

### BOOK REVIEW

day-in and day-out. Life for the Tamil minority, especially, is far from being a holiday.

As this well-documented Amnesty International booklet shows, the Tamil people suffer national oppression, including torture and death, at the hands of the Sri Lankan military and para-military forces.

Since the early 1980s, the Sri Lankan government has carried out a systematic campaign against the Tamil minority, who are 18 percent of the 16 million Sri Lankan people. The Sinhala ethnic group is 74 percent of the population.

Amnesty's report centers on the issue of "disappearances." Since at least 1984, it states, scores of Tamils have "disappeared."

Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) won its independence from British colonial rule in 1948. The Tamil minority, however, was denied full equality even though they, along with the Sinhala majority, jointly led the independence movement.

Soon after independence the new Sinhala-dominated government adopted laws denying a section of the Tamil people (those called Indian Tamils) the right to vote and citizenship.

Other forms of discrimination emerged

as well. As a result, Tamils began pressing for autonomy in the northeastern part of the island, where a majority of them live. Some groups called for an independent "Eelam" — or Tamil homeland.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, a civil war between armed Tamil groups and the central government had developed. After a 1983 pogrom killed more than 2,000 Tamils, thousands of Tamil youths joined militant groups that now control most of the northern province.

Amnesty takes no side in the civil war. Moreover, the report states, "Amnesty International, as a matter of principle, condemns the torture or execution of prisoners by anyone, including opposition groups."

#### Government responsible for violence

While there is criticism of the armed Tamil groups, the report places the onus for violence on the central government.

It documents 272 cases of "disappeared" people — all but one a Tamil. It notes that there are probably many more "disappeared" than is revealed in the report. The 272 are cases of people arrested by members of the security forces that Amnesty had time to verify from eyewitnesses, relatives, and other sources.

The government, Amnesty explains, has conducted few official inquiries on the "disappeared" despite the evidence of foul play. "No members of the security forces," the report states, "are known to have been charged and tried for human rights abuses."

Many of the "disappeared," Amnesty notes, were "secretly shot in custody, or died under torture, their bodies disposed of in secret."

One example cited is of a man tortured in a Special Task Force camp — a unit of special police commandos — in March 1985:

"During the five days I was kept in the cell, I witnessed three deaths. When the inmates died, those who were conscious were asked to carry the corpses out and dig the grave to bury them. If there were more



**Tamil victim of Sri Lankan government. Report details use of torture, murder, and kidnapping against Tamil people.**

than two dead bodies, a rubber tyre was placed on top of them and burnt. The belongings were also burned with the bodies...."

Most of the "disappeared" are youths, particularly young Tamil men. Some 142 of the 272 are between the ages of 18 and 29; five are under 18.

In 1979 the government adopted the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which

suspended many basic democratic rights. Under the draconian PTA, the police, military, and the mostly-Sinhalese paramilitary Home Guards are free to harass and victimize Tamils — called "terrorists" — almost at will. Under this law, those arrested can be held incommunicado for up to 18 months at a time without access to lawyers or relatives.

Torture, the report also documents in detail, is a common form of brutality used by the police and military to force confessions. They include:

- prolonged hanging upside down while being beaten all over the body, sometimes for the duration of one night and sometimes with the head being tied in a bag in which chilies were burning, making the victim feel close to suffocating.

- prolonged beatings, especially on the soles of the feet while lying stretched out on a bench or while hanging by the knees from a pole; beatings on the genitals and other parts of the body with sticks, batons, and sand-filled plastic pipes.

- insertion of chili powder in the nostrils, mouth, and eyes and on the genitals.

- electric shocks.

- insertion of pins under fingernails and toenails and in the heels.

- insertion of iron rods in the anus.

- burning with cigarettes.

- mock or threatened executions."

*Sri Lanka: 'Disappearances'* is a valuable tool and source of information and a strong condemnation of the anti-Tamil policies of the Sri Lankan government. It deserves wide distribution.

