

Jan. 18 action in N.Y. to target racist attacks

All opponents of racist violence should join in and help build the January 18 March for Justice in New York City. The march will start from City Hall at 1:00 p.m.

The protest action is being organized by an array of trade union officials, clergy and community leaders, and legislators. Scheduled to coincide with the holiday honoring slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., the march will protest racist at-

EDITORIAL

tacks on Blacks in the mostly white Howard Beach and Bensonhurst neighborhoods. It will also demand justice for the recent victims of police killings in the city.

Three young white thugs, Scott Kern, Jason Ladone, and Jon Lester, were convicted last month of second-degree manslaughter for leading the Dec. 19, 1986, lynch mob attack on three Blacks in which one, Michael Griffith, was killed.

A fourth defendant, Michael Pirone, was acquitted of all charges against him. Seven other participants in the attack will face legal proceedings on lesser charges this spring.

The march, which comes just days before the scheduled sentencing of the three convicted attackers, can be the first in a campaign of broad protest actions to force government authorities and the courts to impose on them the maximum penalty the law allows — 15 years imprisonment.

Four days after the Howard Beach verdict, two Blacks — Steven and Sylvester LaMont — were assaulted by nearly a dozen white thugs in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn. They were attacked with sticks, a marble slab, and a knife. One of the attackers yelled, "This is our Howard Beach!"

Police have arrested only two of those involved in the attack. All of the attackers should be rounded up, convicted, and given the maximum penalty.



Protest in Howard Beach shortly after December 1986 lynching of Michael Griffith. Actions continue demanding maximum penalties for killers, end to racist violence.

The manslaughter conviction of the Howard Beach thugs was won through the persistent protests that occurred over the duration of the trial. These protests were of decisive importance at each critical turning point in the case.

From the start the protests prevented the cops from sweeping the investigation of the case under the rug, as has happened in so many other attacks on Blacks. And when Queens County District Attorney John Santucci stonewalled the prosecution of the case, massive protests forced Gov. Mario Cuomo to appoint a special state prosecutor, Charles Hynes.

To provide the most effective deterrent against this kind of lynch attack, those guilty should have been convicted of mur-

der. The difference between murder and manslaughter is whether there is intent to kill. And the intent of the lynch mob was crystal clear: a car with four Blacks broke down on the highway near the virtually all-white enclave of Howard Beach. Three of the Blacks decided to walk to a nearby pizzeria to get assistance.

Someone among a bunch of young whites at a nearby party said, "There's some niggers in the pizza parlor — lets go kill them." According to eyewitnesses the gang was armed with a baseball bat, a tire iron, and tree limbs.

Cedric Sandiford and Timothy Grimes were beaten severely. Griffith was killed by an oncoming car as he was forced onto a

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Israeli repression stirs int'l outrage

BY HARRY RING

Faced with a massive uprising of the Palestinian people, the Israeli government has responded with escalating repression, highlighted by a criminal move to deport nine people. They were arbitrarily branded as ringleaders of the rebellion.

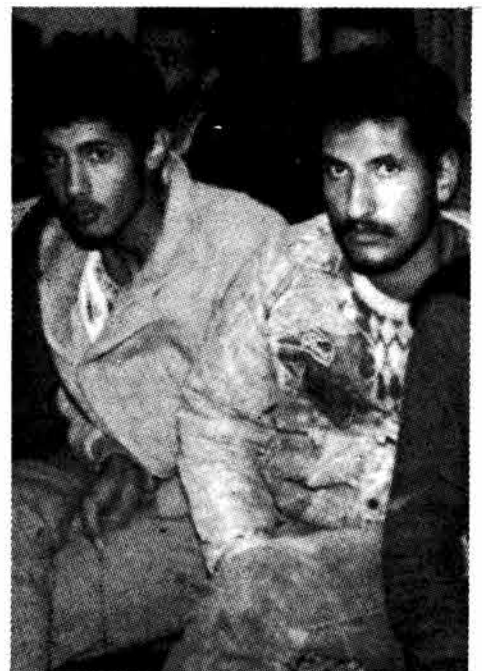
It was reported January 4 that four of the nine, who are jailed in the Gaza Strip, have gone on a hunger strike.

Felicia Langer, an Israeli lawyer who is representing three of the prisoners, said they would rather fast "until the end" than accept deportation from their homeland.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told a U.S. television audience that his government had decided on the deportations because Israeli law does not provide for executions.

The deportation order, a flagrant violation of international law, further exposes the extreme measures the Israeli rulers are ready to take to maintain their "iron fist" rule over the Palestinian people. Even Washington, long the principal mentor of the Israeli regime, deemed it expedient to take its distance from the reactionary move. On January 5, the U.S. delegate to the United Nations Security Council joined in a unanimous vote for a resolution calling on Israel to drop the deportations.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government said that since the current wave of Palestinian protest erupted, 1,200 people have been jailed. The number was put at 2,500 by the Palestine Press Service, a Jerusalem-based



Palestinian youth, arrested for protesting occupation, await trial in Israeli court.

news agency with a network of correspondents throughout the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In Gaza and the West Bank, military judges are meting out jail sentences and fines on an assembly-line basis.

The "trials" are such a mockery of due process that Israeli and Palestinian attorneys for the defendants are boycotting the proceedings rather than give legitimacy to them.

U.S. government observers attended some of the trials and quickly pronounced them "fair."

But a *Washington Post* dispatch from Gaza City noted that the wheels of military justice "moved swiftly." The report de-

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U.S. war in Nicaragua takes big toll

BY LARRY SEIGLE

MUELLE DE LOS BUEYES, Nicaragua — The coming year will be a tough one, President Daniel Ortega told Nicaraguans on New Year's Eve. But he pledged that the revolution that began in 1979 with the overthrow of the Somoza tyranny will not give up the ground it has conquered.

"No one will ever surrender here, because this is a people that knows what it is

defending. The people are not going to let the conquests of July 19, 1979, be snatched away from them," he said.

The Sandinista government will keep on fighting for "an honorable peace" in 1988, Ortega said. It will continue to press for implementation of the Central America peace accords in order to seek an end to the war.

The accords were signed by the presi-

dents of the five Central American countries meeting in Guatemala last August.

The continuously mounting human and economic cost of the war weighs heavily on Nicaragua. The toll of the war, combined with the effects of the crisis of the world capitalist economy, makes major progress toward economic development of the country impossible under current conditions.

Ortega delivered his New Year's message, which was later televised, to several hundred local residents gathered on a hill here overlooking a strategic bridge on the La Rama highway, in southeastern Nicaragua. The contras had tried without success to destroy the bridge in a major attack on this town in October.

Blowing up the bridge would have severed the only land connection between the Pacific Coast and the Atlantic Coast port of Bluefields. The attack was repelled by reserve and militia units, backed up by army troops.

The contra army has been defeated strategically. This means that, from the military standpoint, there is no possibility that the contras can defeat Nicaragua's army. But being defeated in strategic terms

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Justice Dept. to appeal court ruling against FBI spying

BY FRED FELDMAN

NEW YORK — Attorneys for the U.S. Justice Department filed notice January 4 that the government intends to appeal a federal court ruling in the lawsuit brought against the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government police agencies by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. The suit, filed in 1973, led to the exposure of the FBI's use of burglaries, paid informers, poison pen letters, cooked-up documents, and other criminal operations to disrupt

the socialist groups.

In August 1986 Judge Thomas Griesa held that the FBI's spying and disruption against these organizations had violated basic constitutional rights. These included the constitutional right of privacy that, he held, had been flouted by the burglaries, wiretaps, and planting of informers. The government was ordered to pay \$264,000 in damages to the plaintiffs.

Based on his ruling, Griesa issued an injunction in August 1987 barring govern-

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'Militant' supporters will launch nine-week renewal campaign

BY NORTON SANDLER

Supporters of the *Militant*, the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazine *New International* will be organizing a nine-week subscription renewal campaign this winter. This effort will run from January 16 through March 19.

Our new readers have received or will soon receive several notices encouraging you to resubscribe to the *Militant*. The same will be true for new *PM* subscribers. Local distributors will also be contacting you about renewing your subscriptions.

Three large circulation drives

Since the fall of 1986, our distributors have participated in three successful circulation drives. These efforts have resulted in an expansion of the long-term readership of the *Militant* and *PM*.

A combined total of 8,648 *Militant* and *PM* subscriptions and single copies of *New International* were sold during the recent fall 1987 drive.

Supporters reported that allowing time for political discussion was key to winning these readers. This was true for subscriptions sold to coworkers on the job, in working-class communities, at factory gates, on campuses, and in high schools.

Interest in the periodicals is growing, and we have every reason to believe that talking to subscribers after they have read several issues will provide the basis for even better discussions.

A good example of this took place in Newark, New Jersey, near the end of the fall campaign when supporters there began contacting subscribers. Several extended their subscriptions. The effort also resulted in a few of these workers and students beginning to attend events sponsored by *Militant* and *PM* supporters.

Big circulation drives are an essential first step to increasing the regular long-term readership of the periodicals. By long-term reader we mean someone who has subscribed for a longer period than our introductory offers.

Most people buy a subscription because they are interested in one or more articles in a particular issue. Sometimes a person will subscribe initially because they like the *Militant* or *PM*'s coverage of a particular struggle they are involved in.

After reading the periodical for a while, many decide they are not interested in receiving it regularly.

But others find the *Militant* and *PM* an invaluable source of news and analysis and become convinced to renew. Over time these readers get a deeper understanding of the major questions facing working people in this country and around the world. They begin to look to the *Militant* and *PM* for political direction.

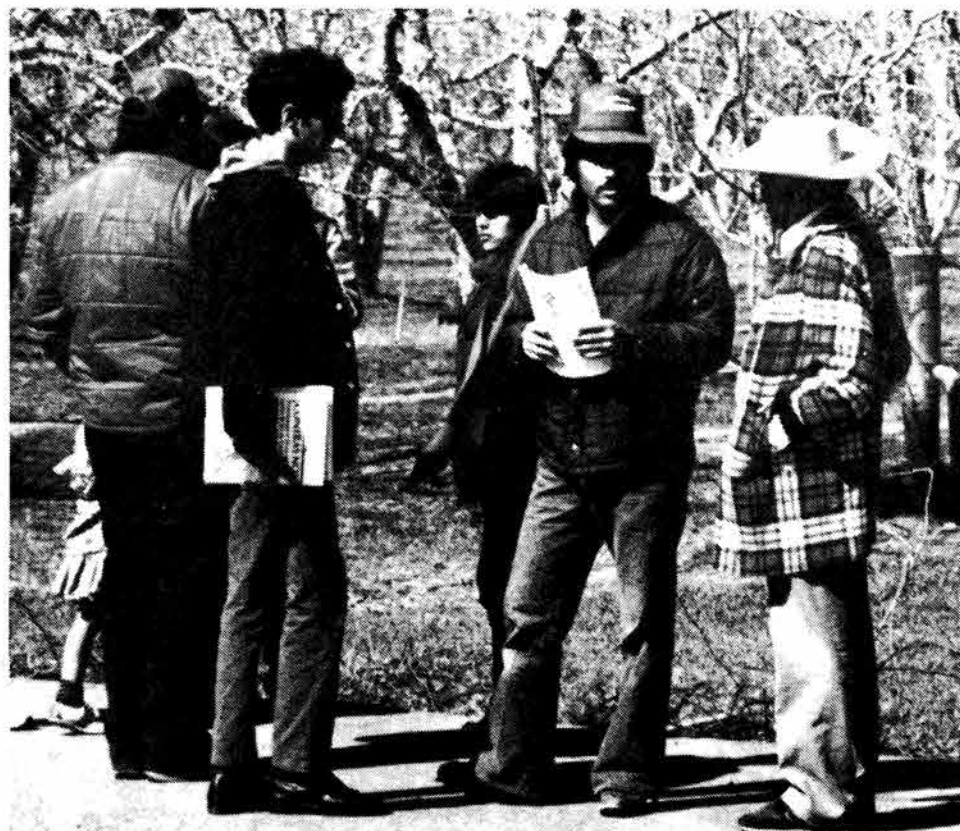
Evolution of subscription base

In July 1986, the long-term subscription base of the *Militant*, which had been in decline for several years, stood at 1,100. The *PM* base was 141.

Out of the 6,295 subscriptions that will be mailed out from our New York office this week, 1,873 are long-term. Of the 1,909 *PM* subs mailed out, 317 are long-term. Additional subscriptions are mailed to readers in several countries by distributors in London, and in Sydney, Australia.

Supporters can see from these figures that their efforts during the circulation drives and renewal campaigns play an important role in expanding the long-term readership of the periodicals.

With a big effort, the *Militant* subscrip-



Militant
Farm workers in Washington State looking over an issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*. During renewal campaign, supporters will be discussing politics with unionists, students, and others who have been reading the *Militant*, *PM*, and *New International*.

tion base can grow to between 2,300 and 2,500 by the end of 1988. The *PM* base can go over 500 by the year's end.

Role our distributors play

Since last June, the *Militant* business office in New York has received an average of 40 to 50 *Militant* subscription renewals each week. Almost all of them come from the reminder notices that are stuffed in the paper every week.

Experience has shown that when our distributors go on a renewal campaign, the number of renewals we receive each week goes up.

Here's how we propose to organize the renewal campaign.

- We want to contact everyone who purchased a subscription last fall at least once, and possibly more than once, about renewing.

In the past renewal efforts, we have found that most people can be visited in person or reached by phone or mail.

On campuses, where it is not uncommon for students to move between semesters, many can be recontacted through the process of setting up a table with the periodicals and Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

During the fall, important strides were made in expanding the international readership of the *Militant*, *PM*, and *New International*, and we anticipate that a substantial number of these readers will also be convinced to resubscribe.

- A collective effort by our supporters was key to the success of the fall drive. A similar approach should be taken to the renewal drive. Last winter supporters found that establishing renewal committees in each local area facilitated their efforts. Most

areas organized calling or other renewal work in teams several nights each week, with a special push on Saturdays.

The renewal effort also provides an important opportunity to get back to plant gates, campuses, and working-class communities in the region, where many subscriptions were sold last fall.

During the drive, trade unionists will be talking to their coworkers who bought subscriptions during the fall.

New International

Last fall, important progress was also registered in selling *New International* to workers, farmers, students, and other political activists.

Articles in *New International* go into more depth on topics covered in the *Militant* and will be of special interest to many readers. Having discussions about the articles in *New International* will be a boost to the renewal campaign.

The current issue, No. 6, contains "Cuba: a Historic Moment, Two Speeches by Fidel Castro" and articles titled, "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop," "Land, Labor, and the Canadian Revolution," and the "FBI's 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation."

Those who don't already have this issue can get \$3 off the cover price by purchasing a subscription of six months or longer to the *Militant*. Readers can also purchase the first five issues of *New International* for \$15.

Anyone interested in helping on the renewal drive — either by extending your own subscription or helping to convince others to extend theirs — can contact our distributors listed on page 12 or the *Militant* and *PM* business office in New York.

Gov't will appeal FBI spy ruling

Continued from front page

ment agencies from making any use of the mountain of files it had illegally accumulated on the SWP and YSA. The injunction specifically barred any use of membership lists or other items that mention members of the two organizations by name.

On November 5 Griesa signed a judgment formally putting his ruling and injunction into effect. The government was given 60 days to file notice of its decision to appeal the ruling. The notice of appeal was filed on the last day of this period.

The Justice Department, headed by Attorney General Edwin Meese, now has 10 days in which to file a statement of the is-

sues it plans to raise in attempting to overturn Griesa's ruling.

In several cities supporters of the Political Rights Defense Fund, which has been helping to publicize the suit and raise money for legal expenses since 1973, immediately announced rallies to respond to the government's move to challenge the decision.

Rallies will be held in Boston and Detroit on January 30, and in Hartford, Connecticut, on February 19. The Detroit rally will be held at the headquarters of United Auto Workers Local 600 and is being co-sponsored by the PRDF, American Civil Liberties Union, and National Lawyers Guild.

The Militant tells the truth — Subscribe today!

"There is no doubt the Militant is doing an excellent job."

—Dennis Brutus



Brutus, exiled South African poet and leading anti-apartheid activist.

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SPECIAL OFFER

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Brooklyn march hits racist violence

BY MIKE SHUR

NEW YORK — The chant "Whose streets? Our streets!" rang out as nearly 500 antiracist protesters marched through the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn on January 2. The demonstration in the largely white neighborhood was called to protest the assault by a gang of white youths on two Black men Christmas night.

The victims of the attack are two unemployed brothers, Sylvester and Steven LaMont. They were collecting empty soda cans and bottles in Bath Beach, a part of Bensonhurst, when they were attacked.

At a news conference several days after the attack, Sylvester LaMont described what happened: "The mob yelled at us, 'This is our Howard Beach.'" The mob was referring to the section of Queens where a similar gang of whites attacked three Blacks, killing one, last year.

Sylvester LaMont said that he and his brother were pelted with bottles and beaten with sticks. Steven had a marble table top thrown at him. When it shattered, one of the attackers tried to stab him in the head with one of the shards. Steven told reporters, "They were coming at us like a mob, a wolf pack. And all they wanted to do was hurt us; hurt or kill."

He pointed out that three white women, who had been with the gang before the assault, attempted to stop the attack. Sylvester credited the women with saving their lives. "I think it is only because of them we are alive today," he said.

Steven was held overnight for observation in a hospital emergency room because of his injuries. C. Vernon Mason, the lawyer for the two men, charged that when the police arrived they attempted to arrest the victims. The police then allowed most of the attackers to escape. Since the attack only two assailants have been arrested. Douglas Mailliband was picked up on the scene and Dean Prestia was arrested December 31.

