

Gov't wants \$45 billion to keep nuclear arsenal

The trickle of revelations has become a flood. An environmental disaster, perpetrated by the U.S. government, is taking place at nuclear weapons production plants across the country.

The 12 plants have poured radioactive and other toxic wastes into the environ-

EDITORIAL

ment. Nuclear accidents, radioactive emissions, and toxic dumping have been knowingly concealed from the public.

The damage to the health of workers inside the weapons plants has yet to be accurately gauged and made public. "Many occupational health professionals say it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the health of the nuclear workers," reported the December 11 *New York Times*, "because the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration has no power in the plants, because security rules have limited the access of union officials and other safety inspectors, and because the Energy Department will not release for independent review the health records on which [its] studies are based."

This deadly course was pursued by Washington over decades — regardless of whether it was a Republican or Democrat who sat in the White House Oval Office, whether it was Republicans or Democrats who headed congressional "oversight" committees.



Unloading area at Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, where most radioactive wastes from weapons industry are stored. Energy Dept. admits these wastes are leaking into soil, water.

Now the Department of Energy has come up with its proposed solutions. The central objective: to keep the weapons of mass death coming off the production line, no matter what the cost in human health, environmental destruction, and financial resources.

The Department of Energy proposes spending \$45 billion to build new nuclear weapons plants to replace some of the old,

deteriorating, and now widely discredited plants. As the proposals were being made public, the *New York Times* reported that the agency has spent more than \$5 billion since 1970 on nuclear power projects that had to be abandoned.

In addition to calling for new plants, the DOE insists that "national security" requires that one of the reactors shut down

Continued on Page 14

Agreement signed on Angola, Namibia

BY SAM MANUEL

The governments of Angola, Cuba, South Africa, and the United States have signed an agreement that represents a substantial step toward ending the 13-year-old U.S.- and South African-run war against the people of Angola. It also opens the way to implementing a United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, which has been militarily occupied by South Africa since 1915.

The agreement was signed December 13 in Brazzaville, Congo, and is known as the Brazzaville Protocol. A formal signing ceremony of the protocol will take place at the United Nations on December 22.

"The signing of the agreement inaugurates a new era of peace in southern Africa," said Angolan Army Chief of Staff Gen. Antonio dos Santos Franca Ndalu, according to a December 14 report from Brazzaville by the Angolan Press Organization (ANGOP).

"The protocols show that a people determined is able to reach peace," Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Ricardo Alarcón was quoted in the ANGOP dispatch. "The peace and security of Angola, and the independence of Namibia based on UN Resolution 435/78 constitute the results of these protocols."

Alarcón added, "Brazzaville will always be associated with the common struggle of the African peoples and Cuba and it is a special honor that the protocols were signed in Brazzaville."

Ndalu and Alarcón have been leading figures in the Angolan and Cuban delegations throughout the negotiations, which began in May.

The UN observer mission of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia released a statement welcoming the signing of the protocol. The agreement sets April 1, 1989, as the date to begin the UN plan for Namibia's indepen-

dence, which is spelled out in Resolution 435. Elections to establish a Namibian government are to take place on Nov. 1, 1989.

"SWAPO is confident that notwithstanding the many obstacles that Pretoria will certainly try to create, the movement will win the Nov. 1, 1989, elections and lead the country to independence," read the statement.

It also commended Angola and Cuba for their "decisive military actions to create favorable conditions for the negotiations, their steadfastness as to principles, and flexibility regarding tactics throughout the long, drawn out negotiations."

Angolan and Cuban troops dealt a decisive military defeat to South African troops and their Angolan ally, UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), in March of this year at the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale. The Angolan and Cuban forces were joined by fighters from SWAPO. There is no mention of UNITA in the pact.

The four points of the protocol also provide that Angola and Cuba will reach an agreement with the secretary general of the UN on a procedure for verification of Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola. The details are to be set by the December 22 UN signing. Cuba and Angola have agreed to the establishment of a UN-sponsored unarmed observer force to monitor Cuban troop withdrawal. The United States and South Africa are not participants in this force.

A previous attempt to sign an agreement in Brazzaville broke down on December 3 when the South African delegation suddenly walked out of the talks. South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha said the document was "not specific" about verification of Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola.

Angola and Cuba have consistently reit-

erated that the schedule of Cuban troop withdrawal will be negotiated solely between Angola and Cuba.

The exact schedule for the Cuban withdrawal will be presented at the formal UN signing. But the December 14 *Washington Post* reported a summary of the initial proposed schedule. On April 1, 1989,

Continued on Page 11

Defenders of Mark Curtis zero in on drive for sponsors

BY MARGARET JAYKO

Anne Braden and Frank Wilkinson — two longtime fighters for Black rights and civil liberties — have recently become sponsors of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Like Curtis, both have been victims of government repression for their political activities.

In 1954 Anne Braden and her husband Carl sold their home in an all-white section of Louisville, Kentucky, to a Black family. This set off a racist furor, which climaxed with the bombing of the house.

The Louisville authorities charged that the Bradens had conspired to set the bomb themselves as part of an attempt to overthrow the state of Kentucky! The Bradens were again indicted for sedition in 1967.

Anne Braden was also a leader of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, which tried to involve Southern whites, alongside Blacks, in the civil rights movement. She continues her antiracist activities today.

Frank Wilkinson is director-emeritus of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation.

In 1958 when the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) slated hear-

In switch, U.S. gov't will talk with PLO

BY HARRY RING

Washington's decision to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization represented an abrupt reversal of U.S. policy. It registers a setback to the Israeli regime and its efforts to smash with an "iron fist" the Palestinian uprising on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

The December 14 announcement by President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz came on the heels of a press conference hours earlier by PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat in which he reiterated earlier declarations recognizing Israel and reaffirming the PLO's opposition to terrorism.

Just 24 hours before the U.S. switch, Arafat had made these same points to the UN General Assembly and Washington had rebuffed him.

In an initial response to the Reagan administration's new stand, Israel's U.S. ambassador expressed "regret" and repeated, "We don't recognize the PLO as a viable partner for negotiations."

Washington's decision came only weeks after it denied Arafat a visa to come to New York to address the UN.

Earlier, it had shut down the Palestine Information Office in Washington and tried unsuccessfully to close the PLO's UN observer mission.

For some two decades, U.S. administrations — Republican and Democratic alike — joined hands with the Israeli regime in efforts to isolate and, if possible, destroy the PLO.

Washington had come under increasing international pressure to modify its stand toward the PLO. But, Palestinian leaders stressed, the decisive factor in Washington's retreat was the year-old West Bank and Gaza Palestinian uprising — the *intifada*.

"It is the *intifada* which has changed the world," explained PLO spokesperson Ahmed Abdul-Rahman. "Now the world understands there is a Palestinian nation that

Continued on Page 13

ings in the South to discredit the civil rights movement, Wilkinson went there and worked with Carl Braden to oppose this. They were both subpoenaed to appear before HUAC. They refused to answer questions and were sentenced to a year in prison.

A recent lawsuit in California produced 132,000 pages of FBI files documenting the government's 20-year campaign to disrupt Wilkinson's activities.

"These two endorsements," said Mark Curtis Defense Committee coordinator Stu Singer in a telephone interview from the defense committee office in Des Moines, Iowa, "show the potential for involving prominent rights fighters throughout the country — and the world — in the political campaign to free Mark Curtis."

Curtis is currently in the state penitentiary in Anamosa, Iowa, serving a 25-year sentence on fabricated rape and burglary charges. He is a longtime union militant, political activist, and member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Curtis was convicted in September, despite the lack of any evidence to connect

Continued on Page 4

North Carolina textile workers welcome 'Militant'

BY RICH STUART

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Supporters of the *Militant* here have prioritized sales to workers at three work sites: the Cone Mills White Oak textile mill in Greens-

boro, Norfolk and Southern rail yard in Linwood, and the maintenance facility at Piedmont Airlines in Winston-Salem.

Part of what we discuss on these sales is how the employers are reorganizing production and tightening the squeeze on workers' time and take-home pay. Unionists also express interest in the Nicaraguan

revolution; the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and other political issues.

Workers at Cone Mills have been cut to three 12-hour shifts a week. One group goes in from

and a base for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in North Carolina.

Textile companies in nearby Reidsville and Gibsonville recently announced that they will be shutting down operations. At the end of October Cone officials here explained the company will be laying off 825 workers. The companies blame foreign imports for the closures and layoffs.

Many workers go along with this. But even more say the job losses are due to the employers' greed.

The *Militant* has been distributed at Cone for five years. Several workers have longterm subscriptions as a result of discussions with the plant-gate teams and with *Militant* supporters who work in the mill.

Kathleen Mickells, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice-president, joined the plant-gate team during a swing through North Carolina earlier this year.

The sales team at Cone has also introduced many workers to the Mark Curtis defense campaign. Curtis is an Iowa unionist and political activist serving a 25-year prison sentence on trumped-up charges.

Receptivity to the *Militant* has also been good at the Linwood rail yard. Often an article will be clipped and put on the bulletin boards in the shanties. Photocopies of these articles find their way to rail yards hundreds of miles away.

Members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) help move millions of tons of commodities

such as coal, grains, cotton, automobiles, paper, steel, and chemicals through the yard.

Many railroaders work grueling hours — on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no scheduled time off.

A good number of UTU members are also working under the provisions of a two-tier contract. That means workers performing exactly the same task get paid two different rates, with those at the low end of the seniority lists having to wait five years to get up to full pay.

A *Militant* team has also started selling to members of the International Association of Machinists at Piedmont Airlines. This company was recently purchased by US Air, contributing to IAM members' uncertainty about what the future has in store.

SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

boro, Norfolk and Southern rail yard in Linwood, and the maintenance facility at Piedmont Airlines in Winston-Salem.

Part of what we discuss on these sales is how the employers are reorganizing production and tightening the squeeze on workers' time and take-home pay. Unionists also express interest in the Nicaraguan

Monday through Wednesday, another Thursday through Saturday. It's almost as if the company has two separate work forces. Teams of *Militant* supporters talk with both groups.

There are 200,000 textile workers in the state — mostly non-union. The Cone Mills plant is the largest denim producer in the world

Sales drive wins new readers around the world

BY NORTON SANDLER

"The drive was more successful than we thought possible at the beginning."

That comment from Catharina Tirsén in Stockholm, Sweden, summarizes what our international distributors are reporting about the just-concluded circulation drive.

Distributors outside the United States won 19 percent of more than 11,000 new readers to the *Militant*, the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazines *New International* and *Nouvelle Internationale*. These same supporters sold 2,600 copies of the *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*. The Action Program is a Pathfinder pamphlet containing proposals being advanced by the Socialist Workers Party on how working people can effectively fight against the employer and government attacks that will mount as the capitalist economic crisis deepens.

Tirsén explained that this was the first time supporters in Sweden had taken a goal. After meeting initial success they raised their targets, finally selling 39 *Militant* and 21 *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions, five *New Internationals*, and 31 *Action Programs*.

