

4 foes of apartheid convicted of treason

BY SAM MANUEL

Four leaders of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa were convicted November 18 on treason charges. Seven others were convicted on charges of terrorism.

Both counts under South African law carry a maximum penalty of death by hanging. The trials lasted for three years.

Another eight defendants were acquitted of all charges. Three of the original 22 defendants were dismissed earlier in the trial for lack of evidence.

Three of those convicted of treason are leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF). They are Popo Molefe, general secretary; Mosiuoa Patrick Lekota, publicity secretary; and Mabokela Moses Chikane, secretary of the UDF's Transvaal region.

Madikwe Thomas Manthata, also convicted of treason, is a UDF activist and worked for the South African Council of Churches in the Transvaal region.

The 3-million-member UDF is South Africa's largest anti-apartheid organization.

The 1,521 page decision of South African Supreme Court Justice Kees van Dijkhorst also raises the possibility that the UDF could be outlawed. The organization was among 17 anti-apartheid groups prohibited from "carrying on or performing any acts whatsoever" in a February 24 government decree.

Judge van Dijkhorst's decision accused the UDF of operating as a domestic wing of the outlawed African National Congress. The ANC is the leading organization fighting to overthrow the apartheid regime and establish a nonracial and democratic South Africa.

Those convicted of terrorism are Gcinumzi Petrus Malindi, Tsietsi David Mphuti, Naphali Mbuti Nkowane, Tebello Ephraim Ramakhula, Sekwati John Mokoena, Serami Jacob Hlanye, and Hlabeng Sam Matlole.

1984 Sharpeville protests

The charges against all of the defendants were based on their alleged roles in anti-government protests in 1984 in the township of Sharpeville.

In September 1984 the UDF and the Vaal Civic Association organized a boycott against rent increases in Sharpeville. The action was part of broader protests against a constitutional "reform" of apartheid that would allow for representation of Asians and those of mixed race in segregated houses of parliament. Both would be subordinate to the white chamber.

In the course of the protests the deputy mayor of Sharpeville and three of the township's council members were killed. Blacks, Asians, and those of mixed race view members of the township councils as collaborators of the apartheid regime.

The prosecution never accused the defendants of any specific acts of violence but said they had created a climate for violence and had shown an unwillingness to halt violence once it began.

A South African court handed down a similar ruling in the 1985 trial of six young Blacks, also from Sharpeville. In that case no evidence was produced that any of the six had committed murder or any act of violence. The court ruled that they had "common purpose" with the crowd, which also killed a township councilman. International protest has forced the apartheid regime to indefinitely suspend execution of the Sharpeville Six.

Attorneys and supporters of those convicted on November 18 announced that they would appeal the convictions.

Mark Curtis sentenced to 25 years in prison

BY PRISCILLA SCHENK

DES MOINES, Iowa — On November 18, Polk County Judge Harry Perkins rejected the motion for a new trial submitted by Mark Curtis' attorney, Mark Pennington, and sentenced Curtis to 25 years in an Iowa prison. Curtis was convicted September 14 on trumped-up charges of sexual abuse (rape) and burglary.

Judge Perkins decided to give Curtis the minimum sentence, 25 years. This means the mandatory sentence of 10 years for third-degree sexual abuse and 25 years for first-degree burglary will run concurrently. The maximum sentence would have been 35 years.

According to Pennington, the state parole board will decide when he is eligible for parole.

The sentencing took place amid extensive media coverage of a report issued by the Des Moines Civil Service Commission accusing the police department of widespread racism and sexism.

Mark Curtis maintains that he is not guilty of the crimes he was convicted of. A politically active packinghouse worker and unionist, Curtis was arrested on March 4, 1988, beaten by the police, and charged with trying to rape a young Black woman. His arrest took place the same day Curtis was involved in protests against the arrest of 17 coworkers by immigration cops at the Swift meat-packing plant.

Thousands of union members, farmers,



Frame-up victim Mark Curtis (left) with lawyer Mark Pennington at September 1988 trial.

students, and political activists from around the world have protested Curtis' victimization.

More than 25 of those supporters were in the courtroom when he was sentenced.

Among them were several coworkers from Swift and longtime Des Moines civil rights activist Edna Griffin.

Also present was Héctor Marroquín, a

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Dollar's decline unsettles Wall St.

BY FRED FELDMAN

The Dow Jones Industrial Average of stock prices dropped by 60 points in the three days following the November 8 U.S. presidential election, the worst postelection drop in 40 years. On November 11 the stock market suffered its worst setback in seven months, losing 47.66 points.

By November 22 the turmoil on the stock, bond, and currency markets appeared to have settled down for the time being. But the events highlighted the fact that the economic problems of U.S. and world capitalism that resulted in the October 1987 stock market crash have not been resolved and are growing worse.

The election victory of Vice-president George Bush, who most capitalist investors and corporation executives had backed, did not stem the growing fears on the financial markets.

The downswing in prices of stocks — shares of ownership that entitle the owner to periodic dividends — began before election day. Between October 21, when prices reached a postcrash high, and November 16, the Dow Jones average dropped by 145 points.

The bond markets have also been unsettled. There governments, banks, and corporations raise money by selling interest-bearing securities.

The prices of U.S. Treasury bonds, which play an important part in financing the federal deficit, tumbled on November 9. In an effort to attract reluctant buyers, the government raised interest rates on these bonds to 9.17 percent on November 17.

In addition, the prices of corporate bonds — including those of companies facing debt-financed takeover bids — continued to be in the doldrums. There is growing nervousness about the possibility that rapidly growing corporate indebtedness will lead to defaults on debt payments by some companies.

One factor spurring the downturns in

both the stock and bond markets is the decline in the exchange value of dollars in international currency markets, which have now fallen near to the record low levels reached after the Oct. 19, 1987, stock market crash.

By November 17, the dollar had lost 11 percent of its exchange value since August.

On the next day, the government banks of the U.S. and 10 other countries poured massive sums into the market to purchase

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Nicaraguan government announces new farm credit, price measures

BY LARRY SEIGLE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Hurricane Joan cut an indiscriminate swath across Nicaragua's midsection, but the burden of the economic damage it left behind is falling most heavily on poor farmers and the lowest-paid workers.

In response, the Sandinista government has altered some of the "free market" policies it adopted earlier this year.

In a report to the National Assembly November 15, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said that the government's top priority is to help farmers who grow rice, beans, and corn get a new crop in. "Without this," he said, "the whole country would come to a standstill."

Most of the production of these basic food staples is in the hands of small farmers. Tens of thousands of them, whose farms stood in the path of the hurricane, lost their crops.

The Sandinista government has now adopted emergency measures granting these hurricane victims extensions on loan repayments as well as new long-term credit for purchasing tools and equipment.

Farmers in areas most severely affected by the storm are being granted a reduction of interest on outstanding bank loans to a flat 5 percent a month, a rate far below the pace of inflation.

Growers of basic food grains will also be eligible for 100 percent bank financing of

the next crop, instead of the 80 percent previously in effect.

"We are obligated to concentrate resources for the time being on the farmers so that farm production of foods can be stabilized," Ortega told the National Assembly. He said that the government bank has instituted a "more flexible credit policy."

The government will not "stick too much to the economic policies we have been carrying out this year, although this doesn't mean we are abandoning these policies," Ortega said.

Last June, the government had tightened farm credit substantially. It cut bank financing for planting from 100 percent to 80 percent. The bank also began charging interest at rates closer to the pace of inflation.

The goal of these "free market" measures, the government said at the time, was to reward those farmers who were "efficient" and cut subsidies to those who weren't.

In an interview in the November 21 edition of *Barricada*, published by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, Alonso Porras of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform stressed that the task of guaranteeing production of basic food crops in the aftermath of the hurricane has to be shouldered by the government as well as by the farmers.

"Now, reconstruction and recovery of

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Unions raise emergency aid for Nicaragua

BY HARRY RING

Headway has been made in winning union support for hurricane relief to Nicaragua. Several unions in Miami and other cities are supporting the relief effort.

In Britain the National Union of Mine-workers is backing the emergency relief drive, along with local affiliates of the rail and telecommunications unions.

At a meeting of the American Postal Workers Union, Miami area, chief shop steward Betty Tsang presented a motion on Nicaragua aid, which was adopted unanimously. It called for the union to endorse the Pastors for Peace relief supply convoy, contribute \$100 to the effort, and have the union hall listed as a dropoff point for relief donations.

A breakfast meeting of the Miami Sanitation Employees Association heard an appeal for support to hurricane relief by Roland Rolfe, director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

In addition to relief supplies, the Miami pickup truck joining the national convoy to Nicaragua will also take a \$500 check from Postal Workers for Peace. The money was collected from workers in the three major postal unions and will go to their sister union in Nicaragua to help restore phone service.

The Miami Coalition to Support the Pastors for Peace Convoy includes organizations in the Cuban and Puerto Rican communities. Union sponsors include Al Edden, president of Transport Workers Union Local 291, and Randy Cecil of the United Farm Workers.

In Britain the National Union of Mine-workers contributed £1,000 (about \$1,800) and urged its affiliates to back the "Nicaragua Must Survive" drive sponsored by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign.

The paper of the Yorkshire-area miners' union featured an appeal to its members, declaring: "When the revolutionary Sandinista government came to power with mass popular support, they inherited an economy ruined by the policies of the Somoza dictatorship. . . . Since then they have had to endure the onslaught of the U.S.-inspired contra terrorists, as well as the USA's own economic blockade. . . .

"Western governments are unlikely to be enthusiastic about aiding Nicaragua. . . . People's aid is therefore that much more important."

The appeal by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign has won significant public support. As of November 21, £115,000 had been raised, including £10,000 from Wales.

Andy de la Tour, a leading figure in the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, recently returned from Nicaragua, having arrived there on the first civilian plane to land after Hurricane Joan struck.

At a London meeting of the New International Forum, he described the destruction he had seen in Nicaragua and urged support for the relief drive. He noted that the £115,000 raised by the solidarity campaign is nearly half the \$250,000 the



Militant/Larry Seigle

Bluefields, in Nicaragua's South Atlantic Coast region, three weeks after Hurricane Joan struck.

British government gave for relief. He demanded that the government increase its contribution.

In the United States the Pastors for Peace Convoy was slated to leave for Nicaragua November 28. Twenty trucks, buses, and other vehicles, originating in five cities will drive across the country, collecting additional contributions along the way. They will converge in San Antonio, Texas, and proceed as a convoy to Nicaragua.

Tom Hansen, coordinator of the project, said that more is being collected than the 20 vehicles can carry. The surplus will be shipped to Nicaragua in cargo containers. The 20 vehicles will be left in Nicaragua.

Hansen also said that two eight-ton trucks bearing 24,000 pounds of rice have already been sent to Nicaragua on an emergency basis.

In St. Petersburg, Florida, the Quaker-based group, Pro-NICA, has been sending aid to Nicaragua for several years.

Shaun Duran of Pro-NICA said in a telephone interview that they have been collecting hurricane relief funds and supplies internationally. Quakers in London re-

cently raised \$10,000 that was used to send enough corrugated roofing for 500 hurricane-damaged homes in Nicaragua.

A shipment of relief supplies was being sent this week in two river boats that will be able to get the supplies to areas where the roads have been washed out.

Contributions can be sent to Pro-NICA, c/o Friends Meeting, 130 19th Ave. S.E. St. Petersburg, Fla. 33705. Telephone (813) 896-0310.

Brian Grogan in London and Pete Seidman in Miami contributed to this report.



Nicaragua Network Hurricane Relief Brigades

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 Brigade cost: \$450 plus travel.

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British soldiers ransack homes in north of Ireland

BY PETER CLIFFORD

BELFAST, Ireland — In recent weeks the oppressed Catholic population here has been subjected to systematic and destructive house-to-house searches. The British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) themselves admit 1,100 homes have been gone through.

The mainly Catholic housing projects have been sealed off. People going in and out are searched and their names and addresses checked against lists of people living in the projects.

The most savage search was carried out in the Turf Lodge district of Belfast, when the army moved into the Donnelly household. Soldiers tore down kitchen units and ripped out the stove, dumping them outside together with the furniture.

They proceeded to dig up the concrete floor to a depth of five feet using pneumatic drills. Floor boards in the rest of the house were torn up. The Donnellys' home is now uninhabitable.

Nothing was found during this 30-hour army operation. In fact this very house had been similarly searched three months earlier.

In the most recent period, the British government has introduced media censorship on Sinn Féin, the leading republican organization. This contributed to the assault on the Donnelly home going unreported in the British press.

The media censorship didn't stop 100 people from mounting a picket outside the army barracks in Turf Lodge to protest that assault.

An entire legal system has been constructed to victimize and harass those who fight back. The use of the Prevention of

Terrorism Act (PTA) is growing. This act allows the army and police to detain someone for up to seven days without charge. The right to contact a friend or relative can be denied for the first 48 hours. Other rights are also ignored while a vigorous interrogation system proceeds.

From 1975 to 1986, nearly 7,000 people were detained in the north of Ireland and more than 6,000 in mainland Britain under the PTA. Most were never charged.

People who travel between Ireland and mainland Britain are especially subject to harassment. In 1986 alone, 59,481 were detained at ports of entry, often for a few hours at a time.

One victim of the British repression is Brendan Donaghy, a republican prisoner who I visited at Long Kesh on November 8. At 18 years of age, he was held for seven days under the PTA. Then he was released for six days, held for another seven, released for two months, and then held once again. By the end of this traumatic period he was forced to sign a "confession," which was the prime evidence used to convict him of murder. Donaghy was given a life sentence.

Former prisoner Richard May described the conditions faced by the 440 prisoners in the H-blocks at Long Kesh. You must remain in your cell for 15 hours a day, May said. While outside the cell you can only mix with the 24 others in your wing. As punishment, some republicans have been moved between the blocks every three weeks for the past five years, preventing them from settling down.

Two hundred of the 700 republican prisoners are serving life sentences. These prisoners have now taken a new step to



Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary admit going through 1,100 homes in mainly Catholic housing projects in Belfast.

protest their unjust treatment.

Brendan Donaghy described the issues: "In the H-blocks today 70 percent of life sentence prisoners have spent more than 10 years. Some have done as long as 16. The reason we are doing long years in jail with no prospects of release is simply because we are not loyal subjects to the foreigners in our country."

"My comrades and I," Donaghy continued, "are being kept in jail because we hold a particular political belief. I was born into a society in which people were walked all over because of their religion and political beliefs."

"Examples of this injustice are seen when British soldier Ian Twain, sentenced

to life, was released after doing under three years of his sentence and he gets back into the British Army again. I have served almost twice as long as Twain myself," explained Donaghy.

"I will do at least another six years because my case won't be considered by the review board until 10 years are served," Donaghy added. "The review board is made up of people unknown to us, and all reports they draw up are secret."

Prisoners' demands

The prisoners have put forward six demands as the basis for the new Campaign For Lifers:

- Scrapping of indeterminate sentencing.
- Legal representation at reviews.
- Ending secret reports.
- Right to challenge those appointed to sit on reviews.
- Notification of future review dates.
- An end to political criteria being used to prevent release.

This campaign is now stimulating the beginnings of a movement in the north. Two hundred people recently met in Belfast, and 100 in Dungannon, Tyrone, to form committees of relatives and supporters to highlight these demands.

Participants in the meetings included both supporters of Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labor Party.

Peter Clifford was recently in Ireland on a sales trip for Pathfinder. He interviewed Brendan Donaghy at Long Kesh on November 8. After leaving the prison, Clifford was himself jailed and interrogated over a 24-hour period by the RUC and the British Army under provisions of the PTA.

Attorney Leonard Boudin assails 'threat to basic freedoms in Ireland'

The following article by leading constitutional attorney Leonard Boudin appeared on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* of November 19. Boudin is general counsel for the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. He is currently representing Irish-American organizations that are suing the State Department to obtain a visa for Irish republican leader Gerry Adams.

It may be foolhardy for an American — especially one not of Irish descent — to address the centuries old Irish political question. But we must concern ourselves with the recent British government threat to basic freedoms in Northern Ireland.

On October 21, the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced that, in criminal cases, courts in Northern Ireland would be permitted to draw "whatever inferences would be proper from the fact that an accused remained silent."

This violates the basic right — long honored in Anglo-Saxon legal tradition — to remain silent, by punishing the accused's refusal to talk to the police and other authorities.

The current criminal procedures of Northern Ireland, which, among other things, substitute judges for juries, are Draconian. However, the new sanction undercuts the presumption of innocence that has been fundamental in England since the Star Chamber was abolished in 1641.

Our country followed with the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution that provides that no person "shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself."

During the McCarthy period, Dean Erwin Griswold of the Harvard Law School wrote his famous pamphlet "The Fifth Amendment Today" and the United States Supreme Court upheld the Fifth Amendment rights of individuals subpoenaed by grand juries and Congressional committees.

England does not have a written con-

stitution, so there are few limitations on Parliament. But three centuries of established fundamental rights explain why, in 1981, the English royal Commission on Criminal Procedure recommended against the diminution of this right.