Rally leads to action

The protest march was called at a December 30 rally held at the House of the Lord Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn. Three hundred people attended the protest



Left to right, Steven LaMont, Al Sharpton, and Sylvester LaMont lead march of nearly 500 protesters against racist violence. The LaMonts were attacked by a gang of whites in the mostly white section of Bensonhurst in Brooklyn on Christmas Day.

meeting and heard the leaders of the action call for a response to this and other racist attacks in New York.

The following day in a televised interview, New York Mayor Edward Koch claimed that most whites were afraid of Blacks and that there were more whites attacked by Blacks than Blacks by whites. He condemned Black leaders who called protests and demanded that they act "responsibly."

On the morning of January 2 demonstrators gathered at the House of the Lord Church to be part of a bus and car caravan that took them to the march site. The crowd was predominantly Black and included dozens of young people.

On the buses several participants explained why they were going to the action.

One city worker said, "I have three children and all of them have faced this kind of harassment by gangs of whites and the cops. We have to protest and put a stop to it."

A Black woman explained, "We have to protect our young people, we can't have them walking the streets in fear."

As the buses pulled up to the Marlborough Houses, a majority Black and Latino housing project on the edge of Bensonhurst, the protesters lined up six abreast with their arms linked and headed down Bensonhurst's main street.

The procession was led by the LaMont brothers and protest leaders Al Sharpton; C. Vernon Mason; Alton Maddox, Jr.; Herbert Daughtry; and Ben Chavis. Mason was also one of the attorneys for the victims of the Howard Beach attack.

Hundreds of cops in riot helmets flanked both sides of the march, and hundreds more sat in buses near the march route.

Racists line steets

As the protesters advanced into the neighborhood, hundreds of residents gathered on the streets shouting racist epithets. One group, carrying a Confederate flag, walked along chanting, "Howard Beach," "Niggers go home," and "White power."

The marchers responded by chanting, "Bensonhurst haven't you heard, this is not Johannesburg" and "No justice, no peace!"

The racists gathered at the sides and rear of the march and harassed the action as it proceeded to the 62nd police precinct and then marched back to the housing project.

While a majority of whites on the streets participated in the racist abuse, a small number just watched and some waved at the crowd. As the march turned one corner,

a handful of whites standing on the steps of their home waved and flashed the peace sign.

A family of Latinos leaned out of the window of their apartment and pumped their fists, joining in the "Whose streets? Our streets!" chant.

A white man from Bensonhurst who was part of the march joined in the antiracist chants. Another demonstrator pointed out to him that not everybody on the sidewalks watching the march opposed the protest. He agreed after some discussion that part of the fight was figuring out how to integrate people from Bensonhurst in the fight against the racist attack. A young white man marching next to him also turned out to be from Bensonhurst.

When the march returned to the Marlborough Houses there was a short rally. Sharpton told the crowd, "These are our streets. There will never be a racist attack that we don't respond to. We will continue to march in these neighborhoods and will come back in numbers."

He pointed out that the police have not arrested all the attackers. "We demand a special prosecutor to investigate and prosecute this case and the murders of Yvonne Smallwood in the Bronx and Sanders in Queens."

Smallwood, a Black woman and unionist, was beaten to death by cops in early December. Alfred Sanders, a young Black man, was shot eight times and killed by two cops on December 29.

Mason told the rally that the attack on the LaMonts "is not just an assault case, but a case of attempted murder, and it must be handled as such. If you kill a Black person in this city you should go to jail for murder."

ANC youth concludes tour

ALYSON KENNEDY

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Victor Mashabela of the African National Congress was welcomed here with a standing ovation at a meeting in solidarity with the freedom struggle in South Africa. The young ANC fighter was joined by a broad platform of speakers December 18 at St. Joseph's Baptist Church.

Birmingham was the last stop in a speaking tour that also took Mashabela to Morgantown, West Virginia; Greensboro, North Carolina; Atlanta; and Cleveland. The tour was hosted by the Pathfinder Mural Project, which is sponsoring a six-story mural in New York City featuring portraits of revolutionary leaders whose writings are published and distributed by Pathfinder. Prominent among these is Nelson Mandela, imprisoned leader of the African National Congress.

Welcoming "this distinguished warrior of the ANC" to Alabama, Abraham Woods, pastor of St. Joseph's and president of the Birmingham chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said he liked Victor's name. "That's what is going to happen in South Africa in the final analysis — we shall have victory," he said. Woods blamed the U.S. government for propping up apartheid. "Apartheid must be destroyed before it destroys us," he added.

Albert Carson, president of Molders' union Local 255, linked the struggle that destroyed the Jim Crow system of racial segregation in the South to the South African people's fight to destroy apartheid.

Eve Passerini of the Peace and Justice Coalition at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa described students' efforts to organize anti-apartheid actions.

Longtime peace activist Jane Christian, and Mary Jones, administrative assistant to the mayor of Birmingham and staff liaison for the Mayor's Commission on the Equal



Militant/Elizabeth Kilanowski

Victor Mashabela

Status of Women, also spoke.

The audience of coal miners, steelworkers, students, and others heard Mashabela describe the current struggle against apartheid. He urged them to oppose congressional moves to restrict the activities of the ANC in the United States.

The meeting was cosponsored by Pathfinder Bookstore in Birmingham, St. Andrew's Southside Ministries, Lodestar Books, First World Imports, Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women, and the Black History Month Committee at the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Mashabela, who is a leader of the Youth Section of the ANC, got an enthusiastic response from two classes at Carver High School and from 200 students at Christian Junior High School.

The New South Coalition of Alabama invited Mashabela to speak at a leadership school for Black youth at Tuskegee Institute. He also met with Bishop Stoll of the Episcopal Diocese, who had just returned from a trip to Namibia and South Africa.

Miami action hits fake Haiti election

BY LINDA JOYCE

MIAMI — Some 4,000 people, mainly Haitians, participated in a demonstration here January 1 to demand free and democratic elections for Haiti. Elections are now scheduled to take place January 17 under the control of the military-dominated government of that country.

A central theme of the march was "No elections with the Tontons Macoutes," referring to ousted dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier's thugs. The Macoutes, along with government soldiers, carried out a bloodbath during the November 29 elections, providing an excuse for Lt. Gen. Henri Namphy, who heads the government, to cancel the elections and dissolve the independent electoral council.

Participants in the Miami demonstration also demanded the ouster of Namphy, who has been in power since February 1986 when Duvalier was overthrown by a popular uprising.

Haitian presidential candidate Louis De-

joie, who is on an international tour, spoke to the January 1 rally, along with Gerard Jean-Juste, a leading figure in Miami's Haitian community.

Several flight attendants from Eastern Airlines attended the demonstration and leafleted for the upcoming Martin Luther King Day labor rally, scheduled for January 18. Jean-Juste will be speaking at that event.

There have been nightly demonstrations of several hundred in Little Haiti, Miami's Haitian community, demanding the ouster of the Namphy regime since the elections were canceled. Activists have vowed to keep these up until the government goes.

Comité Veye Yo, an important organization in the Haitian community, is fighting severe restrictions on the right to demonstrate in downtown Miami. The city administration reluctantly allows protests in Little Haiti, but is trying to make it impossible for opponents of the Namphy regime to demonstrate at sites like the downtown Federal Building.

Israel's repression stirs world outrage

Continued from front page

scribed the trials of a group of 16 defendants.

All but one pleaded guilty in order to receive a lighter sentence. Some complained of being beaten in prison.

Most of the cases took 10 minutes to complete, some less than three.

The sentences were uniform — those convicted of throwing stones, three months in jail and a \$650 fine; those simply participating in an "illegal" demonstration, 20 days and a \$200 fine.

The mother of one defendant pleaded she was a poor widow and her son the sole support of the family. The judge said he could pay the fine on the installment plan.

Meanwhile, David Mellor, a British foreign office official, toured a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip and was so taken aback by the wretched conditions that he branded them "an affront to civilized values."

Mellor made the charge at Jabaliya, home to 65,000 Palestinian "refugees."

A new Sharpeville

Earlier, at the same camp, Bernard Mills, director of the UN relief operation there, assailed the repeated instances of Israeli troops firing at youth under the pretext that they were defending themselves against attack.

"I'm very sorry to say this," Mills declared, "but it is a Sharpeville in the making."

Sharpeville is the South African township where 69 Black demonstrators were killed in 1960 by troops of the apartheid regime.

Recently, Avi Pazner, a government official, excoriated the foreign media for portraying Israel as "a kind of South Africa."

But the truth is that for the Palestinian people, Israel is a kind of South Africa — which is why their struggle has assumed such scope and power.

News dispatches attest to this. A report in the December 27 *Washington Post* described how for two weeks Palestinian youth in the occupied territories fought with stones and molotov cocktails against the Israeli troops. Arab schools, shops, and transportation shutdown, and 100,000 Palestinian workers stayed home from their jobs in Israel.

The moment of "singular triumph" came, the *Post* said, with the historic nationwide general strike of December 21 in which Palestinians within Israel extended the hand of solidarity to their em-

Bank failures in 1987 in the United States highest since 1933

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) reported that 184 banks failed in 1987, more than in any year since the FDIC was established in 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression. The government set up the FDIC, which now insures 14,000 banks, to help stabilize the banking system after the collapse of 4,000 banks in 1933.

More than half of the bank closings last year were in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, where the big drop in oil prices opened a sharp economic downturn.

In addition to the banks that closed, another 19 banks needed major FDIC help to stay afloat.

Another 17 savings institutions, insured by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, closed in 1987. Another 26 needed federal backing in order to get bigger banks to take them over and head off collapse.

Congress also adopted measures providing multibillion dollar loan guarantees to rescue the federal Farm Credit System and the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp.

The 1987 figures topped a six-year surge in bank failures. Bank failures totaled 42 in 1982, 48 in 1983, 79 in 1984, 120 in 1985, and 138 in 1986.

"Our current hope would be that next year would be a little better in terms of bank failures," stated L. William Seidman, chairman of the FDIC.

battled sisters and brothers of the occupied territories.

"Every shop was closed in Gaza, the West Bank, and in Arab villages inside Israel," the report added. "Every Arab bus was halted, every worker and schoolchild remained home."

'Civil war'

A *New York Times* dispatch the same day offered the estimate that "there is already a civil war going on here, although few Israelis and few outsiders are prepared to admit or accept that fact."

Correspondent Thomas Friedman offered statistics illustrating that the current uprising is but the climax of a battle that has been going on for some time. He cited figures compiled by the West Bank Data Project on clashes between Palestinian protesters and occupation troops. Between 1977 and 1982, violent confrontations averaged about 500 a year.

Since 1982, when Israel staged its massive invasion of Lebanon, the average has leaped to 3,000 a year.

Friedman noted that "barely a week has gone by in the last three years without a Palestinian or Israeli killed or wounded."

Since the current battle was touched off December 9, at least 24 Palestinians have been killed and 160 wounded. That's by Israeli government count, and no one really knows how high the true figure is.

Noting that many Israelis insist that the occupied territories are in fact part of a "Greater Israel," Friedman observes that this can cut two ways. He writes:

"Not surprisingly, as the Jews have come to see Israel and the West Bank and Gaza as a single entity under the control of a unified Jewish population, so the Palestinians, including the Israeli Arabs, have come to see it as a single entity with a unified Palestinian population under occupation."

"The decision by the Israeli Arabs to stand by the Palestinians in the occupied territories only reflected that perception."

'Obsolete language'

The events of the past weeks, he added, may lead Israelis and Palestinians to realize they have been talking "in obsolete language" about their conflict.

"Yes," Friedman wrote, "it is still territorially based — but the territories in dispute are not the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but all of Palestine."

The Israeli rulers do recognize that "all of Palestine" is at stake. That's why they seem ready to risk touching off a new explosion with the extreme measure of the projected deportations.

Five of the nine targeted for exile are from the West Bank, the others from Gaza. They include a trade unionist, a student, a teacher, a religious leader, and the author of a book on conditions in Israeli prisons.



Palestinian women in Gaza demand release of prisoners held by Israeli occupiers. Current revolt has highlighted nature of Israeli state as an occupation regime based on seizure of Palestinian land.

Most of the nine have already done time for their opposition to Israeli rule.

They are charged with "terrorist activity," but only three are accused of actually participating in the recent demonstrations. In other words, their "terrorism" comes down to what they think.

The Geneva Convention flatly states that deportations from occupied territories "are prohibited, regardless of their motive."

Despite this, the Israeli government has deported many Palestinians from their homeland. Since 1985, a total of 44 have been banished. (The Israelis claim it's only 19. The other 25, they assert, weren't bona fide residents.)

Right to 'appeal'

Those ordered deported have the right to appeal to Israel's Supreme Court. No appeal has ever been upheld.

Arguing a case on appeal can be difficult. For "security" reasons, the army can refuse to divulge its evidence against the accused.

"Security" is also the justification for the storm-trooper behavior by Israeli forces in their attacks on the Palestinian camps.

One special target of such treatment was the Balata camp in the West Bank. Balata was singled out because the community there is led by members of Shabiba, a youth movement associated with Fatah, the principal force in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

In nighttime sweeps, arrests were made by Shin Bet, Israel's security police. These were followed with rampaging attacks by a border patrol force.

In search of more suspects, they broke down doors, smashed furniture, and clubbed residents with gun butts. At some

homes, they hurled tear gas bombs through windows.

The savagery of the occupation forces not only stiffens the opposition of the Palestinians but is developing existing fissures within Israeli society, including within the armed forces.

On December 31, an organization of Israeli soldiers calling themselves "There Is a Limit," published a petition signed by 161 reservists, including 28 officers.

They declared they would never again serve in the occupied territories.

Iranian solidarity

Reports are also coming in on the reverberations of the struggle in the Mideast.

A massive solidarity demonstration was held by Iranians in the capital city of Tehran.

In Egypt, where the government so badly discredited itself by submitting to a 1979 "peace" pact with Israel at the expense of the Palestinian struggle, demonstrations were held at several Cairo universities. But a January 1 demonstration in the streets of Cairo was attacked by club-swinging cops.

Earlier, on November 29, in a move to refurbish its reputation, the government permitted the PLO to reopen its Cairo office, which it had ordered closed some seven months earlier.

Meanwhile, in a January 3 interview in Kuwait, PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat told a *Washington Post* reporter that the PLO may establish a government-in-exile. This would be the executive arm of the Palestine National Congress, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

Arafat also scored the U.S. government for closing down the Palestine Information Office in Washington and moving to shut down the PLO observer mission to the United Nations.

How Israel stole Palestine

The following is a very brief chronology of the emergence of the state of Israel; its oppression of the Palestinian people, whose homeland it stole; and its aggressions against its Arab neighbors.

1882 Russian Jewish emigrés establish first settlements in Arab Palestine.

1917 British government, then emerging as principal imperialist power in Mideast, and concerned with holding back Arab independence forces, promises support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. December 9, British troops occupy Jerusalem.

1923 Mandate from League of Nations, predecessor to the United Nations, gives Britain "legal" right to govern Palestine.

1947 Unable to maintain grip in Mideast, and with U.S. imperialists emerging as key power there, Britain turns Palestine issue over to UN. UN carves up country, giving 55 percent to Jewish settlers who are outnumbered two-to-one by Palestinians. Zionist paramilitary forces unleash

bloody campaign to force Palestinians out. Some 700,000 are driven from their homeland, mainly into neighboring Arab countries.

1948 May 14, state of Israel officially proclaimed. War erupts with Egypt and Jordan.

1949 With January 7 cease-fire, Israeli land takeovers give it 80 percent of Palestine.

1964 Palestine Liberation Organization is founded as coalition of liberation forces.

1965 January 1, PLO conducts first guerrilla operation within Israel.

1967 June, heavily armed by Washington, Israel defeats Arab nations in six-day war. With new land grabs, including West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel now controls 100 percent of historic Palestine. Flouting Geneva Convention that bars settlements in occupied territories, begins moving settlers into West Bank and Gaza. Colonial settlers today number some 60,000, principally in West Bank.

1970 Regime in Jordan, then main base of PLO, uses troops to try to crush it. Full-scale civil war rages for 10 days. Cease-fire restricts PLO operations.

1979 Egyptian regime breaks ranks with Arab countries and signs Camp David accord, brokered by Washington, recognizing state of Israel and making peace with it.

1982 Israel invades Lebanon and lays siege to Beirut. Troop actions and bombing raids take heavy civilian toll. As part of peace agreement, PLO is compelled to move its troops from Lebanon. Forces are dispersed to other Arab countries and bitter internal disputes wracks coalition. But later many fighters find way back to Lebanon, particularly to Palestinian refugee camps, a pillar of support and source of recruits for movement.

1987 At April meeting of Palestine National Council in Algeria main contending forces within PLO agree to reunite.

U.S. fleet, economic embargo menace Iran

Claims to guard oil shipping mask support for Iraq in Persian Gulf conflict

BY FRED FELDMAN

A U.S. fleet of about 30 warships, backed up by warplanes and 20,000 U.S. troops and other military personnel, is steadily expanding its operations against Iran in the Persian Gulf region. The U.S. forces are backed by warships and personnel from Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands.

The buildup, the biggest U.S. naval armada put into action since the Korean War in the early 1950s, has already resulted in dozens of deaths and seven clashes involving U.S. and Iranian forces.

Although supposedly sent to the Persian Gulf to protect convoys of U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti oil tankers, the actual goal has been to help the Iraqi regime fend off defeat in the war it began in 1980 by invading Iran. The Kuwaiti emirate has strongly supported Iraq in the war — providing Iraq with its only ports for receiving arms shipments and other matériel. Kuwaiti oil revenues are also used to bankroll the Iraqi forces.