Other advances, Tirsén said, included establishing a weekly sales team at a cable manufacturing plant. Also, on Saturdays, distributors set up tables featuring Pathfinder books at busy locations in Stockholm.

In Iceland, bankruptcies and layoffs of workers in the fish processing industry have sparked much discussion in recent weeks, distributors there report. "There was less optimism about what's happening in the country," shipyard worker Grétar Kristjánsson explained.

A worker in a plant where fish nets are manufactured said her coworkers were interested in an article by *Militant* editor

Doug Jenness, following the 1988 presidential elections, that looked at the political situation in the United States a year after the stock market crash.

Supporters in Iceland sold subscriptions at plant gates, on the job, and at political meetings on Nicaragua, South Africa, and Palestine.

In New Zealand distributors "discussed the Action Program with workers participating in marches and other protests against unemployment in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch," Janet Warman said. Forty workers in meat processing and engineering plants there purchased subscriptions.

"Meat workers would often comment on the articles about Mark Curtis," Warman emphasized. Curtis is a Des Moines, Iowa, packinghouse worker serving a 25-year jail term on trumped-up rape and burglary charges.

Warman said sales of *New International* were boosted by visiting subscribers in their homes. "We also began to carry out consistent subscription renewal work for the first time."

An average of 1,100 copies of the *Militant* are sent to Britain each week. Some 440 are sold by distributors. The rest are used to fill subscriptions in Britain, the rest of Europe, and in Africa and the Middle East.

Subscriptions to coal miners, rail workers, and engineering workers in Britain increased during the drive. The Northwest area of the National Union of Mineworkers, which encompasses Durham, is taking a bundle of 30 copies of the *Militant* to distribute to their members each week, reported Jonathan Silberman.

Distributors also point to an increase in subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Many were purchased by workers born in Colombia and Chile, part of the growing number



Militant, other socialist literature sold well at Durham miners' gala in Britain last summer. National Union of Mineworkers in Durham takes bundle of 30 *Militants* a week to distribute to members.

of Latin American-born workers in Britain today.

Australian distributors used book stalls featuring Pathfinder titles to spur the drive. Favorite titles included works by Che Guevara and Malcolm X, distributor Ron Poulsen reports. The bulk of the *PM* subscriptions were sold at the end of the drive in Fairfield, a suburb of Sydney, where many workers born in Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina live.

"The Action Program has been a consistent seller," Poulsen emphasized. "We would say this is the pamphlet workers

need to get for information about the coming economic crisis. Several people stopped dead in their tracks and came back to get a copy."

Thirty-nine subscriptions and six *New Internationals* were sold in Norway. Seventeen were also sold in Puerto Rico.

A team of volunteers from Canada, the United States, and Britain who participated in a Paris symposium on the political contribution of African revolutionary leader Thomas Sankara sold some 60 copies of *Nouvelle Internationale* to individuals and to bookstores.

THE MILITANT TELLS THE TRUTH SPECIAL RENEWAL OFFER

With 6 mos. or longer renewal, *New International* #5 or #6 only \$3.50
(Up to \$3 saving)

The *Militant* carries news and analysis on the developing world economic crisis and resistance by workers and farmers to employer and government attacks — from the U.S. to the Philippines, Britain to South Africa.

- Reports on advances in Cuba
- On-the-scene coverage from our bureau in Managua, Nicaragua

Enclosed is

☐ \$4 for 12 weeks, new readers ☐ \$9 for 12 weeks, renewals

☐ \$17 for 6 months ☐ \$30 for 1 year ☐ \$55 for 2 years
For \$3.50 additional, send *New International*

☐ 5th issue: "The Coming Revolution in South Africa"
☐ 6th issue: "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop"

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Union/School/Organization _____

Send to THE MILITANT, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014



The Militant

Closing news date: December 14, 1988

Coeditors: MARGARET JAYKO and DOUG JENNESS

Circulation Director: NORTON SANDLER

Nicaragua Bureau Director: LARRY SEIGLE

Business Manager: JIM WHITE

Editorial Staff: Susan Apstein, Fred Feldman, Seth Galinsky (Nicaragua), Arthur Hughes, Cindy Jaquith, Susan LaMont, Sam Manuel, Harry Ring, Judy White (Nicaragua).

Published weekly except one week in August and the last week of December by the *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: Editorial Office, (212) 243-6392; Telex, 497-4278; Business Office, (212) 929-3486. Nicaragua Bureau, Apartado 2222, Managua. Telephone 24845.

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The *Militant* Business Office, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Subscriptions: U.S., Canada, Latin America: for one-year subscription send \$30, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$65. Britain, Ireland, Continental Europe, Africa: £22 for one year, £12 for six months, or £6 for three-month renewal. Send check or international money order made out to Pathfinder Press and send to Pathfinder, 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL, England. Australia, Asia, Pacific: send Australian \$60 to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 153, Glebe, Sydney, NSW 2037, Australia.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

Pathfinder London meeting celebrates new Sankara book

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — More than 100 people gathered at the Africa Centre here December 3 to celebrate the publication of the Pathfinder book *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87*. Through the words of its central leader, the book chronicles the development of the revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso from 1983 until its overthrow in 1987, when Sankara himself was killed.

Great interest had been shown in the book prior to the meeting, explained Pathfinder's Alan Harris, who chaired the event. *Africa Concord*, a prominent magazine on African politics, featured the book on its cover and for six weeks offered a free book with every subscription.

The book is a best-seller in the recently opened Pathfinder bookshop in London where more than 60 copies have been sold. To date, 500 copies of the book have been sold in Britain.

Messages were sent to the meeting from Jacob Hannai, deputy chief representative in Western Europe of the South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia; Julio Ricardo of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua; Angola's embassy in Britain; Labour members of Parliament Bernie Grant and Paul Boateng; Keith Bennett, political editor of *Hansib* publications, which publishes *Africa Times*, *Caribbean Times*, and *Asian Times* here; and from Kenyan author and political activist Ngugi Wa Thiongo.

"Thomas Sankara was a young leader," Ngugi wrote, "but he had managed to make his mark on 20th century Africa. They may kill him, but his spirit will never die. This book of his talks is evidence of this. But the greater evidence is that the spirit is in millions of African peasants and workers, who are today struggling against neocolonialism and will never stop doing so until victory. We here today can only honor that spirit by uniting with the peasants and workers of the world to continue the work he was doing."

Speaking at the meeting were David Gakunzi, editor of the Paris-based magazine *Coubite* and a leader of the International Thomas Sankara Association; and Sam Manuel, director of the Pathfinder Mural Project in New York.

With them on the platform of the London meeting were African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa representative Mzala; Geoff Revel, a prominent activist in the National Union of Railwaymen; and

Helen Arthur, a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

"It is a great privilege for us to be invited to speak on this occasion," said Mzala, reporting that he had had the opportunity to meet Sankara on a visit to Burkina Faso.

"We feel joy and optimism in South Africa and Namibia because the launching of this book allows us to keep alive the ideas of one of those outstanding revolutionaries whose thoughts are not confined to the borders of his country," he continued. "Sankara represented the vision of Africa and the world when men and women shall walk tall with pride in themselves."

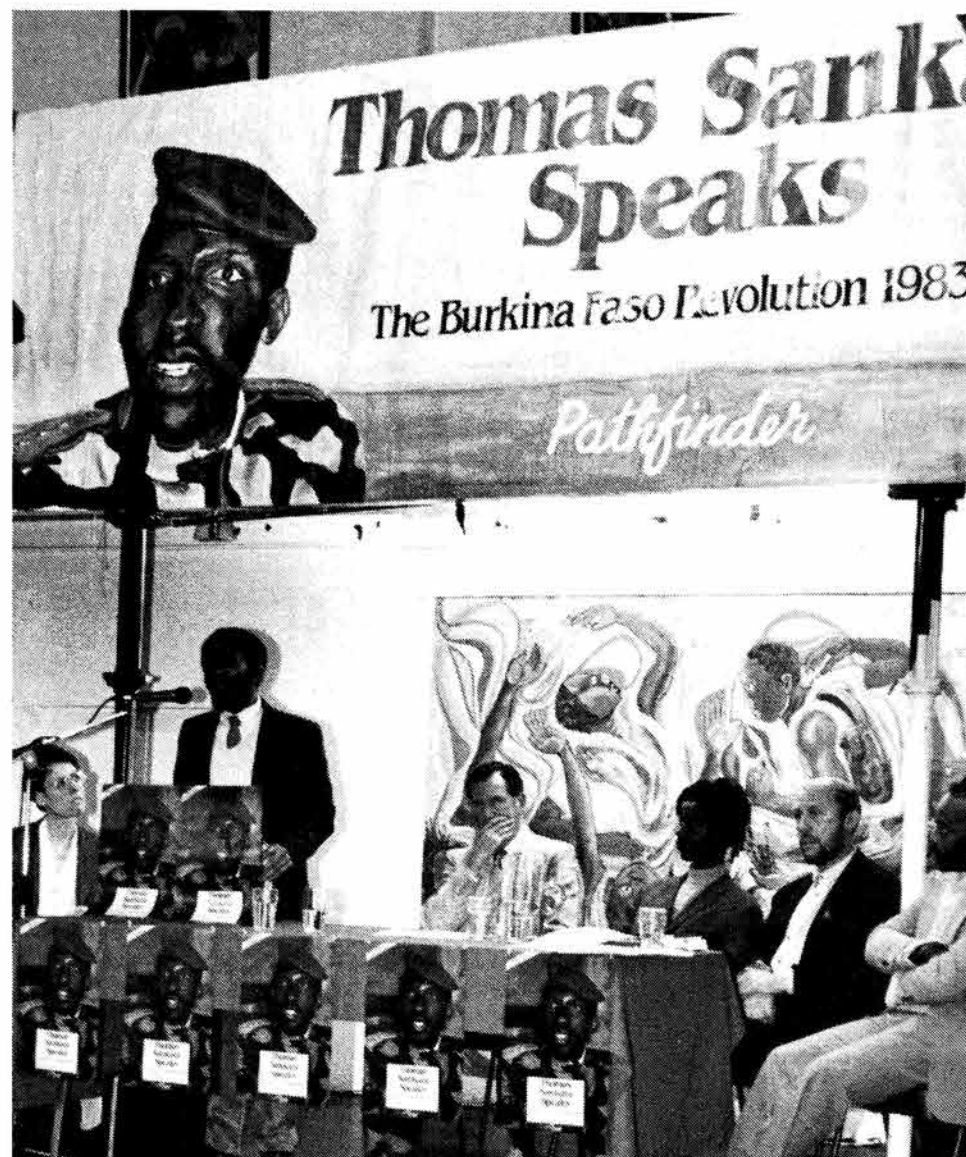
Mzala, a frequent contributor to the ANC's journal *Sechaba*, announced, "We are preparing reviews of the Sankara book in *Sechaba* and in the journals of allied organizations."

Revel, chair of Rail Against Apartheid, told the meeting that the National Union of Railwaymen had also commissioned a review of the book for its journal *Transport Review*.