Ironically, at the same time that it plans to compel the accused to speak, the British Government is attempting to suppress public speech. Exercising powers under the Broadcasting Act, it has banned broadcasting interviews with representatives of the Sinn Féin and other Irish organizations.

The excuse is that this is necessary to prevent "terrorism," no matter how innocent the speech. As a result, Irish members of Parliament such as Gerry Adams, a Sinn Féin leader and an elected member of the British Parliament, are not permitted to speak on British television except in Parliament or during an election campaign.

It is impossible to reconcile this ban with the historic English concern for freedom (personified for us by Hyde Park) embodied in the First Amendment to our Constitution that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, — to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

In our country, such suppressions of fundamental rights on the excuse of national security have been held unconstitutional.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has also proposed that candidates for local elections take an oath renouncing violence. While superficially palatable, it interferes with the electorate's right to choose its representatives in office, a right upheld in England and by our Supreme Court in the case of Julian Bond, who was denied a seat in the Georgia Legislature because of his opposition to the Vietnam War. Test oaths of this kind have always been regarded as anathema to free institutions.

Such oaths intrude into the personal thoughts of the individual. As Justice Rob-

ert H. Jackson wrote, "Attempts of the courts to fathom political meditations of an accused would be as futile and mischievous as the efforts in the infamous heresy trials of old to fathom religious beliefs."

Our own government has engaged in similar infringements by the denial to aliens of visas for political reasons. Thus, Gerry Adams has been denied a visa on the claim that the Sinn Féin is the political arm of the Irish Republican Army, which has engaged in unlawful military action against the British.

Regrettably, the State Department, like the British government, seems to believe that suppression of speech is legitimate for a claimed ultimately good purpose.

Jailed Irish activist wins right to apply for asylum in U.S.

BY HARRY RING

NEW YORK — The federal Board of Immigration Appeals has ruled that Joseph Doherty, an Irish liberation fighter, can apply to be released from prison and apply for asylum here.

Doherty has been jailed here since 1983 and ordered deported to Britain. On November 14, the immigration appeals board ruled that he has "a well-founded fear of persecution" in Britain.

Doherty has won a half dozen legal victories in his fight against deportation. But the government has persisted in its stubborn efforts to turn him over to British authorities, who accuse him of having killed a captain in the British occupation forces in Northern Ireland.

Doherty and seven other Irish Republican Army prisoners escaped from jail. Doherty fled to the United States but was later arrested by FBI agents here.

Twice Immigration and Naturalization

Service judges blocked deportation. The government made four appeals of these decisions, losing all of them. At that point Edwin Meese, then attorney general, directly ordered Doherty deported to Britain. The effect of the present decision is to block that order.

If and when Doherty is released from prison remains to be determined.

In an interview, his attorney, Mary Pike, said that the appeals board decision was "a very significant victory" for Doherty and that he was "very happy" about it.

At the same time she noted the half dozen favorable rulings in the case and the government's moves to thwart them.

She said the present decision has major implications for those who are forced to flee oppression and seek asylum here.

For further information on the case, write to: Committee for Joseph Doherty, P.O. Box 20474, Midtown Station, New York, N.Y. 10129.

Report shows cops knew in advance of attempt to attack Curtis

BY MARGARET JAYKO

Recently released police reports show that cops in Des Moines, Iowa, were complicit in an attempted assault on frame-up victim Mark Curtis.

Curtis' attacker, Keith Morris, is the father of the young woman Curtis is falsely accused of raping. Curtis is currently serving 25 years on the trumped-up charges.

On November 17, the police were forced to hand over records to attorney George Eichhorn. He is representing Pathfinder Bookstore owner Jason Redrup in a small claims action Redrup recently won against Morris.

A court ordered Morris to pay Redrup \$2,000 plus interest for smashing the plate glass windows of the bookstore in an attempt to attack Curtis, who was inside at the time. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has offices in the building.

The police reports have been released to the press by the Curtis defense committee. In one report, filed on July 15, 1988, the night Morris tried to attack Curtis, officer M. Hofmann wrote, "While myself and reserve officer Robinson were on a domestic at . . . 22nd St., a Keith Morris approached us and said he was 'going to 25th St. to kick ass.'" Curtis lives on 25th Street. Witnesses saw Morris banging on Curtis' door that evening, right before the attack on the bookstore.

Hofmann continued, "I attempted to talk more with Morris to get an address, but he drove off." The two cops did nothing, thereby giving Morris a green light.

The report went on to explain, "As soon as we finished our domestic . . . we drove 25th St. from 1100 blk to 1600 blk looking for Morris's vehicle. As we were looking, we were tripped to 2105 Forest [Avenue] on a fight." That's the address of the premises that the Mark Curtis Defense Committee shares with the Pathfinder Bookstore.

When Robinson and Hofmann arrived, two other cops — J. Pollock and T. Odam — had Morris detained. "Morris was bleeding quite badly and windows to the bookstore were broken out," wrote Hofmann. Morris was then taken to the hospital.

Officers Pollock and Odam had been dispatched to the bookstore, arriving after the damage was already done. Morris and his wife told the cops they had broken the windows.

In a report filed 11:35 p.m. that night, officer R. Dawson wrote: "According to Pollock, this Path Finder Book Store is helping pay the expenses for the defense Attorney for Mark Curtis in regards to his sexual abuse charges in which the suspect's daughter was sexually abused." Bookstore director Redrup, who is a supporter of the Curtis defense effort, says this is false.

Dawson continued: "It was for this reason the suspect Keith Morris retaliated against the Path Finder Book Store by breaking out the windows and because he was upset with the process and course of action the court system was taking in regards to the trial and so on." In other words, anyone who supports the Curtis defense effort is fair game for an attack by Morris.

This was not the first time that Morris had threatened Curtis.

In a November 17 letter to Polk County Attorney James Smith, attorney Eichhorn wrote that the attack on the defense committee office "took place after Mr. Morris made an indirect threat at a hearing on July 12, 1988, where he stated, ' . . . I have five grown sons . . . and I constantly have to keep those boys talked to — they're not boys; they're grown men — to keep control and try and let the judicial system run these courts . . .'" The prosecutor's office simply ignored these threats, made openly in court.

Although Redrup filed a complaint after the attack on the bookstore, Smith's office refused to press charges against Morris. Attorney Eichhorn pointed out that Morris admitted to the police, and to the court in the November 10 small claims hearing, that he intentionally broke the windows.

At the November 10 hearing, Morris also stated he would do it again, a state-

ment which elicited no response from the presiding judge. Eichhorn stressed in his letter to Smith that "this most recent threat is troublesome to Mr. Redrup and the other tenants at 2105 Forest Avenue and requires me to determine whether or not the Polk County Attorney's office is intending to do anything concerning the complaint against Mr. Morris."

The police reports on the Morris arrest revealed that the arresting officers recommended filing criminal charges and that this was rejected by top officials at the county prosecutor's office.

In his report the night of the attack, Hofmann classified the assault as "criminal mischief."

In his lengthy report written that night, officer Dawson wrote that he "spoke with the Assistant County Attorney Maggi Moss at lengths about the circumstances involving this. Moss is fully aware of the charges and counter charges being brought by Keith Morris. I advised her and I have been advised by the owners of the Book Store that the damage estimate would be between \$1600 and \$1700.

"Moss feels my recommendation that the suspect be brought to jail and charged with criminal mischief and Moss agreed, but after further thought, further discussion Moss wanted to take it under advisement

Mark Curtis sentenced to 25-year term

Continued from front page

Mexican-born worker and leader of the party Curtis is a member of, the Socialist Workers Party. Marroquin recently won his 11-year fight against the U.S. government for a permanent residence visa. He addressed a rally the day after Curtis was sentenced, celebrating his own victory and appealing for support for Curtis.

Curtis had been held in the Marion County Jail in Knoxville, Iowa, since his September conviction. As two guards led him into the courtroom at 8:40 a.m. for his sentencing, Curtis smiled and greeted those present. He was handcuffed, but reached to shake his brother Paul's hand.

Curtis had received permission from the judge to wear a suit and tie, instead of his prison jump suit. He sat down, talked with his supporters, answered questions from reporters, and consulted with his attorney before the court proceedings began.

Stu Singer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, handed Curtis a copy of new evidence to support the motion for a new trial. The evidence was a police report from last July showing that Keith Morris, father of the woman Curtis is falsely accused of raping, informed the cops that he was on his way to attack Curtis. The police did nothing to stop him. Morris broke the storefront windows of the Curtis defense committee office.

Singer also showed Curtis the lead story in the *Des Moines Register* about revelations of racist and sexist actions by the cops.

Just before the hearing began, Judge Perkins granted Pennington's request that the guards remove Curtis' handcuffs.

Motion for a new trial

Perkins asked Pennington and Assistant Polk County Attorney Catherine Thune if they had further comments on Curtis' motion for a new trial.

The motion was based on several serious violations of Curtis' rights during his September trial. Judge Perkins had ruled in favor of prosecution motions to bar Curtis from introducing into evidence material relevant to his defense. He was not allowed to testify about his beating by the police, introduce evidence on the record of lying by the arresting officer, or utilize files on illegal FBI surveillance of him for his anti-war activity.

The motion also documented irregularities related to the jury, including an affidavit by one of the jurors saying she thought Curtis was innocent but voted for the guilty verdict. She didn't know that if



Militant/Sara Lobman
Front window of Des Moines Pathfinder Bookstore after July 15 attack by Keith Morris.

until such time she could discuss it with her superiors and possibly issue an arrest warrant for the suspect at a later date."

In a follow-up report on Aug. 1, 1988, Dawson wrote: "Upon my return from vacation contacted Asst. County Attorney Maggi Moss and she stated that she was in possession of the charges and that she has not and will not for the time being issue an arrest warrant for Keith Wesley Morris. Moss advises that she suspects Morris will be arrested in the future on the criminal

mischief charge, but not at this time.

"At this time the investigation has been completed, the suspect has admitted to the crime and charges have been filed and our part of the investigation is concluded."

On August 4, Polk County Attorney Smith announced that he would not file charges against Morris.

The police reports on the Morris attack were submitted as an addendum to Curtis' motion for a new trial, which Judge Harry Perkins rejected on November 18.

she maintained her vote of not guilty, a mistrial would be declared.

The judge had wrongly disqualified the one Hispanic juror, leaving an all-white jury to convict Curtis.

Thune filed a countermotion, arguing that there was no basis to declare a new trial. Three jurors from the September trial were in the courtroom to testify for the prosecution in case the charge of jury misconduct was debated, Pennington told the *Militant*.

The judge, however, did not discuss the defense motion for a new trial. "After due consideration," he said, "the motion is overruled."

Curtis statement

Judge Perkins then moved on to the sentencing. He asked for statements from the defense and prosecution. Attorney Pennington asked the judge to run the sentences concurrently. Curtis, he said, had "an absence of any previous criminal record" and had led an "exemplary life."

Curtis then exercised his right to speak before sentencing. "Your honor, since my arrest thousands of people from Des Moines to the Philippines to New Zealand have asked that the charges against me be dropped, that this frame-up be ended, and that I be allowed my freedom," he began.

"The *State of Iowa v. Mark Curtis* is not about rape or burglary or assaulting police officers or any of the other things I was accused of. It's about putting the fear of jail, the fear of the billy club into the hearts of working people."

Curtis said his case shows how the cops and courts are used against working people, just like they use the cops to "help banks foreclose on farmers and drive them off their land. It's part of the racist beatings by police and prosecution by the courts that's responsible for a 20 percent Black prison population in a state where the percentage of Blacks is far lower than 20 percent."

When he was arrested, Curtis said, the cops "beat me up, sent me to the hospital, and called me a 'Mexican-lover' and a 'colored-lover.'"

Drawing on the exposés of police bigotry in Des Moines, Curtis referred to police who "wear KKK robes, sexually harass women, and use racist slurs."

He explained that he has become a victim of the police and prosecution because he is "a supporter of immigrant rights — at the Swift meat-packing plant and elsewhere. I am opposed to racism," he said, "from racist actions in Clive [Iowa] to For-

syth County [Georgia] to the Des Moines Police Department. I am a union activist trying to make the meat-packing industry a safer, more humane workplace.

"I am not a rapist but a fighter for women's rights. And I am not guilty of the crimes I have been convicted of. But there is no presumption of innocence and no fair trial for workers like me."

Curtis concluded: "The goal of demoralizing and discrediting me and my supporters has not and will not succeed. I'm going to keep on being a part of the fight for working people."

Following Curtis' statement, prosecutor Thune said that Curtis had been convicted "by people representing a cross-section of our community" and asked the judge to proceed with sentencing.

Judge Perkins then sentenced Curtis and ordered him sent immediately to the Oakdale Detention Center near Iowa City before being transferred to a state prison. This is the normal procedure at sentencing, Pennington said, and he expects Curtis to be assigned to a state penitentiary within three weeks.

Curtis was permitted to embrace his wife, Kate Kaku, and his brother Paul and to shake hands with his supporters. He was then handcuffed and led from the courtroom by two guards.

Outside the courtroom, reporters spoke with Pennington and Singer. Pennington insisted the trial would have been different if the defense had been allowed to introduce all its evidence. "Mark should have been tried by a jury of his peers. He was not," Pennington added.

Curtis has 30 days in which to file an appeal. Pennington has been retained to represent Curtis in the appeal.

Reporters asked Singer if the Mark Curtis Defense Committee will continue now that Curtis has been sentenced. "Mark Curtis supporters are increasing our activity to get out the truth," Singer replied. "We know that an injury to Mark Curtis is an attempt to injure every working person."

When asked if support has fallen off since the conviction, Singer said that "support has increased and has continued to increase. This conviction raises big questions of human rights, political rights, and workers' rights. That's why people will fight back. This conviction is an outrage and comes out of an unjust, criminal, and racist justice system. The fight will continue until Mark gets out of jail."

The three TV stations here ran major stories on the hearing, and the *Des Moines Register* ran a front-page article.

Team sells Action Program to Iowa workers

BY NORTON SANDLER

A four-person team of *Militant* distributors traveled some 1,600 miles in Iowa and surrounding states during the final days of the circulation drive.

They sold 125 copies of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* — many at packinghouse gates. The Action Program contains proposals being advanced by the Socialist Workers Party. Also sold were a couple dozen subscriptions to the *Militant* and the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Team member Linda Nichols explained in a telephone interview from Des Moines that they met many United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) members who participated in strikes to defend wages and working conditions in 1986-87. They also met young workers hired recently in both unionized and unorganized packing plants.

"The trailer parks we visited in South Sioux City, and Dakota City, Nebraska, were near the Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) plant where there was a several-month strike," said Nichols. Seven subscriptions were sold.

After selling at the Oscar Mayer packinghouse in Perry, Iowa, the team stopped at the big University of Iowa campus in Iowa City, where another chunk of subscriptions were sold. They had discussions with students about the fight for justice for Mark Curtis, a Des Moines packinghouse worker serving 25 years on trumped-up rape and burglary charges.

Thirty workers bought Action Programs during two shift changes at the IBP plant in Joslin, Illinois. "Here, like at other plants, we ran into people who knew the *Militant* or who had heard something about the Action Program," said Nichols.

The team sold to UFCW members at the FDL packinghouse in Dubuque, Oscar Mayer in Davenport, and at Farmstead Foods in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Workers at the unorganized Louis Rich turkey-processing plant in West Liberty, Iowa, bought numerous copies of the Action Program in Spanish. "There's a large



Kathleen Mickells (left), Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate in recent U.S. elections, discussing Action Program with workers at Oscar Mayer plant in Perry, Iowa, during campaign stop earlier this fall. Recent team also sold at that plant.

Latino work force there, many of them women," Nichols explained. The team also sold *PM* subs to workers at IBP's nearby nonunion Columbus Junction plant.

Nichols said she would begin by pointing to the article in the November 18 *Militant* by Doug Jenness which describes the situation in U.S. politics a year after the October 1987 stock market crash. "From there the discussion would often lead to the proposals for unifying working people contained in the Action Program."

"People are very aware of the general

discussion in the media about the stock market going up and down, and the possibility of a depression," Nichols stated. "Most acknowledge that things aren't going to get better, and they are looking for answers."

Nichols pointed to the example of an older worker at Farmstead Foods who said, "I know things are bad. I used to be paid \$11 an hour, now I'm getting \$6.50."

Several young workers and students responded favorably to the demand in the

Action Program for canceling the debt countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa owe to the bankers in North America, Europe, and Japan, she said.

The final circulation drive scoreboard will be printed in next week's *Militant*. Distributors will want to double-check their totals with those on hand in our business office by 1:00 p.m. on November 30. The phone number is (212) 929-3486.

Keeping Malcolm X 'in young people's hearts'

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The letter printed in the box below tells Pathfinder supporters how much fellow workers behind bars appreciate their efforts to raise \$250,000 this fall.

As Eric Penn writes, that money will help Pathfinder keep the works of revolutionaries like Malcolm X "in the hearts of young people."

It is also through the Pathfinder Fund that books by Malcolm or Thomas Sankara can be made available to jailed fighters stripped of all financial resources.

Nearly \$30,000 was collected this past week for the fund and another \$7,000 pledged. But almost \$110,000 remains to be collected. The fund is scheduled to end December 1.