## —10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE 32¢  
March 18, 1977

New evidence surfaces almost every week that the "natural gas shortage" this winter was a fraud — artificially contrived by the energy profiteers to force prices up and end government regulation.

The latest is the revelation that Tenneco — an energy giant with sales of \$5.6 billion in 1975 — has been illegally diverting gas since at least 1965 from the interstate market (where the price is federally regulated) to the intrastate market in Texas (where the price is not regulated).

The week before, a private report commissioned by gas utilities concluded that gas producers had failed to bring to market vast, proven, producible reserves of gas in the Gulf of Mexico. The utilities group — Associated Gas Distributors — had fully intended to cover up this discovery.

Only one thing can be said for certain about the "gas crisis" — that the American people have no way of knowing the real reserves of gas or the real cost of producing it.

The energy corporations lie. The government "regulators" cover for them. And congressional "investigations" produce talk and no results.

The truth can only be determined by opening the books of the energy trust to

scrutiny by trade unions and consumers. Each week's news adds to the urgency of this demand.

**THE MILITANT**  
Published in the Interests of the Working People  
March 19, 1962 Price 10¢

ALBANY, Ga., March 8 — The Albany office of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee reported this week that 163 Negroes registered to vote in Albany last month. This brings to 353 the number of Negroes who have registered since SNCC field secretaries came here in October.

SNCC field secretaries also organized vote drives in nearby Terrell County, where Negroes outnumber whites almost two to one. However, out of 2,858 registered voters in 1958, only 48 were Negroes. SNCC worker Charles Sherrod has been maintaining voter-registration classes in rural homes and has encouraged local citizens to take the initiative for registering more Negroes. Sherrod said that local Negroes "are greatly distressed at the slow progress of the U.S. Justice Department in following through on complaints of brutality, intimidation and harassment aimed at Terrell County Negroes who only want to exercise their rights as citizens and register and vote."

## Court to try 13-year-old Black

**BY MIKE WOODS**

ATLANTA — Barrow County Superior Court Judge James Brooks has ordered that Keyvin Jones, a 13-year-old Black youth, be tried as an adult on charges stemming from the death of his school principal.

The January 31 decision was protested by Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, who charged that the ruling was racially and politically motivated. Lowery called on federal and state authorities to investigate the case.

The youth, a fifth grader at Bethlehem Elementary School near Winder, Georgia, is charged with having stabbed principal Murry Kennedy twice with a fingernail file, resulting in Kennedy's death.

The incident took place November 19 in Kennedy's office. Sherry Lyle, Keyvin's mother, had asked for a meeting with Kennedy to complain about his punishment of her son two days earlier for fighting at school. Kennedy had made Jones sit in a chair and then paddled him across the

thighs. The student came home with bruises where he had been struck.

At the meeting, an argument broke out, and Kennedy called the police. When Lyle tried to leave with her son, Kennedy blocked the door and shoved Jones so hard he fell to the floor. Jones then stabbed Kennedy with the nail file.

The Ku Klux Klan has been agitating for the Black youth to be tried as an adult.

In backing this demand, the district attorney's office has portrayed the principal as a man who loved children and didn't like to punish anyone, while painting Jones a troublemaker.

At a February 1 news conference, Lowery described Jones as a victim of child abuse by the Barrow County school system. The SCLC receives complaints from Black parents throughout the state about mistreatment of children in the school system.

The SCLC has set up a legal defense fund for Jones.



## Court upholds promotion quotas

The fight to defend affirmative action programs has been strengthened by a February 25 Supreme Court ruling upholding the use of quotas in promotions and hiring to overcome discrimination suffered by Black workers.

A majority opinion in the 5-to-4 ruling stated that it was constitutional for judges to order employers to use strict racial quotas to overcome discrimination in job promotions. This is the first time that a court has ruled in favor of quotas for promotions as well as hiring.

The ruling upholds a lower court decision requiring Alabama to promote one Black state trooper for every white even when whites score higher on promotion tests.