Revel stressed the importance of making Sankara's ideas known as widely as possible in the labor movement. "As the bosses come face to face with their crisis, they'll turn on us — their class enemy — with a viciousness that we've not yet experienced," he said. "In the fight back against these attacks, this book will be a weapon for us, an inspiration to trade unionists and to youth."

Arthur discussed how Sankara's speeches and interviews reflected his understanding that working people are the subjects of social change, not simply objects of history.

"The book does not present the idealistic or unrealizable visions of a dreamer," she said, "but the story of a real revolution in the making and the power of a conscious



G.M. Cookson

Speakers at London meeting were (from left) Helen Arthur, engineering union member; ANC representative Mzala; Alan Harris of Pathfinder; International Thomas Sankara Association leader David Gakunzi; rail union activist Geoff Revel; and Sam Manuel, Pathfinder Mural Project director.

and united people, led by communists, to overcome tremendous obstacles. On no issue is this revealed more vividly than in what Sankara said and what the revolutionary government did in relation to women."

After the meeting dozens of participants

— who all agreed that the meeting had been a huge success — made their way across London to the Pathfinder bookshop to continue discussions. Altogether they bought £188 (US\$348) worth of literature, including 16 copies of the new book.

Nicaragua demands return of helicopter

BY LARRY SEIGLE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Nicaraguan government is demanding the return of a Soviet-built MI-25 helicopter flown to Honduras December 7 by a defector. Capt. Edwin Estrada Leiva, a pilot in the Sandinista Air Force, delivered the craft to the Hernán Acosta Mejía air base in southern Honduras.

The MI-25 is an advanced combat helicopter that played an important role in the

war against the U.S.-backed forces known as the contras.

According to Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, treaties between Nicaragua and Honduras require the return of the stolen aircraft. D'Escoto also asked the Honduran authorities to detain Estrada until a formal extradition request can be submitted.

Honduran officials have so far taken no action in response to Nicaragua's requests.

In a statement December 7, the Nicaraguan defense ministry said that Estrada was acting under instructions of the CIA. The following day, President Daniel Ortega said that the seizure of the helicopter was a CIA operation carried out by an "infiltrator."

Ortega said that the action was timed so as to "sling mud at Mikhail Gorbachev's appearance at the United Nations." The Soviet president spoke before the General Assembly in New York on December 7.

Estrada is the highest-ranking Nicaraguan military officer to defect since Major Roger Miranda Bengoechea sold out to the United States in October 1987. Miranda, who had been a member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front since 1978, was in charge of the secretariat of the ministry of defense.

He left the country with military documents and subsequently became part of the U.S. government's propaganda campaign against the Nicaraguan revolution.

No information has been made available here on Estrada's background. Nor have details been released on the circumstances of his removal of the MI-25 from a military installation.

In another development, a Nicaraguan judge has freed from prison the last of those convicted of involvement in assaults on police during an antigovernment demonstration in Nandaime last July. Those found guilty included leaders of several opposition political parties and officials of antigovernment trade unions.

The demand for the release of the Nandaime prisoners had become an interna-

tional rallying cry for opponents of the Sandinista revolution. Some capitalist governments and procapitalist international union organizations had demanded the release of the prisoners as a condition for sending emergency aid to Nicaragua in the wake of Hurricane Joan, which struck here October 22.

The July 10 demonstration in Nandaime was organized by the Democratic Coordinating Committee of Nicaragua, a coalition of anti-Sandinista parties, unions, and business groups.

During the action, several hundred participants attacked the police with stones, clubs, and poles used to carry banners. Ten policemen were injured.

Originally, 38 individuals were found guilty. An appeals court overturned the convictions of 25, ruling that the government had not provided proof of their responsibility for criminal acts.

Four of the 13 remaining prisoners were sentenced to three years in prison, and eight were given terms of one and a half years. One was released because of ill health.

On December 7, the judge in the case, Luis Jiménez, suspended the sentences of all the remaining prisoners. Jiménez acted under a provision of the criminal code allowing conditional suspension of sentences of less than three years when the judge believes the defendants are of good character and unlikely to pose a danger to society.

Jiménez has the authority to impose restrictions on the activities of those whose sentences have been suspended, but has not yet done so.

Government officials denied that the judge's decision to release the prisoners was influenced by political considerations.

Barricada, the daily newspaper of the Sandinista front, said in an editorial that the courts had handled the "much-discussed case with professional responsibility and juridical-technical impeccability. Powerful domestic and foreign pressures tried vainly to turn this case into a political scandal."

N.Y. meeting to honor life of ANC leader Mfanafuthi Makatini

A memorial meeting for African National Congress of South Africa leader Mfanafuthi Makatini will be held in New York on December 16. Makatini, 58 years old, died on December 3 in Lusaka, Zambia, following a short illness. He was the ANC's director of international affairs.

Makatini went into exile when the apartheid regime in South Africa outlawed the ANC in 1960. He served as the ANC representative in Algeria until 1972 and was its chief representative to the United Nations from 1978 to 1983.

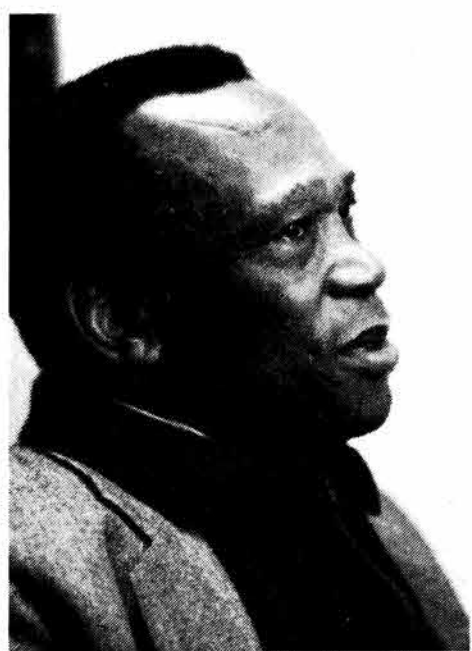
Many messages and statements of solidarity with the ANC have come in from around the world. A message from Socialist Workers Party leader James Warren on behalf of the SWP National Committee read, "The long struggle of the South African people led by the ANC to put an end to the blight on humanity represented by the apartheid state has been an inspiration to working people the world over. . . .

"The ANC's political perspectives, uncompromising leadership, and long years of resistance have inspired new generations of fighters in South Africa that have joined in the battle against apartheid. . . .

"These new generations will stand on the shoulders of comrade Makatini and the thousands of others who came before them

— until the final victory over apartheid is won."

The memorial meeting for Makatini will be held at the Canaan Baptist Church, 132 West 116th Street in Manhattan, at 6:30 p.m.



Militant/Ernest Harsch

African National Congress leader Mfanafuthi Makatini.

City Council of Jersey City joins defense effort

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.

The city council of Jersey City, New Jersey, voted unanimously at

of ACTWU [Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union]; the African [National] Congress; and

"Whereas, the constitutional rights of Mark Curtis have been grossly violated leading to the implications that if the rights of one citizen are violated, then the rights of all citizens are violated.

"Now, therefore, be it resolved, that:

"1. the City Council of Jersey City joins with the National and International Defense Efforts on be-

victim's high school this fall.

"The *Guardian* would do well to check for a local progressive consensus before accepting sectarian campaigns at face value."

In the letters column in the December 14 issue, the editors printed an answer to Douglas by Nellie Berry and Robert Berry, two Iowa Socialist Party members.

"We attended the complete trial of Mark Curtis," they wrote. "No physical evidence was presented at any time through the trial to convict Curtis of the crime of which he was charged. Furthermore, Curtis was not allowed to bring evidence into the courtroom which we feel would have proved his innocence beyond a shadow of a doubt.

"We too were workers before retiring and have belonged to and worked with union people so we know the problems working people face. Therefore we understand what happened to Mark Curtis and as members of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee we can assure you we will not rest until Mark is free and cleared of all charges against him."

Héctor Marroquín has sent out a letter thanking all those who supported his successful fight for permanent residence in the United States, explaining the importance of his victory and urging backing for the fight to free Curtis. Marroquín is a Mexican-born leader of the Socialist Workers Party who now lives in Des Moines.

"This victory registers progress for the rights of immigrants," Marroquín writes. "It expands the capacity of those not born in the U.S. to fight to live, to work, and to be politically active here.

"It is a blow against government and employer efforts to force undocumented workers into pariah status, denied protection of law, and subject to special discrimina-

tion in wages, working conditions, and social services.

"This victory advances the rights of the labor movement and of all those born in the U.S. It strikes a blow against government efforts to intervene in the unions, to deport unionists who are foreign-born, to break up the unity of workers fighting against employer attacks on their rights,

it is popularly known, is the first test of the gains for political rights registered in the Socialist Workers Party's successful lawsuit against government spying and disruption. . . .

"Mark's crime was to be an outspoken defender of foreign-born workers in the middle of a nationally coordinated INS raid and probe against Congress' amnesty pro-



Militant/Linda Marcus
Nellie and Robert Berry at international defense rally for Curtis last September.

wages, and working conditions.

"The victory defends the rights of all to meet, discuss, and work with everyone they choose, regardless of where they were born, free from government political censorship and exclusion.

"Because of this victory, everyone in this country — immigrant and native-born alike — has more rights and is in a stronger position to defend and use those rights today.

"My success in winning permanent residence, or a green card as

gram. His crime was to be a unionist at Swift in the middle of a national drive in the packinghouse industry to lower wages, and working and safety conditions. . . .

"I was a victim of a similar attempted frame-up in Mexico, which forced me to flee to the U.S. My victory proves that by fighting and appealing for public support such frame-ups can be exposed and justice won."

Marroquín is currently on a national speaking tour.

DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

its October 27 meeting to approve a resolution in support of Mark Curtis.

It said, in part:

"Whereas, on March 4, 1988, Mark Curtis, a trade union member from the State of Iowa, was arrested and charged with rape and assaulting police after attending a meeting in support of 17 coworkers from the Swift Premium Meat Packing Plant in Des Moines; and

"Whereas, at the jail, Mark Curtis was harassed and abused by the police, who called him 'Mexican-lover' and brutally beat him, after which he was charged with assaulting police officers; and

"Whereas, the events leading to the arrest of Mark Curtis are highly suspicious, leading to the belief that he was attacked because of his role in the union movement in support of migrant workers from Mexico and El Salvador; and. . .

"Whereas, the National Lawyers' Guild is joined by hundreds of organizations and individuals nationwide who have expressed concern about this case, including U.S. Congressman John Conyers, Jr.; the United Farm Workers of Washington State; Bernard Firestone, Secretary-Treasurer of Chicago and Central State Joint Board

half of Mark Curtis and believes that every individual's right to free speech and association must never be trampled upon and silenced. . . ."

In its November 16 issue, the *Guardian* newsweekly ran a substantial article about Curtis' frame-up. Two weeks later, a response was published in the letters column, under the heading "No consensus on Curtis." It was written by Bill Douglas, leader of the Iowa Socialist Party.

"Careful readers of the *Guardian* story on the Mark Curtis case will note no mention of local progressive support for the case, especially from the Black and feminist communities," Douglas wrote. "The reason is that such support does not exist very far outside the isolated Socialist Workers Party chapter here.