The chart this week shows some important advances. Supporters in Los Angeles sent in more than \$3,000 and raised their goal by \$4,000. The Los Angeles Pathfinder Bookstore held a successful meeting November 20 featuring Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New Internationalist*. The meeting celebrated the life of Oscar Coover, a longtime SWP leader and active Pathfinder supporter.

Newark supporters have raised their goal by \$2,000. This follows a large donation by a railroad worker whose union just won a contract dispute, including a retroactive wage increase.

A rally celebrating the book *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder/Pacific and Asia, was held at the Newark bookstore November 19. The featured speaker was the book's editor, David Deutschmann.

Among those in attendance was a woman whose husband is currently in jail. She found out about the meeting after Pathfinder supporters attended a social at the Rahway State Prison organized by Latino prisoners.

Another woman present heard about the meeting by sheer accident. A Pathfinder supporter calling people about the event dialed her number by mistake. But when he told her that the meeting would celebrate a book of Che's writings, she wanted to attend.

There are now 1,018 contributors to the Pathfinder Fund. Many of these new supporters have met Pathfinder through literature tables on the street or attended one of the many rallies to celebrate books dis-

tributed by Pathfinder.

Once at a rally, most working people new to Pathfinder books decide they want to make a donation. Many also decide to return to the Pathfinder bookstore in their area for other political events and to pick up more literature.

The increase in contributors has brought the total amount pledged to the fund up to \$260,248 now, indicating the breadth of support Pathfinder has won for its publishing and book distribution projects.

The key job now is to collect that money as rapidly as possible.

Pathfinder Fund contributions

UNITED STATES	Goal	Received
Atlanta	5,000	1,515
Austin, Minn.	2,850	1,520
Baltimore	3,000	650
Birmingham	7,000	2,990
Boston	9,000	4,997
Charleston, W. Va.	3,500	2,190
Chicago	10,100	3,755
Cleveland	5,400	3,512
Des Moines	3,300	1,285
Detroit	6,100	3,335
Greensboro, N.C.	2,800	1,438
Houston	8,500	4,775
Kansas City	3,700	2,290
Los Angeles	20,000	9,808
Miami	5,500	3,445
Milwaukee	3,000	1,648
Morgantown, W. Va.	4,600	2,187
Newark	12,000	8,358
New York	27,000	18,796
Oakland	13,000	8,390
Omaha	3,800	2,527
Philadelphia	7,000	3,380
Phoenix	3,500	1,160
Pittsburgh	5,000	2,572
Portland, Ore.	4,100	2,951
Price, Utah	2,250	1,515
Salt Lake City	6,300	4,289
San Francisco	11,500	7,586
Seattle	7,000	3,740
St. Louis	8,800	7,008
Twin Cities	12,000	5,780
Washington, D.C.	7,500	2,542
Other U.S.	7,500	2,812
Total U.S.	241,600	134,746
INTERNATIONAL	Pledged	Received
Australia	820	20
Britain	3,966	696
Canada	8,720	3,776
France	200	200
Germany	150	150
Iceland	1,010	102
New Zealand	2,055	435
Sweden	565	565
Other International	1,162	1,162
Total U.S. goals and int'l pledges	260,248	
Total received		141,852

'You bring words to life by action'

Organizers of the Pathfinder Fund recently received the letter below from a supporter in prison. The fund aims to raise \$250,000 by December 1 to expand the Pathfinder's publication, promotion, and distribution of books and pamphlets on working-class struggles around the world. The fund also makes it possible to provide some books free of charge to those behind bars.

I wish that I could attend the publications celebration of *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, and I wish I could help raise the \$250,000 by December 1. But I am held hostage, incarcerated and pauperized.

I want to help because I know that the funds will be used for good purposes. However, prison holds me just like the

Third World debt holds people. It lacerates me just like apartheid demoralizes and decapitates people. Therefore I am in a condition of helpless inactivity.

Yet I fully understand that the only remedy is for people to involve themselves in more social activity such as you've been promulgating, and I congratulate your positive efforts.

You have sent me many books free of charge over the last four years. Your program isn't only rhetoric; rather you bring words to life by action.

Thanks for keeping Comrade Malcolm X in the hearts of young people. You're great!

Eric Penn
Brunswick Correctional Center
Lawrenceville, Virginia

\$250,000

Pathfinder Fund

Deadline: Dec. 1

☐ Enclosed is \$ _____ for the fund.

☐ I pledge \$ _____ to the fund.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

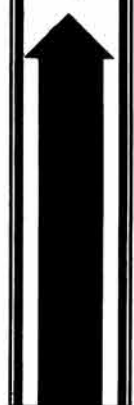
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250,000

Collected \$141,852



Voters approve statute on New Caledonia

Calls for continued French rule over Pacific island until 1998 referendum

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS — In a national referendum held here November 6, 80 percent of those voting approved a new statute on the future of New Caledonia, one of France's colonies in the South Pacific. The statute is based on a recent agreement on New Caledonia signed by pro- and anti-independence forces there and the French government.

In France, less than 33 percent of eligible voters participated in the referendum. In New Caledonia, where voting also took place, the yes vote was 57 percent, with 58 percent voter participation.

Surveys showed that more than 90 percent of the voters who are Kanaks, the indigenous people of New Caledonia, voted yes. This means that a big majority of other voters, mostly of European origin, or originally from other Pacific islands, voted no.

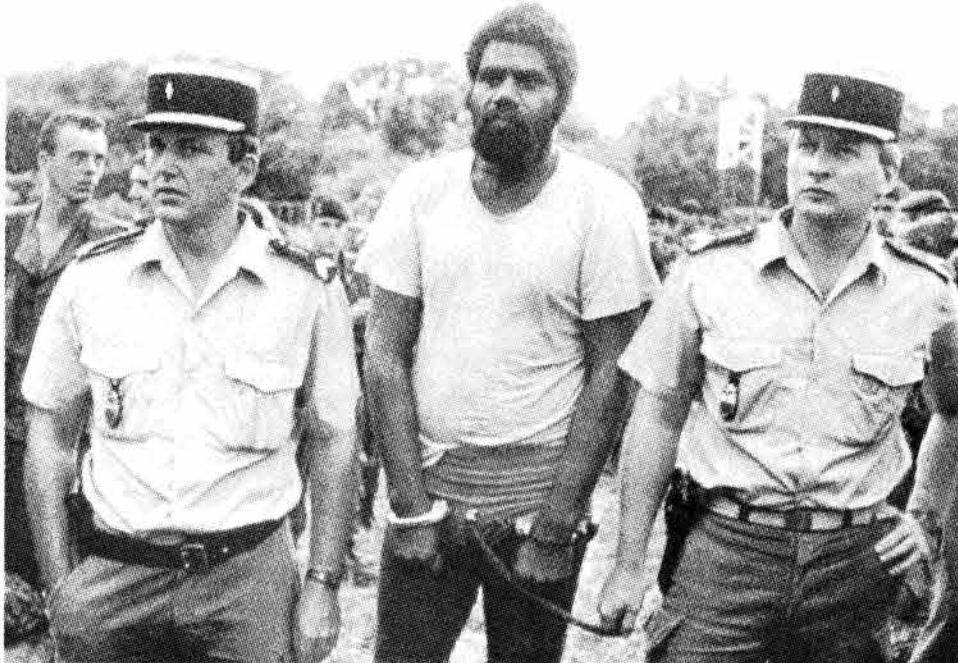
Background to referendum

Last May 5 the French government sent an elite "antiterrorist" unit to storm a group of proindependence Kanaks who were holding 23 soldiers hostage in an attempt to force the government to negotiate.

The assault in Ouvéa, New Caledonia, led to the deaths of two soldiers and 19 Kanaks, several of whom — including their leader Alphonse Dianou — were obviously murdered in cold blood hours after the attack. Three days later Francois Mitterrand of the Socialist Party was reelected president of France.

The new prime minister named by Mitterrand, Socialist Party leader Michel Rocard, quickly brought together the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) — which leads the anticolonial struggle in New Caledonia — and the Rally for Caledonia in the Republic — the main anti-independence force — in negotiations. An initial agreement was concluded in Paris on June 26.

It provided for the French government to immediately assume direct control over the colony and postponed any change in colonial status until at least 1998, when a referendum will take place in New Caledonia. Only those voters registered today in the island and their offspring will be able to vote in 1998. This condition partially meets an FLNKS demand to limit participation of the thousands of French and other immigrants who have come to the island in recent years.



Murderous assault by French soldiers earlier this year resulted in 19 Kanak deaths, 26 arrests. Under new pact, Kanaks seized and sent to jail in France will be released.

The territory is to be divided into three provinces in the next year, each of which will elect an assembly. Two of the assemblies will likely have a FLNKS majority, while the southern province will be led by anti-independence forces. This province includes all the principal economic resources of the country.

In addition, the agreement provides for substantial economic investment by the government, mainly outside the southern province, and expanding the training and education of Kanaks. Promises of preferential hiring of Kanaks for public jobs have

also been made.

The agreement puts an end, for the moment, to the virtual outlawing of the FLNKS in parts of New Caledonia.

Debate in independence movement

The initial agreement was the subject of discussion and debate in the independence movement. This led to new negotiations in August, which concluded in a provision of amnesty for most Kanak political prisoners. This began to be put into effect November 18 with the freeing of 51 Kanaks imprisoned in Paris, among them

all 26 survivors of the Ouvéa massacre.

The Socialist and Communist parties and the main union federations in France called for a yes vote on the referendum. The far right National Front opposed the accord. The Rally for the Republic, a Gaullist party, called on voters to abstain on the referendum.

The New Caledonia solidarity movement in France was divided on what stance to take. Many followed the lead of the FLNKS in voting yes. Others called for abstention, explaining that while the FLNKS might be forced to accept a compromise, Kanak independence supporters in France should not, through their vote, give political approval to the perpetuation of French colonial rule.

Within New Caledonia, one of the component organizations of the FLNKS, the United Kanak Liberation Front, called for a no vote.

A young worker at the Alsthom plant in St. Ouen, France, where large transformers are made, said he abstained on the referendum because he didn't want to see France "continue plundering that country for another 10 years." A number of other workers made similar comments.

A worker in St. Ouen who voted yes said, "Something has to be done to stop the violence in that country. At least the agreement will bring peace." Others voted for the new law because the FLNKS had called for a yes vote.

Two weeks before the referendum, FLNKS President Jean-Marie Tjibaou, declared: "We aren't waiting for anybody to give us anything. And we know that for us the only possibility to maintain political pressure will be if the perspective of seeing us go back into the streets is kept in mind."

Dollar drop shows economy unstable

Continued from front page

dollars and slow the fall. Although massive buying by the Federal Reserve Bank and Bank of Japan failed to turn the tide earlier in the week, this intervention appeared to break the dollar's fall for now.

The value of a dollar is the amount of other major capitalist currencies — particularly West German marks and Japanese yen — that a dollar can be exchanged for in

international money markets. If the value of a dollar rises, it can be exchanged for more marks or yen. If the value drops, as at present, fewer marks and yen can be obtained for a dollar.

This means goods produced in the United States sell for less in Germany and Japan, while commodities produced in those countries are more expensive in the United States.

The current decline in the exchange value of a dollar is making it more difficult to finance the federal government and corporate deficits. Earlier in the 1980s, when dollars were in great demand relative to other currencies, foreign investors were attracted to treasury and other bonds, as well as to the U.S. stock markets.

Now they and U.S. investors are more hesitant, and this adds to the pressure to raise interest rates in order to sway them into buying.

In the context of an economic upturn that shows signs of beginning to lose steam, higher interest rates could tend to slow the pace of borrowing — whether for stock speculation, new plants and machinery, or consumer goods like houses and cars.

The November 14 *Wall Street Journal* commented: "Business-cycle experience suggests . . . that the current expansion has become exceedingly long in the tooth. . . . Few economists believe that a downturn can be averted much beyond next year."

U.S. government deficit

This fear is spurring demands that the incoming Bush administration make more of an effort to limit the U.S. government deficit, in hopes of easing the pressure on financial markets that stem in part from fears of higher interest rates.

The estimated federal deficit for the current fiscal year was running at an annual rate of \$155 billion, not the \$110 billion that the Reagan administration had promised earlier in the year. (This is a reduction from the 1986 deficit of \$220 billion.)

The growth of U.S. government, corporate, farm, and consumer debt — coupled with the massive, unpayable debts accumulated by countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America — has heightened worry that the onset of a recession could

put unbearable pressure on the U.S. and international banking system.

Alan Greenspan, chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, said on November 16, "The imbalances in the economy are such that the effects of the deficit will be increasingly felt and with some immediacy."

Thomas Foley, Democratic majority leader in the U.S. House of Representatives, warned that the incoming president might come under congressional pressure to increase taxes and cut some Social Security benefits as a means of reducing the deficit.

As the pressure mounted, Bush promised to treat the deficit as a matter of "grave urgency" but proposed no specific steps.

Not all spokespeople for the U.S. capitalists are unhappy about the fall of the dollar. Just after the election, Martin Feldstein, a former chairman of Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, proclaimed the need for a further drop of up to 20 percent in the exchange value of the dollar in order to further reduce the trade deficit. Feldstein argued that the further reduction will be needed to counter increases in the U.S. inflation rate, which would push up prices of U.S. exports.

Aides to Bush disassociated themselves from Feldstein's statements.

Like the declining dollar, cutting the federal deficit is also a two-edged sword for U.S. capitalists. Federal spending coupled with tax cuts for the rich provided driving forces — together with big attacks on the wages and working conditions of the working class — in the economic upturn that began in 1982 and was followed, after a brief downturn in 1986, by a further upswing.

Sharp cuts in government spending could deal blows to the many firms that depend on government contracts — not to mention the profiteers of the bankrupt savings and loan industry who are now demanding a federal bailout that could total \$50 billion or more.

While a Bush administration, like its predecessors, will probe for ways to further reduce the part of the budget that pays for social services to working people, the huge cuts required to make a big dent on the deficit could arouse stiff opposition.

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Impact of coming recession

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If you can read or are studying Spanish, there is a complementary monthly magazine for you: *Perspectiva Mundial*. PM is a Spanish-language socialist magazine that carries many of the same articles you read in the *Militant*.

The December issue of PM features an article by Doug Jenness on the impact the coming economic recession will have on the two-party structure of capitalist politics in the United States. It takes up the U.S. presidential elections and puts them in the context of the deepening social crisis working people face today.

In addition, the December issue includes two interviews with Thomas Sankara, slain leader of the revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso.



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'Thomas Sankara belongs to Harlem, to working men and women everywhere'

Tributes to African leader at Pathfinder book launching

The Pathfinder book *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87* was launched at a November 13 meeting in New York attended by more than 300 people.

The book is the first collection in any language of the speeches of Sankara, who led the Aug. 4, 1983, revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso, previously known as Upper Volta. Sankara was murdered in a 1987 counterrevolutionary coup.

This week we are printing the speech at the November 13 meeting by David Gakunzi, editor of the magazine *Coumbite*, which is published in Paris. Gakunzi, originally from the West African country of Burundi, is a leader of the International Thomas Sankara Association.

We are also reprinting the message sent to the meeting by Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Mervyn Dymally. He is the co-author of another Pathfinder book, *Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the Course of History*, a full-length interview with Cuban President Fidel Castro. Dymally's message was read to the meeting by Marina Dini from the congressman's office.

Next week's *Militant* will print some of the other messages sent to the book launching.

David Gakunzi

Wherever there is oppression, there is also resistance by the people, a resistance that often is symbolized by historic revolutionary figures. In this hemisphere you have people like Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Augusto Sandino, and Maurice Bishop. In Africa we have Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Amílcar Cabral, Samora Machel, and most recently, Thomas Sankara.

No African revolutionary of the 1980s will have as great an impact on the continent and in the world as Sankara.

Why? For several reasons, which can be found in the book *Thomas Sankara Speaks*.

As young Africans, we supported Sankara because he broke the silence of our humiliations, but also because he restored our confidence in ourselves. He awoke in



Militant/Alicia Merel

David Gakunzi

us our calling as free men and women.

But more than that, Sankara's popularity comes from his theoretical and practical contribution to the African and world revolutionary movement.

What was important for Sankara was to politicize the people, that is, to make them understand that the revolution is not a matter of redemption, or of a messiah, that there is no supreme savior besides the people themselves.

The revolution must be made with the people, by the people, for the people. He said, "We should prefer one step forward with the masses to 10 steps forward without them."

The role of the peasantry in the revolution was also important to him. First, because numerically it is the biggest class; and second, because it is the most oppressed class. The peasantry suffers a triple oppression: imperialist, bourgeois, and feudal.

Also, the revolution cannot succeed if it does not succeed in mobilizing and organizing the peasants.

For Sankara there could be no social revolution without the liberation of women.

"Comrades, no revolution, beginning with our own, can triumph without first liberating women," he said. "Our struggle, our revolution will be incomplete as long as we understand liberation to mean essentially that of men. After the liberation of the proletariat, the liberation of women still remains to be won."