In the majority opinion, Justice William Brennan wrote that the one-for-one requirement was properly imposed after the lower court judge "determined that strong measures were required in light of the [state's] long and shameful record of resistance and delay" to promoting Blacks on an equal footing with whites.

In 1972 a federal court ruled that Alabama's systematic refusal to hire Black troopers violated the Constitution. The court ordered Alabama to hire one Black for every white until Blacks were 25 percent of the department.

Twelve years later, after only four Blacks had been promoted, the court ordered that quotas be put into effect mandating one-for-one promotions for Blacks and whites as well as equal hiring.

Government lawyers argued in the Alabama case that the one-for-one quota "unnecessarily and severely burdens innocent" white troopers.

But history has shown that without quotas and preferential treatment, Blacks are "severely" burdened by discrimination. Without hiring, training, and promotion quotas, Blacks are relegated to the lowest-paid, dirtiest, and most menial jobs.

Low wages and poor working conditions, which are more often meted out to Black, women, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian, and undocumented workers, drag down the pay and conditions of all workers.

This decision, the third in the past two years to uphold racial quotas, underscored the Reagan administration's failure after six years to make significant headway in rolling back widespread acceptance and support for preferential treatment to combat race and sex discrimination.

Affirmative action was codified in law as a result of the victory of the massive civil rights movement. The women's rights movement, in turn, expanded and strengthened the fight for affirmative action measures. As a result, preferential treatment of the most oppressed — a new conquest previously considered unthinkable — was institutionalized to one degree or another in many industries, in education, and in government employment.

Today, as the employers drive hard to force down



wages, gut longstanding work rules, and weaken the unions, they find affirmative action an obstacle to moving as fast and as far as they want to.

By aggressively championing the demands of the most oppressed workers, the unions can strengthen solidarity among all working people. This makes it harder for the employers to use divisions based on race and sex in their assault on the unions.

That's why the labor movement has an important stake in fighting to strengthen and expand affirmative action programs.

## Right to political asylum

Continued from front page

Some of the most outrageous denials of political asylum in recent years have concerned refugees from such countries as El Salvador and Guatemala. Despite the wealth of evidence that the U.S.-backed regimes of those countries routinely torture, "disappear," and murder opponents of their tyranny, the U.S. government has refused to grant asylum to most Salvadorans or Guatemalans, deporting many back to the executioners in those governments.

Charges that these immigrants are deliberately sent back to their deaths were confirmed recently in testimony by Frank Varelli, a former FBI agent. Varelli says he was sent by the FBI to El Salvador to meet with that country's National Guard. "While there, the National Guard gave me a copy of their 'death squad' list," he says.

Varelli passed the list on to the FBI. The FBI told Varelli to regularly report to the National Guard the names of Salvadorans deported from the United States. Many such deportees are known to be kidnapped upon their arrival in that country, and some of them are killed.

Popular revulsion in this country for the Salvadoran regime and for aid given to it by the U.S. government has deepened support for the right to political asylum. This support increased during the 1986 trial of eight activists for the "crime" of helping Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees find church sanctuary from deportation.

Working people were repelled by the government's re-

fusal to grant such refugees asylum and by its attempt to imprison those aiding them. Outrage grew when the trial revealed government use of informers in the sanctuary movement to entrap refugees and those in solidarity with them.

The sanctuary trial helped expose Washington's selective use of political asylum. The government rolls out the red carpet to welcome to this country butchers from dictatorships around the world. But for the butchers' victims — most of whom are workers and peasants — it's a different story. The government denies them asylum and seeks to deport them because they are living witnesses to the terror imposed in their native countries by regimes loyal to Washington. Washington doesn't want them expressing their political views here in the United States and sharing their experiences with other working people.

Deportation has historically been used against workers in this country who have ideas that the U.S. government does not like. This is the issue in the case of Socialist Workers Party member Héctor Marroquín, whom the INS has been trying to deport for a decade. The INS openly states that this Mexican-born worker should be expelled from the country because of his Marxist ideas.

The new Supreme Court ruling provides an important weapon in the ongoing fight against deportations and for the right to political asylum — not only for the thousands being hounded by the INS today, but for all U.S. working people.