"The implausibility of Curtis's story that police entrapped him," continued Douglas, "using an entire Black working-class family, coupled with a dishonest and at times despicable support campaign, has brought little support from those in a position to know the whole story. The campaign set new standards for insensitivity and harassment by leafletting the rape

Defense committee zeroes in on sponsor drive

Continued from front page

him with the alleged crime. Curtis is appealing his conviction.

Supporters are on a drive to sign up thousands of sponsors of the committee. "To become a sponsor," Singer explained, "you simply have to agree with the committee's goal of opposing this frame-up and winning freedom for Curtis."

Hundreds of people have already signed sponsor cards. They include: Thomas Gumbleton, bishop in the Archdiocese of Detroit; Byron Charlton, assistant to the executive director, African-American Labor Center, AFL-CIO; R.T. Griffin, president, Central Arizona Labor Council; Terry Marryshow, leader, Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement of Grenada; Bill Means, executive director, International Indian Treaty Council; Angela Sanbrano,

national director, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Fred Dube, African National Congress of South Africa; attorney Stuart Russell, Association of Québec Jurists; Yvonne Meléndez and Juan Segarra, Puerto Rico/Hartford 15; Connie Gilbert-Neiss, Essex County, New Jersey, National Organization for Women; Socialist Bloc, Dominican Republic; Peter Schey, National Center for Immigrants' Rights, Inc.; James Southworth, president, International Union of Electronic Workers Local 244; and farm activists Carroll Nearmyer, George Paris, and Maurice Owens.

"Up until now," said Singer, "supporters of the defense effort have concentrated on collecting thousands of signatures on petitions protesting Curtis' arrest and beating by the cops at the time of his arrest. Stacks of these were delivered to the authorities in

Des Moines, and they have made a big political impact."

But, he emphasized, "we're making a shift now in the focus of our activities. We're urging defense committee supporters in every city — from Los Angeles to Stockholm — to draw up a list of figures in the fight for Black rights, Puerto Rican rights, Chicano rights, women's rights, and immigrant rights; leaders of unions, farm organizations, antiwar groups, and left-wing political parties; elected officials; civil libertarians; student leaders; and pro-

fessors.

"We want to systematically call and visit people and convince them to become sponsors of the defense committee."

This broadening out of the defense effort, said Singer, builds upon the substantial amount of work supporters have already done among coworkers and fellow political activists.

To get sponsor cards and other defense materials, contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

Des Moines cops guilty of harassment

BY PRISCILLA SCHENK

DES MOINES, Iowa — A Polk County district judge here ruled December 7 that former policewoman Deborah Lynch had been subjected to "intensely degrading" sexual harassment by fellow officers in the Des Moines Police Department and awarded her \$10,000 in compensation.

He also ordered the city to pay Lynch's attorney's fees and ordered the police department to submit a plan to educate and train officers to prevent further incidents of sexual harassment.

Police Chief William Moulder expressed surprise at the ruling. "It certainly doesn't make my day," he said.

Lynch's case brought out testimony that a cop unzipped his pants in public and asked Lynch to perform a sex act; that women officers face degrading antiwoman language; and that police officers dressed in Ku Klux Klan robes to intimidate Black officers.

In a separate case, policewoman Charlie Smith was fired when she reported that a police lieutenant called an arrested Black man a "coon." In November the city's

Civil Service Commission ordered Smith reinstated to the police force. The commission issued a report accusing the police department of condoning sexist and racist abuses by police officers, and of trying to clear superior officers of wrongdoing rather than investigate the charges raised by Smith.

In response, the U.S. Justice Department has begun an investigation of the city's police force.

A member of the Civil Service Commission stated publicly, however, that he believes the investigation will be a "whitewash."

Pascual Marquez, the Justice Department investigator who has been called in, teaches classes at the Des Moines police academy. "This causes me a real problem," Commissioner Tom Baker told the *Des Moines Register*. "It would taint the investigation in my opinion."



Militant/Nelson Blackstock
Curtis sponsors Anne Braden and Frank Wilkinson



Militant/Della Rossa

Civil rights veteran joins struggle against frame-up

BY MARGARET JAYKO
(Tenth of a series)

DES MOINES, Iowa — A key element of the political campaign to frame up Mark Curtis, led by city and county authorities here, has been to emphasize that Curtis is white and the woman he is accused of raping is Black. The goal is to confuse and win support for this frame-up from progressive-minded working people by appealing to Black nationalist and antiracist sentiments.

During Curtis' Sept. 7-9, 1988, trial, a couple of people who are members of the National Black United Front chapter in Des

The Mark Curtis Story



Moines picketed the Mark Curtis Defense Committee office, repeating the prosecution's lies, and urging the Black community to mobilize in defense of the alleged victim and against Curtis.

This plea fell largely on deaf ears. The number of Blacks who came into the defense committee office to discuss the Curtis case, and often volunteer to help, outnumbered the one or two pickets who walked silently outside.

At an international Curtis defense rally here on the eve of the trial's opening, three women and one man from the NBUF chapter picketed for several hours.

More than 400 people attended the rally, and heard a broad array of speakers link Curtis' fight for justice to their own experiences with the cops and courts in South Africa, El Salvador, on the streets of U.S. Black and Spanish-speaking communities, on strike picket lines, and on farms facing foreclosure.

One of those who spoke was Edna Griffin, a 79-year-old civil rights and political activist in the Des Moines area. She told the crowd that when she read in the papers that a white man accused of raping a young Black woman was being vigorously prosecuted by the authorities, she wondered, "What's this new arrangement? When has there been such concern about sexual abuse, never mind rape, of our young Black women?"

Griffin pledged to get all her friends involved in the fight to defend Curtis. "Color doesn't mean a damn thing today when it comes to the battle for justice," she said.

Griffin attended all three days of Curtis' trial, and his sentencing, as well as events at the defense committee office. Forces hostile to the defense effort tried their best to convince her to stay home.

I sat down with Griffin and defense committee activist Jackie Floyd in October and discussed Griffin's political experiences and what convinced her to become a partisan of the defense committee.

We talked over lunch at Hobbs, a barbecue restaurant across the street from the defense committee office. Griffin is well-known in this town, and it was not unusual

that she was greeted with affection by one of the patrons when we walked in the door. As we were waiting for our food, Floyd gave Griffin a statement of support for the Curtis defense fight by a longtime friend and political colleague, farm leader Merle Hansen. He and Griffin had both been supporters of the Progressive Party campaign of Henry Wallace for U.S. president in 1948.

"My background and life are a little unusual," Griffin began. She was born on Oct. 23, 1909, in Kentucky, but moved to Walpole, New Hampshire, when she was nine months old. Her father trained saddle horses. "We were the only Black family" there, she recalled.

She went to high school in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where she was the only Black person in the school, "except for one Black boy who didn't consider himself Black," she said. She described high school as a "traumatic experience," but "I managed to graduate." The minister of a Black church that she was a member of helped Griffin get a scholarship to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. The school was coed and all Black.

I asked her when she first became interested in politics. "I think I learned to read from *The Crisis* magazine," she said, referring to the publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Her parents, however, were not involved in political activity.

Scottsboro case

Griffin recalled the arrest of the "Scottsboro Boys" and the fear it inspired at Fisk. In 1931 nine Black youths were tried in Scottsboro, Alabama, on charges of having raped two white women in a freight car passing through Alabama. The nine were found guilty and sentenced to death or to 75 to 99 years in prison.

The U.S. Supreme Court twice reversed the convictions on procedural grounds. At the second trial one of the women recanted her testimony. In 1937 charges against five were dropped. Three others were freed in the 1940s, and the last escaped in 1948 to Michigan, which refused to return him to Alabama.

"People stopped breathing" when the Scottsboro Boys were arrested, recalled Griffin.

She recounted another incident that contributed to the atmosphere of intimidation. Fisk's dean of women was driving from Nashville to Atlanta to go to a football game, and had an accident en route. She was left on the side of the road until an ambulance came all the way from Atlanta. A hospital for whites, meanwhile, "was within shouting distance" of where she lay.

After graduating from Fisk, Griffin went to New York City where she lived for about a decade. She roomed with a woman from New York who was a political activist. Griffin had a variety of jobs: working in a cafeteria, a YWCA, and for the Works Progress Administration, where she taught English to the foreign-born. The WPA was established by President Franklin Roosevelt as a public works program to provide federal jobs for unemployed workers. Griffin became a member of the teachers' union.

First political meeting

At teachers' seminars and classes Griffin "learned about the history of the labor movement." One of her professors was Leo Huberman, who later became a founding editor of *Monthly Review*, a socialist magazine. She also learned about anti-Semitism for the first time in a class he taught.

The first political event she ever went to was a small meeting protesting fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.

Griffin walked her first picket line in support of striking teachers. She got arrested along with several other pickets as part of a regular cop round up of strikers and their supporters. Her roommate bailed her out.



Militant/Yvonne Hayes

Reporters interview Edna Griffin at defense committee office

The Urban League helped Griffin get a skilled job during World War II at the Western Electric plant. She was one of a handful of Blacks who worked there. They were never asked to join the union, she said.

The idea was to give her a job she couldn't do so that she would get discouraged and leave. But a coworker, an Italian man, helped her out. She eventually was fired.

In 1947 Griffin moved to Iowa where her husband was attending college. Griffin participated in the fight against racist segregation in Des Moines.

One day Griffin went with her baby daughter to Katz' drugstore downtown and ordered a soda. A young woman who worked there was about to serve Griffin, when she got a signal from somewhere not to wait on her.

Civil rights activists began picketing Katz' every Saturday. Then they decided to sit in at the counter and the booths. And every Monday morning, somebody filed a suit against Katz' for discrimination. Griffin had insisted that they not include the waitress who had tried to serve Griffin as a defendant in the suit. The waitress was a key witness for the defendant in the trial of the drugstore. Katz' eventually lost in state supreme court and was forced to serve Blacks.

Griffin was also involved in the fight against the frame-up of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were murdered in the electric chair in New York in 1953 on the phony charge of giving the "secret" of the atom bomb to the Soviet government.

When she first got a phone call asking her to do something in Des Moines to defend the Rosenbergs, "I could have cried," she said. She was a housewife, in the middle of the McCarthyite witch-hunt, who was being red-baited in her church.

But she went ahead and joined the fight

for executive clemency for the Rosenbergs. She got several top church figures to add their names to the appeal.

What prompted her to become a supporter of the Curtis defense effort?

"I think I read a story in the paper, and then I picked up a phone and asked a buddy what was going on," said Griffin. She got a "cue" to mind her own business.

Griffin said she got involved anyway "when I figured out that he is Spanish-speaking and is a great danger because he can communicate with Spanish-speaking workers." She mentioned that the recent exposés of racism and sexism in the Des Moines Police Department also entered into her decision. "That's why I came to court," she said, and sat through the trial.

The issue, said Griffin, is Curtis' anti-war activity and participation in the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), and the fact that he speaks Spanish and can communicate with immigrant workers. That makes him dangerous as far as the employers and government are concerned.