"There is no true social revolution without the liberation of women," Sankara explained. "May my eyes never see and my feet never take me to a society where half the people are held in silence. I hear the roar of women's silence. I sense the rumble of their storm and feel the fury of their revolt. I await and hope for the fertile eruption of the revolution through which they will transmit the power and the rigorous justice issued from their oppressed wombs."

As a consistent revolutionary, Sankara knew that a revolution that does not have an international perspective will not live long. "Our revolution is an integral part of the world movement for peace and democracy against imperialism and all kinds of hegemonism," he said.

African unity should be accomplished not by the association of only the heads of state, but of the base and in the struggle against oppression and apartheid. "So long as South Africa is not freed, no African should feel free," he said.

Sankara the Pan-Africanist was also a convinced voice for the Third World. His contribution to the Nicaraguan revolution, his admiration for the Cuban revolution, and his friendship with Maurice Bishop are known.

Sankara's support for the Third World was built around concrete demands such as changing the world capitalist economic order that oppresses the peoples of the Third World and around refusing to pay the debt. "The debt is mathematically unpayable, morally unjust, and politically unacceptable," he explained.

Sankara was not only a voice for the Third World. He also had a broader perspective. "Imperialism has been organizing an International of domination and exploitation on a world scale for a long time, yet we have no International of revolution, of resistance to oppression," he would explain.

Every day our world becomes more and more a little village. From New York to Johannesburg, passing through New Caledonia, Seoul, Santiago, and the Ivory Coast, the enemy of the people is the same. Therefore, the fight for the freedom of the people is the same. One enemy, one fight.

From this flows the necessity today to strengthen the ties and to coordinate the struggles of the peoples throughout the world, but also to exchange experiences.

Belongs to Harlem

The experience of Sankara does not belong only to Burkina, it belongs to the world revolutionary movement, it belongs to Harlem. It belongs to working men and women everywhere. The questions that he posed are posed around the world.

That is why the publication of a book on him was an excellent initiative. It is one more theoretical weapon in the hands of the oppressed.

It is important that this weapon also be available in French. From Dakar to Bujumbura, passing through Brazzaville, young people who want to be rid of imperialism want to know what Sankara said, so that they can follow his path.

In order for tomorrow's revolts to be victorious, and not sidetracked, books like *Thomas Sankara Speaks* are a vital necessity in Africa as well as in New Caledonia,

in Martinique, or even in France. This book must come out in French.

To finish, I would say about Sankara what he said about Che Guevara:

"Every time we think of Che, we will try to be like him, to make this man, the fighter, live again. And especially, every time we think of acting like him, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, in the rejection of bourgeois wealth that tries to alienate us, in refusing the easy path, but also by turning to education and the rigorous discipline of revolutionary morality — every time we try to act in this way, we will have better served Che's ideas and made them known more effectively."

Like Guevara, Sankara was a Marxist, that is, a revolutionary who not only assimilated Marxist theories, the historical lessons of struggles by working people the world over. But above all he was able to awaken among the oppressed self-confidence and the will to fight. All other communists should follow their path.

Mervyn Dymally

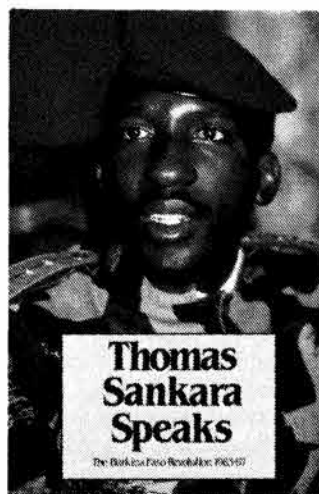
My friends, it is most difficult to imagine how differences in opinion within the Burkinabe revolution could have culminated in the tragic death last year of one of the most revered leaders in the history of African politics and social change.

Indeed, Capt. Thomas Sankara was a master of the Burkinabe revolution as well as the African revolutionary struggle. I dare say that few African leaders have symbolized the hopes of the ordinary man and woman as Captain Sankara did.

Because he was such a true symbol of the daily struggle of the Burkinabe, his people easily identified with him and most importantly, they trusted him. In my view this type of leadership is extraordinary in nature and perhaps irreplaceable.

I remember Thomas Sankara as a very charismatic, unpretentious young man who wanted to give his country dignity and hope. In an effort to instill pride in his countrymen he changed his nation's name from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, which translated as the land of the upright, the incorruptible, the honest, and the most dignified men.

Most importantly, Sankara wanted power for the people. In particular he tried to give them back the land, which had been confiscated under previous regimes. As many of you are aware, Sankara implemented policies meant to improve the lives of the country's poor majority of rural peasants. Ambitious health and education projects were launched by Sankara to combat high rates of infant mortality and illiteracy in rural areas.



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Congressman Mervyn Dymally, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

As a reform-minded African leader, he was a man equally committed to women's rights and launched a series of campaigns to bring about the improved status of women in African society.

Lowest-paid chief of state

I can recall the rather amusing encounter I had when I met Thomas Sankara for the first time in 1987 at a meeting of the Organization of African Unity. I was shocked to learn that Sankara was the world's lowest paid chief of state, earning a salary of roughly \$450.

As we spoke my admiration for him grew. Can you believe this man, a Third World leader who claimed a guitar and an old Renault automobile as his prized possessions? He later told me about his daily drive in his modest Renault subcompact to work from his home, a relatively small villa, stacked with books, in the barracks where he lived with his wife and children.

What I found to be most impressive about Sankara was that he did not simply preach the motto of hard work and incorruptibility for the people, he solemnly lived by it.

As an example for the people of Burkina, he set a modest life-style for himself as he cracked down hard on the corruption endemic in previous regimes. Corruption was soon replaced with successful health, education, housing, and road projects. In part Sankara's success was also due to his outgoing, down-to-earth approach, which gained him immediate popularity with his own people as well as with the youth of

Continued on Page 13

Marroquín urges support for Curtis at Omaha rally

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving 25 years in jail on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international protest campaign to fight for justice for Curtis. To contact the committee, write Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695.

Mexican-born political activist Héctor Marroquín celebrated the victorious conclusion of his 11-year fight for permanent residence

for equal rights for the undocumented.

Marroquín spoke at a fund-raising event for refugees from El Salvador in Omaha on November 12. The next day, he addressed a rally at the Chicano Awareness Center in South Omaha. Site of stockyards and packinghouses, the neighborhood is populated mainly by Latino and white workers. Packinghouse workers, neighborhood activists, and young people were among those who attended the rally.

Rally speakers included: Daniel Cobos, a former air force sergeant

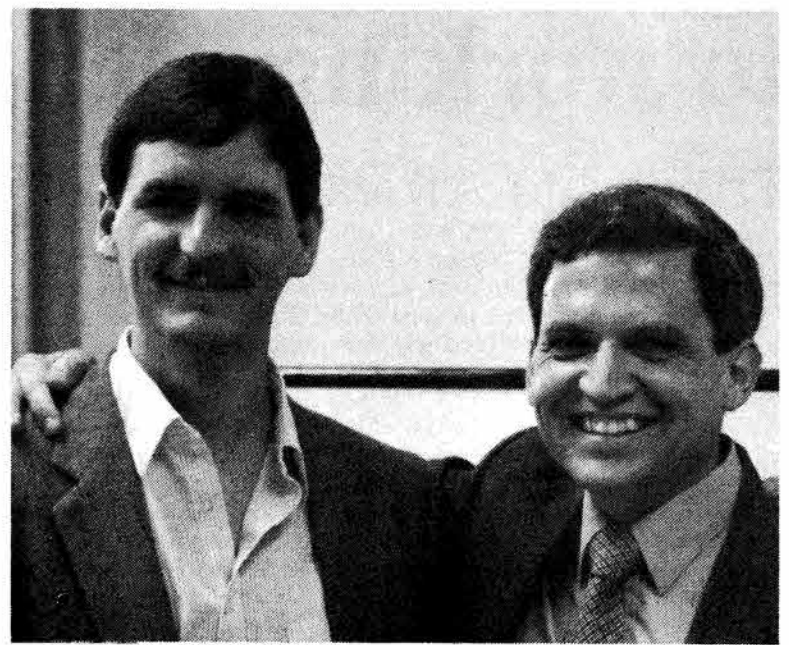
support that Mark Curtis needs to get out of prison."

Youth for Peace has supported both Marroquín and Curtis, said Christianson. "Social change cannot come if one is afraid to stand up and speak out. The tactics used against Héctor and Mark are sending us a message to be quiet, but if we organize against these injustices, then we take that threat away."

Kiko Martínez, a Chicano activist in Colorado, was framed up on bombing conspiracy charges. Like Marroquín, Martínez has won his fight against government frame-up and has remained firm in his political convictions and activities on behalf of immigrant workers, explained Melgares. She said it was important to use Curtis' motion for a new trial, which exposes how crooked his September trial was, to win support for the jailed packinghouse worker.

Doug Lee-Regier also urged people to read the motion for a new trial because the charge of sexual assault, he said, can create doubts about Curtis' defense among activists. "But these kinds of charges are a trick. They gave me pause at first, but they fly in the face of what the solidarity movement and the Socialist Workers Party and its members stand for and work for," he said. Curtis and Marroquín are both members of the SWP.

More than two dozen new endorsers of the Curtis defense effort were signed up at the fall conference of the Progressive Student Network, held at the University of Illinois in Chicago November 12-



Militant/ Stu Singer

Mark Curtis (left) and Héctor Marroquín

13. Some 150 student activists attended.

According to Greg McCartan, national secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance, at the beginning of the meeting articles championing the frame-up from the *Bulletin*, newspaper of the Workers League, were distributed to participants by supporters of the newspaper. These included a reprint of a letter from Keith Morris, father of the young woman Curtis was falsely accused of raping.

These articles, said McCartan, confused some conference participants about the real issues in the Curtis defense effort. "We took the necessary time to explain the facts of the case," reported Mc-

Cartan, "reviewed the motion for a new trial, and explained the struggle Mark was involved in with other packinghouse workers at the time of his arrest, as well as his political activity as a member of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, which led to his being a victim of illegal FBI spying."

These political discussions, said the youth leader, proved "decisive in countering the slanders, winning new support, and helping those who were already supporting Curtis' fight to be better able to explain the issues."

Diane Shur contributed to this column.

DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

in the United States at a rally in Omaha at the start of his nationwide speaking tour.

A victim of political repression, Marroquín was forced to flee Mexico in 1974. He became an active unionist in the United States and joined the Socialist Workers Party. In 1977, Washington began deportation proceedings against him. Through a broad public campaign, involving thousands of unionists, civil rights fighters, and antiwar activists, Marroquín finally won the right to permanent residence. He received his "green card" in November.

Marroquín is explaining the importance of his victory for the rights of all working people, especially other immigrant workers. And he is explaining that Curtis was victimized for the same reason he was: fighting for unity among working people, including

who won conscientious objector status after refusing to fly secret spy missions over Nicaragua; Rita Melgares of the Kiko Martínez Defense Committee; Doug Lee-Regier, a board member of Nebraska for Peace; Eric Christianson of Youth for Peace; and Clemens Namwira of the South West Africa People's Organisation.

"When I met Héctor a couple of years ago," said Cobos, "I was trying to get out of the Air Force, afraid of the struggle ahead of me. Héctor was facing deportation, and Oliver North was being held up as a hero."

"Well today I am a free man, Héctor is a legal resident, and North is about to go to trial. Héctor and I won our cases because of the support we got from people like you. That support got me out of the Air Force with an honorable discharge, and that's the kind of

Nicaragua government takes new economic steps

Continued from front page

farm production demand that we put aside the stance of 'every man for himself' and replace it with a commitment to organization and solidarity," said Porras.

Some price controls reinstated

In another policy shift, Luis Carrión, minister of the economy, industry, and trade, announced November 14 that government price controls will be restored on certain industrial products. Government efforts to regulate these prices were abandoned in June as part of the turn to letting market forces work with less interference.

The new policy will apply to both government and private factories that have a de facto monopoly on essential products. "Beginning with the June economic measures," Carrión told a news conference, "we saw that some industries have been making excessive profits."

In addition, Carrión said, some factory managers had routinely stopped distribution of their products each time the córdoba, Nicaragua's currency, was devalued.

After a few days, they would put the products on the market again, but at a higher price. Following the artificial disappearance of vital commodities, customers were ready to pay the higher prices.

Among the factories covered by the new policy are those producing soap, cooking oil, plastic bags, and certain industrial and construction materials.

Cost-of-living provision

In a related development, the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) has been pushing for a government-enforced wage scale that would rise automatically with increases in the price of a "market basket" of essential commodities.

Last June, the government abolished the national wage-and-productivity scale in favor of letting workers and management negotiate wages in each company.

Since then there has been a growing wage disparity among workers in different companies as well as a widening of the gap between the lowest and highest paid.

Workers at the bottom of the ladder have been less able to absorb the burden of infla-

tion. Those wage raises that have been granted have been percentage increases, which have further widened the gap between top and bottom.

Overall hurricane toll

In his report to the National Assembly, President Ortega said that the cost of rebuilding what Hurricane Joan destroyed has been placed at \$828 million.

This figure does not include damage to Nicaragua's forest resources or other ecological consequences of the disaster. An estimated 1.2 million acres of forest were wiped out by the hurricane as it tore through Nicaragua.

Among the victims of the hurricane, Ortega reported, are 20,000 farm families "who have lost practically everything." The total number of people directly affected by the hurricane amounts to 6.4 percent of the population.

"It is in times of difficulties," Ortega said, "when we must appeal to the consciousness of all Nicaraguans, for solidarity with thousands of compatriots who are homeless, without jobs, without a secure food supply, and without agricultural implements, household goods, or clothes."

He added, "Could it occur to anyone to propose, in these circumstances, a policy of economic demands for more wages, or to look for ways to get better prices for their products, as if the country were in a normal situation?"

"No, the country is not in shape for these kinds of proposals. Economic demands are not realistic, regardless of where they come from — from wage workers in the city or countryside, from producers of coffee, cotton, rice, sesame, or sugar cane, or from industry."

Report on international aid

President Ortega also rendered an accounting of the hurricane relief that Nicaragua has received from abroad. He emphasized that, as of November 14, the aid flown in by Cuba, 464 metric tons, almost equalled the combined aid airlifted by all other governments and nongovernmental agencies in the world.

A total of 479 metric tons had arrived on flights from Italy, Spain, West Germany, East Germany, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Argentina, Mexico, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.

An additional 2,880 metric tons of food

supplies have arrived overland and by sea as a result of donations from the United Nations and from private relief organizations in Belgium, Norway, Britain, Holland, the European Economic Community, and the United States. Ortega repeated Nicaragua's appeal for help in rebuilding the country "without regard for political or ideological differences."

He condemned the U.S. government, "which has never offered real humanitarian aid." On the contrary, he said, Washington has continued to provide funds to the contras "so that they can go on assassinating the people in the midst of, and after, the hurricane."

In a meeting November 16 with representatives of church and other international relief organizations, Ortega refuted assertions by U.S. officials that the Nicaraguan government has blocked aid from Washington.

"The Nicaraguan government has no official prohibition against receiving U.S. aid for the hurricane victims," he said. "If funds from the U.S. Congress were really humanitarian they would be given to the people of Nicaragua instead of the contras."

Canadian socialists hit chauvinist campaign

Continued from back page

sure is a deadly trap.

"It is criminal that the union and NDP leaderships have joined forces with the big-business Liberal Party to carry out this chauvinist anti-American campaign in the name of defending the interests of working people."

The Toronto meeting was chaired by garment worker Michel Dugré, the RWL candidate in the Montréal riding of Papineau-St. Michel. The following day, Dugré spoke to a similar meeting in Montréal chaired by Manwaring.

"The anti-free trade campaign is the answer that the Liberals, the NDP, and the top union officials are offering to the growing crisis of capitalism," Dugré told the audience.

"But it's no answer at all. It won't save one job. The coming depression that was announced by last October's stock market crash will mean massive layoffs with or without this trade deal. The only realistic perspective for workers and farmers is to join in struggle with working people throughout the world against the ruling families in imperialist countries such as Canada, the United States, Britain, and others."

Dugré outlined the need for an international fight to force cancellation of the foreign debt of the Third World countries, legislate a shorter workweek without cuts in pay, and adopt affirmative action laws to raise the wages and access to jobs of Blacks, women, and other workers who face discrimination at the hands of the employers.

Susan Berman, who had just returned from participating in an international *Militant* sales team that traveled to several Caribbean countries, told the Montréal meeting that "three of the seven banks on the committee that is managing the foreign debt of these countries are Canadian."

"They will help decide the cuts in social spending required by Caribbean governments to pay the foreign debt. This will mean more economic and social devastation of these countries."

Roger Annis, who participated in the recent struggle of the Lubicon Lake Cree Indians to force the Alberta and federal governments to grant them their land claims, spoke at the Toronto meeting. Participants at both meetings donated almost \$600 to help cover the expenses of the Revolutionary Workers League campaign.



Militant/Tom Jaax

Fights by meat-packers at Hormel plants in Austin, Minnesota; Ottumwa, Iowa; and Fremont, Nebraska, in 1985-86 helped inspire struggles in packing industry.