## Why women workers get lower wages than men

BY MARGARET JAYKO

A recent study by the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the labor force "remains sharply segregated by sex." According to another study, nearly half of all women and 70 percent of all men are employed in occupations where at least 80 percent of their coworkers are of the same sex.

Moreover, even these figures underestimate the degree of sex segregation, since they don't reflect segregation in subcategories of specific occupations or workplaces.

There is also a large gap between the average wages of male and female workers. In 1984, women who worked

## LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

full time earned about 64 percent of what men earned. While 45 percent of men who worked full time in 1984 earned more than \$25,000, only 13 percent of female full-time workers earned that amount.

One of the most pernicious aspects of women's oppression under capitalism is the low — and unequal — wages women are paid. And it contributes to dragging down the wages of all workers, male and female.

What is the relationship between this wage inequality and job segregation? And how can equal wages be won?

Whenever working people protest the low level of women's wages, the employers claim that mysterious "market forces" dictate wages. Since women "choose" to work in jobs that "traditionally" pay less, the bosses say, it's certainly not their fault that women bring home such puny paychecks.

In response, supporters of women's rights in the labor movement often put forward the notion that the wage gap is caused by job segregation. The way to overcome this, they say, is to demand "equal pay for work of comparable value."

An article in the April 5, 1986, *AFL-CIO American Federationist*, for example, called for "job evaluations that take into account an individual's responsibility, knowledge, skills required and work environment regardless of sex. Pay scales would then be restructured to reflect true job values rather than institutionalized sex discrimination."

This approach to the fight for equal pay assumes that women's low wages are the result of sex segregation in the labor market. But the opposite is actually the case. Segregating jobs by sex originates with the effort by employers to profit from cheap female labor.

This false idea is based on another misconception — that what workers get paid is related to the value of what they do or produce.

How, then, are wages determined?

The value of every commodity — that is, something produced to be exchanged in the marketplace — is determined by the quantity of labor time that society needs on the average to produce it.

Labor power — the ability of workers to work — is also a commodity under capitalism. It is bought and sold on the "labor market."

The value of workers' labor power — which regulates what workers receive in wages — is determined by what it costs to feed, clothe, house, transport, train, and reproduce a worker. In other words, workers' wages are linked to the amount of labor involved in producing and reproducing a worker, just like the price of a car is linked to the labor time embodied in building it.

"But there are some peculiar features that distinguish the value of the laboring power . . . from the values of all other commodities," explained Karl Marx in his 1865 work *Value, Price and Profit*. "The value of the laboring power is formed by two elements — the one merely physical, the other historical or social."

That is, the value of labor power is not just the minimum material needs necessary for workers to maintain and reproduce themselves so that the capitalist has another generation to exploit. The value of labor power "is in every country determined by a traditional standard of life," said Marx.

This includes "the satisfaction of certain wants springing up from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared up," he explained. Previous social gains, level of union organization, struggles by working people and their allies to better their conditions — all these are part of the "social and historical" element that determines the value of labor power.

Because women for centuries have been the oppressed sex, the value of their labor power is lower than that of male workers. That's why, on the average, the price they receive for their labor is less.

Job segregation along gender lines results from this lower value of women's labor power. It flows from the fact that — despite the advances of recent years — women remain economically dependent on men.

Next week, we'll take a closer look at why this is true. And we'll see the crucial role that affirmative action plays in raising the value of women's labor power.



# Workers need hourly pay raise, not lump-sum bonus

BY MARK EMANATION

In January 5,000 Montreal garment workers won a victory in a month-long strike. That inspiring struggle contains important lessons for workers in the United States.

The Canadian garment bosses tried to get Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU)

## UNION TALK

members to accept lump-sum bonuses instead of pay raises when their contract came due. The employers also wanted to get rid of overtime pay.

But the workers said no to the takebacks and waged a militant, successful strike that closed 150 Montreal shops.