U.S. aircraft have been coming to the aid of ships under Iranian attack in the gulf, even when they do not carry the U.S. flag. The Pentagon has announced that U.S. warships may strike at Iran if warships of Washington's allies are involved in clashes.

More clashes coming

Washington's increasingly aggressive operations to bolster Iraq guarantee more conflict with Iran — and more pretexts for launching U.S. naval or air attacks on Iran as "retaliation."

In the first days of 1988, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci flew to the Persian Gulf to discuss further military steps. The Saudi Arabian monarchy is reported to favor U.S. escalation as a counter to recent Iranian attacks on its shipping. Until the regime of King Fahd began actively assisting Iraqi raids against Iranian shipping and oil terminals, Iranian forces had largely avoided striking at Saudi shipping in the sea war.

The Iraqi regime has been attacking shipping bound for Iran in the Persian Gulf since 1981. When the Iraqi forces massively escalated their attacks in 1984, the Iranian military began to retaliate by striking at shipping bound for ports in states backing Iraq in the war.

The sea war has escalated sharply since the U.S. naval armada arrived. The number



Iranian soldiers on southern war front in Iraq. Imperialist-backed war against Iran is one of most costly wars in this century.

of attacks on shipping in December was the highest since the beginning of the war.

The buildup has provided Washington with an opportunity to test some of its new surveillance equipment, weaponry, and other military technology.

These include floating naval bases — two of which, the size of football fields, have now been set up in the gulf. This is an attempt to compensate for Washington's lack thus far of full-scale naval basing facilities in the gulf states. The "floating fortresses" are equipped with attack helicopters, fast patrol boats, army and navy commando teams, and long-range radar and intelligence-gathering units that intercept Iranian communications.

The Pentagon has also gained experience in coordinating operations among the array of navy, army, air force, and marine forces involved in the growing conflict.

Security Council threat

As the imperialist buildup continues, the representatives of the 15 governments making up the United Nations Security Council announced December 24 that they were prepared to declare an embargo on arms shipments to Iran.

The embargo has been demanded by Washington as part of the drive to force the Iranian government to accept terms dictated by the Security Council for ending the war with Iraq.

The Iraqi government has supported the Security Council terms, which include a call for unconditional Iranian withdrawal from bits of Iraqi territory that Iranian forces captured after pushing back the Iraqi invasion.

The Security Council is controlled by its permanent members — the representatives of the U.S., British, and French imperialists, and of the Chinese and Soviet regimes. Any one of these can veto measures before the council.

Endorsing the proposed embargo at a Moscow news conference in December, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky urged that the military chiefs of staff of the governments permanently represented on the Security Council meet to discuss its enforcement.

He also called for establishing an armada in the Persian Gulf under the UN flag. The government of China, which had been non-committal, also indicated it would go along with an arms embargo.

Economic squeeze

"A tightening embargo on purchases of Iranian oil by the United States, France, and, to some extent, Japan has been choking Teheran's exports and straining its financial lifeline in recent weeks," asserted correspondent Youssef Ibrahim in the November 27 *New York Times*.

"The crisis has been deepened by frequent Iraqi air raids on a crucial tanker shuttle that Iran has been using to move its oil out of the dangerous waters of the Persian Gulf," Ibrahim wrote. The Iraqi air strikes have been all but openly encouraged by Washington.

"A glut of crude oil on world markets," Ibrahim continued, "has complicated Iran's efforts to circumvent the embargo by

discounting the oil it sells." He said that Iran was estimated to be earning \$6 million to \$10 million less per day from its oil exports than in the summer.

On October 26 President Ronald Reagan barred all imports into the United States from Iran, and forbade the export of tractors and 13 other allegedly "militarily useful" items to Iran.

The U.S.-organized military and economic aggression against Iran has nothing to do with "freedom of navigation" or with protecting shipments of oil from the Persian Gulf. Washington's goal is to contain the impact of the Iranian revolution that took place in 1979.

Gains of the revolution

The Iranian revolution was a massive popular upheaval that overthrew the U.S.-supported shah, abolished the monarchy, and broke the political and economic power of the big landlords who had backed the monarchy.

U.S. military bases were dismantled, and about 40,000 U.S. military and economic advisers were ordered out. The power of the shah's secret police and the army officer caste, set up and trained by Washington, were broken.

The new government took control of the production and export of oil, which had been in the hands of U.S. and British firms.

The new government broke diplomatic relations with Israel and ended oil shipments to South Africa.

In the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Iranian government sent volunteers to Lebanon who aided the fight against Israeli and other imperialist occupation forces. Iran has been the scene of mobilizations in solidarity with the re-

cent demonstrations and strikes by Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

The popular revolution in Iran marked a huge setback for U.S. domination of the Persian Gulf region and the whole Middle East. It has undermined and spurred opposition to the backward, U.S.-dominated regimes in the region.

Iraqi regime invades

When the Iraqi regime responded to the Iranian revolution by invading Iran in 1980, the U.S. government and its allies encouraged the Iraqis. They hoped that Iraq, with superiority in weaponry and air power, would defeat the Iranian forces and either overturn the government or force it to make substantial accommodations to imperialism. Officially, however, the U.S. government adopted a stance of "neutrality."

But the Iraqi invasion was pushed back, and it began to appear that Iran might win the bloody conflict, bringing about the collapse of the Iraqi regime. Fearing another big blow to U.S. power in the region, Washington began to intervene more openly on the Iraqi government's side.

U.S. working people have no interest in sacrificing a single cent or a single human life to preserve U.S. domination of the Persian Gulf — whether this is done under the Stars and Stripes or the UN flag.

Calls for an arms embargo, naval blockade, or other acts of war against Iran should be opposed. The embargo against Iranian oil and other trade with Iran should be ended.

The U.S. Navy should pull out of the gulf region, and the thousands of U.S. sailors and other military personnel who have been placed in harm's way in the Persian Gulf should be brought home now.

N.Y., Detroit, San Francisco actions hit Israeli repression

The Israeli government's repression of protests against occupation and military rule in the West Bank and Gaza has been opposed by demonstrations and other activities in several U.S. cities.

"We are here to insist that the Israeli government withdraw from the occupied territories, cease its assaults on Palestinians, and recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the chosen representative of the Palestinian people," said Salle Soladay, president of the National Association of Arab Americans to a December 22 picket line of 350 people outside the Israeli consulate in San Francisco.

Benjamin Weir, who was held hostage in Lebanon for more than a year, voiced his support for the Palestinian protests at a news conference preceding the event.

Close to 500 demonstrators marched in three separate actions in Detroit during Christmas week. On December 22 nearly 200 people marched and rallied at the Federal Building. The next day, about 50 youths held a rally at the offices of the Red Cross.

On Christmas Eve a candlelight vigil drew more than 200 people from neighboring Dearborn's Arab community. The youthful participants waved Palestinian flags and carried placards demanding that Washington end its support to the Israeli government.

Nearly 300 demonstrators picketed outside the Israeli consulate in New York City on December 17. At a rally following the protest, the names were read of 30 of those killed recently by Israeli forces.

On December 28 more than 30 people representing a broad range of organizations met to plan a broadcast teach-in and other activities to get out information about the struggle in Palestine.

The Israeli mission to the United Nations was the scene of another protest January 7, followed by a public meeting on "What Is Happening in the West Bank and Gaza."

(This article is based on reporting by Malik Miah in San Francisco, Ed Josephson in Detroit, and Georges Sayad in New York City.)

ISRAEL'S WAR AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

BY DAVID FRANKEL & WILL REISSNER



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By David Frankel and Will Reissner

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Hunting contra terrorists in rural Jinotega

Reporter's notebook from three days with Nicaraguan army unit

BY ROBERTO KOPEC

JIQUELITO, Nicaragua — "Do you have any tortillas to sell?" the soldier asked the woman who was watching a troop of young Sandinista soldiers pass by. She went in her house and promptly came back with a stack of tortillas.

The soldier offered her a 5,000 córdoba note. "No, that's too much and I don't have change," she said, rejecting the bill. "No matter, use it to buy something for your kids," the soldier answered.

She took the money. "Wait here," she said, smiling, and ran back into her house. A minute later she came out with a few pieces of chicken and yucca that she had been cooking and gave them to the soldier.

She was one of several peasants encountered by Company 4 of the Francisco Estrada Irregular Warfare Battalion of the Sandinista People's Army as it pursued a band of contras through this isolated mountain area about 30 miles north of the town of Jinotega late last year.

Five journalists accompanied the unit for three days and two nights, marching up and down hills along rough and narrow trails that were sometimes barely visible under the brush.

The area is sparsely populated, dotted with cattle ranches, coffee farms, and small cornfields. The houses are few and far between, usually half a mile or more apart. Most peasants live in one- or two-room houses made of wooden boards crudely nailed together, and a dirt floor that toddlers share with some pigs and hens.

There is no electricity or running water. Many houses don't even have an outhouse or latrine. Water has to be fetched from one of the brooks and rivers that crisscross the region.

Coffee, Nicaragua's main export crop, is grown here. Region VI, which includes the departments of Jinotega and Matagalpa, provides about two-thirds of the country's coffee.

Company 4 included about 30 soldiers, young men in their mid-to-late teens and early 20s doing their two-year military service. Lt. Roberto Martínez, 28, an eight-year veteran of the army, led the troops.

The soldiers were lightly armed, with Soviet-made automatic rifles, hand grenades, and rocket-propelled grenades. A walkie-talkie and field radio provided communications with the base and with nearby companies. One soldier carried a U.S.-made hand grenade, salvaged from an earlier engagement with the contras.

The troops carried field rations of canned sardines, sugar, and *pinol*, a sweet cornmeal mix you drink diluted in water. To supplement their rations, and offer a welcome respite from the sardines, one of the soldiers carried money to buy food from the peasants along the way. Some sold the troops tortillas or cheese, or prepared some coffee. Occasionally they would also sell one of their pigs or a calf.

The Sandinista troops treated the peasants they met politely. When the unit camped or rested by a peasant's home, only two or three soldiers would approach



Nicaraguan peasant points soldiers in the direction of contra unit, which passed a few hours earlier.

the house to talk with the people living there, asking for information on contra movements in the area and looking to buy food. If the residents went inside and closed the door when the unit approached — as some did — the soldiers simply kept on going without stopping at the house.

No platoon here can be without a pet parrot. Mario, one of the soldiers, carried two perched on his backpack. Whenever we stopped and rested for a few minutes he would play and talk with them. His dream is to collect more parrots and build a zoo one day.

"You have to capture them when they're very young," he said, "so they will stick with you."

"But aren't they a problem to have around?" a reporter asked. "What if they start squawking just as you're preparing an ambush?"

"Oh, don't worry. They know when to keep quiet," Mario assured him with absolute confidence.

"We'll surely have a fiesta tomorrow," the soldier on guard duty told a reporter who was lying on a hammock one night, trying to sleep. "We had a great one last week. You should have been there; you would've taken some great pictures. We really blasted those contras," he added proudly.

It took a while to realize he was not talking about having a few cold beers and relaxing, but about confronting the contras in combat. "You've never been in a battle before?" he asked. "There's nothing to it. It's scary at first, but I've been in combat 13 times already," he said. He has been in the army only four months.

In the end there was no "fiesta." The band of contras was too far ahead of the company to be caught. "You know what I would like?" one soldier said, "I would like to have our entire army and the contras' entire force battle it out for three days and finish them off once and for all. It's this never-ending pursuit of small contra bands that is so frustrating."

One morning the troops met María Salas, a young woman aged by the loss of her daughter two years ago. While her family refilled the soldiers' canteens with water, she told of the day she learned that her 12-year-old daughter Marlene had left with a band of contras passing by their house. María was gone that day, visiting a nearby town. She hasn't seen Marlene since. "I went out of my head for some time after that," Salas said. Occasionally somebody would report having seen Marlene with a group of contras, but the last such report was a long time ago. Now she

doesn't even know if her daughter is still alive.

María Salas has other children. One of them, a lively 11-year-old boy, walks with great difficulty, the result of polio in his early years. He can't go to school, he explained. The closest one is at least a several hours' walk from his home.

Efforts by the Nicaraguan government to bring health and education to the peasants here are seriously hampered by the contra war. Teachers and health workers are prime targets for assassination and kidnapping by the contras. Only a few days before, the contras had completely destroyed a health center not far from where the company was marching. They burned it to the ground.

Juan lives with his family in Las Piedras, right by the Coco River, along a route frequently used by the contras. He makes a meager living from the corn he plants in a

small plot of land. He rents the land from a neighbor.

Recently the government granted Juan title to a plot of land in Pantasma, a few miles away. He's happy about it. Not only will he work his own land for the first time, but his family will also be safer there. He plans to move as soon as he finishes harvesting the corn.

His wife, though, is not so happy. She will miss her neighbors, she said, and the house they've been living in. She would like to return here once the war is over.

For all the peasants in the area, an end to the killing is their overwhelming desire. For some this means aiding the Sandinista soldiers and defending the revolution that brought the workers' and peasants' government to power. For some others, however, it means sympathizing with the contras, who blame the Sandinistas for the war. For still others, it means a careful neutrality, trying to stay out of the conflict and doing what little is in their power to try to keep battles as far from their homes and farms as possible.

"Once," one of the platoon leaders recalled, "a group of us left this peasant woman's house just as the contras were coming in from the other side. The contras outnumbered us. They wanted to follow and ambush us, but the woman — she told us later — warned them not to do it. 'There's hundreds of them,' she told the contras, 'I don't want a battle around here, my house could get destroyed.' The contras, concerned that we were really that many gave up and took off in another direction."

"We were really angry when the old woman told us that. She should've told them there were only 10 of us. Then we could've had them where we wanted," the soldier added.

On an army truck returning to the unit's base in Pantasma a reporter asked a young soldier what he thinks of first as he returns to base from a patrol. "Whether I have mail waiting from home," he answered.

But his mission was not yet over. As the trucks dropped the reporters off at the base, the troops received orders to leave immediately on another mission. Another band of contras had been sighted close by.

Canadian volunteer worker killed in accident is honored in Managua

BY THERESA DELGADILLO

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Canadian volunteer Jennifer Green was honored at a December 28 vigil and memorial meeting held here by the Nicaraguan Committee in Solidarity with the Peoples.

Green, 26 years old, died in an accidental grenade explosion in the Plaza Hotel in the city of Matagalpa on December 25. Also killed was a Nicaraguan army officer, Lt. Róger Méndez, who was with Green at the time.

Green came to Nicaragua on November 25 as part of a brigade of Canadian electricians who worked on a child-care center and a welding shop. She then helped lead a team of coffee pickers from Canada who arrived here December 11. Members of the coffee brigade and children from the farm where they have been working held an all-night vigil in tribute to Green December 26 in Matagalpa.

"Jennifer was very much the life of the brigade in her identification with the revolution, her affection for Nicaraguan children, her outgoing personality, and her openness to learning," said one member of the brigade. "She helped inspire others to learn about and contribute to Nicaragua." To honor her work, the brigade renamed itself the Jennifer Mary Green Brigade and on December 27 returned to the farm, Los Alpes, to finish the work Green helped inspire.

Volunteer workers from many countries participated in the memorial meeting at the offices of the Nicaraguan Committee in Solidarity with the Peoples (CNSP). Ray

Weiss, a Canadian medic, took a moment to remember Méndez. Weiss attended the two accident victims when they were brought to the hospital emergency room. "When Méndez realized that the grenade was about to explode," Weiss explained, "he took it and turned to the wall in an attempt to protect Jennifer from the worst of the blow, which he took. Méndez's sacrifice as well as Green's love for the Nicaraguan people are testimony to the deep feelings they had for others."

Patricia Elvir, general secretary of the CNSP, explained that in a country that is facing aggression by the United States daily, no task is without risks. "We would like to be able to provide an atmosphere where you could work aiding Nicaragua without facing those risks, but the war prevents this," she said.

"Nonetheless," Elvir continued, "we want you to know that we will always take the utmost precautions when the lives of foreign volunteers who come to help Nicaragua are involved. The brave action of Lieutenant Méndez is an example of what Nicaraguans will do to protect you."

Elvir closed by pointing to the reputations Green and Méndez had for their work in defense of Nicaragua. "We will remember Jennifer, and Róger, too, for the important contributions they have made to the Nicaraguan people. And we will continue our work, the work they supported, as Nicaraguans do everyday in spite of the pain, as her brigade is doing right now in picking coffee."

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Why did Somoza build a statue of Roosevelt in Nicaragua?

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Why did Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza build a grandiose monument during World War II to honor U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt?

Why did Somoza rename Managua's principal street, where the monument was erected, Roosevelt Avenue to honor the U.S. president's 60th birthday in 1942?

These questions came to mind recently when the Nicaraguan government refurbished the old Roosevelt monument and rededicated it to honor the soldiers fighting against the U.S.-backed mercenaries.

In fact, World War II was a period of close ties between the governments in Washington and Managua. Roosevelt and Somoza had a solid basis for cooperation.

Roosevelt led the United States into the war to win a dominant position for the U.S. capitalist class among its imperialist rivals and to expand the areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America to be plundered by the owners of U.S. banks and corporations.

The U.S. president carried out this policy in the name of fighting for democracy

and against fascism. But this did not prevent the U.S. government from attacking democratic rights at home and bolstering dictatorial regimes abroad — such as the Somoza regime in Nicaragua.

In the United States, Roosevelt ordered the FBI to spy on, harass, and disrupt trade unions and Black organizations. His Justice Department used the thought-control Smith Act to imprison union and socialist leaders who spoke out against the government's war policies. The Roosevelt administration ordered 112,000 U.S. residents of Japanese descent imprisoned in concentration camps, singling them out solely on the basis of their national origin.