At the September defense rally, Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, which Curtis is a longtime member of, pointed to Edna Griffin as an example of how the ruling class misjudged what the response would be to Curtis' frame-up.

Working people who are Black, he said, have had the most extensive experiences with cop brutality, police frame-ups to discourage political activity, and employer victimization to curb militancy among workers and deepen racial divisions.

Far from being blinded by the skin colors of the people involved, Black working people in Des Moines tended, especially as the date of the trial approached, to become more supportive of Curtis. Many could identify with Curtis' history of struggle.

(To be continued)

Curtis moved to state prison

"Today nine of us from Oakdale were transferred to Anamosa," began a letter Mark Curtis wrote December 8 to defense committee activist Sandra Nelson. Anamosa is the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa, Iowa, which is in the east-central part of the state.

On November 18, the day he was sentenced, Curtis was moved from the Marion County Jail, where he had been held since his September 14 conviction, to the Iowa Medical and Classification Center in Oakdale. At Oakdale he was put through a series of medical and psychological tests to determine which state penitentiary he would end up in, and to get him oriented to prison life.

"We took a van out at 8:00 a.m. for the 45-minute ride to this little town where the Iowa State Men's Reformatory is located," Curtis wrote. "It's an old prison. I saw the date 1904 etched into some of the limestone bricks."

"At first glance it looks like some old castle from another time. It's got high, 50-foot walls with tall windows and bars. Inside are the 'living units,' the cafeteria, and many other buildings. There's a big yard and softball field."

"I will be going through a 10-day orientation and (if I pass) go to one of the living units. There's a level II, III, IV, etc., each with more privileges. You are assigned

based on your 'crime' and behavior here.

"After seven days I can get visitors. Only family at first, but later friends."

"Yesterday I received the defense committee's answer to the slanderous attack on me and the committee by Keith Morris. The materials I had in Oakdale were very helpful. People continue to write letters to me and I am responding."

Curtis can receive only letters, not packages. According to the prison rules:

"Incoming letters are to be written in a legible manner on standard-type stationery." The sender's full name and address must appear in the upper left hand corner of the envelope and "only correspondence from the noted sender is permitted. The resident's full name, number, box number, city, and state must also appear on the envelope in detail. Sign name in full at end of letter. Greeting cards (not to exceed 8 1/2"x11") are permitted."

"Persons under the age of 18 must have written permission from their parents before correspondence with residents will be allowed."

To write to Curtis, address letters to: Mark S. Curtis, No. 805338A, Box B, Anamosa, Iowa 52205.

Copies should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.



Militant/Norton Sandler

Farming area in St. Vincent. Small farmers there are fighting for improved roads, so that crops can be brought to market in salable condition.

Economic crisis spurs resistance by Caribbean workers, farmers, youth

BY NORTON SANDLER

The depth of the economic crisis in the Caribbean was brought home to a team of Pathfinder volunteers from Britain, Canada, and the United States who recently toured several islands.

We were in the English-speaking Caribbean promoting the new Pathfinder book *One People, One Destiny: The Caribbean and Central America Today*, edited by Don Rojas, as well as increasing the distribution of the full range of Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Rojas was the featured speaker at several meetings on the book held during the tour.

Rojas had been the editor of the *Free West Indian* and press secretary to Prime Minister Maurice Bishop during the 1979-83 Grenada revolution. Bishop was killed in a counterrevolutionary coup on Oct. 19, 1983, an act that paved the way for Washington's invasion of the island six days later.

Below are a few observations based on discussions with workers, union leaders, farmers, and students.

Trinidad and Tobago is in the throes of a depression brought on by the collapse of world oil prices. It is exacerbated by the U.S. government's cutbacks in sugar quotas and other imports.

With the country already heavily in debt to imperialist banks, the National Alliance for Reconstruction government is negotiating additional loans with the International Monetary Fund.

As a precondition for continuing discussions, IMF officials have demanded and received a pledge from the Trinidad and Tobago government to cut the payroll 15 percent by 1990. Nearly 10,000 civil servants will be laid off. The imperialist bankers have also received a pledge that government workers will continue to be denied past due cost-of-living payments.

Some 150,000 are already unemployed in a country of 1.2 million. The Trinidad and Tobago dollar was devalued once this year. Another devaluation is rumored.

On weekdays people line up outside the United States and Canadian embassies to apply for travel visas. On a Saturday afternoon, hundreds of working people pack into the airport hours before departure time for the Air Canada and BWIA flights to North America.

Prime Minister A.N.R. Robinson's government is also selling off nationalized industries to private owners to help raise currency to meet the debt payments. An end to these privatizations was one of the major demands 3,000 unionists and farmers raised during an October demonstration against the government and the IMF held in Port of Spain.

In St. Vincent we spoke with Earlene Horne and Robert Fitzpatrick, leaders of the National Farmers' Union, an organization of 1,200 small farmers.

About 200 of the union's members are women. Horne said women do a half to three-quarters of the work in the fields on many crops including bananas, St. Vincent's main agricultural export.

Geest, a British company, operates a virtual monopoly over the country's banana trade. A couple of times a week small farmers haul bunches of bananas out of the

steep hills to the main roads where trucks pick them up. They are taken to sheds for weighing and packing. Afterwards, the bananas are trucked to the harbor where they are loaded onto Geest freighters bound for Britain.

One of the union's main demands is the improvement of roads in the countryside.

"People live on the coastal areas and farm in the hills," Horne explained. "Up in those areas the main roads are bad, but in some places no road at all exists. So people make a little footpath. When the rains come, the path gets wiped out."

"A farmer clears the land in the hills without any help," she continued, "you wait nine months to get your bananas. When you begin to reap the bananas the roads and paths are in such bad shape that almost half, or in some cases more than half, your bananas will be rejected for bruises."

Health care is also poor in the countryside. "You might be fortunate to have a medical clinic in your area, not all the rural areas have them," said Horne. "But you might find that there are hardly any supplies in the clinic and that the doctor visits them once a week. If a patient is very ill, and travels straight to the city, they don't accept you. They say go back to your district, find your district doctor."

Fitzpatrick said, "The government has spent large sums of money on the infrastructure, roads to sites that have been identified for factory shelves. They invariably use some of our best agricultural flatlands to construct the shelves," which are the concrete foundations for buildings.

"They offer minimal rent for the building and give you a 10- or 15-year tax holiday. And you can bring in the machinery duty free."

But in many cases, he emphasized, the foundations remain only concrete shells because, even with the giveaways, the government has been unable to attract investors from abroad.

At the end of October, members of the National Workers Movement of St. Vincent won a union recognition strike at the East Caribbean Metals Industries Ltd. plant in Campden Park.

The company employs 25 workers in a plant that fabricates galvanized steel tanks and pipe, NWM General Secretary Noel Jackson explained.

"A man comes to work at 7:30 in the morning and goes home at 8:00 at night. Another set comes on at 8:00 and leaves at 7:00 in the morning," Jackson said. "For nearly seven years they have been going like that night and day and they wouldn't take it anymore."

In May 80 percent of the workers in the plant voted to recognize the NWM. The plant previously had been organized by a union federation known for its close ties to the governing party.

After management stonewalled, the union members were finally forced on strike in September.

The company threatened to reopen the plant with scabs. The union responded by blocking the entrance to the factory with vehicles.

The police dragged the vehicles away, which served to increase support for the strikers among working people on the island.

Union leader Jackson said the Caribbean Basin Initiative launched by Washington in 1984, touted to bring development to the region, has instead "promoted oppression and exploitation."

He cited a meeting 1984 in the Bahamas where governments from the English-speaking Caribbean got together and drafted the "Nassau Understanding." The document called for putting caps on workers' pay hikes.

The U.S.-based Wilson Sporting Goods, the largest employer in St. Vincent after the government, has been successful thus far in blocking unionization.

"Women come out at the end of the week at Wilson with \$48," Jackson said. "If they want to make more they have to put in a lot of nights doing overtime."

The fiberglass used in tennis racket production "gets all over the skin and there is no safety protection," he said.

Jackson believes the victory at East Caribbean Metals "can help bring a revival to the trade union movement in this country." The teachers union, which has been fighting for recognition for years, is pressing forward its demands, and other unions will follow suit, said Jackson.

In Grenada Anslem DeBourg and Derek Allard described that government's attempt to push back union rights. DeBourg is president of the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union and Grenada's Trade Union Council. Allard is president of the Bank and General Workers Union.

In August Prime Minister Herbert Blaize's New National Party passed the Essential Services Act. Under the law, Allard explained, unions will be required to give 28 days notice before striking or taking other forms of industrial action in workplaces deemed by the government to be essential.

Included are dock, electrical, telephone, airport, and sanitation workers. The list can also be expanded to include other industries at the discretion of the minister of labor.

"The minister of labor can declare any strike, sick-out, go-slow, work-to-rule illegal," said Allard. "Workers that disobey an order from the minister of labor can be sent to jail for six months or a year."

"The right to withhold labor is a fundamental right," DeBourg explained. The government has hinged its plans for development on growth of "the private sector," he continued. As is the case in St. Vincent, investors were promised years of tax breaks if they set up shop in the country. In return, the Grenada government has fought hard against workers' attempts to unionize the factories, hotels, and other facilities. In the meantime, DeBourg said, thousands have been laid off.

The airport in St. Vincent was crowded with farm workers in the early morning on November 3. They were waiting for a flight to St. Lucia. There, they join farm workers from other islands on a charter jet to Miami.

One man explained that the government in St. Vincent is under contract with U.S. growers to supply workers to cut sugarcane.

Another farm worker said he had been going to the area near Belle Glade, Florida,

for four years. They work six or seven days a week depending on which camp you get assigned to. Only a few workers get paid by the hour, the rest by the amount of cane they cut. His family can't get by, he said, without the trip to Florida every year.

Governments in the English-speaking Caribbean contribute to maintaining the University of West Indies (UWI) campuses in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad.

Under the impact of the economic crisis, the Trinidad and Tobago government is trying to push through Parliament an annual tuition fee of nearly \$900 per student, the first such assessment in the history of the country.

On November 5 the Student Guild at the UWI St. Augustine campus in Trinidad staged a two-hour candlelight demonstration singing "we can't pay the cess [assessment]."

They are getting support for their struggle from students at the UWI's Mona campus outside Kingston, Jamaica.

The Jamaican government was the first Caribbean government to introduce the "cess," explained Mona Student Guild President Cordel Green.

"The government claims you are contributing towards your education," Green stated. "It is really tied into policies of the International Monetary Fund, which is demanding that the government cut its public expenditures."

The opening of the Jamaica campus was delayed for two months because of the devastation brought by Hurricane Gilbert in September. The violent winds tore roofs off dormitories and classrooms, shattered windows, and uprooted large trees.

While repairs continue, students are living four or five to a room that normally houses two, Green told us.

from Pathfinder

ONE PEOPLE ONE DESTINY

\$5.95

The Caribbean and Central America Today

Edited by Don Rojas, press secretary to Grenada's late Prime Minister Maurice Bishop

The struggle in Nicaragua and El Salvador, impact of the Grenada revolution, U.S. militarization of Puerto Rico, Panama's struggle for sovereignty, and the region's crushing foreign debt. These topics are discussed in speeches and resolutions drawn from the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America. 115 pp. \$5.95. Sold at bookstores listed on page 12 or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., NY, NY 10014. Please add \$1 for postage.