The unionists finally forced the bosses to drop their overtime demand and won pay increases totaling 85 cents an hour over a three-year contract.

In 1985 many ACTWU members in the United States were forced to accept lump-sum bonuses instead of pay raises and to make other concessions in contract negotiations. Our hourly wages have been frozen ever since.

It is now becoming clear how big a setback we suffered.

I worked at Leon Clothing, one of Boston's largest garment shops. The company's owner said he didn't

make enough money last year and demanded in December that we reopen the contract. We were told we had to give up the three upcoming holidays, a week's vacation, and the paltry \$600 lump-sum bonus check that was due the next week. The total package amounted to \$1,000.

The owner threatened to close up shop immediately if we didn't give in.

Workers responded with shock and anger to the threats since we don't get paid much to begin with.

More than 150 of us met with the owner in the shop December 11. The meeting was conducted in Spanish, Chinese, Greek, Italian, and English so everyone could participate.

The owner made an hour-long speech, referring to us as "children who won't get a good Christmas present" but who could hold onto our jobs if we agreed to his demands. The so-called "Christmas present" was the lump-sum payment we were due.

When lump-sum bonuses were first proposed instead of pay raises in 1985, many thought it would be a good idea to get an extra check at holiday time. But then the first check came, and we got much less than \$500 since taxes were taken out.

After we forced the owner and his foreman to leave the meeting, the workers had a three-hour discussion. For many, it was the first real union meeting.

Speaker after speaker blasted the lump-sum bonuses as

a scam. An older stitcher said, "I've worked here for years. I work through my breaks. He's gotten rich from my work. He calls it a bonus. It's not a bonus, it's my money."

She was right. It is our money, money we should have been getting all along in the form of an hourly wage increase. Inflation has gone up the whole time that our wages have been frozen.

Too much had been given up over the years for the workers to accept this attack without a fight. Even though we all needed a job, we voted 99 percent to demand what was due.

When the owner heard our decision, he said he was keeping the money and shut the doors to the plant.

That was a month and half ago, and we haven't seen a penny.

If the plant reopens, it will be a fight to keep it a union shop. It will also be a fight to get all of us rehired. Many, however, still feel it was better to have said no to the concessions no matter what the outcome.

The Montreal strike shows what a unified response from the membership can do to halt the employers' attacks. It is an important example for the ACTWU membership in this country to draw on when the next contract comes due.

Mark Emanation is a member of ACTWU Local 4HD.

## LETTERS

### Workers and farmers

I was born on a farm here in the San Joaquin Valley, near Fresno, California. My brothers are still in the farming business.

Myself, I'm a butcher in a slaughterhouse called Harris Meat Company. I've worked here for 20 years. I see the struggle going on with the worker and the farmer, enjoy your magazine.

I would like a pamphlet on the Hormel strike. Maybe some of my coworkers would be interested. Enjoying reading your articles on "Learning About Socialism" about the Russian system compared to capitalism.

K.N.  
Lemoore, California

### GI movement

Just a note to suggest that in tandem with any other review about the film *Platoon*, the *Militant* run an article about the GI movement during the Vietnam War.

Few people know the scope of it — for example, the many GI antiwar papers both in Vietnam and on bases all over the United States. And the huge political impact that it had on ending the war.

B.M.  
Morgantown, West Virginia

### Justice for Bruce!

The murderers of teenager Jimmy Lee Bruce have yet to be indicted.

"We want justice, and we want it now!" was the demand of a February 9 rally in Goshen, New York, that took place in front of Orange County District Attorney Frank Phillips' office.

It has been two months since an off-duty cop killed Bruce by using a deadly chokehold while another off-duty cop watched and kept others from the victim. Both were moonlighting as security guards at a theater in Wallkill when Bruce supposedly caused a "disturbance."

Maude Bruce, Jimmy Lee's mother and president of the Ellen-ville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, noted the repeated postponements of the convening of a grand jury — once because the court stenographer was sick! She also announced that noted civil rights lawyer C. Vernon Mason, the attorney for one of the survivors of the racist attack in Howard Beach, had been retained to handle the case.