Somoza, who had been brought to power by the U.S. government in 1936, did his best to prove himself a loyal ally in Washington's war for "democracy."

Two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Nicaraguan government declared war on Japan — becoming the first Latin American country to enter the war.

The Somoza regime, which ruled on behalf of Nicaraguan capitalists and landlords, then opened the country to U.S. mil-



Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza (left) built a monument to honor U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, who he called "the greatest man in the Americas."

itary bases and allowed U.S. corporations to plunder its gold, timber, rubber, and other natural resources — all under the slogan of "fighting fascism."

The U.S.-backed dictator also used the war as a pretext to declare a state of seige, suspending democratic rights guaranteed by the constitution and prohibiting opposition parties from meeting. Aping his Washington mentors, Somoza arrested all German citizens in Nicaragua, together with their Nicaraguan-born children. He then took over their properties for his own profit.

Roosevelt enthusiastically backed Somoza's rule, as he did with other dictators loyal to U.S. imperialist interests. In 1939 Roosevelt invited Somoza to visit Washington, giving him red-carpet treatment and promising military and economic support.

During the war, Washington built the dictatorship military bases, created its air force and navy, ran its military academy, and supplied weapons for its hated national guard.

No wonder Somoza placed a plaque on the Roosevelt monument in Managua hailing the U.S. president as "the greatest man of the Americas."

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega commented on this history at a rally here rededicating the monument.

"Somoza erected the monument to honor U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt," Ortega told the crowd. "That was the president who once said of Somoza: 'That Somoza is a son of a . . .,' and he said the word, 'but he is our son of a . . .'. And so he supported Somoza."

"I imagine that President Reagan would speak similarly about the mercenaries and the rightists," he continued. "He would say: 'Those mercenaries, those rightists, they are some sons of . . ., but at least they are our sons of . . .'."

"I'm not making this history up," Ortega concluded. "This is the real history. It's the history of the rulers of the United States."

U.S.-run contra war takes heavy toll

Continued from front page

does not mean that the contras have been eliminated as a serious force. As long as they continue to be supplied by Washington and can maintain their bases in Honduras, they will remain capable of inflicting substantial damage and casualties on civilian targets. This terrorist campaign has been escalating.

Figures provided by Ortega in his New Year's message show the extent of the war in 1987. Some 5,100 civilians were killed, wounded, or captured by the contras. This was more than four times the 1986 total.

The number of Sandinista soldiers killed by the contras increased from 1,019 in 1986 to 1,732 in 1987. The number of reported contra dead increased from 4,000 to 4,800.

Ortega said that Nicaraguan casualties on both sides since the beginning of the war now total more than 50,000. In figures proportional to the population of the United States, this would be more than 3 million people.

1987 economic performance

Despite the war, Nicaragua was able to achieve an increase of 1.7 percent in its gross national product, according to Ortega. In 1986 the economy shrunk by 0.4 percent.

The 1987 figure reflects small increases in production achieved by workers in the country's mining, fishing, and lumber industries. The harvest of coffee, Nicaragua's main export, increased in 1987. But because the world market price fell, Nicaragua earned less from its coffee in 1987 than in 1986.

The war means that Nicaraguan working people must labor harder just to keep production from shrinking. Ortega reported that in 1987 "damage caused by the direct impact of the war totaled \$376.7 million, while our exports totaled \$260 million."

The Nicaraguan leader continued, "We have a fundamental problem, the war. Because without the war — even with the international economic crisis — we are certain that in the short term we would become the country in Central America with the best economic conditions, the most economic development, the most production, the most education, and the most health services for the people."

One of the areas in which the revolution advanced in 1987 was in expanding facili-

ties for child care, Ortega reported.

The number of children in the Centers for Child Development in the cities more than doubled over the previous year, from 3,539 to 7,781. "This benefits working-class mothers above all," Ortega noted. "And in the countryside, where these services for children never existed before, in '86 there were 3,869 children cared for, and in '87 we advanced to taking care of 8,070."

Distribution of land

Turning to the land reform process, Ortega told the nation that in 1987 a total of 9,200 peasant families received land. Some will work this as individual producers, and others as part of farm cooperatives or collective farms. The 1987 figure represents a decline in the rate of land distribution compared to 1986, when 16,000 peasant families got land to work.

In the new year, Ortega said, the government will continue distributing land to those peasants who want to work it. "We will also continue guaranteeing ownership of the land to those small and medium producers, and even big producers, who want to work the land because they work it very efficiently here in this area."

The president added, "In 1988 we will continue defending the right to produce, we will continue defending the right to distribute fairly the little that there is. And if the rich people who write in some newspapers are so interested and so worried about what they call the hunger of the people, then, if the crisis continues, if the war continues, the time will come when we will have to say to those rich people: 'How about handing over your wealth so that it can be distributed to the poor.'"

Guatemala accords

In the new year, Ortega stressed, Nicaragua will continue "defending the implementation — to the letter, and in the framework of simultaneous compliance — of the Guatemala accords."

"It must be born in mind," he said, "that we have been complying, and we are going to see what the International Verification Commission says about Nicaragua's compliance."

The verification commission was established to oversee implementation of the Guatemala accords, and a commission delegation will tour Central America in January. The commission will then prepare a report to the presidents of the five Central American countries, who will meet January 15 in San José, Costa Rica.

"The Guatemala accords were not signed so that Reagan would triumph with

his criminal policy against Nicaragua," Ortega said. "They were signed in order to achieve peace, to preserve the sovereign right of the Nicaraguan people to have a revolution, to be masters of a revolution, to be masters of their own actions."

In 1988 Ortega concluded, "We will continue concentrating in a single fist the power of the workers, the power of the peasants, the power of the women, the power of the youth, the power of all Nicaraguans, in order to defeat the Yankee aggression in the military terrain, in the economic terrain, and in the political terrain."

Portland rally protests millions voted in aid to Nicaraguan contras

BY LISA HICKLER

PORTLAND, Ore. — Some 150 protesters marched from Pioneer Courthouse Square here to the Federal Building on December 24 to protest a congressional vote two days earlier approving \$14.4 million in aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

At the head of the march, demonstrators carried a black coffin adorned with red ribbons and a sign that said "Merry Christmas, Nicaragua," signifying that the vote would mean more Nicaraguan deaths.

Marchers also protested the role of Oregon Democratic Rep. Les AuCoin, whose vote helped pass contra aid, 209 to 208. AuCoin has sought to portray himself as a supporter of opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America. He signed a letter pledging to vote against any bill containing contra aid. Calling his decision "agonizing," AuCoin issued a statement claiming that a compromise now would permit another vote in February when he would try to stop contra aid "once and for all."

Elisabeth Linder, mother of volunteer worker Ben Linder, who was killed by the contras last April, slammed AuCoin's role in the contra aid vote. She also pointed out that the contra aid that helped kill her son was sent by a Republican-controlled Congress and that the millions being sent now are approved by a Democratic-controlled Congress. She demanded a total and immediate halt to all contra funding.

In a statement issued earlier, the Linder family said, "Congressman AuCoin voted to rearm the murderers who killed our son. As members of Congress enjoy Christmas with their families, we would like to remember one North American, Ben Linder, who can't come home for Christmas thanks to the actions of the U.S. government."

At the conclusion of the march, 10,000

signatures of Oregonians opposing contra aid were delivered to AuCoin's office.

The rally was sponsored by the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee, the Linder family, the Portland Labor Committee on Central America and the Caribbean, SANE, Witness for Peace-North Pacific, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and several other organizations.

Farmers' debt burden spells more injuries, deaths for children

The crushing burden of debt that farmers carry is being paid by their children too. Three hundred children die and another 23,500 are injured every year in farm-related accidents, researchers reported in a Mayo Clinic study.

The researchers noted that their figures did not include the many minor injuries that children suffer on farms.

The average hospital stay was 12 days, Dr. Martin Sachs and Dr. Jill Swanson, who collaborated in the study, reported. They point out that the hospitalization was often emotionally and financially devastating for farm families.

Federal law allows children of any age to work for their parents on a family farm. Children over the age of 12 may work on other farms with a parent's consent.

"With the increasing debt on the farms, the mother often works outside the home, and children are left with the father, who takes them along to work," said Sachs.

"Many farmers can't afford to buy new machinery, and some of the older machinery doesn't have safeguards."

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Mexico crisis bears down on toilers

Half 1988 gov't budget goes to pay debt

BY SUSAN LaMONT

The economic disaster bearing down on Mexico — now entering its sixth year — has been front-page news worldwide since December.

In mid-December the government of President Miguel de la Madrid announced a new "economic solidarity pact" — an emergency plan, including severe austerity measures, aimed at bringing some stability to Mexico's reeling economy. Among other things it set the official exchange rate of the peso at 2,200 to the U.S. dollar. (In early 1982, the rate was 26 pesos to the dollar.)

Just two weeks later, a joint plan between the Mexican and U.S. governments was announced to reduce and refinance up to \$10 billion of Mexico's debt to foreign banks. Owing more than \$100 billion, Mexico is the world's second-largest debtor, after Brazil.

December ended with an announcement by the Mexican Finance Ministry that 54 percent of its planned \$92 billion budget for 1988 would go to make payments on its foreign and internal debt.

A 'model' debtor

Mexico has long been held up by Washington and Wall Street as an example of development for the rest of the semicolonial world. With a population of 82 million people, Mexico is one of the most industrialized countries in Latin America. After Canada and Japan, it is U.S. capitalism's biggest trading partner; roughly two-thirds

oil prices in 1982, Mexico has been in the deepest depression since the 1930s.

Mexico's economy — like the rest of Latin America — is marked by astronomical debt to U.S. and other imperialist banks, and by an actual decline in real economic growth, skyrocketing inflation, growing unemployment, flight of capital out of the country, deterioration in government services, and decline in public health. The living standards of the region's already impoverished toilers is plummeting.

'Economic solidarity pact'

The latest stage in Mexico's crisis was announced in October, when the bottom dropped out of the Mexican stock exchange two weeks before the New York Stock Exchange crash.

With inflation running at 140 percent for 1987 and many businessmen converting their pesos into dollars and sending them out of the country, the government announced the "economic solidarity pact" on December 14 to try to regain control of the situation.

This is a case where the cure is as bad as the disease for those who have been hit hardest by the economic crisis: Mexico's working people.

In addition to devaluing the peso in the hopes of boosting the sale of Mexico's exports, the plan includes a raft of austerity measures. Among them are:

- An 80 percent increase in the price of gasoline, electricity, phone calls, sugar, and fertilizers;
- A nearly 20 percent rise in the cost of rail and air travel;
- A tax hike;
- A cut in government spending, which will mean further deterioration in schools, roads, hospitals, and other public services.

This may just be the beginning, as the government has announced that further measures might be required this spring.

After protest from the labor movement, a 35 percent increase for minimum-wage earners and a 15 percent increase for others was included in the pact. But this does little to soften the blow for Mexico's toilers.

Real wages cut in half

Five years of sky-high inflation have taken their toll.

In 1982 the average real wage for workers in Mexico equaled \$5.50 per day in U.S. dollars. Today it is about \$2.50.

While 43 percent of workers earn the minimum wage, another one-third earn even less. This is more than 10 times the percentage of U.S. workers who earn at or below U.S. minimum wage levels.

Workers have to put in longer hours, get second jobs, and put family members, including children, to work just to keep their heads above water.

Workers and peasants in Mexico's countryside are even harder hit. Basic food items cost more in rural areas, transportation costs are higher, and the prices peasants get for their crops are dropping lower and lower. More than 1,000 people pour into Mexico City from the countryside every day in hopes of finding better jobs. Others head farther north to the maquiladoras along the border.

Growing numbers of workers have to try to eke out a living as vendors, selling items like jewelry, toys, or candy on city streets. Others try to hawk their wares or services to the cars stopped at busy intersections.

Government-owned enterprises, such as sugar mills, truck factories, railroads, and steel mills, are laying off thousands of workers. Tens of thousands of construction workers have lost their jobs in recent years due to a sharp drop in government and private building.

While workers and peasants are hardest pressed, higher-income people — from computer programmers to college professors — have also had their real income slashed.

Debt crisis

More than \$400 billion of the \$1 trillion international debt owed to the imperialist



Mexican oil workers. Worst economic crisis since 1930s comes down hardest on workers and peasants, who are being squeezed by U.S. and other imperialist banks to pay country's \$100 billion foreign debt.

banks comes from Latin America. Of this, \$275 billion is owed by three countries: Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, all of which are finding it more and more difficult to meet their payments.

This situation, and the international debt crisis as a whole, is a big threat to the imperialists' world banking system, which could collapse should major debtors begin defaulting on their loans.

That's why the late December announcement by the Mexican government and U.S. Treasury that a plan had been worked out to cut some \$10 billion from Mexico's debt was such big news. And why bankers and big-business newspapers heaped so much praise on Morgan Guaranty Trust, one of the largest banks in the United States, for coming up with the plan and backing it.

In outline form, the deal works like this: if the U.S. banks (such as Citicorp, BankAmerica, Chase Manhattan, and others) to which Mexico owes tens of billions agree to write off some of that debt, Mexico will guarantee repayment of the remainder of the debt by issuing long-term, high-interest bonds. These will be backed by special U.S. Treasury bonds. For \$2 billion now, Mexico can purchase these bonds that will be worth \$10 billion in 20 years. If Mexico should default on its debts its creditors can be guaranteed payments totaling up to \$10 billion.

The advantage of this plan, according to its backers, is that the banks that take part will have some of their Mexican debts backed up by the U.S. Treasury — a prospect more appealing than being forced to write off the debts if Mexico should default. In addition, the hope is that Mexico's crisis-ridden economy will be given a boost because it won't have to use so much of its revenues servicing its debt. This in turn is supposed to strengthen Mexico as a market for U.S. goods.

The new Mexico-U.S. Treasury plan marks a further step toward openly admitting what most toilers in the world's indebted countries already know: that the debt is simply unpayable.

While the official position in imperialist banking and government circles until now has been that the debt can and must be paid in full, regardless of the toll it takes on working people in the debtor countries, growing recognition of the impossibility of this ever happening has begun to be registered in several ways.

In December two U.S. banks — the Bank of Boston and Riggs bank — for the first time wrote off some of their Latin American debt — \$225 million worth. In addition, loans to Latin American countries have been sold on world financial markets at 50 percent or less of their face value for some time now. Moreover, some

banks have built up cash reserves in the event debtors default on their loans.

Not a solution

Even for Mexico, this new plan is not a solution to the debt burden or the country's general economic crisis. This was made clear when the government announced that more than half of this year's budget would have to go to debt service. In 1988 alone, Mexico will pay \$13 billion to foreign banks.

And financial columnists were quick to point out that less "reliable" debtor countries aren't likely to be eligible for such an arrangement.

Thus the imperialist banks' approach to Latin America's toilers, who are being driven into the ground by the ever-growing debt burden, will remain substantially the same: keep squeezing working people in the debtor countries as much as they can no matter what the human cost.

New international economic order

In 1982 Mexico announced for the first time that it had simply run out of money and could not meet its debt payments. While the immediate problem was "solved" by refinancing and taking out still more loans, it brought the international debt crisis as whole to world attention.

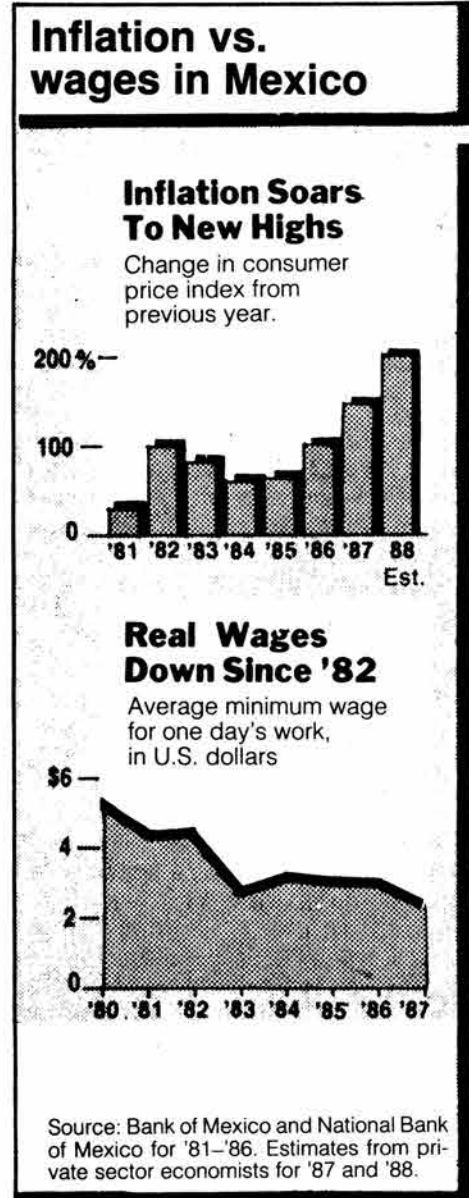
Since then the only real solution to the debt crisis is the one put forward by Cuban President Fidel Castro: that the debt is financially and morally unpayable and should be canceled.

When you consider that in the last four years Latin America has transferred \$125 billion — equal to one-third of the region's exports — to the imperialist banks, it is easy to see why Castro's proposal is gaining more of a hearing among working people worldwide.

The call to cancel the debt is part of a broader proposal for a new international ordering of economic and trade relations, aimed at relieving the tremendous inequality in these relations that exists between the imperialist countries and the semicolonial world.