Nicaragua: sugar harvest under way at recently nationalized mill

BY LARRY SEIGLE

CHICHIGALPA, Nicaragua — Long after dark, tractors are still hauling trailers filled with freshly cut sugarcane to the mill. The plant's machinery is alive, and the chimneys spew a steady column of smoke into the sky.

As it has every year for almost a century, the frenetic pace of the sugar harvest in full-swing regulates all activity at the giant complex known as the San Antonio Sugar Mill.

But this year, the San Antonio's harvest has taken on a directly political as well as an economic dimension. In July the Sandinista government nationalized the mill and its tens of thousands of acres of cane fields. Now, the 1988-89 harvest is being followed closely by both supporters and opponents of the revolution.

"The people of Nicaragua are watching this harvest," Lucio Jiménez, head of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), told a group of workers at the mill recently. "And so are the enemies of the revolution."

"The revolution's enemies want to demonstrate that we are incapable, as the working class, of a successful sugar harvest," Jiménez said. "We have to show that we have the capacity to do it."

Political challenge

In taking over the San Antonio operation, the Sandinista government assumed the challenge of organizing production at the huge mill. It is a challenge substantially complicated by the fact that workers here are divided in their attitudes toward the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and toward the CST leadership.

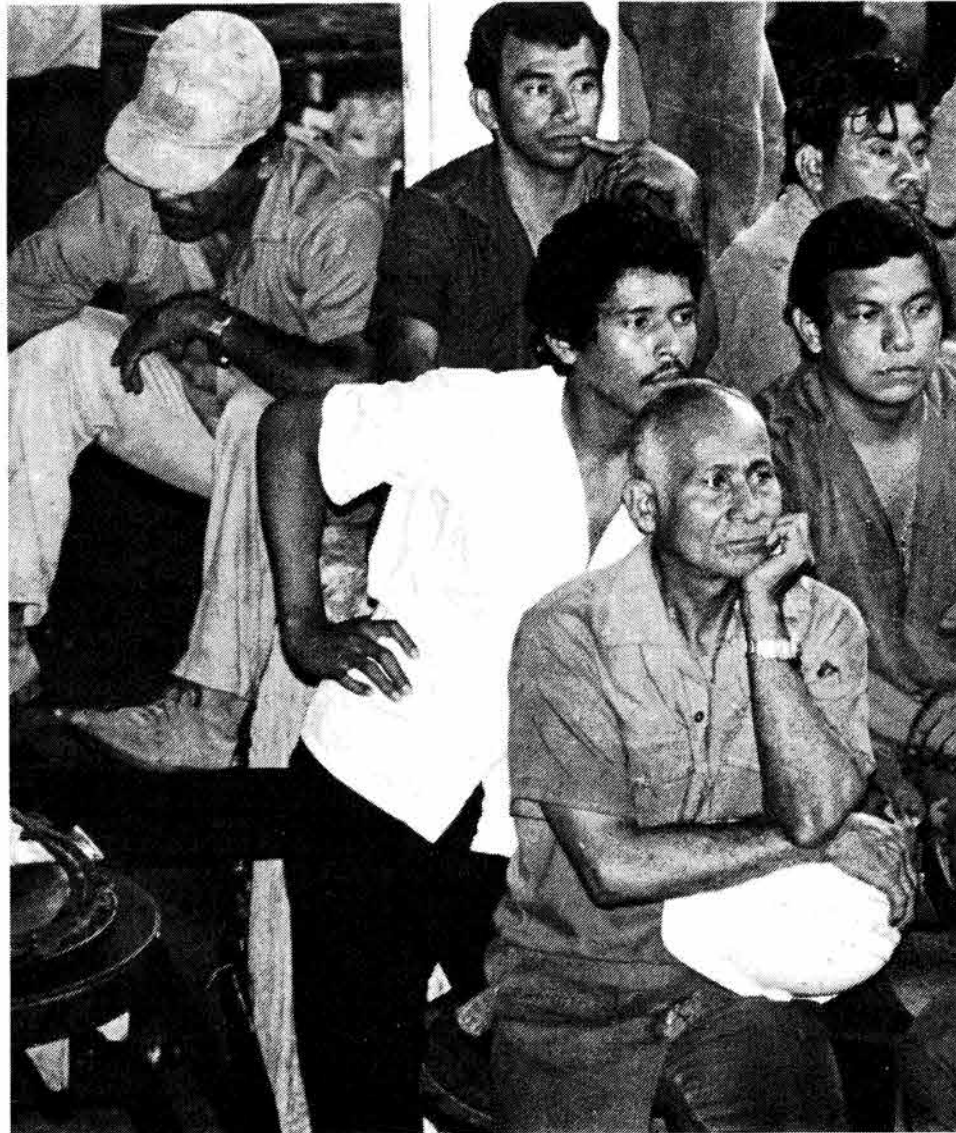
The FSLN has been relatively weak among workers here. And, although the local union is affiliated to the CST, some workers look to opposition union groups for leadership.

The government seized the property because the capitalist owners, the Pellas family, were running it into the ground. They had been taking capital out, letting the fields, equipment, and processing plant deteriorate. The Pellas family was content to let production fall as long as the mill provided enough sugar to supply the profitable Flor de Caña rum distillery, which it also owns.

Last year's San Antonio harvest was a disaster. Although the facility has a capacity of 150,000 tons of sugar, in 1987-88 it produced only 55,000 tons.

On July 13 the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA) ordered the expropriation "for reasons of public necessity and the interests of society."

The "Confiscation Decree" also encompassed the Flor de Caña Rum Co., but so far no government action has been taken on that part of the order. Jaime



San Antonio sugar mill workers

Militant/Larry Seigle

Wheelock, minister of agricultural development and agrarian reform, has said that MIDINRA will soon hold discussions with the Pellas family about the "transfer" of the Flor de Caña distillery.

Divided opinions

The nationalization of the San Antonio mill was carried out by the government with little political preparation or involvement of the workers here. There were no mobilizations leading up to or accompanying the decree.

The decision itself has met with different reactions among the workers. Some support the move. But others echo the capitalists' position that the problems at the mill were all the fault of the Sandinista government, not the bosses. Many aren't sure, and have adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Since the takeover, the government has allocated substantial resources to get the mill ready for the harvest. A goal of producing 80,000 tons has been set.

Trucks, tractors, and trailers have been repaired, and the mill itself has been put into shape. There have also been some improvements made in living and working conditions.

How much progress has been made in advancing the political consciousness and level of organization of the workers on whom the harvest depends is another question. Some CST leaders believe that opposition unionists could still cause a significant disruption of the harvest if they were to try to organize a work stoppage.

The issue was spotlighted at a November 12 assembly here, where Wheelock spoke to kick off the harvest and award prizes to workers who had exceeded production goals. Although no discussion period was planned, one member of the audience, Rigoberto Solís, a cane-cutter, interrupted the program and succeeded in getting the floor.

Solís complained vigorously about what he said are abysmal wages and inadequate food. If conditions don't improve, he said, a strike might be the only alternative. CST leaders said afterward that Solís is a supporter of the Workers' Front, a union grouping organized by the ultraleft Marxist-Leninist Party.

Solís was answered from the floor by two workers who support the CST. They argued

that a successful sugar harvest is in the interests of the working class as a whole, and is necessary to help defend and strengthen the Sandinista revolution.

'Cut off their hands'

Wheelock then responded. "The revolution gives rewards," he said, "but it also punishes. If anyone raises the banner of a strike here, we'll cut off his hands because it would be a crime against the people, who need the sugar and the medicine that can be bought with the foreign exchange it brings."

Wheelock's statement, which was reported in the Sandinista daily, *Barricada*, was quickly seized on by opponents of the FSLN, who cited it as an example of threats of repression against workers.

Conservative Democratic Party deputies in the National Assembly submitted a formal request to the chamber for a written explanation from Wheelock.

The capitalist newspaper *La Prensa* quoted the threat in a banner headline. The next day, Wheelock replied to *La Prensa* with a statement published in *Barricada*.

"Those who in our history have cut off not just the arms but also the heads of Nicaraguan workers and peasants have been the Yankee marines and their successive allies: the Díazes and Chamorros, the Somozas, and now the Bermúdezes and company," Wheelock wrote. "In these last nine years the revolution has threatened the peasants, giving 100,000 landless families property titles, as well as tractors, irrigation equipment, tools . . . and rifles to defend their revolution and their homeland."

"With the expropriation of the San Antonio Sugar Mill, the revolution has prevented its collapse, which would have cost the jobs of thousands of workers with families to feed."

"If the aggression that our people suffer at the hands of the Reagan administration is criminal, so are the actions of its allies inside Nicaragua. The revolution and our people have the sacred right to defend Nicaragua, from both foreign aggressors and their domestic allies."

"From the time of Sandino we learned that the sovereignty of a people is not to be discussed, it is to be defended with arms in hand."

Whatever they thought about Wheelock's approach to workers who advocated

a strike, most workers who spoke to CST leader Jiménez during a recent visit said they haven't heard much talk about a work stoppage, nor did they think there is much support for one. Many said there have been some improvements in conditions for the workers.

"Were you there at the meeting where Commander Wheelock spoke, and some *compañeros* were talking about a strike?" Jiménez asked one group of workers.

"Yeah, this *compañero* spoke there, that there was going to be a strike," replied one cane-cutter, who is a CST activist. "We don't agree with a strike. It's better to sit down and reach an agreement."

"A strike wouldn't be an advance, it would be a step backward," he added. "We know very well that if there is a strike we are defeating ourselves by stopping production."

At an impromptu assembly held after supper in one of the housing settlements on the San Antonio property, Jiménez and Víctor Sevilla, head of the CST local at the mill, talked with workers and their families about the problems they face.

With the beginning of the harvest, the ration of rice, beans, corn, and cooking oil available to the families of workers was increased. But some people complained that there is sometimes confusion over how much they are entitled to.

The company also provides three meals a day for employees, at a very low cost. Everyone agreed that the meals are good. But, several said, the woman who runs the dining room in their neighborhood doesn't get up early enough to have beans and tortillas ready for breakfast at 5:00 a.m. As a result, they are late getting into the fields.

More serious complaints came from workers who said there are delays in giving workers new machetes, files, rubber boots, and water jugs, which the company is supposed to provide. Other supplies, such as mattresses for the seasonal workers, are also slow in being distributed, they said.

Sevilla replied that some cane-cutters had arrived for the harvest, picked up their tools and clothing, and then took off with them. As a result, he said, union officers and management had agreed that workers would only get these things after they had been on the job for a while.

"But how can we work without good tools?" asked Thelma Espinoza angrily. "Anyway, many of us live here year-round. Where are we going to take off to?"

Sevilla and Jiménez agreed that the decision would be modified. Jiménez also suggested it would be better if the food allotments were distributed every two weeks, instead of once a month. The local union leadership should make sure the proper amount of food gets to each family, he added.