BY MARGARET JAYKO

(Eighth of a series)

DES MOINES, Iowa — Farming and related industries are the economic and political heart of this city and state.

Iowa has the highest corn production of any state. It ranks third in the country, after Texas and Missouri, in the number of farms.

The value of farmland here has plummeted 37 percent since 1981 and many farmers have lost their land.

Iowa is a national center for the meat-packing industry. It leads the country in all livestock and hog marketings, with about 27 percent of the pork supply and 9 percent of the grain-fed cattle.

The workers and farmers here and throughout the Midwest — who produce

The Mark Curtis Story



the food, fiber, and manufactured goods — have waged important fights in the last couple of years to defend their rights and living standards.

In the meat-packing industry, the assault opened in 1982 when Iowa Beef Processors demanded big concessions in wages and work rules at its Dakota City, Nebraska, plant and smashed a strike by the United Food and Commercial Workers local there.

Other big packers demanded wage cuts and gutting of work rules, closing down plants as a further threat. The bureaucracy of the United Food and Commercial Workers union recommended workers accept the concessions, arguing it would lead to improvements later.

By 1985, 75 packing plants had been closed and 24,000 workers had lost their jobs. Average wages had been cut from \$10.69 an hour to \$8.24. Two-tier wages were introduced on a wide scale. A murderous speedup had been imposed.

The stunning blows delivered to packinghouse and other industrial workers in those years marked a rout of the labor movement. Confronted with deepgoing takeback demands from the employers, the labor misleadership capitulated, unwilling to launch a fight or even lead a retreat. More and more unionists, demoralized by the performance of labor officials, voted to

Mark Curtis is a packinghouse worker, unionist, and political activist in Des Moines, Iowa. On Sept. 14, 1988, he was convicted on frame-up charges of sexual abuse and burglary. He was sentenced to serve 25 years in jail.

Unionists, farmers, and youth around the world recognize that Curtis is one of those workers who are starting to stand up and fight back against the employers and their government. In their thousands, working people are beginning to join the fight for justice for Curtis.

The Mark Curtis Story is a multipart series that describes what happened to Curtis, where it fits into the class struggle, and the big stakes for working people in the fight against this frame-up.

approve takeback contracts without a fight. Many accepted company claims that concessions would save jobs.

But then a layer of workers began resisting further takebacks.

This shift was symbolized by the 1985-86 strike by the meat-packing workers of the Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9.

What set the P-9 struggle apart was its membership's decision to risk a fight, with the possibility they would lose, rather than vote for more concessions without a fight on the promise this might be better in the long run.

The P-9 strike was defeated in 1986, and all 800 strikers were denied the right to return to their jobs. But a wave of strikes hit throughout the Midwest in the wake of the P-9 battle.

Even though most of these strikes were defeated, they registered a break in the rout of the labor movement. More young workers were deciding it's better to fight, even if you lose, and learn from the experience, than simply vote to shaft yourself; that making concessions without a struggle doesn't make your job or anyone else's more secure.

Curtis moves to Des Moines

This is what prompted Mark Curtis to move to Des Moines in November 1986. In a speech he gave on April 2, 1988, to a Socialist Youth and Activists Conference in Pittsburgh, Curtis explained his decision as part of an effort to "start up a new branch of the Socialist Workers Party."

"Party members from around the country came to Iowa; Omaha, Nebraska; and Austin, Minnesota, to join struggles there," he said. "These included the fights by farmers for the right to work their land, the fights by workers, particularly meat-packers, against the forced speed-up, dangerous conditions, and lower wages the bosses are forcing on them, and the fights by students against CIA recruitment on their campuses and student solidarity with South Africa's anti-apartheid movement. . . ."

"I got a job at the Swift Independent Packing Co.'s meat-packing plant in Des Moines and joined United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431."

The Swift plant is notorious among working people in the city. Many have gotten a job there, only to quit as a result of the intolerable combination of poverty-level wages and dangerous and abusive working conditions — typical of what the packing bosses have accomplished in many plants and are pressing to impose in even more.

Local 431 is an amalgamated local that organizes workers at a 110 different plants over a broad geographic area. Its officials are based in Davenport, Iowa — more than 150 miles from Des Moines. They appoint the chief shop steward at Swift. The union at Swift is relatively weak, with half or less of the work force union members. Curtis tried to involve other workers in the union to make it stronger.

The top wage scale at the plant is \$7.90 an hour. There are two sections of the plant: slaughter and fabrication. Fabrication is where the meat is processed and packaged. Lots of women work there, and the starting pay is \$5.40 an hour.

The slaughter section, where the cows are killed and butchered, is mostly male.

Wave of workers' and farmers' struggles led Curtis to move to Iowa in 1986

Starting pay there is \$5.60 an hour. That's where Curtis worked, on the kill-floor. His job was cutting and pulling large, heavy cattle paunches off the gut table.

Marion Carr is one of the few women who work in the cut-and-kill, which has about 150 workers. She makes \$6.85 an hour. Despite the horrible working conditions, she says, "for many workers, it's the best job they ever had," especially the recent immigrants from Southeast Asia and Latin America.

The foremen, she says, "can be very abusive," screaming racist and sexist epithets in your face to intimidate you into working faster and harder. Curtis tells the story of a foreman teaching workers from Laos, many of whom can't speak English, to call the Mexican workers *mojados* (wet-backs).

Injuries the norm

Meat-packing, and sausage and processed-meats production, are the most dangerous industries in the state of Iowa. In Iowa, 43 out of every 100 meat-packing employees — this is 10 above the national average in this industry — suffered work-related injuries or illnesses in 1986. One out of every three Iowa employees who make sausage or other prepared meats suffered work-related injuries or illnesses. This exceeds the national average by 13.1 per 100. In meat-packing, about one-fourth of the injuries were cuts and lacerations and about a third were serious strains and sprains.

John Patramanis of the Iowa Division of Labor was quoted in the March 20, 1988, *Des Moines Register* as saying, "Just imagine being up to your ankles in blood and trying to kill a live animal that's kicking and it's slippery and you've got knives." In addition, Patramanis pointed out, meat-packing requires heavy lifting, use of sharp tools, and working in chilled rooms. And speed-up has made it all the more dangerous.

Nearly 80 percent of the 600 workers in the Swift plant suffered an injury last year, Curtis told the *Militant* in an interview that appeared in the Sept. 9, 1988, issue. Cuts from the knives, amputations, and carpal tunnel syndrome are the most common injuries.

"Swift treats workers as if they were disposable razor blades," Curtis explained. "They use you for a while and then throw you out. At a union meeting last spring, the business agent reported that Swift had hired 3,000 workers in a 12-month period."

"The company uses this to try to break down solidarity. They tell you it's not worth learning the new workers' names because they won't be there tomorrow."

At Curtis' trial in September, four former and current Swift workers took the stand for the defense, all of whom testified to the dirty and dangerous conditions at Swift.

Curtis, 29 years old, was one of those younger workers who was unwilling to simply accept the company's view of the workers as "disposable razor blades."

On Dec. 11, 1987, Curtis walked off the production line because of an injury. "I was grabbing cattle paunches," he explained in the September interview. "They were too heavy and I pulled the muscles in my back. I told the boss that I had to see a doctor. He said I couldn't leave."

"After a couple of hours, I told him I was leaving because of the pain. He walked alongside me hollering, 'You're going to be fired, you're going to be fired.'"

"I got help in fighting the firing from my union steward and from many coworkers," said Curtis. "It actually came down to a little hearing where a company official lied through his teeth about what happened. But two coworkers who saw what happened testified on my behalf and I got the job back." Curtis was back at work less than two weeks later.

This victory was an unusual event at Swift. When Curtis initially talked to his coworkers about the fact that he planned to fight the firing, most were skeptical. But Curtis explained the importance of getting the union to go to bat for the membership in fights like this, and was successful in getting local support.

"It's not unusual to get fired from Swift," says Curtis. "It has a notorious reputation. But what was unusual is that I fought and won my job back with the help of my coworkers and the union. This was a big victory."

(To be continued)

How you can help

- **Raise money.** The Mark Curtis Defense Committee needs to raise \$60,000 by December 31 in order to cover legal and publicity expenses. Contributions should be sent to the Des Moines defense committee. (Checks for large tax-deductible contributions may be made out to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc.)

- **Sign up endorsers for the defense committee.** The committee has launched an international drive to sign up 5,000 endorsers by March 4, the anniversary of Curtis' arrest and beating. "We want to ask everyone from coworkers to public figures," says committee coordinator Stu Singer.

- **Build the Héctor Marroquín tour.** This Mexican-born political activist recently won an 11-year battle against government efforts to deport him for his political activities. His national speaking tour is celebrating his victory and urging

supporters of his fight to campaign for freedom for Curtis, explaining that the same political issues are at the heart of both cases. Contact the defense committee to find out when Marroquín will be in your area.

- **Get out the truth.** Representatives of the defense committee are available to speak at meetings. The committee has fact sheets and buttons.

- **Write to Mark Curtis.** He will be at the Oakdale Detention Center until the end of the first week of December. His address there is: Mark Stanton Curtis, No. 805338, IMCC, Box A, Oakdale, Iowa 52319. Curtis is only allowed to receive letters. Send copies to the defense committee.

Contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee at Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695.

Advances, challenges for autonomy

BY HARVEY McARTHUR
AND JUDY WHITE

(last of 4 parts)

PUERTO CABEZAS, Nicaragua — Today, with its policy of championing autonomy, the Sandinista government "has taken firm steps" toward winning the confidence of Indians and Blacks on the Atlantic Coast.

This is the assessment of Dorotea Wilson, a Sandinista leader who was interviewed here recently. Wilson, who is Black, is a deputy to the Nicaraguan National Assembly from the North Atlantic region, whose population consists of Miskito and Sumu Indians, mestizos, and English-speaking Blacks.

More Miskitos and Sumus are participating in discussions, assemblies, and development programs, Wilson notes. This marks significant progress from a few years ago, when many Indians were hostile to the revolutionary government and thousands were fighting along with the U.S.-backed contras.

"But it is a slow process," Wilson continues. "We can't say we've achieved everything. There is still a fear of imprisonment here. There is a fear of being kidnapped and taken to Honduras again. There is a fear of losing one's sons: the contras say the Sandinista army will capture and kill them. These feelings are very strong among indigenous families."

This challenge was reflected in a recent government meeting in La Tronquera, administrative center for the many small Miskito villages along the Coco River. Participants included local and regional government officials as well as local leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Also present were leaders of YATAMA, an armed Miskito group that has signed a cease-fire with the government.

The meeting discussed how to respond to the latest contra propaganda being



Dorotea Wilson, right, is a Sandinista deputy to Nicaraguan National Assembly from North Atlantic region. Population there is made up of Miskito and Sumu Indians, mestizos, and English-speaking Blacks. Mirna Cunningham, left, heads North Atlantic regional government.



Militant photos by Harvey McArthur

Cunningham, head of the regional government, reminded the meeting. "The enemy is present in many villages every day, spreading their lies, so we must carry out day-by-day political work."

No military draft

Although the military draft is in effect in much of the North Atlantic region, the government has still not won enough support to be able to implement it in most Miskito villages. Nor does it station troops near these villages.

The Sandinista army maintains a policy of not going after Miskito combatants in the area, instead allowing local people to talk with them and encourage them to accept a cease-fire. Most Coco villages do not have any form of self-defense, though the 200 YATAMA troops in the area attempt to provide security up and down the river.

"There used to be a fear about the revolutionary process among Miskito youth," says Santiago Hodgson, talking about the military service. Hodgson, who spoke with the *Militant* at the FSLN's office in La Tronquera, is a leader of the Sandinista Youth and of the Miskito Youth Movement on the Coco River. The youth movement promotes sports teams and music and dance groups among young people. It now involves youth in one-third of the Coco area villages.

"We try to build up a relationship through the sports activities," Hodgson explains. "We talk informally about the revolution, and expose the real aims of the contras. And we try to convince individual young men to volunteer for the army. But if they don't want to go, nothing happens."

So far, the Miskito youth movement has recruited one contingent of 40 young men for the military service. They are serving their two years in army units near their home villages, Hodgson says.

Law on autonomy

At the heart of the political progress the FSLN is making on the Atlantic Coast is the Autonomy Statute, a law guaranteeing the rights of the indigenous peoples there. It was adopted by the National Assembly on Sept. 2, 1987, after a broad-based, two-year discussion among the coast population.

"We have laid the basis for a blossoming of the multiethnic and multilingual nation," said Tomás Borge in a 1988 interview with *Barricada Internacional*. Borge is Nicaragua's minister of the interior and president of the National Autonomy Commission.

The law guarantees the *costeños* "absolute equality of rights and responsibilities"; the right to "freely develop their social and

economic organizations according to their own values"; the right to education in their native language and in Spanish; and the right to elect their own autonomous government authorities.

The statute guarantees *costeños* the right to preserve and develop their languages, religions, and cultures. "Spanish, the official language of the State, and the languages of the communities of the Atlantic Coast shall be in official use in the autonomous regions," it provides.

The law also recognizes communal property, which "consists of the lands, water, and forests that have traditionally belonged to the Atlantic Coast communities." Such land cannot be given away, sold, taxed, or seized by the government. All inhabitants of a given community have the right to work a part of the communal land for their own benefit.

Under a Nicaraguan law adopted after the revolution, all large-scale mining, lumber, and fishing operations have been nationalized. The Autonomy Statute specifies that the inhabitants of the autonomous regions "shall benefit in just proportion" from the exploitation of these natural resources. Details are to be worked out "through accords between the Regional Government and the Central Government."

Implementing the law

Some steps have already been taken to implement the Autonomy Statute. For instance, the government has surveyed some traditional Indian lands and given communal titles to several villages.

Today, Miskito children in Puerto Cabezas and some villages receive bilingual education. They start learning in Miskito in kindergarten, and Spanish is gradually introduced over the first four years of grade school. By the fifth grade, teaching is done completely in Spanish.

Education programs among the Sumus are less developed. One school in Puerto Cabezas has started an English-language bilingual program for Black children, whose families speak English.

The regional government also works with local artists to promote indigenous music, dance, and handicrafts. Researchers have collected and translated hundreds of Miskito and Sumu stories, and the government is seeking funds to publish the collection.

Lack of government resources has limited the impact of these programs, says Rosa Cunningham, regional head of the government's cultural programs. In addition, "there has been very little promotion of indigenous culture in Managua and the rest of the country. We're ready to send groups, but we're waiting for someone to invite us and finance the trip," she adds. "We need to

project ourselves nationally, and develop consciousness and increase awareness of the indigenous cultures throughout the country."

Autonomous regional governments

"The concept of autonomy is not limited to respecting customs, religion, languages, and land and water use rights," wrote Tomás Borge in 1986. "It is also the election of local authorities and a regional assembly that guarantees the participation of each one of the ethnic groups."

Under the new law, two autonomous regional governments will be elected, one in the North Atlantic region and one in the South Atlantic. Each will consist of a council of 45 members that must include representatives of each of the ethnic groups in the region. The councils will each elect a seven-person executive committee, which must also include representatives of each of the ethnic groups. The councils will be authorized to set broad policies for their region.

Anyone born on the coast and who has lived there for a year prior to the election can run for the council. Nicaraguans born in other parts of the country must have five years' residency before being eligible to run. However, they can vote if they have lived on the coast for one year. The voting age in Nicaragua is 16.

Executive authority in each region will rest with a coordinator elected by the regional council. The coordinator will have authority to appoint government functionaries, administer the region's development fund, supervise national government programs in the region, and oversee implementation of the decisions of the regional council.

Municipal and village councils will also be elected. (Prior to the devastating Hurricane Joan in October, the elections were projected to take place in March or April 1989.)

Peace and Autonomy Commission

An important new development has been the formation of local Peace and Autonomy Commissions. These bodies now exist in Puerto Cabezas and most Miskito communities in the North Atlantic. They first arose in 1985, as the cease-fire and autonomy discussions got under way.

The commissions are usually chosen in village or neighborhood assemblies. They have between five and 10 members, often including the local pastor, teacher, or health worker. Many members are women.

Commission members have played a key role in establishing contact between the government and Indians fighting the government, helping promote cease-fire agreements. They also organized discussions on autonomy and helped draft the new law.

In addition, the commissions try to involve people in their community in deciding on and carrying out local development projects, such as building a school. They represent their village or neighborhood before the regional government, seeking social services and donations of medicine, farm and fishing supplies, and other aid.

Mirna Cunningham, the Managua-appointed head of the North Atlantic regional government, is a Miskito from the Coco River. Some other institutions, such as the local government agriculture and culture offices, are now headed by Miskitos or Blacks.

Many Miskitos in leadership

"Before the revolution, all the posts were taken by mestizos," recalls Henry Herman Hernández, the mayor of Puerto Cabezas. "Miskitos couldn't even get an education to prepare for a better job. Today, this has changed, and many Miskitos have leadership positions in the municipal government, the bank, and other institutions."

However, top government and FSLN officials still come mainly from the Pacific. The FSLN head for the region, for instance, José Mendieta, is a leading Sandinista from the Pacific. He was appointed in August of this year. His predecessor was

Continued on next page

In September Harvey McArthur and Judy White of our Managua Bureau made a reporting trip to the North Atlantic region of Nicaragua.