This proposal addresses other aspects of the imperialist-caused economic crisis faced by Mexico and other Latin American countries, such as declining prices for the commodities they export; ever higher prices for the technology and manufactured goods they must import; protectionist measures by the imperialist countries; continued high interest rates; and dumping of cheap goods and commodities.

Workers and farmers in the United States, who face exploitation and oppression by the same big bankers and industrialists as Mexican and other working people worldwide, have a big stake in supporting this call.



of Mexico's imports and exports come from and go to the United States.

It is also considered a model debtor — a country that pays its foreign debt, and urges other countries to do the same.

U.S. capitalists point to the growth of the *maquiladoras* as the kind of economic initiative they are especially fond of. The *maquiladoras* are the 1,400 foreign-owned plants strung along the U.S.-Mexican border, where hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers are employed at less than the \$5-a-day minimum wage making everything from auto parts and electronic components to clothing.

These "positive" signs helped mask the reality that, following the collapse of world

Burkinabè UN diplomat tries to defend coup

BY SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK — "We want you to understand that we didn't look to Thomas Sankara because we saw him as some kind of saint, but because of his progressive leadership," explained one Harlem resident and mother of six.

"If one of my sons grows up and takes the path of Thomas Sankara I would be a very proud mother," she added.

Her remarks summed up the feelings of the 40 Black activists and journalists attending a press conference called by the United Nations ambassador of the West African country of Burkina Faso, Michel Monvel Dah. The December 22 press conference was held at the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building in Harlem.

The revolutionary government headed by President Thomas Sankara came to power in 1983 in Burkina Faso as the result of a popular democratic revolution. It won widespread support within the population for carrying out social programs in the interests of peasants and workers. It was widely respected among revolutionary fighters throughout Africa, as well as in other countries, for its consistent opposition to imperialism.

That government was overthrown on Oct. 15, 1987, in a military coup by soldiers loyal to Capt. Blaise Compaoré, then minister of state and justice. Sankara and 12 of his aides were killed in the coup. The new regime calls itself the Popular Front.

Dah explained that he had called the press conference in order to respond to "rumors" spread in the media and at certain meetings concerning the coup. One such meeting to pay tribute to Sankara was held in Harlem shortly following his overthrow. The meeting of 200, mostly Blacks, strongly condemned the coup and murder of Sankara.

Dah's opening remarks at the news conference were interrupted repeatedly by hisses, groans, and other outbursts.

Two courses

For the most part Dah repeated the slanders hurled against Sankara by leaders of the Popular Front of being a "traitor" and "power hungry." Nonetheless, Dah's explanations did shed some light on the different courses charted by Sankara's revolutionary regime and that of the Popular Front.

Dah explained that the political differences that led to the coup "began as early as 1985, became more focused in 1986, and broke out in the open in 1987."

The ambassador asserted that among other things Sankara "gave no thought to the impact of his decisions on the economic life of the country."

"Sankara had created serious tensions with France, our largest economic and

trading partner," Dah complained.

Dah said that Sankara had attempted to shut down Shell Oil Co., another big investor in Burkina Faso. No proof of this charge was offered.

It is no secret, however, that Sankara was at the head of a campaign to educate the Burkinabè people on the complicit role Shell plays with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Shell is the main supplier of oil and fuels to the South African military.

Dah exclaimed that Sankara's housing policy had led "to many poor people in the ghetto areas having to be moved."

The facts, however, are that under the Sankara government urban land was redistributed, providing lots to thousands of families on which to build houses. An April 1984 rent law lowered most rents, some by up to one-half. Houses illegally acquired by speculators were confiscated. A state enterprise was set up to construct new, cheap housing, and a bank was established to provide loans on easy terms.

Dah accused Sankara of trying to create union leaders to his own liking. He blamed Sankara for the arrest and imprisonment of the union leader Soumane Touré.

This reporter along with others from Britain and Canada met with Frederic Kiemde, an aide to Sankara, on the evening before the coup. Kiemde was one of those killed with Sankara. Kiemde told us that Touré's arrest had been carried out by the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), not by the government. He said that Sankara had opposed the arrest. Leaders of the CDR had demanded the execution of Touré, but Sankara was able to prevent it by calling a meeting of the ruling National Council of the Revolution (CNR) in order to intercede to spare the trade unionist's life.

Policy toward army

Dah claimed that Sankara's efforts to "politicize" the army played a major role in the crisis.

Sankara explained the CNR government's policies toward the army at a press conference in October 1984 held during his visit to speak before the United Nations.

The revolutionary leader said that the old colonial army had been drastically purged, the privileges that went with a uniform were being abolished, and troops were undergoing political education and being engaged in productive labor. Sankara often explained that in his view, "A soldier without political training is a criminal in power."

"We have given weapons to civilians," Sankara said. "In every village in our country we have vigilance brigades, which are armed and which take care of security. The



Militant/Ernest Harsch
Street scene in capital of West African country of Burkina Faso. Before overthrow, revolutionary government mobilized population to overcome misery and backwardness.

defense system in our country is composed not only of the army; it is composed of all the people."

After his presentation Dah answered questions. Many of those present wanted to know what support the new government had received from other African countries, and within Burkina Faso.

The government of Togo has been the only one in Africa to recognize the Popular Front regime. The coup was strongly condemned by Kenneth Kaunda, chairman of the Organization of African Unity; and by Robert Mugabe, chairman of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries and president of Zimbabwe.

Concerning support within Burkina Faso Dah said, "President Compaoré has made it clear that he didn't want any marches of support."

To the contrary, it was widely reported

that following the coup, leaders of the new regime called upon the people of Burkina Faso to show their support for the new government by marching in the streets. Only a handful responded to the call but were prevented from marching by crowds of people who hurled insults and threats at them.

Dah was asked why Burkina Faso abstained on a vote in the UN to reaffirm support for the right to independence for the French-ruled Pacific island of New Caledonia. He replied, "The vote on New Caledonia is a foreign policy matter that I am not here to discuss." He added, "Our abstention does not mean that we have changed our position. We abstained on all important issues this year."

The Sankara government had been a firm supporter of independence for New Caledonia and was one of the sponsors of the UN resolution.

Burkinabès in France demand Sankara's legacy be preserved

BY JON SILBERMAN

LONDON — At the time of the October coup in Burkina Faso, Some Teonbare was living as a student in France. There are some 3,000-4,000 Burkinabès living there, of whom 1,000 are students. Teonbare described to the *Militant* the Burkinabè community's response to the coup.

The coup was "totally rejected" by Burkinabès in France, he said. People were surprised that the overthrow of the revolutionary government headed by Thomas Sankara had been organized by Blaise Compaoré. They were shocked by the betrayal. As soon as they heard the news, a meeting was held in Paris, where the great majority of Burkinabès in France live. The meeting issued a communiqué rejecting the Popular Front government, demanding the rehabilitation of murdered President Sankara, and that his legacy be preserved. The meeting demanded that the full facts of the murder be explained to the Burkinabè people.

Two demonstrations were also organized, Teonbare explained. The first a few days after the coup, the second 10 days later. The newly established Thomas Sankara Collective and other organizations of African nationals in France, such as the Kwame Nkrumah Collective and the Thomas Sankara Vigil, are planning further actions. Others have also held activities against Compaoré's Popular Front government, including from Zaire, Congo, Senegal, and some French nationals.

Prior to the coup, most of the Burkinabè community had supported the revolution and the Sankara government. They formed two Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), one for the students and a second for workers.

The CDRs functioned in much the same way as their counterparts in Burkina Faso. The CDR membership met monthly and other meetings were called in the event of special need. In addition to these meetings, the membership was involved in cultural activities and political discussion on a weekly basis. Each CDR had its own bu-

reau that functioned as an executive committee between general meetings. Women played a leading role and all CDRs were required to include at least one woman on their executive bodies.

Attendance at CDR meetings was very good, Teonbare said. He estimated that 90 percent of the students were members. Some students belonged to the General Union of Burkinabè Students (UGEB). This body was under the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Burkina (PCRB), which was hostile to Sankara. It prohibited students under its leadership to join the CDRs. The PCRB took a disruptive course following the coup, refusing to observe a minute's silence in honor of Sankara's memory at the mass meeting, Teonbare said. However, they were unable to seriously demobilize the mass of Burkinabè students and workers in France.

It was the two CDRs that jointly called the original mass meeting to protest the coup. But following Compaoré's dissolution of the whole CDR system in Burkina Faso itself, the CDRs in France decided to dissolve themselves. The CDRs had been established to support the National Council of the Revolution government under the leadership of Sankara. With its overthrow, Teonbare explained, new tasks were needed — to organize protests, to draw the political lessons of what had happened, and to rebuild a movement based on Sankara's political legacy. The CDRs, he said, were inappropriate for this.

The dissolution of the CDRs in no way signified support for the coup on the part of Burkinabès living in France, Teonbare said. One of the early acts of the Popular Front government was to send a delegation to France to enlist support for its counter-revolutionary actions. They were literally chased out of town. People were so angry, they went from hotel to hotel looking for the delegation. A second delegation came some weeks later, this time with a more politically experienced team — but they got the same treatment.

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With contract almost up, miners discuss fighting concessions

BY JOHN HAWKINS

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — With the union contract in much of the U.S. coal industry due to expire January 31, discussions among miners center more and more on what it will take to win a new agreement.

In 1984, for the first time in more than a decade, the mine union was able to force the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) to agree to a basically non-concessionary pact without a strike. The union organized selective strikes at companies that refused to sign contracts similar to the BCOA agreement.

The current negotiations with the BCOA opened in November. United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) President Richard Trumka expressed hope that a new contract proposal could be presented to union members by December 25. With that date past, no new date for a tentative settlement has been announced.

Nonetheless, union negotiators still appear optimistic that a settlement can be reached without a strike. While UMWA-organized miners across the country share this optimism to varying degrees, few believe that an industrywide, no-concessions contract can be reached in 1988 without a fight.

From their own day-to-day experiences and from observing the attacks leveled by the bosses against workers in other industries, miners are convinced that the coal bosses are out to impose some concessions on the union.

Here in UMWA District 22, the two largest union-organized mining companies — Drummond Coal and Jim Walter Resources — have signed me-too agreements with the union. This means that these companies will sign a contract similar to the one the union negotiates with the BCOA. In return, the union agrees not to go on strike there.

Several smaller companies in Alabama have refused to sign me-too agreements. Among them is Black Diamond Coal, which is demanding far-reaching concessions. Many miners see this as a big threat to the entire union here, especially against the backdrop of the continuing selective strikes at Nickle Plate and McWayne mines in Alabama where disputes over the 1984 contract have not been settled. While most miners in this area expect the companies to

demand concessions, few are inclined to grant them.

Militant supporters who work in mines in Illinois and northern West Virginia report similar sentiment among miners there.

Most miners point out that the operators are already taking ground against the union — even in the framework of the 1984 contract. They are quick to add that granting concessions will only accelerate company demands for givebacks.

Massive layoffs in the coal industry have cut the union's membership in half over the past decade. Nowhere is the impact of the layoffs more pronounced than in southern West Virginia. Despite the high unemployment, UMWA District 17 members undertook serious preparations for a fight with the bosses as the contract expiration date approached.

This has especially been the case at Peabody Coal Co. mines, where special meetings were organized to prepare the union membership for a possible selective strike against the largest U.S. coal producing company. Last August, miners at Peabody established selective strike committees, and women's auxiliaries were also organized. Outreach to other unions and to community groups was initiated.



Militant/Nancy Boyasko

Coal miners are readying to struggle for a no-concessions national contract

In addition to holding the line against concessions, Peabody miners are looking forward to making gains on pension benefits and health-care coverage and to limiting the company practice of contracting out parts of its mining operation.

When miners attended union meetings in early January, they learned that the Peabody and Pittston coal companies were likely targets for selective strikes.

Citing unfavorable market conditions, Peabody laid off thousands of miners in the final weeks of 1987.

The coal companies intent to make inroads against the union is clearest in the western coalfields. Last year the UMWA won hard-fought strikes against Peabody

and several other companies in the West.

UMWA members are currently involved in long strikes at several mines in Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota.

In Utah, the heart of UMWA District 22, miners are bracing for an assault by the operators when their contracts expire. Only one mine in the district is covered by a BCOA contract. None of the other companies in the area has signed a me-too agreement.

One company there has already put forward a list of 20 concessionary demands that include a 30 percent wage cut, removal of the pension fund from union control, and cuts in health-care coverage.

John Hawkins is a member of UMWA Local 2368.

Dakota miners' strike hit by arrests

BY ERLING SANNES

BISMARCK, N.D. — Union members have been on strike since early November at the Indian Head coal mine in Zap, North Dakota. That mine is owned by North American Coal Co.

Coal reserves at Indian Head are due to run out in 1992. United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 8880 wants a job-security clause included in the contract that would give the 43 union miners first preference in job openings at other mines owned by North American.

The company refused to provide the union with coal lease information and other data about its mines in the area. The union requested that information so that it could formulate a job-security proposal.

According to UMWA International Representative Dallas Wolf, coal companies

routinely provide such information. The National Labor Relations Board recently issued an order requiring the company to turn over the information to the union. North American Coal Co. (NACC) has refused to follow the order and has filed an appeal.

A week after the strike began, 23 union members and 10 of their wives were arrested on the trumped-up charge of blocking an entrance to the mine.

NACC obtained an injunction limiting the number of pickets to six at each entrance. A few days later North Dakota District Judge Gerald Glaser lifted the restriction on pickets, saying, "The miners have a right to picket. This is not a church social, it is a labor dispute."

A large contingent of company security agents are all over the mine property. They stand at the gates videotaping every action of the strikers.

"We will not be intimidated," Dan Neurohr, president of Local 8880, told the *Militant*. "We don't want to be on the picket line, but we intend to stay until we get a job security clause in our contract. We will be here six months, a year, whatever it takes," he emphasized. No union member has crossed the picket line during the strike.

The strikers explain that the company is

trying to keep the union from organizing NACC's other mines in the state.

Several miners described the intensive interrogation the company forces new hires to go through. The screening is supposed to guarantee that the company hire only workers with strong antiunion attitudes.

Shortly after the strike began, 24 retirees and surviving spouses were cut off from the company's health insurance plan. The company maintains that its obligation to provide insurance for the retirees ended when the contract expired.

Eighty-year-old Albert Beck, a retired miner, joined the picket line recently. He recalled strikes in 1950 and 1975 that lasted more than six months before the union won its demands. Commenting on the present strike, Beck said, "They [the strikers] just want to be hired at some other place if the mine is closed."

The miners are receiving strong solidarity in the area. The Beulah Lumber Co. is refusing to allow its trucks to cross the picket lines to deliver supplies to the mine. A Beulah supermarket is providing food for the miners and their families. Many farmers have donated eggs, meat, and potatoes to the strikers.

Some 100 people attended a state AFL-CIO-sponsored rally in support of the miners in Mandan in December. Almost \$3,000 was raised for the strikers.

After voting UMWA, miners gain midwestern coalfield victory

BISMARCK, N.D. — Negotiations between the mine workers' union and Knife River Coal Co. ended in a victory for the miners when they voted December 20 to accept a new three-year contract.

Members of United Mine Workers of America Local 1101 had been working under a temporary agreement for eight months. Their old contract expired last spring at about the time they voted to be represented by the miners' union.

The 170 UMWA members work at two Knife River Coal mines in North Dakota and at one in Montana.

Previously the Knife River miners had been represented by the Lignite Energy Workers union.

"The fate of miners, farmers, and small business owners are intertwined," Dallas Wolf, UMWA International representative, told the *Militant*.

"The miners wanted a union made up of miners representing miners," added Dave Creel, president of Local 1101.

The details of the new pact will be made available in mid-January. It is known, however, that 90 years of job security has been written into the contract.

Job security had been one of the main issues in the negotiations. The union demanded and won the right to examine company lease documents and other company data needed to develop the union's position on job security. Miners were quoted in the local press as saying, "In order to make long-term investments, Knife River needs to sign long-term contracts with power plants, landowners, and railroads. Why should we be expected to settle for less? How can we be expected to invest in the growth and development of our community without the same security that the company demands for itself?" — E.S.

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Hormel to end cut-and-kill at Minn. plant

BY GALE SHANGOLD

AUSTIN, Minn. — Geo. A. Hormel & Co. has announced that it will stop slaughtering hogs at its flagship packinghouse here in January. Hormel has slaughtered hogs in Austin since the company was founded in 1891.

Hormel officials claim the company can't compete with high-volume slaughtering operations. Iowa-based IBP Corp., for example, pays hourly wages of \$6 to \$8 compared to the approximately \$10 an hour workers are paid at Hormel's plant here.

"Large, low-cost slaughtering operations have started up in the industry in the last five years, and it's very difficult to compete with the economics of that situation," said Charles Nyberg, Hormel's senior vice-president.

Hormel joins a growing number of processing plants that no longer slaughter hogs. Killing and dismembering hogs is more labor-intensive than the highly automated meat processing, so many companies have either dropped out of hog slaughtering or proposed lower wages for slaughter workers.

The reorganization of the meat-packing industry to make it more profitable has meant fierce attacks on packinghouse workers in recent years.

Some 1,500 Hormel workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9, saw the writing on the wall when they went out on strike in August 1985. They fought a bitter battle for restoration of wages and benefits and for safe working conditions.

A new contract was signed in September 1986 soon after the strike ended. The strikers did not win any of their demands. More than 800 of them never got their jobs back. Instead, they were put on a "preferential hiring list," although not one person on the list has been called back to work.

Last summer Hormel ceased slaughter operations in Ottumwa, Iowa. The company has said it might close its only remaining slaughter operation in Fremont, Nebraska.