"Everything that it is possible to resolve here must be resolved," Jiménez told the assembly. "I don't think the things you are raising are things that are impossible to solve."

The stocks of food, tools, and equipment at the mill are adequate, he said. The importance of the harvest for the revolution, he said, dictates that steps be taken to guarantee that the workers get what they need.

"Whenever there is more rice, more corn, more beans available, they have to be distributed to the workers," Jiménez said. "The revolution's enemies want to prove that we can't complete this harvest. That's why they are pressing for a strike here."

"Our goal is to produce 80,000 tons, and if we need to allocate more of the available resources to the workers in order to achieve that goal, then this is what has to be done."

Barricada Internacional

Barricada Internacional, the biweekly official voice of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, is available in Spanish and English. The price is \$30 per year.

Send check or money order to:

Nica News

P.O. Box 398, Station "E"

Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E3 Canada

NEW

"Cuba Will Never Adopt Capitalist Methods"

Excerpts from
**Fidel Castro's
July 26, 1988 speech**

32 pp. pamphlet, \$1.50

Order from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include 75¢ for postage and handling.

An interview with African Marxist edi

Below is an interview with David Gakunzi, editor of *Coumbite*, a French-language quarterly on politics in Africa and the Caribbean published in Paris.

Gakunzi, 26 years old, comes from the former Belgian colony of Burundi in east-central Africa. Today he lives in exile in Paris.

On November 13, Gakunzi was a featured speaker at a rally of more than 300 people in Harlem to launch the new Pathfinder book *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87*. He addressed a celebration of the book in Atlanta on November 19.

Militant staff writer Sam Manuel interviewed Gakunzi in Atlanta November 20. The interview was conducted in English.

Sam Manuel. Why did you choose Coumbite as the name of your magazine?

David Gakunzi. Coumbite is a Haitian word that means solidarity, or peasants coming together to work. We chose it because we think the problems of Africa can't have individual solutions. We need to work together.

Coumbite means peasants coming together. The independence of Africa cannot happen without addressing the conditions of the peasants. Peasants make up more than 90 percent of the population of Africa. They also produce the wealth of the countries of Africa. At the same time they are ignored by those in power.

We think the condition of the peasants is a fundamental issue not only because of their numbers but also because you cannot talk about revolution and at the same time set aside the most exploited class.

As a Haitian word, coumbite comes from outside Africa. The significance of that is that the problems of Africa are linked with the problems of other Third World countries and the world. Today you can't just get your own national borders, or economic borders, and talk about having independence.

And more than that we think there are struggles in the North, in the European countries, and in North America that are also linked to the struggles of Third World peoples. The imperialists, the people who dominate the world, have been able to divide the working class in the North and the people in the South. But we think that we have interests that are the same.

Even if some working people of the North have a higher standard of living than the peoples of the South, it's those who are in power who really profit most from the international social order. We think that if our struggles of the Third World are supported, it will mean that those who oppress the people in the North will be weakened. Together with us those who are oppressed and exploited in the North will be stronger.

Manuel. How did you come to the decision to launch such a magazine?

Gakunzi. When we first came to Europe most of us tried to make links with the left. Many joined the left parties in France. But I must say we are disappointed at the state of the so-called left. For most of these parties if there is a revolution in the Third World it is only a mini-revolution, it's not very important.

These revolutions are considered by them like children trying to do something, but it's not really serious.

They are unable to understand the need for social change. For them revolution is something that was done 200 years ago in France. Now it is old-fashioned.

And what is the program of these parties? Some just ask for higher wages. Others say, we have to have a more practical view, that the capitalists and those who are exploited have to reach a compromise through discussion so there can be economic equilibrium.

This situation brought many of us to conclude that we were losing time inside the left parties in France. So we decided to get outside and organize ourselves.

Manuel. What is the purpose of Coumbite?

Gakunzi. Today in Africa the young people want change because the situation is so critical. The problem is that most of us know what we don't want, but what do we want, that's the question. What we are trying to do is to build a magazine that will help to discuss and try to find solutions. What is to be done? as Lenin said.

We try to take a position on the revolutions that have taken place in Africa. For example, in Mozambique. What are the problems for the revolution? Or Burkina Faso. What was new in it? We need to know not only what has gone on before but also how not to make the same errors that others have.

Those who began revolutionary struggles in Africa can have an excuse. Before them there were no revolutions. But we haven't that excuse. We have to learn from them.

Manuel. How do you do this?

Gakunzi. We write about revolutionary figures in Africa and their theoretical and political contributions. People like Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau, Franz Fanon who was from Martinique but came to help in the Algerian revolution, and Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso.

Role of women in Africa

We write about the role of women in Africa. Women play a big role in agricultural production in Africa. At the same time they get nothing. In the history of Africa women

have played a great role in resistance against the colonizers. Women like Queen Nzinga¹ of Angola, and others.

We also write about the history of Africa in general. I was watching a video of Malcolm X yesterday. He said, when your history has been wiped out you can't fight. Because when you are convinced that you have accomplished nothing in the past, you can't have confidence that you will ac-

pendence in Angola and Mozambique in the 1970s had a big impact. The South Africans, who were the biggest military power in Africa, tried to overturn the new Angolan government in 1975. They were beaten. Everybody was saying it could 't be done. Everyone was at their radios throughout Burundi trying to follow what was going on. How many kilometers the South Africans had advanced and how far



Militant/Selva Nebbia

David Gakunzi, editor of *Coumbite*.

complish anything today, or tomorrow.

We also write about economic issues such as the International Monetary Fund, and the effects of the foreign debt. We try to demystify all the technical terms. Because they try to make it seem that economics is so complicated that you can't understand anything about it. We try to show that anybody can understand the debt, how it came about, what are its consequences, and why it should not and cannot be paid.

Overall the purpose of Coumbite is to inform people and to convince people that we can understand the world. When we understand that, we have the weapons to change our situation.

Manuel. Where do the people come from who work on Coumbite?

Gakunzi. We come from Namibia, Burundi, Senegal, the Congo, Zaire, Algeria, Haiti, and Martinique. We all come from different experiences, but we are also linked by and have been touched by the same events. Like the Cuban revolution, like the struggles in southern Africa. We are fighters against apartheid.

Coumbite is circulated in Burundi, Benin, the Congo, Senegal and, before the coup, in Burkina Faso.²

Manuel. What impact did the struggles in southern Africa have on your political development?

Gakunzi. The winning of national inde-

the Angolans had been pushed back. But the South Africans were beaten.

The independence of Angola was proof that oppression can be overthrown, that things can be changed.

That event was important also because it was Cubans, who had been described in the worst way in Africa, who came to help us, who sent troops to aid Angola. Even so... African regimes didn't move to oppose South Africa. It was the Cubans who came to shed their blood and die for Africa. All those people around the world who were talking about democracy and human rights were helping the South Africans. That was clear. It was clear who were our enemies and who were our friends.

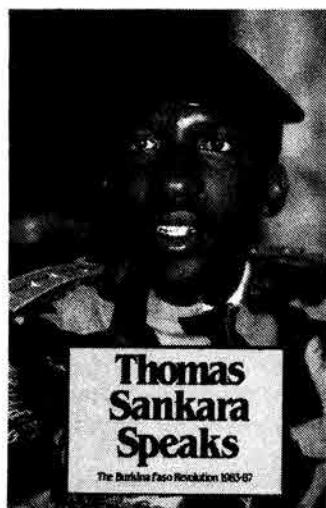
The independence of Zimbabwe was also important. In 1978 Ian Smith was saying, come back to Rhodesia³ in 1,000 years and you will still find us here. One year later he was defeated by the liberation movement. And we said next time it will be Johannesburg.

Cuito Cuanavale

Manuel. Those events took place in 1975, '76, and '79. How do you view the impact of the South African defeat at the hands of Angolan and Cuban troops at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, earlier this year?

Gakunzi. You know in Paris it was n seen as important. But for the people of Africa this was the second, and most important lesson to South Africa. It forced South Africa to the negotiating table to discuss the independence of Namibia. It showed that the only language that the South Africans understand is the language of force,

3. Rhodesia was the name of the white minority-ruled country in southern Africa founded by Cecil Rhodes. In 1980, after years of struggle, the Rhodesian regime headed by Ian Smith was replaced by a Black-majority government and the country was renamed Zimbabwe.



from Pathfinder

THOMAS SANKARA SPEAKS THE BURKINA FASO REVOLUTION 1983-87

"The Burkinabè people took strides toward democratizing social relations on the land and reversing the loss of farmland to the desert.

"This book is an inspiring chronicle of Sankara's role in leading the people in these achievements."

George Paris

Alabama farmer and leader of Federation of Southern Cooperatives

To get this book:

Contact the **Pathfinder bookstore** nearest you listed on page 12, or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. 260 pp., \$9.95 (Please include \$1.00 postage and handling.)

For mail orders in **Africa, Europe, Middle East:** Central Books, 14 The Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER, England; in **Asia and Pacific:** Hale & Iremonger, GPO Box 2552, Sydney NSW 2001, Australia. In **Canada:** P.O. Box 9600, Station A, Toronto, Ont. M5W 2C7, Canada.

Editor David Gakunzi

not dialogue. Dialogue has come only because of what has taken place on the battlefield.

Cuito Cuanavale will go down in African history as the reversal of Bambata's defeat.⁴ It was Bambata who said what you have lost on the battlefield you can only win back on the battlefield.

Manuel. You are a leader of the Thomas Sankara International Association. What was the importance of Sankara and the revolution in Burkina Faso?

Gakunzi. I think that the importance of Sankara and the Burkinabè revolution was that for the first time in a French-speaking country in Africa there was a revolution which was a radical rupture of the system.

For example, on the issue of apartheid Sankara fought for concrete action. He stressed that so much has been said, now there must be action. Sankara spoke at the 1986 summit of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa. When he took the platform he brought 10 guns and ammunition and said this is my contribution to the African National Congress. He called on everyone there to do the same.

It was great! It put everyone on the spot in that great tribune where everyone is there only to pass resolutions and make mutual congratulations.

Sankara is very important in Africa's struggle. That's why it is important that such a book as *Thomas Sankara Speaks* is published in English and should be published in French. The best tribute to Sankara is to be like him. But to be like him the people need all the weapons he had, even more. That means first of all that his ideas must be available to people.

Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions

Manuel. You have spoken of Sankara's close relations with the leaders of the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian revolutions. Were you able to get much information in Burundi about these revolutions?

*Gakunzi. Mainly through the French-language edition of the *Granma Weekly Review* from Cuba. The Nicaraguan revolution came about the same time as the independence of Zimbabwe. I remember seeing the pictures of the Sandinistas entering the Somoza palace. In the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions the leaders were like the working people.*

We saw pictures of Maurice Bishop⁵ with the people, building schools with the people and doing manual work. This was important. It was a new way of being a leader. He gave dignity to manual work.

Bishop's approach was to advance the revolution with the people. He didn't just come to the people with a program and say "Follow me!" and not even tell the people where they were going.