A previous demonstration of 400 in nearby Middletown, 4,000 in Howard Beach, and 30,000 in Forsyth County, Georgia, has

opened people's eyes to the racism that exists in this country. And they are ready to fight back.

Sam Chetta  
New Paltz, New York

### Forsyth County

Sandy Drayton, president of the West Virginia National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was one of the first to arrive in Cumming, Georgia, for January's historic march against racism. He gave an eyewitness account at the Charleston Militant Labor Forum.

The highpoint, he said, was the sight of 30,000 people pouring into Cumming from all directions in cars, church and private buses, donated taxi cabs, and on foot.

"In Cumming, whites and Blacks alike were linked hand in hand, arm in arm together. We found there was power in unity and solidarity. All our destinies were tied together. We can change racism."

Drayton reported seeing men, women, and children on the sidelines carrying signs and wearing the hoods of the Ku Klux Klan.

But he also saw many people waving and carrying signs of welcome. One read, "I hope that you are able to make change with us."

Another bystander with tape placed over his mouth to protest the atmosphere of intimidation carried a sign saying, "I'm from Forsyth County, too."

Juliette Montauk  
Charleston, West Virginia

### To the point

I just finished reading your publication for the first time and was impressed with its reporting — clean, accurate, to the point, and no sweeping rhetoric! I also like the diversity of coverage.

M.K.  
Detroit, Michigan

### 'Red Devils'

During the McCarthy period in the 1950s, the high school athletic teams in East Jordan, Michigan, lost their name, "The Crimson Tide," because some people felt it was too suggestive of the "Red Menace."

Now the teams are fighting to keep the name "Red Devils." A group of citizens say they're concerned that it has a satanic meaning and gives the town a bad image.

A group of ministers collected 200 signatures on petitions demanding the name, and devilish logo, be dropped. Students coun-

tered with 500 petitions in favor of keeping the name.

The students did accept a school board compromise. The logo will be redrawn so the devil looks more impish and less satanic.

Howard Mayhew  
Whiting, New Jersey

### 'Friends of labor'

As someone who lived in Chicago during the 1983 mayoral campaign, I look forward to the *Militant's* coverage of the upcoming race, and the lessons it holds for genuine independent labor political action.

The article "Who is 'labor's friend' in Chicago?" in the February 20 *Militant* exposes the fraudulent claim of Democratic incumbent Harold Washington that he is such a "friend."

But the article, while alluding to the city's February 24 Democratic primary, fails to mention Washington's principal opponent, former Democratic mayor Jane Byrne, who also makes demagogic claims to be for working people, and who pitches this appeal with thinly concealed racism in attempting to win the "white vote."

Her service to the bosses' divide-and-rule schemes further explains the dead end for working people represented by the Democratic Party. In exposing the sham of Washington's pro-labor facade, to omit reference to Byrne's campaign imbalanced an otherwise hard-hitting article.

Jon Hillson  
Boston, Massachusetts

### Business of health care

Pittsburgh is an international center for human organ transplants. The local media treats this as a constant source of human-interest stories. The latest is a great example of how health care is a business in a capitalist country.

Ronnie DeSillers is seven years old. He needs a new liver. Friends were raising money for the operation. Four thousand dollars raised by school kids was stolen. This became big news.

Donations poured in from concerned people. Even President Reagan, what a guy, chipped in \$1,000. The boy was flown here for the operation.

What I find gross about this story, though, is that Children's Hospital would not even put the boy on a waiting list until he came



up with \$162,000. Cash in advance, or die!

Ronnie is from south Florida. I'm reminded of another story from that area a couple of years ago.

A guy had a bad accident and needed a brain operation. His friends were raising money, too. Their initial idea, however, shows what health care could be.

"We were going to put him on a boat," a friend was telling the TV cameras, "to Cuba. Everybody knows you get free treatment down there."