This week we are publishing the final installment of a four-part article they have written on the peace and autonomy process in that area.

This coverage provides background on the economic and social conditions in the North Atlantic area, the shifts in the policies of the Nicaraguan government, and the challenges facing the residents in the post-contra war period.

The most severe damage caused by Hurricane Joan in October was in the Bluefields area on the South Atlantic Coast. —The Editors

spread in the Coco villages. This includes rumors that a new refugee center under construction in La Tronquera is actually a jail for Miskitos and that the government plans to forcibly relocate the Miskitos from the Coco River as was done in 1982.

Answer contra lies

YATAMA leader Francisco González urged the government leaders to issue a statement refuting the lies, and broadcast it widely over the local radio station.

"We should do this immediately," replied Hazel Lau, a Miskito who is an FSLN deputy in the National Assembly. "The government has learned the lessons of the earlier relocation, and that experience will never be repeated."

This contra propaganda poses a particular challenge because the government does not yet have a presence in part of the Coco River area. There are still some villages where teachers, health workers, and representatives of the local and regional governments don't go for fear they will be assassinated by contra bands operating from Honduras.

On the other hand, Miskito contras often go into the villages, especially where they have relatives.

"This territory is still in dispute," Mirna

Internat'l Paper ends 19-mo. lockout of Alabama workers

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The 19-month lockout of 1,250 paperworkers at International Paper Co.'s mill in Mobile ended October 28 after union members voted to accept the company's offer and return to work.

"This wasn't a vote for the contract," explained Frank Bragg, president of United Paperworkers International Union Local 265. "It was a vote to end the long lockout."

Local 265 is the largest of four paperworkers locals in the mill that were locked out by International Paper (IP) in March 1987, along with members of an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local. Several months later, paperworkers at the company's mills in Jay, Maine; De Pere, Wisconsin; and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, went on strike. Union members at all four sites were fighting to resist IP's demands for concessions in premium pay, holidays, work rules, and on other issues. The strikes were ended by union officials October 9.

The Mobile workers voted to accept a six-year contract, which is dated retroactively to 1987. The agreement calls for a 12 percent wage increase over the life of the contract for production workers, a 6 percent increase for maintenance workers, an end to premium pay for Sundays and Christmas, and elimination of Christmas as a holiday. The contract also calls for "total job flexibility," Bragg explained, which effectively eliminates job classifications and gives the company the right to order any worker in the mill to perform any job.

The locked-out workers began returning to work, in staggered groups, in early November. All the scabs who have been working in the mill during the lockout are supposed to be out in 30 days, Bragg said. "This is a contract. That's all it is," he stressed. "But we won't consider that the

Morrell packinghouse fined for 'willful' safety violations

On October 28, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced fines of \$4.3 million against John Morrell & Co. for hundreds of "willful" violations at its packinghouse in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The fine is the largest against a single employer ever levied in OSHA's 17-year history.

The federal agency found that the incidence of cumulative trauma injuries such as tendinitis and carpal tunnel syndrome were "nine times greater than the industry average of 4.8 per 100 full-time workers per year and more than 600 times the rate for all U.S. industries." More than 40 percent of the 2,000 workers at the plant have suffered such disorders in the past year.

Less than two weeks later, a jury in Federal District Court in Rapid City, South Dakota, awarded Morrell \$24.6 million for damages the company claimed it suffered during three strikes in 1986 and 1987. If the union is forced to pay this sum, the company will have nearly six times what it needs to pay the fine levied by OSHA.

The November 10 verdict resulted from a \$40 million suit filed by Morrell against the United Food and Commercial Workers union. The company claimed the strikes by UFCW members — who were honoring picket lines set up by strikers from Morrell's Sioux City, Iowa, plant — were illegal because a contract was in effect at the time they occurred.

A few days earlier, a federal arbitrator had ruled that the strikes were legal and that Morrell must rehire some 1,900 workers who were replaced during the walkouts and pay them back wages. An attorney for Morrell claims that the court verdict supersedes the arbitrator's ruling.

Negotiations between the UFCW and Morrell on a new contract are continuing. The current contract expires November 20.

fight against IP is over until the workers at the other three mills are back at work — either at their own mills, or similar IP mills elsewhere."

Paperworkers at International Paper Co.'s mill in Vicksburg, Mississippi, approved a new, three-year contract October 11. The workers are members of United Paperworkers International Union locals 618 and 70.

Local 618 President Tommy Mask said the new agreement calls for a first year lump-sum bonus of \$500 to \$1,100, and two subsequent yearly raises of 2 percent.

The paperworkers "traded off" in the area of holiday pay, Mask explained. In exchange for annual holiday "bonuses" paid at the beginning of each year, they will give up premium pay for holidays worked during the year. The unionists had already been forced to give up Sunday premium pay and to accept "flexibility" in job assignments in 1985.

Mask said he assumed United Paperworkers President Wayne Glenn would sign the agreement.



Mobile, Alabama, paperworkers at 1987 union rally in solidarity with struggle against IP lockout. Militant/Dennis Konciewicz

Garment union organizes at 'jobber' outfit

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

NEW YORK — The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union recently won a major organizing victory at SoHo Manufacturing Co. when a year-long effort forced the company to sign a "jobbers" agreement with the union. SoHo, a \$30-million-a-year blouse company, finally came to terms with ILGWU Local 23-25 by agreeing to use only union shops for production.

Jeff Hermanson, director of the New York ILGWU Metro Organizing Department, said that the company employs as many as 600 workers through contract shops. "Jobbers" like SoHo contract out all production work instead of hiring their own work force. The union tries to organize these contractors, along with trying to win agreements with the manufacturers. SoHo was the biggest company to sign such an agreement in a decade, Hermanson added.

The ILGWU started the organizing drive at contractors doing work for SoHo in August 1987. Conditions in the shops included subminimum wages, 12-hour work days, and child labor. Two contractors who do work for SoHo were fined \$2,500 last year

for asking employees to do work at home.

Such conditions are common in hundreds of New York sweatshops. The union estimates that 75,000 garment workers are employed in unorganized shops here. Many are young, undocumented workers.

Cecilia Polanco, who worked at three contracting shops where blouses are sewn for SoHo, told reporters that many workers were afraid to complain about conditions because they were undocumented. At one shop, "We had no water fountain, no heat in the winter, and it was filthy," she explained. "Many of the women made only \$3 an hour," less than the federal minimum wage.

At one of SoHo's contract shops, all but one worker signed union cards last spring. The company fired two workers for union activity, and on April 11, the entire shop walked out on strike. The National Labor Relations Board later upheld charges of unfair labor practices against the company, awarded back pay to the workers, and ordered the contractor to begin bargaining with the union.

The union also began an informational

picket about these work conditions at SoHo's showroom in Manhattan last March. The garment manufacturer moved its shipping center to New Jersey the next day. The union located the site, and began a picket there too.

SoHo then moved all of its production to Hialeah, Florida, in the greater Miami area. The union tracked them down, and set up pickets there as well.

In late July the union launched a national boycott against SoHo, and set up pickets at stores in 15 cities. The boycott was endorsed by the national AFL-CIO. Some large retailers, including Sears, agreed not to buy SoHo products.

SoHo owner Bruce Jordan conceded that the boycott was effective. "We couldn't continue with [the union] boycotting the stores we do business with," Jordan told *California Apparel News*. "We were losing business. It was unbearable."

After signing the agreement September 16, SoHo announced plans to move production back to New York.

Vivian Sahner works in a contract shop organized by ILGWU Local 23-25.

Advances, challenges for autonomy process

Continued from previous page

also from the Pacific.

Most top officials of the army and police are also from the Pacific regions. There is a growing number of army troops and police officers from the coast, including some Miskitos and Sumus, but most of these are new recruits.

The FSLN recently took a step to strengthen indigenous leadership in the region, Dorotea Wilson says. She and several other Black and Indian leaders who had been mainly working in Managua were reassigned by the FSLN to the coast "to support the work of the local people."

"There has been a normal growth of indigenous cadres in the region," Wilson reports. The FSLN tries to recruit "the best without discrimination," she adds. "We now have more than 100 Miskitos, Sumus, and Blacks within the ranks of the FSLN."

Mirna Cunningham made a point of encouraging costenos to take more responsibility when she spoke at a rally in La Tronquera September 21.

"We're celebrating the first year of the Autonomy Statute," Cunningham said. "Autonomy means that we costenos have the responsibility to participate in the economic development of our region. We are the ones

who will be responsible for administering the health services, education, and transportation here."

She pointed to the Inreca factory, a state-owned resin and turpentine plant that is the main employer in La Tronquera. "The

plant belongs to us, to the people," Cunningham said. "We all must learn to organize and to manage the company. That's the way to get economic development and to live better. That's what it means to put autonomy into practice."

Troops kill 5 in Brazil steel strike

Five workers were killed November 9 in a battle between thousands of striking steelworkers and government troops at Brazil's largest steel mill 80 miles northwest of Rio de Janeiro.

Some 18,000 steelworkers had gone on strike against the National Steel Co. the previous day. They were demanding a reduction in the workday from eight to six hours, reinstatement of a suspended 26 percent cost-of-living adjustment retroactive to July 1987, and additional inflation adjustments suspended earlier this year.

That night, government troops occupied the steel mill. Soldiers kept blast furnaces running, and tanks were stationed in front of the gates. The next night some 3,000 strikers, armed with rocks, firebombs, and iron bars, gathered inside the plant and refused to leave. About 800 soldiers attacked

the strikers with tear gas, guns, and clubs, killing five.

The day after the attack, 30,000 steelworkers and supporters gathered to await autopsy reports on the slain workers, and 10,000 attended one worker's funeral. Several hundred steelworkers who had remained in the mill after the battle left the plant.

The steelworkers' action is part of a wave of strikes sweeping Brazil, as workers try to defend themselves against the country's rapidly worsening economic crisis.

In October inflation in Brazil was 27.25 percent and is expected to exceed 900 percent for the year. It will be the fifth year, out of the past six, in which there has been triple-digit inflation in the country. Brazil has the largest foreign debt among the semicolonial countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, owing \$120 billion.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Pathfinder Rally: Celebrate the Publication of Thomas Sankara Speaks. Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New Internationalist* and Pathfinder; Carlos Madrid, Salvadoran political activist. Translation to Spanish. Sun., Nov. 27. Reception 4:30 p.m.; program 5:30 p.m. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Pathfinder Books. For more information call (602) 279-5850.

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Justice for Mark Curtis. Speaker: Héctor Marroquín, Mexican-born socialist who recently won permanent residency in the United States. Translation to Spanish. Tue., Nov. 29, 7:30 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 282-6255.

Live Aid Palestine! A concert for medical aid for Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Featuring Dance Brigade, Al-tazor Latin American New Song with Lichi Fuentes, and Al Awda Palestinian Cultural Ensemble. Sat., Dec. 10, 8 p.m. Victoria Theatre, 2961 16th St. Admission: \$10 advance, \$12 at door. For tickets or more information call Palestine Solidarity Committee at (415) 861-1552.

FLORIDA

Miami

Behind Changes in Political Attitudes of Cubans in Miami. A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Live Aid Palestine! Presents in concert: Gil Scott Heron; Sechaba Singers of the African National Congress; Al Watan, Palestinian folk-trope; New Concept Theatre of Chicago. A project to support medical aid for Palestinians

'Militant' Managua correspondent to tour on 'Aid for Nicaragua'

A speaking tour for Harvey McArthur is scheduled for eight cities in the United States from November 20 to December 20. McArthur will speak on the topic: "For Massive Aid to Nicaragua! An Eyewitness Report on Hurricane Joan and the Challenges Facing the Nicaraguan Revolution."

McArthur was a member of the Managua Bureau of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* for the past three years. He recently returned to the United States. Prior to joining the Managua Bureau he was a garment worker in Miami, and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami in 1985.

McArthur's tour began in St. Louis, on November 20. He speaks in Des Moines, Iowa, from November 24 to 30 and December 3, 5, and 6; Omaha, Nebraska, December 1 and 2; Austin, Minnesota, December 4; Chicago and Milwaukee December 8 to 13; St. Paul and Minneapolis, December 15 to 17; and Kansas City, Missouri, December 18 to 20.

living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Fri., Dec. 9, 8 p.m. Medinah Temple, 600 N. Wabash Ave. Admission: \$10 in advance, \$13 at door. Tickets available at Ticket Master outlets, (312) 559-1212. Sponsor: Palestine Solidarity Committee. For more information call (312) 342-2986.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

The Role of Revolutionary Leadership in Africa's Liberation. Weekly discussion group on developments in Burkina Faso, South Africa, and Angola. Two sessions, 12 noon and 7 p.m. every Monday for seven weeks through Dec. 19. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Nicaragua Video Festival. Showing of film on Hurricane Joan and the relief effort. Sat., Nov. 26, 6 p.m. Goddard Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Ave. at 88th St. Donation: \$5. Sponsored by Casa Nicaragua. For more information call (212) 769-4293.

Dance Party for Hurricane Relief in Bluefields, Nicaragua. D.J. Jonathan Rudnick with variety of African, Afro-Caribbean, Latin, and Afro-American music. Special feature: *costeño* music from Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast; slideshow of coast communities before the hurricane. Sat., Nov. 26, 9 p.m. - 3 a.m. Ethnic Folk Arts Center, 179 Varick St., 2nd Floor (1 block south of Houston). Donation: \$10. Sponsor: The Bluefields Project and Nicaraguan Philanthropic Committee. For more information call (718) 797-0146.

Celebration of the Declaration of Palestinian Independence. A public forum for the Palestine Liberation Organization delegation from Algiers. Wed., Nov. 30, 7 p.m. Harkness Theater, Butler Library, Columbia University, 115th St. at Broadway. Donation: \$5. Proceeds to support medical aid to Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Sponsor: Palestine Solidarity Committee. For more information call (212) 964-7299.

Gala Fiesta Dance for Nicaragua Hurricane Relief. Fri., Dec. 2, 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Local 1199, 310 W 42 St. Donation: \$8. Sponsor: Chelsea/El Jicaral Sister City Project. For more information call (212) 924-0468.

Commemoration of South African Human Rights Day. Protest demonstration to demand that Mobil Oil cease its collaboration with South African regime. Fri., Dec. 9, noon. Mobil Oil headquarters, 150 E 42nd St., between Lexington and Third Aves. Sponsor: New York-Southern Africa Solidarity Coalition. For more information call (212) 690-7180.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

Matewan. A video showing of film about 1920 coalfields strike. Discussion to follow. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

El Salvador Today. Eyewitness report and slideshow. Speakers: Maria Rodriguez, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Ike Nahem, Socialist Workers Party, member United Transportation Union Local 1522. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:20 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor

Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

BRITAIN

London

Celebrate the Publication of Thomas Sankara Speaks. Speakers: Helen Arthur, Pathfinder publishers; David Gakunzi, editor *Coumbite*, secretary International Thomas Sankara Association; Bernie Grant, MP; senior representative of South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia; Geoff Revell, National Union of Railwaymen. Sat., Dec. 3, 2 p.m. The Africa Centre, 38 King St., WC 2 (tube Covent Garden/Leicester Sq.). Donation: £1. Sponsor: Pathfinder. For more information call 01-401-2293.

CANADA

Montréal

Celebrate the Joint Launching of the New Lutte Ouvrière and the Third Issue of the Magazine Nouvelle Internationale. Speaker: Michel Prairie, editor *Lutte Ouvrière*. Translation to English and Spanish. Sat., Nov. 26, 7:30 p.m. 4274 Papineau, Suite 302. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte Ouvrière. For more information call (514) 524-7992.

Toronto

Aid Nicaragua Now! Speaker: Gary Kettner, Revolutionary Workers League, garment worker. Sat., Nov. 26, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Socialist Voice Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.



Lenin (center) with delegates to Communist International congress

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SWEDEN

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A winner — With the media looking, the Brooklyn Catholic Youth Organization changed its mind about barring Sara Naison-



Harry Ring

Phillips, 11, from an all-boys basketball team. Earlier her teammates voted to forfeit their games rather than play without her. Declared Sara: "I made the team fair and square. I have as much right to play on it as anyone else."

No appreciation — "Why should America spend millions and millions of dollars prosecuting two people who for a generation have been our closest allies, including our Pacific outpost against communism?" — Multimillionaire Doris Duke fuming about the indictment of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos.

The silver lining — A New York custom tailor says an economic slump often means more business. Unemployed execs need new threads for job-hunting.

First things first — British officials agree that health needs dictate promotion of lead-free gaso-

line, but reject the idea of helping small dealers sell more of it. "To do so," they explain, "would be to interfere with the force of competition."

People's mandate — With voter turnout reported as less than 50 percent for the first time since 1924, Bush was elected by a whopping 27 percent of the voting-age population.

It figures — Choice seats for the December 7 gala opening of the opera season at Milan's La Scala will go for a thumping \$770. Meanwhile, orchestra members had to stage walkouts in a push for better wages.

Poor Albert — British ads for Sharp calculators feature Reagan's face topped by Albert Einstein's hair and advise that with a Sharp, "anyone can be a genius... even Ronnie can have Einstein's head for facts and figures." A spokesperson denied the ad makes Ron an international symbol of dimwittedness.