Hormel is leasing its Ottumwa plant to Excel Corp., a slaughtering subsidiary of Cargill Inc. Those now working for Excel in Ottumwa make an average starting wage

of \$5.50 an hour. Since Hormel has leased its Ottumwa plant to Excel there has been widespread speculation that the Austin plant will also be leased to Excel or another company.

About 300 of the 1,000 union members working in the Austin plant are in slaughtering. The company says it is "optimistic" about finding work for the cut-and-kill workers in other departments of the Austin packinghouse and says these workers can transfer to other Hormel plants if no work is available in Austin.

The loss of 300 jobs in the plant is one more obstacle for those on the "preferential hiring list." The company is doing everything possible to avoid recalling these workers. The list is effective until August 1988, but workers laid off because of the slaughtering shutdown would have first recall rights for six months if jobs in other departments don't materialize.

Hormel executives have claimed that they are "not anxious" to lease to "one of these low, low wage operators involved." But they also admit, "Whichever company takes over the cut-and-kill operations will definitely pay lower wages than the \$10 plus the Hormel company is paying its workers in that area now."

Richard Knowlton, president of Hormel, has said that the company has been losing millions of dollars each year in the cut and kill and so is forced into this closing.

At the same time, however, Hormel has reported its best financial performance in its 96-year history, with record sales and earnings for the year and for the quarter ending October 31.

Many meat-packers in this area are discussing the ramifications of this attack and feel that the lowering of wages in the cut and kill (seen as the most difficult work in a packinghouse) if this operation is leased out will help pave the way for the lowering of wages in the other departments.

As one Hormel worker explained, "This is just a way to go about lowering everyone's wages. Before you know it, they will have this whole plant leased out."

Gale Shangold works on the boning line at Land o' Lakes packinghouse in Albert Lea, Minnesota, and is a member of UFCW P-6.



Militant/Tom Jaax

Rally at Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota, during 1985-86 meat-packers' strike. Company plan to end hog-slaughtering operation there will eliminate 300 jobs.

—WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

Cuba opposes Haiti 'peace keeping' force

The Cuban government has strongly opposed any suggestion of a "peace keeping" force being sent to Haiti.

A Dec. 1, 1987, statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the "terror and repression" being carried out against the Haitian people by the ruling military junta, the National Council of Government.

The Cuban government noted the statements made by U.S. officials aimed at justifying military intervention in Haiti.

"We draw attention to the fact that such interventionist language has been used before every military adventure of imperialism, particularly in our region, as happened, for example, in the Dominican Republic in 1965, in Grenada in 1983, and in Haiti itself when it was occupied for 19 years (1915-34)," the statement read.

"We call for the prevention of any kind of interference, particularly military intervention under the pretext of protecting lives and property, and for the establishment of a democratic regime because it is up to the Haitian people alone to freely solve the serious internal problems they face," the statement concluded.

French right blocked in Martinique, Guadeloupe

Protests in the French-ruled Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe blocked an attempted visit to the islands by Jean-Marie Le Pen. Le Pen is the presidential candidate of France's right-wing National Front party. His visit aimed to whip up support for the National Front in the French presidential election to be held later this year.

In Martinique 3,000 protesters broke through police barricades and ran onto the runway at the island's Lamentin International Airport, preventing the aircraft bearing the National Front delegation from landing.

The aircraft was diverted to Guadeloupe where it was able to land. But protesters prevented Le Pen and his supporters from disembarking, ultimately forcing them to return to Paris.

The actions were organized by political and labor groups, including the Mar-

tinique Independence Movement (MIM) and the Guadeloupe Front of United Trade Unions.

Demonstrators in both Martinique and Guadeloupe chanted anti-National Front slogans and denounced it as racist, fascist, and supportive of continued French colonial rule of the islands.

The French authorities on the islands have announced their intention to press legal charges against those who organized the protests.

Grenada's ruling party to set up spy unit

Grenada's ruling New National Party (NNP) is looking to set up its own spy unit to infiltrate rival political groups on the island, according to an internal NNP document.

The proposal was put forward in a report leaked to the Caribbean News Agency (CANA). The report was compiled by a select committee of the NNP charged with finding ways to help the party spruce up its "unsatisfactory image."

Opposition to the NNP regime has deepened since it came to power in rigged elections following the 1983 invasion of the island by U.S. military forces. Since then it has imposed a series of austerity measures, which have fallen most heavily on the workers and poor farmers of the island.

The aim of those measures has been to further eradicate the gains made by working people during the four-year rule of the People's Revolutionary Government headed by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

That government was overthrown in a military coup led by then deputy prime minister Bernard Coard. Bishop and several members of his cabinet were murdered following the coup. Within days U.S. military forces invaded the island.

The proposed spy unit would deepen the existing undemocratic and repressive measures established by the U.S.-backed regime.

On June 26, 1986, the NNP rammed through parliament an Emergency Powers Act. The act allows the government to call a state of emergency, during which it can assume sweeping powers over the economy and over the right to travel and demonstrate. It also provides for the arbitrary detention and deportation of persons deemed undesirable.

W.Va. AIDS victim fighting antigay exclusion, threats

BY ERIC SIMPSON

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Michael Sesco, a young gay man from Williamson, West Virginia, is standing up against a violent antigay campaign. He was forced to leave his hometown after the local mayor, police chief, and newspaper editor promoted a hate campaign centered on the fact that Sesco suffers from AIDS.

In Charleston recently, Sesco talked to the *Militant* about his experience.

Last summer, the mayor of Williamson closed and drained a public pool when he learned that Sesco was swimming there. The mayor ignored the well-documented fact that AIDS is not spread through casual contact or swimming pools. Police escorted Sesco and family members from the pool as a hostile crowd gathered. The local paper ran a banner headline on the pool closing the next day.

Later, police told a member of Sesco's

family that Sesco should get out of town, claiming they could not protect him from death threats and vandalism. Sesco relocated with the help of the Mountain State AIDS Network.

Sesco won national support after a major newsweekly ran a cover story about him.

He decided to take his rights fight back to Williamson after participating in the massive October 12 march on Washington for AIDS funding and gay rights. He returned as the featured guest on a recent Oprah Winfrey show broadcast from Williamson. Residents voiced the fears and prejudices fostered by government inaction on AIDS.

Sesco told the *Militant* that he wants to help his community learn that "people with AIDS need to be cared for with compassion, not locked up, quarantined or put on reservations."

Commenting on the antigay attitudes that underlie AIDS discrimination, Sesco said that people must realize that "the homosexual is out there digging that coal, he's digging those ditches and punching those computers — he's a working, breathing person" who deserves equal treatment.

Sesco added that the national march on Washington inspired him to fight harder to win a cure for AIDS. He condemned those in Congress who are voting for cuts in AIDS funding, saying that Reagan's AIDS policy makes him "no better than a murderer."

Returning to West Virginia after testifying before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, Sesco and his companion were evicted from their Martinsburg apartment. They moved to Charleston, the state capital, to "dig in and make a stand." "I'm tired of running," Sesco said. "If you want rights, you better go out there and fight for them."

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CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Stock Market Crash: Its Impact on Working People. Speaker: Eli Green, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Celebrate Publication of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*. Speakers: Elizabeth Stone, editor of *Women and the Cuban Revolution*; Lydia Brason, Nicaraguan Cultural Center; representatives of the Revolutionary Democratic Front-Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front and African National Congress. Showing of a short film on Guevara. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church, 1010 S Flower. Donation: \$5. Sponsor: Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Oakland

The 1987 Stock Market Crash. Speaker: Malik Miah, Socialist Workers Party, former editor of the *Militant*. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave., Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

Mural Art as an Expression of Struggle. Slideshow presentation by Timo Topete, professor and lecturer on Mexican mural art. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave., Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

Classes in Socialism. The Secret Police and the Struggle for Democratic Rights. A class series based on Larry Seigle's article, "The 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation" in issue No. 6 of *New Internationalist*. Translation to Spanish. Held every Wednesday at 11 a.m. or 7 p.m., Jan. 13, 20, and 27.

"The Post-World War II Witch-Hunt: the Role of the FBI in Splitting the CIO." Wed., Jan. 13.

"The Second Smith Act Frame-Up (1949-50): the Contrast Between the Defense Policies of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party." Wed., Jan. 20.

"The Socialist Workers Party Court Victory Against the FBI and the Importance of the Struggle for Democratic Rights." Wed. Jan. 27.

All classes at 3702 Telegraph Ave. Donation: \$1 per class. Sponsor: Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

San Francisco

The Wall Street Crash: What Does It Mean

for Working People? Speaker: Malik Miah, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 282-6255.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Civil Rights Movement and the Fight for Black Rights. Speaker: Ken Milner, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16. Dinner, 6 p.m.; forum, 7 p.m. 6826 S Stony Island Ave. Donation: forum, \$2; dinner, \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (312) 363-7322 or 363-7136.

Zionist Oppression and the Fight for a Democratic, Secular Palestine. Speakers: Ayub Talhami, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee; representative of Palestine Solidarity Committee; Cathleen Gutekanst, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Steelworkers of America. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 23. Dinner, 6 p.m.; forum, 7 p.m. 6826 S Stony Island Ave. Donation: forum, \$2; dinner, \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (312) 363-7322 or 363-7136.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

The Struggle for Democracy in Haiti. Speakers: Fritz Longchamps, Washington Office on Haiti; Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to French and Spanish. Sat., Jan. 9. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: dinner, \$3; program, \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Palestine: a People in Revolt. A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Palestine in Revolt. Speakers: Anan Jabara, Palestine Aid Society; Rudy Simons, Witness for Peace; Mark Friedman, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

The Stock Market Crash and the International Fight for a New World Economic Order. Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, chairperson of Twin Cities Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

Israel's Apartheid: the Palestinians' Struggle in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Speakers: representative of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee; Tom O'Brien, Socialist Workers Party. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution. Ten classes on the writings and speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara. Mondays at 10 a.m. or 7 p.m. from Jan. 11 through March 14. 508 N Snelling Ave. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call ((612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

Kansas City

The Reagan-Gorbachev Summit Talks and Their Meaning in the Fight for Peace. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 9, 4:30 p.m. 4725 Troost. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 753-0224.

Palestinian Freedom Fighters Rock Israeli Occupation. Speakers: Rita Shukair, Palestinian Human Rights Campaign; Paco Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16, 4 p.m. 4725 Troost. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 753-0224.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Solidarity With the Palestinian Peoples. Sat., Jan. 9, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Struggle for Freedom on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Speakers: representative of General Union of Palestinian Students; Maureen Coletta, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

Haiti's Revolutionary Process. Speakers: Ben Dupuy, *Haiti Progrès* newspaper; representative of Dominican Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Haiti: The Struggle Against Repression and U.S. Intervention. Speakers: Ben Dupuy, *Haiti Progrès* newspaper, Committee Against Repression in Haiti; David Ortiz, Bloque Socialista; Tony Savino, reporter in Haiti during the elections; representative of Dominican Workers Party. Translation to French and Spanish. Fri., Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

African National Congress Maps World Campaign Against Apartheid. A report from the ANC conference in Tanzania. Speakers: Sam Manuel, *Militant* reporter at the conference; representative of the ANC. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

The Reagan-Gorbachev Summit: The Road to Peace? Speaker: John Cox, Young Socialist Alliance. Translation to Spanish. Sun., Jan. 10. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; forum, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

Defend Abortion Rights. Speaker: Sherrie Love, Socialist Workers Party, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sun., Jan. 17. Dinner, 5:30; forum, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

OHIO

Cleveland

Film: *Martin Luther King: From Montgomery to Memphis*. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2521 Market Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (216) 861-6150.

OREGON

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Uprising in Palestine. New Stage in the Struggle Against Israeli Occupation. A panel discussion. Sat., Jan. 16, 7 p.m. 2732 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

The Summit Talks: The Road to Peace? A panel discussion. Speakers: Jerry O'Sullivan, member of Democratic Socialists of America; Halket Allen, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers union. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m. Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (215) 225-0213.

Black and Indian Rights in Nicaragua. The Autonomy Plan. Speakers: James Winfield, participant in Martin Luther King Brigade to Nicaragua, Young Socialist Alliance National Committee; Thomas Morton, participant in all-Black delegation on Witness for Peace brigade to Bluefields. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2744 Germantown Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (215) 225-0213.

Pittsburgh

AIDS: Fight the Disease; Defend the Victims. Panel of speakers: Eileen Yacknin, National Lawyers Guild AIDS Task Force; Laura Johnston, builder of October 11 gay rights march in Washington, D.C.; Sara Button, Young Socialist Alliance; member of United Steelworkers of America Local 15018. Sat., Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (413) 362-6767.

WEST VIRGINIA

Morgantown

Strike-Breaking and Union-Busting. Hear about two struggles from workers who are fighting back. Speakers: Cindy Dickey, member United Paperworkers International Union Local 1787, Lock Haven, Pennsylvania; Janice Fye, schoolteacher and member of the Lock Haven UPIU strike support committee; representative of District 1199 National Hospital and Health Care Employees at Fairmont General Hospital. Sat., Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

Frame-up of Kentucky United Mine Workers Union Members. Speakers to be announced. Sat., Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

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

Scrooge, Inc. — Some 110 workers at Okonite, a New Jersey plant, were suspended for donning attire "not appropriate for a business environment." It began prior



Harry Ring

to Xmas when visiting execs found two workers sporting Santa hats. They were suspended for declining to doff them, and the others then followed suit. They are members of the union and suspect

it may be related to contract talks.

Whistle while you work — A Conference Board study found that 60 percent of workers are allegedly happy with their jobs. They found that those who make more than \$50,000 tend to be happier than those who get less than \$15,000. The single most satisfied group of workers were those who are about to retire.

News-of-the-week dep't — We recently reported the finding of a Medicare study that cost cutting at hospitals resulted in worse care. Now a Medicaid study comes up with the finding that rich people get better medical care than poor people.

Reasonable question — Not-

ing that the fight for equality is very much with us, Thurgood Marshall, the only Black on the Supreme Court, observed, "I still know when I'm certain places. I know there are clubs here in this town that invite everybody else but me. I don't have an honorary membership in any club. . . . How come?"

Figures-don't-lie dep't — Social Security is proud of its low error rate in payments. Only overpayments are counted as errors. Underpayments aren't errors because nothing was paid.

Skip the fountain hangout — A pathologist warned a House

committee that an unknown, but sizable, number of electric drinking fountains may be providing water with an unhealthy level of lead, especially for children. He said this may result from contamination of the water by lead components of the coolers.

Quality education — Those who gripe that New York doesn't spend enough on its school system might note that the new schools chancellor will receive \$150,000 a year, a \$25,000 housing subsidy, \$10,000 for entertaining and, natch, a car and chauffeur.

No bullets — Express Yourself Inc. offers the Revenger. Mount it on the dashboard of your car and,

when need be, vent your anger by making the sound of a machine gun.

A real card — "She's got a great sense of humor. You know what Elizabeth did? She did a German dialect for us. She said, 'Oh ja, vot a vunderful hallvay ve haff. I vood luff to show you de pain-tinks dere.' Really wonderful gal, that queen." — Bob Hope, on his visit to the British royal castle.

A caring system — Elderly Wisconsin residents may not realize it, but if they received any welfare during the Great Depression, some counties demand repayment. But they don't try to collect until the recipient is dead. Then they bill the heirs.

New evidence exposes Reagan's 'yellow rain' myth

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Recently declassified U.S. government documents disprove the Reagan administration's claim that Vietnam has used chemical weapons in Laos and Kampuchea. They also indicate that the government's own investigations, as early as 1984, exposed the unreliability of these allegations.

This new information appears in a fall 1987 *Foreign Policy* magazine entitled "Yellow Rain: The Story Collapses," by Julian Robinson, Jeanne Guillemin, and Matthew Meselson.

On Sept. 13, 1981, then Secretary of State Alexander Haig charged Vietnam and the Soviet Union with using deadly chemical weapons composed of trichothecene toxins in Southeast Asia.

A March 1982 State Department report to Congress explained that "beginning in the fall of 1978, the majority of the attacks were carried out by aircraft spraying a yellowish substance which 'fell like rain.'" The administration claimed to have "firm" evidence to prove these charges, including interviews with victims, eyewitness accounts, and secret intelligence data.

Since 1984 Washington has annually incorporated these charges into the president's official "Report to the Congress on Soviet Non-Compliance with Arms Control Agreements." The 1987 report charges the Soviet Union with violating "its legal obligation under international law as codified in the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972."

The facts show that these serious accusations are based on the flimsiest of evi-

dence. At the time of Haig's 1981 speech this evidence consisted of a single, uncorroborated analysis of just one leaf and stem sample from Kampuchea. Subsequent analyses by the U.S. Army's Chemical Systems Laboratory of more than 80 samples from alleged attacks found no evidence of trichothecene toxin. British, French, and Swedish laboratories reached the same conclusion.

Altogether, the administration never claimed to have more than four samples of yellow material containing the trichothecene toxin. However, even in these four samples the toxin comprised less than a few hundredths of a percent. The other 99.9 percent of this "yellow rain" consisted almost entirely of pollen. The administration's response to the pollen discovery was to charge the Soviet government with deliberately adding pollen in manufacturing its chemical weapon.

In their haste to politically discredit the Soviet and Vietnamese governments, the Reagan administration chose to ignore basic scientific facts and laws of nature that contradicted their case.

By 1983 several scientists began explaining that yellow rain was not a chemical warfare weapon but a phenomenon of nature: the feces of wild honeybees. In 1984 scientists discovered that wild honeybees flying too high to be noticed conduct "collective cleansing flights" which cover areas with hundreds of thousands of yellow spots.