Michael Pennock  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### Slave owner

While reading some articles published for Black history month, I ran across this story:

The U.S. minister to Nicaragua from 1854-56 was Col. John Hill Wheeler. During this time, he was also a slave owner in North Carolina. Three of his slaves were Jane Johnson and her two children.

In the summer of 1855, while mercenary William Walker was marching into Nicaragua, Colonel Wheeler took his slaves with him on a trip to Philadelphia, where he warned Johnson not to talk with any other Blacks.

But porters at the hotel in which they were staying contacted the local vigilante committee. A committee member told Johnson she was free under Pennsylvania law.

Wheeler took Johnson to court, where she testified on her own behalf. While the verdict was pend-

ing, members of the Female Anti-slavery Society surrounded Johnson to prevent federal marshals from arresting her under the Fugitive Slave Act.

Johnson won the case for her freedom and that of her children.

Janet Post  
Portland, Oregon

### Biweekly

The newspaper should be biweekly; too much information to absorb.

R.F.  
Allston, Massachusetts

### Stacked deck

When I was arrested the cops said I was lying. When I went to my pretrial hearing, the judge said I was lying. When I went to trial the jury was convinced I was lying due to the fact that the police never lie and never tamper with evidence.

Here in prison when I get a misbehavior report, every time I've gone to one of those hearings and explained what actually happened, I am "guilty, based on the officer's written report," because everyone knows cops don't lie.

Did you know that?  
A prisoner  
Attica, New York

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.



## Stop deportation of Palestinians!

### U.S. gov't victimizes immigrants for their political ideas

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

LOS ANGELES — A public meeting here February 21 greeted eight Palestinians and a Kenyan on their release from prison. The nine are charged under provisions of the reactionary McCarran-Walter Act with being supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is seeking their deportation.

Speaking on behalf of the nine, Michel Shehadeh thanked the audience of more than 100 at the United Methodist Church for "wonderful and effective support that resulted in our release."

"If they succeed with Arabs — Latinos, Asians, and all who dissent with Reagan will be targeted next," Shehadeh added.

One of the defense attorneys, Dan Stormer, called the case "a direct attempt by the government to limit the political thought of citizens and noncitizens."

Brian Hudson, also a defense attorney, outlined the contents of a secret memorandum revealing a plan by several government agencies to further curb the political rights of immigrants. Hudson pointed out that the steps taken against the nine closely parallel those proposed in the document.

Antonio Rodriguez, another lawyer for the defense, told how "Operation Wetback" was used in the 1950s in "an attempt to decapitate the trade union movement in the Mexican-American community" through deportations to Mexico. "This case should be used to put the McCarran-Walter Act on trial," Rodriguez added.

Speaking on behalf of the Japanese-American Citizens League, George Ogawa said, "Japanese-Americans are very familiar with this sort of thing," referring to their

internment in concentration camps during World War II.

A representative of the Arab-American Students Association said the government "started with the Arab-American community because they are the weak link in the chain of minorities."

An Arab-American member of the student senate at the University of California at Long Beach, where three of those arrested were enrolled, reported the student senate had adopted a resolution unanimously supporting the prisoners. Students at UCLB organized two vigils at Terminal Island prison, circulated petitions on campus, sent protest postcards to immigration service and FBI officials, called for a congressional investigation, demanded exposure of complicity of University administrators with the arrests, and participated in a vigil at a hearing at the Federal Building.

Some 300 demonstrators turned out for the February 17 vigil outside a hearing where an immigration judge refused a request by the Immigration and Naturalization Service that the prisoners be denied bail.

Other speakers included City Councilman Robert Farrell, Harriet Katz of Jews United for Peace, and Tony Hall of the Committee for Justice. The Committee for Justice is widely publicizing the facts in the case.

It was announced that congressmen Mervyn Dymally and John Conyers had denounced the actions against the nine immigrants and that the INS had denied a request by Black Congressional Caucus head Dymally to attend the hearing.

Tony Saidy of the American-Arab Anti-



Militant/Jean Savage

Three hundred demonstrators protested imprisonment of nine Palestinian-rights supporters who have since been released. Government seeks to deport them.