Social struggle — It hit the front page of the San Francisco *Chronicle*. Across the bay, in plush Marin County, residents are demanding action against Sandra Warnum's doghouse. Built for \$15,000, it houses 10 special breed Salukis. The poochhouse features such amenities as an antique bath-

tub and silver water bowl. Yet the neighbors insist it's a nuisance and a threat to property values.

Tense situation — The cop who directed the Boston police stress program was removed after being busted on charges of trying to shoplift a small TV.

Funniest thing since slavery — The army probed a 1986 incident at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, in which a sergeant chained two Black GIs together so he could find a soldier when he needed one. A PR officer at Devens assured the incident was humorous, not denigrating, vicious, or racist.

Trinidad meat-packers protest 'privatization'



Oilfields Workers' Trade Union banner in recent demonstration in Port of Spain protests government selling of state-owned enterprises to pay country's soaring debt.

BY DAVID MARSHALL

ARIMA, Trinidad and Tobago — Some 80 unionists have been occupying the state-owned T&T Meat Processors Ltd. (Meat Pro) plant here for the past 10 months.

The Meat Pro workers are members of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union. Local President Isaac Sam and union activist Pulham Charles arranged for the *Militant* to visit the plant.

Not long ago, Meat Pro was one of the most modern and productive pork-processing plants in the Caribbean, slaughtering and boning about 300 hogs a day.

In the mid-1980s, depressed commodity

prices and the skyrocketing debt Trinidad owes to international bankers squeezed the country's economy. Under pressure from the government, the union accepted a workweek reduction from five to four days, and a 25 percent pay cut.

Pulham Charles explained that by the end of 1987 the workers were receiving the same wages as four years earlier, while prices for basic goods had soared.

Company earnings continued to slide. Workers explained that was in part due to a series of incompetent, corrupt administrators.

Last January, as time for negotiating a union contract approached, the Trinidad and Tobago government placed Meat Pro in receivership. The government-appointed receiver announced plans to lay off the entire work force and sell the plant.

It was in response to these attacks that the plant occupation began. The workers are demanding continued employment, a decent wage, and a union contract with a state-owned company.

The government is attempting to sell state-owned enterprises like Meat Pro to private owners so it can add to its dwindling hard currency reserves. The workers fear new owners will move to further drive down their standard of living and get rid of the union. A sign over the lunchroom entrance reads, "Privatization means pauperization."

When the receiver took bids for the plant, the large state-owned flour mill put in a substantial offer. After a private group placed a lower bid, the government-appointed flour mill administrators withdrew their offer. The Oilfield Workers' Trade Union says the state-owned company is in better position to provide decent wages and a measure of job security.

Today Meat Pro's machinery sits idle. In

fact, the workers stay out of the production areas so no one can accuse them of sabotaging the machinery.

A dozen or more meat-packers spend each night in tidy quarters in the plant offices, laboratory, and guard house. Days are spent reading and talking beneath a bamboo and sheet metal canopy erected in the parking lot, which protects them from the searing Caribbean sun.

The workers have suffered hardships the past 10 months. Trinidad law bars their union from making direct financial contributions to sustain the occupying workers and their families. Individual workers make contributions and unionists from all over the country buy tickets to the local's solidarity picnics.

Workers from Nestlé's, Lever Brothers, and Trintoc—the state owned oil refinery—have visited the plant to offer support.

David Marshall is a member of the United Steelworkers of America at the LTV mill in Cleveland.

Letter to Mark Curtis

The following letter to Mark Curtis was signed by 15 meatpackers participating in the occupation of the T&T Meat Processors Ltd. plant. Curtis is a Des Moines, Iowa, packinghouse worker serving a 25-year sentence on trumped-up rape and burglary charges:

We the comrades of Meat Processors, fighting against a wicked and oppressive system of privatization, join with you in solidarity against the frame-up and unfair trial.

Keep fighting for justice for all working class in the world. Forward ever, backward never.

Dymally message

Continued from Page 7

neighboring West African states.

And for a time at least, his vigorous self-help philosophy, directed particularly at agricultural and basic health services, won him the respect of his people. It was widely believed that Burkina Faso could serve as a model for the other struggling states in Africa and a fine model it was for all the growth, success, and pride it brought to the people of Burkina Faso.

Many of us will remember Sankara for his pioneering role in the resurgence of the quest for the economic and political emancipation of Africans. As a staunch Pan-Africanist we know that Sankara's vision included a sound commitment to the economic, social, and political development of the entire African continent.

My friends, it is for these reasons that the importance of Sankara's philosophy cannot be understated or ignored. It is essential that we educate others about Sankara's important philosophy. For myself I feel very fortunate for having had the opportunity to contribute to the promotion of Pathfinder's recent publication, *Thomas Sankara Speaks*.

Upon reading this book, many of you will find that Thomas Sankara has spoken quite eloquently about the concerns and aspirations of the African people. His tragic and untimely death entrusts us with the responsibility to spread his message to the entire world. I ask you to join with me in educating others about Sankara's great contribution to humanity, and most importantly to keep his message alive for generations of Africans to come.

600 celebrate opening of new abortion clinic in Canada

BY ROBERT SIMMS

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Canada — Six hundred supporters of women's right to abortion marched through pouring rain here November 5 to celebrate the opening of British Columbia's first abortion clinic.

The new clinic, which had opened the previous day, will offer several medical services for women. It is only the third such clinic in Canada outside the province of Québec.

The Supreme Court overturned Canada's restrictive abortion law last January 28. Since then, however, access to abortion has been made more difficult in some regions. Some provincial governments have cut funding for abortions, and several hospitals, under pressure from antiabortion groups, have stopped performing them. The need for clinics such as Vancouver's is pressing.

A rally following the march demanded full funding for abortions from the provincial government, which has sought every legal avenue to limit such funding. Last July it was revealed that the British Columbia attorney general's office organized a spy operation against Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion, a B.C. abortion rights group.

"It's a significant day when women can win freedom of choice from such a socially regressive provincial government," said Anne Harvey, a vice-president of the B.C. Federation of Labour. The federation promises "our continued support" for the clinic struggle, she added.

Hilda Thomas of the B.C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics explained one of the other main demands of the march. "We must not have any new laws that 'place new restric-

tions on a woman's right to abortion, she said. Joanna den Hertog, a New Democratic Party candidate in Vancouver in the federal election, this month, echoed this appeal at the rally. "We must continue to work to insure that abortion is not once again put back into the Criminal Code."

Both the Liberal and Conservative parties have made election vows to reintroduce legal restrictions on abortion.

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

Dec. 1, 1978

ST. LOUIS — Missouri voters delivered big business a major setback November 7 when they overwhelmingly rejected the union-busting "right-to-work" amendment.

Amendment 23 lost by three to two, with 939,026 votes against it and 629,631 in favor. In St. Louis the margin was four to one.

"It was backed by nearly every major newspaper and by business interests outside the St. Louis area," noted a St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* editorial, "yet it collapsed in the voting of many rural counties."

THE MILITANT

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Dec. 2, 1963 Price 10¢

Almost immediately after news of the

assassination of President John F. Kennedy was flashed over radio and television in New York City on November 22, Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, issued a statement, which was at once delivered to newspapers and wire services, condemning the killing.

The full text of Dobbs' statement is as follows:

"The Socialist Workers Party condemns the brutal assassination of President Kennedy as an inhuman, antisocial, and criminal act. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy and the children in their personal grief.

"The act springs from the atmosphere created by the inflammatory agitation and deeds of the racists and ultraconservative forces. Political terrorism, like suppression of political freedom, violates the democratic rights of all Americans and can only strengthen the forces of reaction. Political differences within our society must be settled in an orderly manner by majority decision after free and open public debate in which all points of view are heard."

Campaign to aid Nicaragua

The international campaign to aid Nicaragua, in the wake of the hurricane that devastated the southern Atlantic Coast region, is gaining steam.

As a result, the U.S. government is becoming more isolated in its callous refusal to provide emergency relief to the Nicaraguan government and people.

The international relief campaign expresses the solidarity that workers and farmers all over the world feel with their brothers and sisters in Nicaragua.

Millions identify with Nicaragua — a country where working people overturned a brutal dictatorship and established their own government; defeated the U.S.-organized contra war; and now face the gigantic tasks of rebuilding thousands of homes, preventing the spread of disease, rebuilding workplaces, and restoring crippled transport and communications systems.

One of the ways that working people are showing their solidarity with the Nicaraguan people is by organizing and supporting the aid efforts of scores of non-governmental groups around the world.

Every volunteer's labor and every dollar's worth of help is desperately needed today in Nicaragua.

In the United States, the Quest for Peace organization is among those spearheading a drive to raise \$20 million in material aid. The Miami-area American Postal Workers Union has contributed money and offered its union hall as a drop-off point for aid donations initiated by Pastors for Peace. The Nicaragua Network, Mennonite Church, and others are organizing volunteer brigades to help Nicaragua rebuild.

In Britain, the National Union of Miners has donated \$1,800 to the "Nicaragua Must Survive" drive organized by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign.

In addition to raising hundreds of thousands of dollars

worth of aid, the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign is demanding that the government of Margaret Thatcher increase its \$450,000 aid offer.

Under pressure from the working people of Canada who want to help Nicaragua, the Ottawa government upped its aid contribution from \$250,000 to \$1.6 million.

The revolutionary government of Cuba, meanwhile, has airlifted Nicaragua nearly as much aid as all that airlifted by the other governments and nongovernmental agencies combined.

The U.S. government has refused thus far to offer Nicaragua a single cent. The pretext offered by White House media spokesperson Marlin Fitzwater was that the Sandinistas were using "the storm as another platform for propaganda against the contras."

A growing number of antiwar groups and other organizations have opposed Washington's stand, which has also been criticized in editorials in *New York Newsday*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Boston Globe*.

A vital part of the overall fight to provide massive hurricane relief is winning more support for the demand that the U.S. government offer large-scale aid, without strings attached.

The fight to win U.S. government aid to Nicaragua is greatly strengthened by the scope of the current non-governmental campaigns to provide material aid. In the course of participating in these solidarity efforts workers, farmers, and other opponents of U.S. policy are being drawn into action. This will help to increase the heat on Washington.

Workers and farmers in the United States and around the world should make our voices — and the voices of our unions and other organizations — heard loud and clear: "Massive U.S. aid for Nicaragua now!"

Defend abortion rights

On November 8, referenda banning, or upholding a ban, on the use of state funds to pay for abortions passed in Michigan, Colorado, and Arkansas. The Michigan ban is an especially severe blow. In that state alone, more than 20,000 women each year relied on state funding to obtain safe, legal abortions.

Out of 50 states, only 13 now provide funds to help women obtain abortions if they cannot afford them: Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia. Opponents of abortion rights in Congress are seeking to end the use of public funds to pay for abortion in Washington, D.C.

With the ban on using federal Medicaid funds to pay for abortion, in effect since 1979, the further shrinking of the number of states with such programs is like a noose tightening around the neck of the poorest women. Many of these women are also young.

In addition, the Reagan administration — which has given open and vigorous backing to the antiwoman opponents of abortion rights — filed a brief with the Supreme Court November 10 urging the court to hear the appeal of a Missouri abortion case. It says the case can provide the basis for overturning the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in the United States. The Bush administration will continue pushing such efforts.

For more than a month, hundreds of antiabortion protesters participating in "Operation Rescue" have been disrupting and trying to shut down abortion facilities.

The time is long overdue for supporters of abortion rights to mount a counteroffensive against the capitalists' efforts to restrict and stigmatize abortion.

One opportunity is a national demonstration to defend women's right to abortion, called by the National Organization for Women. It will take place in Washington, D.C., next April 9.

The antiabortion campaign can only be taken on by mobilizing the reservoir of support that exists for abortion rights among millions of working people. As part of this, a serious effort is needed to politically respond to the flood of propaganda churned out for years by antiabortion groups, church hierarchies, Democratic and Republican politicians, and the government.

The only way to defend the right to abortion and win over those who have been confused is on the basis that abortion is every woman's right to choose, regardless of age, income, or marital status.

Abortion rights can't be defended by arguing that using public funds to pay for abortion is less expensive to taxpayers than welfare payments to support children born into working-class families, as was argued by some trying to defeat the Michigan antiabortion referendum. Such an approach is itself antiwoman, anti-working class, and racist, and simply plays into the hands of the opponents of abortion.

Supporters of abortion need to explain that the right of women to control their own bodies is a basic human and democratic right, and a precondition for women to make headway in every other aspect of their lives.

Since 1973, some 24 million women in the United States have had abortions. This figure alone helps explain why support for abortion rights still remains strong.

All working people — men, as well as women — have an enormous stake in defending this right, and reconquering the ground that's already been lost.

Job health, safety under attack

The U.S. Labor Department reported November 15 that a total of 5,843,100 workers were recorded as suffering from job-related injuries and illnesses in 1987 — up by 351,000, or 5 percent, from 1986.

About 190,000 workers suffered new illnesses for the first time, the department reported — up 28 percent from 1986. Most of these involved hearing losses, skin diseases, and ailments such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

These statistics are a pale reflection of the real upward trend in work-related illnesses and injuries. Many accidents and illnesses go unreported — especially those suffered by workers on probation, those in unorganized workplaces, farm workers, "illegal" immigrants, and the growing army of part-time and other unprotected workers.

Government agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) usually give the companies a green light to cut corners on health and safety. Sometimes struggles waged by workers expose the company's actions, stir outrage among other workers

and farmers, and force the government to act.

On October 28, OSHA imposed fines of \$4.3 million on the meat-packing firm of John Morrell & Co. for safety violations at its Sioux Falls, South Dakota, packinghouse. This was the biggest fine ever imposed by OSHA.

Morrell's bitter pill was sweetened by a November 10 court ruling. The United Food and Commercial Workers was ordered to pay \$24.6 million to Morrell because workers at the Sioux Falls plant had honored picket lines set up by strikers from Sioux City, Iowa.

Struggles by these meat-packers helped make a national scandal of the criminal safety violations by Morrell and other firms in the industry.

The growing injury rate in meat-packing is a direct product of speedup and the slashing of health and safety conditions in order to squeeze more profits out of workers. The right to protection of health, life, and limb on the job will be a big issue in the coming battles between the working and employing classes.

What's behind 'rehabilitation' of Stalin's victims

BY DOUG JENNESS

Since Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's speech more than a year ago calling for a review of Soviet history, criminal charges have been lifted from a number of figures who had been leaders of the Bolshevik party and the Communist International when V.I. Lenin was alive and were murdered during Joseph Stalin's regime in the 1930s.

In February of this year, Nikolai Bukharin was exonerated of frame-up charges that he took part in sabotage, espionage, and activities against the party. On June 21 he

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

was posthumously readmitted as a member of the Communist Party.

The Soviet Supreme Court has also annulled the sentences of four other top leaders — Lev Kamenev, Grigory Zinoviev, Yuri Pyatakov, and Karl Radek — who were convicted during Stalin's purge trials.

One figure framed up during the repressive reign of terror in the 1930s who has not yet been exonerated is Leon Trotsky. Trotsky, a leading Bolshevik, served in many top party positions during the first years of the Russian revolution. Along with Bukharin, Lenin, Radek, and Zinoviev, he was part of the Bolshevik's leadership team in the Communist International in its early period.

The current Soviet leadership's reticence to absolve Trotsky is because, unlike the other victims, he never capitulated to the bureaucratic regime. He was the central leader of the forces that continued to carry out the Marxist policies and perspectives that the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership had fought for.

Recent articles in the Soviet press, however, suggest that it's not excluded that the regime will lift the frame-up charges against Trotsky. The June 28 issue of the youth newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported remarks by Otto Latsis, deputy editor of the CP journal *Kommunist*, who said that Trotsky "was neither a spy nor a murderer."

According to the English-language service of the Soviet news agency Tass, Latsis said, "There is civil rehabilitation, and Trotsky deserves it. . . . But there is also political rehabilitation that implies restoration in the party. This, in my opinion, is not going to happen."

Yuri Afanasyev, a historian and head of the Institute of State Archivists, and others have made statements in the same vein.

Does all this point to a new era of democracy and freedom of expression?

To evaluate these developments, they must be placed in the context of the overall restructuring process that Gorbachev and his supporters are carrying out.

The Gorbachev regime is attempting to drive through measures that will increase the incentive of workers to be more productive — to work harder and more efficiently. It has not only begun implementing steps to give greater play to market forces, but projects eventually cutting some key social benefits.

One of the challenges Gorbachev has is winning broad support within the bureaucratic caste and in the population for his policies. Cleaning the regime's skirts of the horrors of the Stalinist terror is part of the attempt to win moral authority among the Soviet people.

The memory of the repressive Stalin era remains a deep wound in Soviet society. The prominent figures who were victims of the purge trials were only a small part of a much more widespread use of executions and slave labor camps that victimized millions and touched every Soviet family. Everyone has a relative, neighbor, or friend who was victimized.

Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and others were not put on trial because they were a threat to the regime. With the exception of Trotsky, who was in exile outside the country, they had become burnt-out shells of the revolutionary leaders they once had been.