The small quantities of trichothecene that had been confirmed were not manufactured artificially but resulted from toxin-



Presidential candidate Alexander Haig initiated 'yellow rain' scam in 1981 while he was Reagan's secretary of state.

producing molds that exist naturally in the environment. British scientists reconfirmed this fact earlier this year when they reported the natural occurrence of trichothecenes in samples of food crops in Thailand.

Newly released documents show that U.S. investigative teams visiting the sites of alleged chemical attacks in 1983 and 1984 found no verifiable chemical attacks and concluded that stories about such attacks from refugees were highly contradictory and unreliable.

These teams visited hospitalized patients claiming to be suffering from chemical attacks. After examining them the team concluded that their symptoms "were as a result of battle fatigue, smoke inhalation,

heat stress, or a combination of these effects."

"At no time . . . was any case documented in which diagnostic examination or autopsy provided clear evidence of exposure to chemical warfare agents," states the *Foreign Policy* article.

The White House and State Department response to the revelations in the *Foreign Policy* article has been to ignore the facts and reiterate their original charges. "We don't have any reason to question the original conclusion of those studies. . . . We don't know of any new information," stated presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater.

However, the facts speak for themselves — Reagan's yellow rain is nothing more than bee dung.

Rally in Omaha celebrates two victories in rights cases

BY MIGUEL ZARATE

OMAHA, Neb. — "Tonight we are celebrating a double victory," said Political Rights Defense Fund spokesperson Joe Swanson to the 40 people who had come to hear more about the successful lawsuit of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against government spying.

In August 1986 federal Judge Thomas Griesa ruled that the FBI and other government police agencies had violated the constitutional rights of the two organizations. He awarded them \$264,000 in damages and in August 1987 enjoined the government from using illegally obtained files on the socialists.

The other victory celebrated by the December meeting here was scored by Daniel Cobos, who was recently granted an honorable discharge from the U.S. Air Force after he applied for conscientious objector status. Cobos told the audience that he had taken this step to distance himself from the U.S. government's illegal war against the peoples of Central America. Cobos explained he was ordered to conduct illegal spy flights in Nicaraguan air space daily. The flights originated from the Strategic Air Command (SAC) base here. Cobos, a Chicano, said he felt he was "betraying my

own people."

In response to his conscientious objector application, officials at the SAC base pressed to try Cobos for espionage or treason. But on November 24, Cobos said, "I got word that I had received an honorable discharge and that the air force investigation against me was ended."

Other speakers at the political rights rally saluted the double victory. They included Rowena Moore of the Malcolm X Foundation; Bill Herndon, president of the University of Omaha Black Liberators for Action on Campus; United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8729 President John McFarland; Anne Else, a representative of the Kiko Martinez Defense Committee; and Political Rights Defense Fund labor spokesperson Bob Schwarz, a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Messages of support were received from Rev. Jack McKaslin, who works with family farmers in Tekama, Nebraska; Arlo Hoppe, a farm activist from Schuyler, Nebraska; Calvin Thunder Hawk, a PRDF supporter on the University of South Dakota campus; Robin Carter, a leader of the Nebraskans for Peace; and Steve Bruner, secretary-treasurer of USWA Local 8729.

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

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

Jan. 13, 1978

A new round in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations took place December 25-26. This time it was Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's turn to make an unprecedented trip: to Ismailia, Egypt.

World attention focused on what proposals Begin would bring with him to move forward the negotiations begun when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat made his headline-catching journey to Jerusalem in November.

Millions of people — encouraged by speculation in the big-business media — hoped that Begin would offer not only Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territories occupied since the 1967 Mideast war, but also some concessions on the rights of the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Ismailia talks quickly stalled. To begin with, the Zionists refused to withdraw from the occupied West Bank, Golan Heights, and Gaza Strip.

They also refused to give Sadat even the face-saving appearance of a concession on what is a key question for the Arab masses: some form of recognition for Palestinian rights.

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interests of the Working People

Jan. 14, 1963

Price 10¢

Jan. 9 — Heavy fighting took place last week in South Vietnam with additional U.S. casualties. Even more alarming to those in charge of President John F. Kennedy's personal war in the Southeast Asian country is the realization that the guerrillas have now assembled a considerable arsenal of captured U.S. weapons.

Another casualty of the past week's fighting was the official fiction that U.S. troops were not in Vietnam as belligerents but merely as military "advisers" to the army of dictator Ngo Dinh Diem.

One engagement, in which 14 out of 15 American helicopters were hit, resulted in 13 U.S. killed and wounded within 24 hours.

Of the other combat missions — bombing and strafing — in the Vietnamese civil war, U.S. pilots are estimated to be flying 30 to 50 per cent.

In the ground fighting the press now reports groups composed exclusively of U.S. troops carrying out patrols and other actions and boasting of the number of guerrillas they captured.

The Palestinian revolt

Recent weeks have seen the biggest revolt by Palestinians in occupied territory in the four decades in which the state of Israel has existed. The revolt began in Gaza and quickly spread to the West Bank of the Jordan River — all Palestinian territories seized by Israel in its 1967 war against its Arab neighbors but not formally incorporated into Israel. The revolt then expanded to include East Jerusalem, conquered in 1967 and annexed by Israel.

A high point of the upsurge was a one-day strike December 21.

Not only were shops, schools and workplaces shut down in the areas seized in 1967, but 750,000 Palestinians and other Arabs who have Israeli citizenship and 100,000 West Bank and Gaza residents who work in Israel joined the strike. The revolt showed the growing dependence of the Israeli capitalist class on the superexploited labor of Palestinian workers.

The upsurge saw a new, young generation of Palestinians take the lead. They were born and raised under the Israeli occupation of their homeland. "The Israeli soldiers their fathers feared and their grandfathers fled do not frighten the sons anymore," fretted the December 28 *New York Times*.

"My sons believe that they can, by their actions, change the world," Jamil Hammad, a Palestinian writer in Bethlehem told a *Times* interviewer. "They are full of confidence."

Despite the Israeli regime's arrest of at least 1,200 Palestinians, the threatened expulsion from their own country of nine protesters, and the murders of at least 24 people by occupation forces, protests are continuing.

The Palestinian upsurge took place in the face of efforts by many Middle East regimes to seek an accommodation with Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, or to portray the occupation of Palestine as a secondary issue for Arab peoples.

At the November Arab League summit meeting, for instance, top priority was given to backing the Iraqi regime's reactionary war against Iran and the Pentagon's mobilization of a massive armada to force Iran to accept a settlement on terms dictated by Washington.

The struggles of the Iranian and Palestinian peoples against imperialist domination have strengthened each other. The Iranians' resistance to U.S. bullying has reinforced the confidence of Palestinian youth, and the Palestinian upsurge has dealt a blow to Washington's efforts to isolate Iran.

By braving the clubs, guns, and tanks of the Israeli military, the Palestinian people have demonstrated their continued support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the broad coalition of groups struggling against Israeli occupation. The efforts of the U.S. and Israeli governments to silence, suppress, and ultimately destroy the PLO have been set back.

The countrywide scope of the protests by Palestinians and other Arabs helped focus attention on the fact that the territories seized in 1967 are not the only areas under Israeli occupation. The state of Israel, from its proclamation in 1948, has been based on the occupation of Palestine, seizure of Palestinian land, expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland, and oppression and superexploitation of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians subjected to Israeli rule. In order to preserve and extend its conquests, the Israeli rulers have carried out five major wars and countless acts of aggression against neighboring countries.

The upheaval in Palestine — coming in the wake of blows dealt to the Palestinian people in the refugee camps of Lebanon and Jordan — demonstrates that the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli state is an irrepressible one that will continue as long as the Israeli state exists.

That just struggle points toward the replacement of the Israeli state, which is based on the expulsion and oppression of the Palestinian people, with a democratic, secular, multinational Palestine. A secular state is one that has no official church or religious belief and in which all citizens have freedom of religious belief or nonbelief.

The fight for a democratic, secular Palestine, which is the goal of the PLO, is the road to the liberation of the Palestinian people and the creation of a society where all citizens — Palestinians, Jews, and others — will be guaranteed full equality and democratic rights.

In the face of worldwide outrage over the gunning down of Palestinians for the crime of demanding basic human rights, the U.S. government mumbled a few criticisms of Israeli tactics and voted for a January 5 United Nations Security Council resolution opposing Israeli plans to expel alleged leaders of the protest.

But there was no move to end or even reduce the massive flow of military hardware that the U.S. government supplies to Israel. The U.S. rulers have supported the state of Israel from its establishment on conquered Palestinian land in 1948 down to the present.

Washington's massive military and economic aid to Israel is intended to enable the Israeli rulers to hold down the Palestinians and to help Washington police the Middle East in the interests of imperialism.

Workers, farmers, and all other democratic-minded people in this country have an interest in solidarizing with the struggle of our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Protests should be stepped up against U.S. government moves to gag supporters of Palestinian rights with its effort to close the Palestine Information Office in Washington, D.C., and the PLO observer mission to the United Nations.

Protests, teach-ins, and other activities are needed to get out the truth about Palestine, and to demand that all U.S. arms and other assistance to the Israeli occupiers be cut off now.

A good introduction to socialism

BY DOUG JENNESS

When people first become acquainted with socialist ideas, they usually begin looking for some book or pamphlet that will help explain what socialism is. And many who are already socialist activists want something basic that they can use to introduce coworkers, students, or others to the fundamental outlook of socialists.

There is no single item that fits the bill, although there are a number of works that are particularly useful. One of my favorites is a small pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and*

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

Scientific by Frederick Engels (Pathfinder, New York, \$1.25). Engels collaborated with Karl Marx in helping to found the modern communist movement in the middle of the last century.

The contents of this pamphlet were originally part of a series of articles published in 1877 in the German Social Democratic press and soon after in a book, *Anti-Dühring*.

Eugen Dühring was a lecturer at Berlin University who in the 1870s announced his conversion to socialism. But he presented a sweeping scheme that challenged the scientific view of human society and history defended by Marx and Engels. Dühring's outlook, however, attracted some attention and even influenced members of the German Social Democratic Party.

Engels noted that "the systematic comprehensiveness of my opponent gave me the opportunity of developing, in opposition to him, and in a more connected form than had previously been done, the views held by Marx and myself" on the great variety of subjects that Dühring addressed.

At the request of French collaborators, Engels selected three chapters of the book for a pamphlet to be published in France. Since then this pamphlet has been translated into many languages and circulated widely as an introduction to socialism.

One reason that it continues to be popular is that it explains the historical conditions that prepared the soil for the modern communist movement and the contributions and limits of its political, economic, and philosophical forerunners.

When Marx and Engels became politically active in the early 1840s and began to be convinced of the communist road, a body of socialist and communist literature, as well as organizations, had already emerged.

But, Engels noted, for most of these socialists removing the wrongs of society "was the task of reason." For them, he said, it was necessary "to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as Utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure fantasies."

Engels explained, however, that "certain historical facts had occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history." These facts were the first revolts and attempts at organization by the working class. "Facts," he wrote, "more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labor . . ."

"The new facts," Engels continued, "made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that all past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange — in a word, of the economic conditions of their time . . ."

Engels noted that since this was discovered, socialism "was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain," but the necessary outcome of the class struggle between the working class and the capitalists.

Moreover, Engels said, another advance over the utopians was laying bare the essential characteristics of capitalist society, which remained a mystery to them. This was accomplished, he said, by showing "that the appropriation of unpaid labor is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it . . ."

These two discoveries — the materialist conception of history and social structure and the secret of capitalist accumulation through the production of surplus value — placed socialism for the first time on a scientific footing.

By understanding where capitalists and workers came from, what the basis of their current antagonisms is, and where this is leading, the working class gets itself in the best position to change its conditions and consciously make its own history.

While *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* presents the basic ideas of scientific communism simply and clearly, getting the most out of it requires study and hard work. That's true of everything that involves breaking with the modes of thinking that permeate capitalist society. But the effort will be rewarding.

New York antiracist action

Continued from front page

highway in an attempt to escape the mob.

Particular fire should be aimed at New York City Mayor Edward Koch. The mayor is chief executive of the city and is responsible for hiring those who administer the police. The policies of his administration and the rulers of New York City bear responsibility for creating the climate in which the attacks in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst could take place.

Talking to reporters at City Hall just prior to the Howard Beach verdict, Koch exclaimed, "You know there are more whites assaulted in this town by Blacks than the other way around." Asked the basis for that contention, Koch answered, "That's my opinion."

But even the statistics of the Bias Unit of the city's police department showed 162 Blacks and 80 whites were the victims of racially motivated crimes during the first 11 months of last year.

New York City cops systematically arrest, beat and kill Blacks, Latinos, and Asians.

Michael Stewart, a young Black, died while in police custody in 1983. Eleanor Bumpurs, 66 years old, was killed in 1984 when a cop fired two shotgun blasts into her. On Dec. 3, 1987, police arrested and beat Yvonne Smallwood, a nurse. Six days later she died while still in police custody. Another Black — Alfred Sanders, a former Transit Authority mechanic — was shot to death by police on Dec. 29, 1987. The two white officers fired a total of 11 shots.

These cops are not out of control. The fact that they are routinely let go without so much as a slap on the wrist for their murderous deeds shows that their actions reflect city policy — from Mayor Koch and his police chief, to the courts.

The failure of city authorities to prosecute and punish killer cops emboldens the likes of the Howard Beach

lynchers, and racist vigilantes like Bernhard Goetz, to feel that they can beat and murder Blacks with impunity.

The majority of people in New York and throughout the country are outraged and disgusted by these racist assaults. The massive struggle for Black civil rights in the 1950s and '60s involved millions of people across this country, both Black and white. It strengthened and extended the rights of all working people. As a result the majority of people in this country oppose such overt racial bigotry and violence.

The existence of white enclaves that are "off limits" to Blacks runs against what the majority in this country have come to consider is just following the defeat of legal segregation.

That sentiment has been reflected in the response during the past year to attacks on Blacks — from Forsyth County, Georgia, to Howard Beach.

It shows the opportunities that exist to build broad, united protests. It underlines the possibilities to organize unionists; Black, Latino, and Asian community activists; antiwar and anti-apartheid coalitions; Central America and Caribbean solidarity organizations; Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other religious groups; women's rights groups; and high school and college students to march on City Hall, to demand maximum jail sentences for the Howard Beach lynchings, the Bensonhurst thugs, and the arrest and prosecution of killer cops.

No new laws are needed to accomplish this. That would serve to take the spotlight off the real problem — the failure of city authorities to enforce already existing laws against assault and murder, as well as civil rights legislation, and to vigorously prosecute, convict, and hand down maximum penalties to racist lynchings.

That is what is needed right now! Such sentences would be the most effective deterrent possible to others who would consider beating and killing someone simply because the color of their skin is Black.

Account of Hartford 16 case reads like FBI report

Los Macheteros: the Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence, by Ronald Fernandez, Prentice Hall Press, New York, 1987, 272 pp.

BY ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

One of the most important political frame-up cases in the United States is unfolding today in Hartford, Connecticut.

Sixteen supporters of Puerto Rican independence are accused of conspiring to rob \$7 million from a Wells Fargo depot in that city in 1983. Claiming that 15 of them

BOOK REVIEW

are members of the Macheteros, a clandestine proindependence organization, and therefore terrorists, the federal government is denying these activists many of their constitutional rights.

This is the correct framework for looking at Ronald Fernandez's book *Los Macheteros: the Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence*.

The book is not an independent investigation into either the Wells Fargo robbery or the Macheteros' supposed connection to it. It is simply a well-written FBI report. All the "facts" in Fernandez's account come from the FBI and the local police.

In fact, in large part the book is an apology for these cops.

In the prologue, Fernandez begins with a description of the FBI's predawn raids in Puerto Rico on the homes

of the Hartford defendants. Doors were kicked in. A shotgun was held to the head of a 10-year-old boy. A Donald Duck cassette and the manuscript of a novel were impounded as evidence.

The FBI never informed the governor of Puerto Rico of the impending raids. Why? "With closet nationalists behind so many Puerto Rican government desks," Fernandez explains, "agents understandably argued that to tell the locals was to tell the Macheteros." (Emphasis added) Using the same logic, the FBI justifies the existence of a list of "subversives" compiled by the FBI and other political police in Puerto Rico. This recently revealed list includes the names of some 60,000 people, including trade union leaders, artists, and government officials.

The author's description of the police interrogation of members of the Puerto Rican community is simply the local cops' version. According to this account, the cops were always polite and generally considerate — even downright kind at times. This is unbelievable to any working person — Latino, Black, Asian, or white — who has ever been stopped by the police. Fernandez rejects out of hand the charges by the Puerto Rican activists that the cops harassed them.

Returning to the FBI, Fernandez explains that during the 1960s it carried out a disruption program against the Puerto Rican independence movement. This operation included wiretapping, the use of informants, and threatening phone calls.

But according to Fernandez, with the introduction in 1976 of federal guidelines for domestic surveillance, the FBI ended all of these and other abuses. He says that the FBI stopped spying on activists who were targeted only for advocating their ideas, spying only on those whom

the FBI claimed carried out physical attacks against the government.

The author describes what he calls the "legitimate" methods of investigation used by the FBI in the Hartford case. These include tapping not only private, but public telephones, following anyone who visited the home of one man the FBI believed to be a member of the Macheteros, and wiring homes. A fact conveniently left out of the book is that this included bugging bedrooms.

I, for one, am hard-pressed to agree with Fernandez that these are legitimate acts.