Discrimination Committee (ADC) expressed skepticism about Justice Department claims that the arrests had been initiated by local INS authorities.

"Why did the FBI install a spy?" Saidy asked, referring to an FBI informer who

lived next door to one of the Palestinians for several months. "This is the same FBI that has made no progress on the Alex Odeh case." Odeh was an ADC leader who was murdered by a terrorist bomb in nearby Orange County in October 1985.

## Calif: Watsonville cannery workers vote up contract



Militant

Watsonville cannery workers were on strike for 19 months.

BY JEFF JONES

WATSONVILLE, Calif. — On March 11, more than 500 cannery workers, members of Teamsters Local 912, voted overwhelmingly to accept a contract offer ending their 19-month-long strike at Watsonville Canning Co. The mostly female, Chicano, and Mexican members of Local 912 returned to work the next day.

On March 6, the unionists had voted to reject a contract proposal that would have forced them to work years in the plant before receiving full medical coverage.

Three days later the company restored the medical benefits and the contract was rapidly approved.

Only a handful of union members crossed the picket lines during the strike. A few hundred scabs were hired by the company.

The prevailing wage was \$7.05 an hour when the strike, which initially involved two packinghouses, began in September 1985.

Workers at Shaw Frozen Foods, also members of Local 912, took wage cuts to \$5.85 an hour when they settled and returned to work a year ago. Watsonville's owner demanded bigger cuts, to \$5.15 an hour. The workers refused to go along.

In December 1986 Watsonville owner Mort Console filed for bankruptcy. His creditors, made up of a consortium of growers, organized a new corporation called NorCal. The growers need a packing plant to process the crops that are beginning to be harvested.

NorCal's contract offer met the \$5.85 wage that has been standard in the vegetable packing industry here since the Shaw settlement. NorCal also agreed to let the scabs go and rehire strikers, based on Watsonville Canning seniority, and to recognize Local 912.

But NorCal originally demanded that the returning strikers be considered new employees for determining their medical benefits. Due to the seasonal nature of the work, it would take three years for the majority of the work force to accrue enough seniority to receive medical coverage.

The strikers weren't ready to accept the loss of medical benefits. "My kids haven't been to a doctor in a year and a half," said Ingrida Primera, a seven-year employee of Watsonville Canning. "Now they have to wait another three years."

The Teamsters officials warned that strike benefits of \$55 a week were ending and that NorCal considered this its final offer. A motion to postpone the ratification vote for one week and to renegotiate on medical coverage was passed, however, 283 to 193.

NorCal announced later that day that if the union didn't accept the offer by March 8 it would be withdrawn and applications for all positions would be taken the following morning. A demonstration of 150 strikers and supporters greeted the few who responded to NorCal's hiring offer.

## Iowa meat-packers strike Morrell in face of harassment campaign

BY ANDREA BARON

SIOUX CITY, Iowa — Picket lines went up in the early morning March 9 outside the John Morrell & Co. meat-packing plant here after members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1142 voted to strike the facility.

The vote was taken after meat-packers on the second shift, angered over the company's firing of one of their coworkers, walked off the job March 6.

Local 1142 President Ron Derochie said the strike was called because 37 workers were suspended for the "unauthorized" walkout.

"The union staged the walkout," Derochie said, "to protest the suspension of an employee for an alleged act of vandalism inside the plant." The union says there is no proof that vandalism occurred.

This worker was one of a number of

union members fired or suspended after being accused of "sabotage" in the plant.

Local 1142 members voted down a proposed concession contract in February that would have reduced wages from \$8.75 an hour to \$7.75 an hour. At the same meeting, the membership accepted the local leadership's recommendation that they continue working without a contract.

Tensions have been running high at the Sioux City plant ever since. Morrell management has gone on a campaign of harassment, claiming workers are sabotaging production.

Derochie explained that the union has consistently refused to condone acts of violence and has warned its members against illegal activity.

Andrea Baron is a member of UFCW Local 271 in Omaha, Nebraska.