Nor was the point of the trials to convince people that these figures were guilty of the charges against them. To the contrary, the main idea was to establish Stalin's totally arbitrary rule — that nobody was safe — in order to more completely intimidate the population.

Gorbachev is attempting to distance himself from this reign of terror, which has made the Soviet people distrustful of every regime since.

But doesn't Gorbachev face a big danger? Won't permitting more open discussion on the Russian revolution and its leaders lead working people to rediscover and rekindle links with the revolutionary traditions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks?

Not really. This development legitimizes discussions about events and personalities that were previously taboo. But reading the works of Lenin and Trotsky and the documents of the Communist International, in the absence of revolutionary struggles and a revolutionary workers' party, won't lead to a resurrection of Marxism in the Soviet Union.

Curtis trial TV show a hit in Marion County Jail

The following letter was received by the *Militant* from Mark Curtis on November 18. That's the day Curtis was sentenced to 25 years in prison on trumped-up charges of first-degree burglary and third-degree sexual abuse (rape). Curtis is a political activist and unionist in Des Moines, Iowa. His trial

BEHIND PRISON WALLS

was in September. The letter was written from the Marion County Jail, where Curtis was awaiting sentencing. He will soon be sent to a state penitentiary. The letter was dated November 14.

This past Saturday, WHO-TV in Des Moines broadcast parts of my trial on the show "On Trial." Despite a close game between the University of Iowa and Ohio State football teams, all television sets here were tuned in.

My cell mates are interested in the case and support the

defense campaign. Several have signed petitions and circulated brochures against the frame-up.

One cellmate announced, "It's 1 o'clock Mark, your show's on." He used to work at the same place I did, the Swift meat-packing plant in Des Moines. He called down to the other basement cell, "Hey, Mark's coming on TV."

After the show, "not guilty" was the verdict from the cells here. For most people, the testimony by the state "criminalist" that there was no physical evidence against me was the decisive factor. The prosecutor's case included testimony that the alleged attacker was a smoker. Several guys pointed out this discrepancy. (I don't smoke.) "It looks like you were set up," said a cell mate.

For some workers who had just come into jail the day before, watching the show was a good first opportunity to talk about the frame-up, especially its connection to the protests at Swift against the arrests of immigrant workers that immediately preceded my arrest last March.

I passed around the motion my attorney, Mark Pennington, had filed three days earlier for a new trial. It detailed the defense evidence that the court prevented us

from submitting at the trial.

People were surprised that so much defense evidence was excluded, especially about my beating at the hands of Des Moines police the night I was arrested. One guy described how he had come into jail with his arm swollen and bruised from a twisting he got during his arrest.

One person wants to see if he can hire my attorney; he hasn't spoken to his court-appointed lawyer for the month since he came here.

A former cell mate who is out and back at his job on a road crew wrote to me recently. Between his full- and part-time jobs, he watched the TV news coverage in October where the father of the woman I supposedly raped accused me and my supporters of burning leaves in the shape of a cross on his lawn. My former cell mate expressed his disbelief that we would commit such a racist act. "How can they say you did that? I just can't see how something like that would help you," he wrote.

Although this is my last week in the Marion County Jail, I'll be staying in touch with the fellow workers I met here.

LETTERS

More on women

Finally I was able to accumulate \$36 to renew my subscription.

I want to say how much I appreciate your coverage of labor, antiracist struggles, Latin America, South Africa, and Native and Caribbean issues. I renew in support of your work.

However, I hope to see more coverage of women's issues and lesbian issues in your future issues.

B.M.

Toronto, Canada

Laura Whitehorn

This letter accompanies a press release about the situation of Laura Whitehorn, a North American anti-imperialist political prisoner. She is now the pretrial detainee held the longest without bail — strictly on the basis of her political beliefs and activities — as a result of the Reagan administration's Bail Reform Act of 1984.

I urge you to take notice of this instance of political repression. The government's ability to designate individuals as " dangers to the community " and to deny them the right to bail solely for political reasons is dangerous to all of us who fight for social justice.

William Kunstler

Emergency Committee to Defend the Legal and Human Rights of Political Prisoners
New York, New York

Laura Whitehorn, currently imprisoned in Washington, D.C., was denied bail from the moment of her arrest in Baltimore in May 1985. Her time in detention totals 28 months, plus one year served on a minor conviction.

On May 11, 1988, Whitehorn was indicted along with others in the "Resistance Conspiracy Case," charged with conspiracy and with a number of bombings of military and government buildings.

She is charged with trying to "influence, change, and protest policies and practices of the U.S. government concerning various international and domestic matters through the use of violent and illegal means." These policies and practices include the invasion of Grenada in 1983, U.S. support for the South African racist regime, and U.S. intervention against the people of Central America.

Whitehorn is currently appealing the detention order and petitioning the Baltimore District Court for a new hearing.

Anti-apartheid exhibits

Pathfinder Bookstore in St. Paul recently displayed two anti-apartheid exhibits that drew many new people into the bookstore.

"Nelson Mandela: His Life in the Struggle" is a collection of 10

large photos detailing Mandela's contribution to the struggle against apartheid.

"Apartheid's War Against Africa" is a collection of 14 large-format posters that outline South Africa's attacks against the Frontline States, especially Angola.

The Militant Forum sponsored a forum on Nelson Mandela to open the poster and photo exhibits and another forum with the Cuban TV documentary on the defeat this year of the South Africa invasion forces in Angola. Recently a Pathfinder Fund rally featuring the new book *Thomas Sankara Speaks* took place in the forum hall.

At these three events new people came to the bookstore, and more than \$150 in literature was sold at each meeting.

The exhibits, which cost about \$10 each, can be obtained from the distributor: International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, P.O. Box 17, Cambridge, Mass. 02138; phone (617) 491-8343. They have a catalog of books, records, and other materials as well.

Michael Maggi

St. Paul, Minneapolis

Castro speech

Thanks especially for the economic coverage and the reprint of Fidel Castro's speech.

Elizabeth Kilanowski

Atlanta, Georgia

Woodworkers' strike

More than 400 union activists and supporters rallied in Springfield, Oregon, October 22 to back 300 woodworkers on strike against Morgan-Nicolai Door Co. The strike by Lumber and Sawmill Workers Local 3035 of the Western Council of Industrial Workers has drawn wide support in the Oregon labor movement.

Local 3035 was forced on strike in July after the company presented the workers with a take-it-or-leave-it contract. Morgan is trying to slash wages 33 percent for the lowest-paid workers, gut seniority, and cut benefits. The company has hired more than 100 "permanent replacement" scabs since September.

Local 3035 member Matthew Johnson, who chaired the rally, announced that \$10,000 had been donated to the strike. Unionists from throughout the region, including many in the wood and paper industry who face similar attacks, participated in the event. Among them were woodworkers who were on strike themselves against Pacific Northwest lumber companies several months ago and Portland-area members of the Association of Western Pulp and Pa-



Doug Marlette

"Think of it as a kinder, gentler foreclosure!"

per Workers currently on strike against Smurfit newsprint company.

Connie Allen

Portland, Oregon

Cops

Please don't say "cops." In all groups there are progressive elements. One must be respectful of all workers. Our police workers are evolving and learning as we all are.

F. L.A.

Portland, Oregon

Broad appeal

I like the *Militant* newspaper. To me it has broad appeal and is both timely and detailed.

R.R.

Dubuque, Iowa

Socialist campaign

During the recent election I was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Michigan. Speaking around the state, socialist campaigners found that the SWP's Action Program was of great interest to family farmers at a National Farmers Organization meeting, and to nearly 1,000 high school students addressed at various classes.

Nearly a dozen major articles appeared on the socialist campaign, mostly in the press outside Detroit. A high point was a one-hour candidates' debate, with call-ins, on the national public radio affiliate WDET. Dozens of my coworkers at Northwest Airlines at Detroit Metro Airport listened to it.

My coworkers followed the campaign in other ways and made suggestions. More than 60 bought Action Programs during the campaign, and 20 bought *Militant* or

Perspectiva Mundial subscriptions, or *New Internationals*.

Several flight attendants organized and built a campaign meeting at a local hotel for other flight attendants. The Machinists' union newspaper carried an article on the campaign.

The *Western Herald*, newspaper of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, endorsed the SWP senatorial campaign. The editorial said, in part, "Mark Friedman is the socialist candidate — we like where this man is coming from."

"The base of the SWP is humanity over profit, and this carries over into his beliefs that we should totally divest from South Africa," the editorial said. "We know Friedman won't get into office this election, but a vote for him is a vote for change. It is not throwing your vote away."

Mark Friedman

Detroit, Michigan

Tompkins Square

Residents of New York's Lower East Side continue to protest the inaction of city officials in bringing to justice those responsible for the police riot at Tompkins Square Park last August 6-7.

Hundreds of people, including bystanders and people demonstrating peacefully against a new curfew law, were severely beaten by cops. Several were arrested on trumped-up charges.

One hundred people met November 19 to discuss how to win justice for those victimized. An activist known as Jerry the Peddler has been arrested while carrying banners and handing out leaflets protesting the park curfew. People were asked to attend his court date to demand that these charges be

dropped.

A homeless man, also named Jerry, who lives in the park, where the riot was centered, was arrested on rioting charges. The charges carry a one-year sentence.

The homeless who live in the park usually light a fire in a trash can, burning the garbage around the park to keep warm. The police decided that this fire was dangerous and called the fire department to put it out. Jerry, along with those around the fire, joined hands to prevent this. The police claim that this constituted rioting.

Another form of victimization that was identified is something called "Project Help." A van with social workers accompanied by police cars travels around the neighborhood trying to "convince" homeless people to go to shelters. If they do not cooperate and the social workers deem they are a danger to themselves or the community, these persons can be taken away by force and brought to the nearest psychiatric ward.

Dee Scalera

New York, N.Y.

The *Militant* special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

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.

Racist killing protested in Oregon

Members of 'white power' gang arrested in Ethiopian's murder

BY K.C. ELLIS

PORTLAND, Ore. — The murder of a young Ethiopian worker was vehemently denounced by a demonstration at City Hall here on November 18. Called by Portland State University Students Against Apartheid, the rally drew a crowd of 500.

On November 3, 27-year-old Mulugeta Seraw, a bus driver and former PSU student, was murdered in an unprovoked attack outside his home by three white youths. They beat him with a baseball bat and kicked him about the head.

Two of Seraw's friends, who tried to come to his defense, were also beaten.

The attackers were described as wearing close-cropped hair and combat boots typical of white supremacist youth gangs sometimes called "skinheads."

The tone of the November 18 rally was expressed in chants of "Down with racism, up with justice" and "We're gonna run those skinheads out of town." Several speakers linked the anti-apartheid and anti-racist struggles.

Shouts of "Fight back, fight back" followed the remarks of gay rights activist Carl Goodman, who said that the right wing is emboldened by the passage November 8 of a ballot measure that overturned Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's order barring state agencies from discriminating against homosexuals. Goldschmidt also addressed the rally.

The Ethiopian Community Organization, Black United Front, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Urban League — along with student, Jewish, Asian-American, and gay rights groups — have demanded that



Militant/K.C. Ellis

November 18 picket line in Portland denounces beating to death of bus driver Mulugeta Seraw

Seraw's murderers be swiftly brought to justice.

Fejiso Kabeto, a founder of the Ethiopian Community Organization, told the *Militant*: "We have no illusions that the police will stop the skinheads on their own. But we will continue to push the police to carry out justice."

Three members of the skinhead group East Side White Power were subsequently

arrested in connection with Seraw's murder. Kenneth Mieske, 23; Kyle Brewster, 19; and Steven Strasser, 20, were arrested over the weekend of November 19-20.

Mieske and Brewster are also being charged with first-degree assault and racial intimidation stemming from a September 10 beating of a Black security guard at a Portland supermarket.

In an interview with the *Militant* follow-

ing the arrests, Ethiopian Community Organization spokesperson Betra Melles said, "We are happy to see the arrests made, but realize we need to keep the momentum going to raise the consciousness level of the community." He stated that there is willingness in the Ethiopian community to participate in forums and rallies that will continue to keep the issue of racism a focus for community action.

N.Y. cop raid victim acquitted of attempted murder

BY SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK — Larry Davis, a 22-year-old Black man from the city's Bronx borough, was acquitted on November 20 of attempted murder of nine cops. The jury of 10 Blacks and two Latinos also acquitted Davis of aggravated assault against the cops.

More than 20 cops were involved in a Nov. 19, 1986, raid on Davis' apartment in the Bronx. Seven heavily armed cops wearing bulletproof vests busted in Davis' door. Six of the police were wounded in the exchange of gunfire. Davis was able to escape. He is reported to have fired shots at two other cops while escaping.

A 17-day dragnet involving SWAT teams and other special cop outfits was set up in the predominantly Black and Puerto Rican neighborhood where Davis lived. The operation has been described as one of the biggest manhunts in the city's history.

Davis surrendered to police on Dec. 6, 1986, after being surrounded in a building where he was reported to have held two hostages.

In the Nov. 19, 1986, raid, the cops first claimed they only wanted to pick Davis up for questioning. Later they said they wanted to arrest him on charges of murdering four drug dealers. Davis was tried earlier on those charges and acquitted in March of this year.

During the second trial Davis and his attorneys explained that since the age of 15, Davis had sold drugs with the protection and collaboration of the cops. They argued that when Davis attempted to quit, the police staged the raid to cover their attempt to kill Davis because of his knowledge about the role of the cops in drug trafficking.

Larry Davis' mother, Mary Davis, testified in court that a police officer had threatened in her presence to kill her son.

She warned her son of the threat. The jury concluded that Davis had reason to believe that the cops intended to kill him and acted in self-defense.

Davis was found guilty on six counts of criminal possession of a weapon and acquitted on two counts of the same charge. Bronx District Attorney Paul Gentile has said that his office will ask for the maximum sentence for the weapons convictions, 10 to 20 years.

Should that sentence be imposed on Davis it would stand in sharp contrast to the six months given to racist vigilante Bernhard Goetz. Goetz was convicted of illegal possession of a weapon after being acquitted of attempted murder for shooting three Black youths in a subway in 1984.

Soon after the trial began, the prosecution charged that Davis' attorneys had systematically excluded whites from the jury. The judge ruled in the prosecution's favor, and a new jury was selected.

That jury was dismissed when its lone

white member told the judge that his wife feared harassment by the police if Davis was acquitted. A mistrial was declared, and the final jury was selected.

Following the verdicts, the cops and city officials quickly unleashed a shrill barrage against the jury.

"I am shocked," said Mayor Edward Koch.

Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward "angrily denounced" the decision, reported the *New York Times*, "saying the verdict seemed to reflect a dangerous tendency among jurors to find fault with police instead of criminals." Referring to the composition of juries, Ward added they "should represent pretty much a cross-section of the city."

"I daresay if this case had been tried with a judge, without a jury, I'm sure that you would have had a very different outcome," Ward asserted.

Several of the cops wounded by Davis attended the trial. One of them, Thomas

McCarren, exclaimed, "It was a racist verdict." All but one of the cops wounded by Davis were white.

Retired police lieutenant Vernon Gerberth, who organized the raid on Davis' apartment, said the jurors were "pliable" and based their decisions on "ignorance and racial bias."

A sharply different response was painted by a *Times* reporter who visited the neighborhood where Davis lived. Three men huddled in a doorway against the rain expressed surprise and pleasure with the verdict.

One of them told the reporter that there was already a new dance in the neighborhood called the "Larry Davis."

A 50-year-old maintenance worker in a nearby church said he doubted the police version of what happened. Another man who worked in a housing project in the area said, "Larry Davis was not an angel," but he was also convinced Davis was not guilty of the charges.

Canadian socialists hit chauvinist campaign

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — "The debate over 'free trade' with the United States is a trap for workers. The reactionary Canadian nationalist campaign against the so-called free trade pact is a far greater danger to working people than anything in the proposed agreement," said Margaret Manwaring.

Manwaring is a steelworker who was the Revolutionary Workers League candidate for Parliament in the Toronto riding (district) of Eglinton-Lawrence. She was speaking to a windup election campaign meeting in Toronto November 19.

The U.S.-Canada trade pact provides for the eventual elimination of most tariffs and

other trade barriers between the two countries. It has been approved by Congress, but ratification by the Canadian Parliament has not yet been completed.

In Canada, the pact has been opposed by the capitalist Liberal Party; the New Democratic Party (NDP), which is based in the organized labor movement; and the trade union officialdom. They claim it would lead to "U.S. domination" and an end to Canada's "sovereignty."

Favoring the pact is Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, head of the Conservative Party, Canada's other major capitalist party. The Conservatives won the November 21 elections.

"The fact is," Manwaring said, "that both wings of the Canadian ruling class are for maintaining protectionist barriers against their Japanese, European, and other imperialist competitors, as well as to keep out cheaper manufactured goods from semicolonial countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean."

"Their main difference is over the extent to which tariffs and other trade barriers between Canada and the United States should be lowered or eliminated."

She continued: "The argument that we should fight to defend 'our' jobs against workers in the United States or any other country by supporting protectionist mea-

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