The book includes some interesting and educational information about the colonial subjugation of Puerto Rico by the United States. But the author's attempt to provide a history of the Puerto Ricans' 89-year-old fight for freedom on the island is distorted because he looks only at the so-called violent struggle. He fails to describe the broad-based movement of hundreds of thousands of people — workers, farmers, students, artists, and church activists — who fight in the political arena every day for their freedom.

The author leaves out the history of the entire decade of the 1960s. Yet this is when the modern nationalist movement, inspired by the Cuban revolution, was formed and shaped. It was during this decade that the Puerto Rican people, in unprecedented numbers, protested the U.S. government's war in Vietnam.

The book suffers from the same flaws as the FBI's case against the Hartford defendants. It is based on tape recordings that were not only obtained illegally, but, as experts have recently testified in court, were doctored by the police.

Therefore *Los Macheteros*, while interesting, must be read with more than a grain of salt.

LETTERS

Indians

At home during the Christmas holiday, I read in the Minneapolis *Star & Tribune* about a ceremony that took place in Mankato, Minnesota, commemorating those killed in the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

Thirty-eight Dakota Sioux Indians who were hanged 125 years ago for leading an uprising were honored as heroes. The ceremony was held as part of a "Year of Reconciliation" proclaimed by Gov. Rudy Perpich.

The conflict of 1862 erupted after the Dakotas were cheated by treaties, forced onto reservations that were inadequate, and denied promised monies and supplies.

After a heroic resistance, the badly outnumbered and outgunned Indians were defeated. Seventeen hundred Indians surrendered, and 392 were tried by a military commission.

Three hundred and three of these Indians were given the death sentence. President Abraham Lincoln commuted the sentence for all but 38 of the defendants. These were to die as an example to any Indians thinking of further resistance.

Surrounded by 1,400 troops, the 38 were hanged from a single large scaffold.

Almost all the remaining Dakotas were exiled. Many died on the way to reservations in the Dakota Territory.

Growing up in rural western Minnesota, I remember being told about the execution of the so-called "savages" in Mankato.

Bringing to light the true history of how this capitalist government used its army, its courts, and its vigilante groups to destroy the resistance of the Indian people will help all working people better understand the nature of the capitalist system we confront.

Dennis Richter
Glencoe, Minnesota

Cuban prisoners

Former major league baseball pitcher Denny McLain was recently released after spending two and a half years in the federal prison system. In an article in the December 14 issue of *Sports Illustrated*, McLain described his stay in the U.S. penitentiary in Atlanta. (He was released two months before the hostage-taking by the Cuban-born inmates.)

"The Atlanta prison was the filthiest place on the earth. We were surrounded by cockroaches and rats — the four-legged and two-legged kind," McClain wrote.

McClain described the way the guards routinely abused the Cuban inmates:

"Maybe the worst of it was in the hospital where the Cubans were truly victims. They went on a hunger strike to protest the conditions. When a guy was starving, the doctors would stick a tube down his nose to feed him. They would handcuff the Cubans — ankles to the bottom of the bed, wrists to the top — and then put the tubes in their noses. When the doctors ran out of the right-sized hose, they just got bigger ones, and shoved them down the Cubans' noses. Guys almost drowned in their own blood."

Allan Grady
San Diego, California

Hope to see the day

I really enjoy your paper, and it provides me with some hope for a better and just world.

I only hope to live to see the day when socialism comes to America. I have a lot of problems living in a class-divided capitalist society, just like millions of other people. I just hope I can survive in the interim, pending the socialist revolution.

Tom LoBello
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Changes

Reading the *Militant* has forced me to make drastic changes in the way I think on many issues.

C.D.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Aryan Nations

At 8:00 a.m. on December 5 a neo-fascist radio program, the "Aryan Nations Hour" began broadcasting its message of racial hate on KZZI radio in Salt Lake City.

A few hours later, several hundred protesters demonstrated in a nearby park denouncing the program and station for carrying it. The gathering consisted mostly of church and student groups. Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance also participated.

On December 14 KZZI management announced that the Aryan



M.G. Lord

Nations program had been canceled because of strong pressure placed on the station and advertisers by various antiracist groups and individuals.

The Aryan Nations is a white supremacist organization that is attempting to infiltrate Utah from its northern base in Idaho. The cancellation of its program is a victory for the people of Utah.

The SWP and YSA should be commended for their instrumental role in organizing the protest and offering classes on the danger of fascism. It was a job well done.

John-Michael Eggertsen
Salt Lake City, Utah

More on gay rights

Good work! I'm glad to find such emphasis on people of color and on Third World concerns.

Please also give more coverage to gay rights. March on Washington coverage was a little brief (though far better than the regular newspapers).

E.E.
Seattle, Washington

Don't miss an issue

I used to buy the *Militant* when I went to the socialist forums in Toronto.

However, with a subscription I get it delivered to my home, and so I don't miss a single issue. The *Militant* is an excellent paper.

P.S. More articles about El Salvador, eh?

Roy Jones
Brantford, Canada

Wilberg mine fire

In the article on the United Mine Workers report of the Wilberg fire in the December 18 issue, I feel your editing simplified the part about "bend" or dog leg too much.

Consider: 1. Federal mining regulations require an escapeway to be the most direct route to the surface possible. But this bend put 2,100 feet extra into the escape-way. The consequence was the 13 bodies recovered from the head of this bend.

There was also a potential for the loss of the mine rescue teams, as it forced them to work out of a base that was behind the fire. Many individual team members refused to work out of that base after it was known there weren't any survivors. The air base was burned up when the fire got out of control later. The rescue teams left it only after five of the six entries had caught fire.

2. This dog leg happened when the Mine Safety and Health Administration approved an illegal ventilation plan. There is no process for appeal. There is a procedure to modify mine laws to suit the companies, but it wasn't used here.

3. All of this was done to save

the expense of building one more overcast. An overcast involves building four cement block walls, approximately four feet high by 20 feet long and using about a dozen prefabricated sheet-metal pieces. All in all less than \$1,000.

Frank Pavelko
Price, Utah

Correction

In the last issue of the *Militant* in the article "Socialist leader speaks on U.S. and world politics," Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes was quoted as saying, "Any one of those in the Democratic race is as qualified to serve as president and carry out the ruling families' bidding as anybody who has ever been in the White House."

What Barnes said was "... anybody who has ever been in the White House in this century."

Also, in the sentence, "This period ... has been good for big business, professional lawyers, and better-off sections of the working class," the word "lawyers" should have been "layers."

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.

Fifth Ky. miner faces frame-up trial

BY DUNCAN WILLIAMS

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — In the wake of the unjust convictions of four union miners in federal court in Ashland, Kentucky, the trial of a fifth miner, Paul Smith, is set to begin January 11 in London, Kentucky.

The charges against the United Mine Workers members stemmed from a shooting incident in May 1985, during the strike against A.T. Massey Coal Co., that resulted in the death of a scab coal hauler.

Donnie Thornsby, David Thornsby, James Darryl Smith, and Arnold Heightland were indicted and arrested in August 1987 for interfering with interstate commerce. Another miner, Ervine Smith, was indicted and later pleaded guilty, testifying against the others in the first trial.

Paul Smith was indicted in September and arrested in October. All the men except Ervin Smith have been held without bail.

At the trial last month in Ashland, which ended with the verdict on December 17,

the miners' defense attorneys convincingly poked huge holes in the government's conspiracy case. But the federal prosecutor was able to get a guilty verdict by appealing to prejudice against "those type of people," that is, union miners.

It was obvious in the first trial that the government is building a frame-up case that Paul Smith fired the shots that killed Hayes West, the scab driver.

Throughout the case, the miners have been portrayed as hard-bitten, violent men, while the intimidation and violence of Massey and the cops have been ignored.

In an interview with the *Militant*, Naomi Rusk, Paul Smith's fiancée, explained how this worked in his case:

"They wrote in the paper as though Paul had run, had fled," she said. "But Paul never knew he was wanted. In fact, he was in Canada, Kentucky, the day the other men were picked up."

"He had been living here with me [near

Logan, West Virginia] for over a year, and everybody knew it." While he was supposedly a fugitive, "he was in Kentucky a lot — hunting, picking up his strike benefit checks, seeing his mother and sister."

Instead of informing Smith that he was wanted, the FBI and West Virginia State Police, acting on a "tip," descended on Rusk's house on October 14. Smith was gone for the day when two state troopers came to the door.

"They sat with me all day," Rusk said, "and searched the house, but I never saw a warrant. I learned later from my neighbors — because they wouldn't let me go out — that they had men in camo outfits surrounding the house. I was very upset."

"When Paul came back about 4 o'clock, he was with the landlord, our neighbor. They stopped at his place first. Right away, the front yard was filled with cops."

"The landlord came out and told them to get out of his yard. He asked them, 'Have

one of you walked up to his door and told the man you had a warrant?'"

"They let me go talk to Paul, and he went peacefully, although he told me he was innocent. He had a hunting rifle and a pistol at the house, but he wasn't armed that day at all."

Despite the setback in Ashland, Rusk says she "can't believe the boys are guilty. Most people I know are really for the boys." Defense lawyers are preparing, in addition to Paul Smith's trial, the first appeals of the conviction. The convicted miners face up to 20 years in jail. The judge will sentence the men following the conclusion of Smith's trial.

Funds to pay the legal expenses of the case are being raised by the Citizens for Justice, Box 8, Canada, Kentucky 41519.

In addition, Rusk urged that cards and letters of support be sent to Paul Smith, Laurel County Jail, London, Kentucky 40741.

Minn. unionists set tour of paper strikers

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ST PAUL, Minn. — Striking paperworkers from De Pere, Wisconsin, and Jay, Maine, will be on tour in Minnesota in January, telling the story of their six-month fight against International Paper Co. to working people here.

Dennis Couture, vice-president of United Paperworkers International Union Local 14 in Jay, along with Local 14 member Roland Samson, will be here at the invitation of International Association of Machinists Local 1833 at Northwest Airlines. They will be speaking to a Local 1833 meeting on January 7, and to other union meetings during their stay January 5-13.

IP strikers from UPIU Local 6288 in De Pere, including local President Jerry Herwald, will be making at least three trips to Minnesota this month.

Unions representing machinists, paperworkers, electrical workers, auto workers, railroad workers, steelworkers, and hotel workers have all extended invitations to the striking paperworkers to speak.

Many local unions affiliated with the Minnesota AFL-CIO have already responded to appeals for financial support to the strike.

The strikers will also be addressing a biweekly community forum sponsored by the Zion Baptist Church in Minneapolis's Black community on Sunday, January 10 at 6 p.m. The church is located at 621 Elwood Avenue North.

The Minnesota tour is being organized by members of IAM Local 1833 and UPIU Local 264 in St. Paul. For more information, contact Gordon Eells, business representative, UPIU Local 264, at (612) 645-8619.

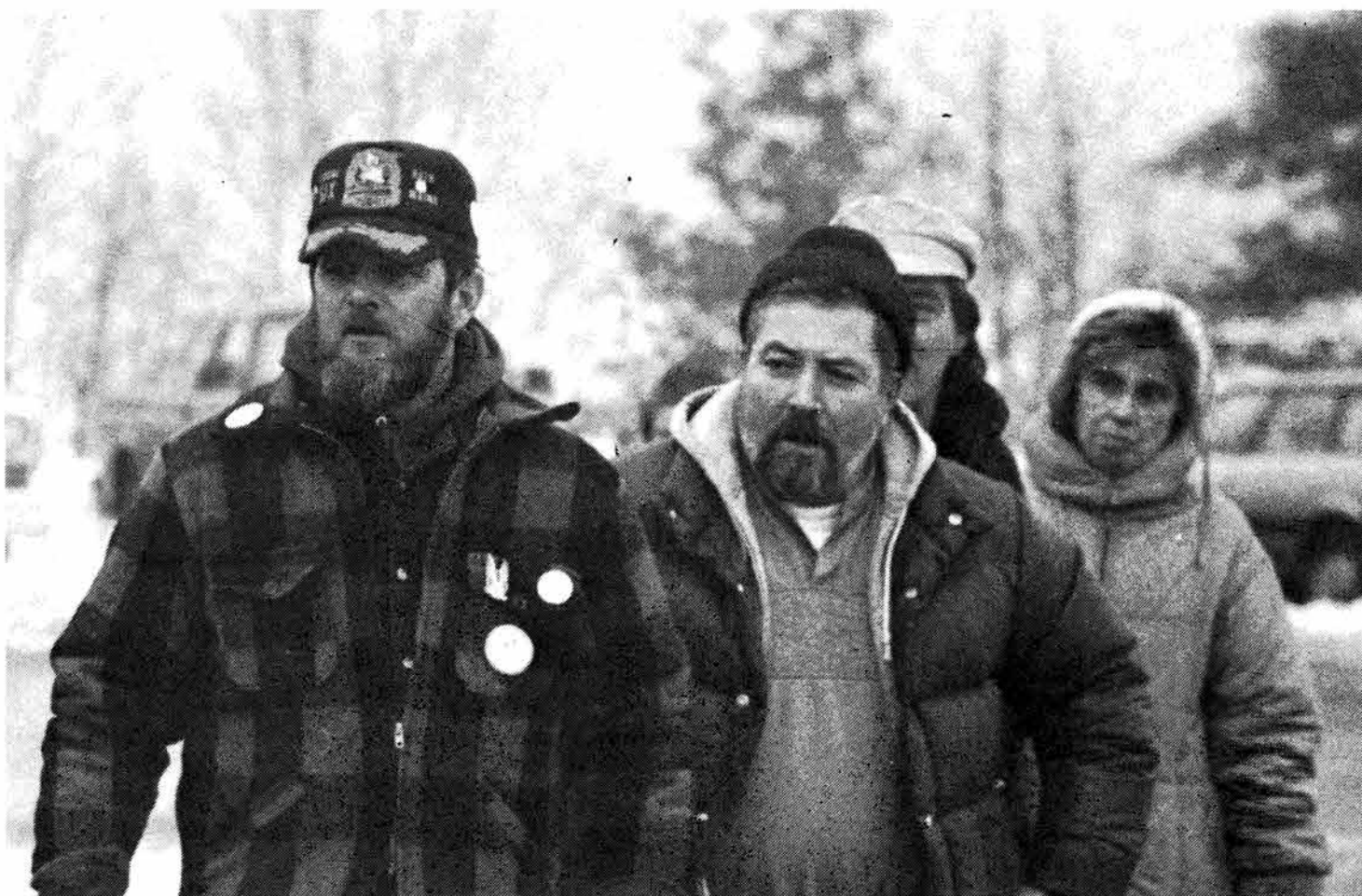
BY EDWIN FRUIT

BALTIMORE — Representatives from UPIU Local 1787 in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, visited the Baltimore area in mid-December to widen support for their strike against International Paper Co.

They addressed a meeting of the Baltimore Central Labor Council, attended a Christmas party hosted by the government employees' union, went to a meeting of the Rainbow Coalition, and spoke at a Militant Labor Forum. They are planning to return in January to speak to other community organizations and unions.

The Lock Haven workers invited everyone to attend and help build a solidarity rally for the IP strikers, scheduled for January 30 at 1:00 p.m. at the Lock Haven High School gymnasium.

UPIU Local 1787 is trying to get the court injunction limiting the number of pickets at the mill temporarily lifted in order to march by the plant.



Militant/Jon Hillson

Mickey Meader (left), vice-president of Shipbuilders Local 6 at Bath, Maine, shipyard helped lead December 25 picket line at International Paper mill in Jay, Maine. Seven-month-long strike has won active support from unionists throughout New England.

Spirited Christmas picket at Maine paper mill

BY JON HILLSON

JAY, Maine — There was no Christmas truce in the battle between International Paper Co. and paperworkers on strike at the company's Androscoggin mill here.

In November management notified the 950 scabs working in the mill that they would be working Christmas Day — the first time the mill hasn't closed for the holiday in almost five decades.

Christmas is the last shutdown holiday that the paperworkers, who have been on strike since June, have left. IP is demanding that the workers give up this holiday, in addition to a slew of other concessions, including an end to premium pay for Sunday work.

The 1,250 strikers — members of United Paperworkers International Union Local 14 and Firemen and Oilers Local 246 — won a one-day lifting of the court injunction that limits pickets at the mill. On December 24, some 400 strikers and supporters lined the road in front of the plant in a

silent vigil to protest the loss of the holiday. lined the road in front of the plant in a silent vigil to protest the loss of the holiday.

On Christmas Day the picket lines were larger than usual, and everyone was thankful that the weather was unusually warm. The picket was headed by Mickey Meader, vice-president of Shipbuilders Local 6 at the huge shipyard in Bath, Maine. Meader has been one of the Jay strike's most solid supporters, and had promised the union/family meeting earlier that week that he would stay on the picket line for 40 hours during Christmas to help give strikers a break. He and other pickets greeted the scabs with angry shouts as they left the mill at shift change.

Inside the small, sturdy picket shack, strikers and supporters talked about the strike while we warmed ourselves at a wood-burning stove.

"My stepson came to me at the beginning of the strike and said, 'I hear they've got jobs at the mill'" said one husky striker

with a salt-and-pepper beard. "I told him 'You take a job there, you've got no home, and I've got no son.' He's not working there, of course."

Another striker with 22 years in the mill pointed to the picket line. "See that woman? She is really tough. Her father went back [to work in the mill], her brother went back, but she is out here all the time."

Christmas, another striker explained, is "the worst time. But we got through it with only a few of us having problems."

Two Christmas parties were organized for strikers' small children, with more than \$20,000 in donations from unions across New England, and a disco was held for the teen-agers.

Back on the picket line, another striker explained, "None of us thought this could go on this long. Maybe until the fall, but not this long. And now, no one knows how long it will go. But, one day we are going to get these bastards for this."