His death was a great loss to us. Those who murdered him were sectarian. They said Bishop was not sufficiently revolutionary, was not leading the revolution correctly. According to which theories or texts, I don't know.

If Bishop had been killed by the right wing, then that's normal, it's the enemy. What was revolting was that it was done by people claiming to be revolutionaries but who objectively killed the revolution.

This has been a problem in every revolution, in Cuba with Escalante⁶, in the Congo, and in Angola. What Bernard Coard did had been done by others before him. It was the same problem in Burkina Faso.

It is a problem of specific social forces. Bernard Coard and Blaise Compaoré represent specific social forces who became bureaucratized. They came to have their own interests different from those of the people.

Manuel. How did you become a Marxist?

4. Zulu Chief Bambata was killed and beheaded in 1906 for his role in leading armed resistance to British colonial rule of what is today South Africa.

5. Maurice Bishop was the central leader of the 1979 revolution in the eastern Caribbean island of Grenada and became the country's prime minister. He was murdered along with several key supporters in an Oct. 19, 1983 coup led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard. His murder opened the way for the U.S. invasion soon after.

Gakunzi. We were greatly influenced by Che Guevara. He is a legend in Africa. His silhouette can be seen in many places. We once saw it on a T-shirt. We thought he was a famous singer.

We were told that he fought in the Congo on the side of the independence forces. He was known as "Tatu." In Swahili it means three. We never figured out its significance.

One of the stories about Che that inspired us was when he and his *compañeros* arrived in the Congo. Che saw that the Congolese fighters did not have boots or shoes of any kind. Che said, "We are all equal here. If you don't have boots, we won't have boots." So he and his men fought without boots.

This had a big impact in Africa because it was the first time that what appeared to be a white man had come to fight alongside the Africans in their behalf.

Later we were able to read some books about Che. They were *Guerrilla Warfare*, and *The Diary of Che in Bolivia*. Strangely enough we got them from the French Cultural Center in Burundi. The books passed through a lot of hands. The pages were even falling out.

Che as a communist

As a communist Che exemplified the highest values of humanity. He became a doctor, but he left that because he saw that the best medicine, the medicine most needed, was revolution. When he met Fidel he was ready to fight for a country that wasn't his own. He had to overcome physical limits such as asthma, which he suffered from. In combat he was always at the front of the battle. He was always first to volunteer for the most dangerous tasks.

Che showed us that a revolutionary, a communist, is a human being with a heart and convictions. He fights because he loves life.

We were told that Che was Cuban so we began to search for something on Cuba. What helped us very much was *Granma*. We got it very late, one month, sometimes two months after publication. But we

Continued on Page 10

6. Aníbal Escalante, a longtime leader of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, was elected organization secretary of Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) formed in 1961. The ORI was a step in the process of uniting the July 26 Movement, led by Fidel Castro, and other parties supporting the revolution in Cuba; this eventually led to the formation of the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965.

In the early 1960s, Escalante organized a fac-

"Burundi's problem is political and social, not 'tribal' "

The following is a selection from the Militant interview in which David Gakunzi takes up recent developments in Burundi:

Sam Manuel. Thousands of people were killed a few months ago in Burundi in what the press reported as "tribal conflicts." Could you comment on this?

David Gakunzi. Burundi is in central-east Africa. It has a long history and was one of the first kingdoms in Africa. There are three main groups of people: the Tutsi, who are about 14 percent of the population; the Hutu, who are about 85 percent; and the Twa, about 1 percent.

Burundi was colonized by Belgium in the early 1900s. The Belgians based their power on the Tutsi minority. Many of the Tutsi were sent to Belgian schools. But some of those people became advocates of independence after they returned. The Belgians then appealed to the Hutu majority, saying that the Tutsi wanted independence in order to oppress the Hutu. Some of the Hutus opposed independence.

There was one progressive leader of the movement for independence who opposed this divisive tactic and stood for unity. His name was Louis Rwagasora, a close friend of Patrice Lumumba [leader of the independence struggle in the Congo, another Belgian colony]. Rwagasora was murdered by the Belgians. Following his death the struggle between the Tutsi and Hutu elites stepped up.



United Nations photo

Peasant women of Burkina Faso working on soil erosion control project, 1986. Gakunzi says, "You cannot talk about revolution and at the same time set aside the peasants, the most exploited class."

tional operation attempting to oust Castro and the historic cadres of the July 26 Movement from the ORI leadership using his position as organization secretary to place former PSP members in important positions. He promoted policies and bureaucratic methods that had a demoralizing impact on the struggles of peasants and workers. In 1962 Escalante was removed from his position by vote of the ORI national directorate. The party was reorganized so that the

membership and leadership would be determined by merit and self-sacrifice, not privilege-seeking and careerism.

In 1968 Escalante and some of his supporters were tried for violations of Cuban law committed in the course of their continued factional activity, especially their dealings with embassy personnel from other countries behind the backs of the Cuban government. They were convicted and imprisoned for a number of years.

The Tutsi elite, who want to keep power, tell the Tutsi peasants "the Hutu want to kill us." The Hutu elite, who want to gain power, tell the Hutu peasants "the Tutsi are oppressing us." But neither of them care about the peasants.

In 1965 and 1972 the Tutsi elite organized the massacres of Hutus, killing more than 10 percent of them. Many of the Hutu youth were killed. The Tutsi ruling class claimed that the Hutu were planning a revolt.

The western press has always presented the massacres as simply tribal war between the Tutsi, whom they describe as tall, and the Hutu, who are supposedly short. I don't know by whose standard they decide what is tall or short, but I can tell you who is poor and who is rich.

The fact is you do not have a situation where all the Tutsi are in power and all the Hutu are poor. You have Tutsis and Hutus who are bourgeois, Tutsis and Hutus who are peasants and suffering. So this problem in Burundi, as in the rest of Africa, is a political and social one.

What makes me laugh is this: Why isn't all the fighting between countries in Europe called tribal wars? That term is only used in relation to Africa. To my knowledge no tribal war in Africa has ever set the world on fire. But the two European tribal wars set the whole world on fire. They killed more people than any war in Africa.

These so-called tribal wars in Africa are

the result of colonialism. When the colonial powers divided up Africa they designed borders without any consideration for the historical, geographical, and cultural differences of the peoples of Africa. Groups of people were thrown together who never had links before, and others with long historical ties were separated.

I have a friend whose grandfather is Cameroonian and his father is Chadian. When the border was drawn it divided his village in half. One side became Cameroonian, the other Chadian.

Manuel. You said that the peasants were and remain the victims of colonialism and its legacy in Burundi. Can you give an example?

Gakunzi. Burundi is a fertile agricultural country. The Belgians exploited cotton and coffee production. They did this both through large foreign-owned farms and by forcing the local peasants to grow these crops to get money to pay the head tax or face going to prison.

Those who didn't have enough land also went into the cities in search of work in order to pay the tax. Some would even go to Uganda, often by foot, to work in the mines to get money to pay the tax.

After independence the Tutsi and Hutu elite continued the same use of the head tax until 1976, when it was suppressed under the reform government of Jean-Baptiste Bagaza.

Marxist editor on struggles in Africa, France, Caribbean

Continued from previous page
would all study it.

Through the example of Cuba we saw our conditions in Africa were not fate. Cuba had been in the same situation as Africa — hunger, misery, prostitution, all of those things.

But after some years of the revolution Cuba made big accomplishments, in education, in culture, and other areas. If there is real social change, hunger and other conditions of oppression can be wiped out.

Through Cuba we also saw that freedom and dignity can't be begged for. The Cuban revolution came by struggle.

We also heard that China had succeeded in wiping out hunger. That since the October 1917 revolution the USSR had become the second most powerful country in the world.

I heard that both of those countries were communist. Neither of them had exploited Africa, that is, they didn't make progress at Africa's expense.

Communism was also popular because the colonial powers would always accuse anyone who stood for independence of being a communist. So I began to try to understand what is communism.

I started with a two-volume series of Marx's writings that I got from the Soviet embassy in Burundi. The man at the embassy thought I was crazy, attempting to read Marx. He would only give me two books. He promised more after I finished them. Later I read *Critique of Political Economy*, but I didn't understand much.

Then some of us began to study collectively. One would understand some parts. Another would get other points. And together we understood much more. We went on to Lenin's *State and Revolution*, and *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, by Frederick Engels.

Immigrant workers in France

Manuel. Can you comment on the role of immigrant workers in France?

Gakunzi. At the beginning of the century the French capitalists sent representatives to Africa to recruit workers. In 1945 this increased as more men were recruited to

fight on the side of Britain and France against Hitler.

Following the war many of them returned to Africa. They were the ones who began to demand independence. They had been promised independence if they defended France, but afterwards they were simply put back in the same situation.

Many of those who had learned to use weapons were massacred, for example in the Thiaroye camp in Senegal where many of those returning were held. They were simply gunned down because they demanded independence.

Others who stayed in France faced many problems of discrimination in housing and other areas. In the immigrant housing areas there were, and still are, beds that are never cold. Because when one person goes to work, another comes home from work and sleeps in the same bed.

Most immigrant workers got jobs in the automobile and construction industries. Many also worked and died in the mines.

At first workers came only to get money to send back home. They did not view themselves as part of France. Now there is a new generation born in France. They are not going back to Africa. They are demanding their rights in France.

Manuel. What has been the stance of the unions towards immigrant workers? What impact have immigrant workers had on French workers?

Gakunzi. Some unions like the CGT [General Confederation of Workers] have tried to organize immigrant workers. They are even in the CGT leadership, but only at the local level.

I think for immigrant workers this is a transition period. We are beginning to see signs of their impact on the workers in France, and they are becoming part of the working class in France. Many of the French workers who had supported the Communist Party in the past supported the extreme right candidacy of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

There are some hopeful signs among the youth. They have organized to defend the immigrant workers. In the fight against apartheid they have also been very strong.



1986 march in Paris protests police killing of student of Algerian descent. "There is a new generation of immigrants born in France," Gakunzi says. "They are demanding their rights in France."

When Dulcie September, the African National Congress representative in France, was assassinated, the youth held big protests across the country. They even attacked the South African embassy in Paris. So we think it is a matter of time and discussions.

Manuel. And the political parties?

Gakunzi. The extreme right campaigns against immigrant workers. They say to make jobs for 3 million unemployed French workers, 3 million immigrants must be deported.

There is not much difference with the Socialist Party. They say no more immigrants should be allowed into France because there is no more room. They also say the immigrants that are in the country illegally should be deported. That is a retreat from their position in 1981, when they legalized all immigrant workers.

The Communist Party fights for the immigrant workers but doesn't fight to integrate them politically. But you can't be a workers' party and set aside the immigrant workers, who are the most exploited part of the workers in France.

The far left also fights for immigrant workers but is unable to integrate them politically. They don't want to listen to us. They only come to teach. And when an immigrant worker sees that attitude he says, OK, I have my dignity too.

Even important historical leaders of the socialist parties like Jean Jaurès⁷ said at

7. Jean Jaurès (1859–1914) was a longtime leader of the French socialist movement.

the beginning of the century that colonization is civilization. In the middle of the century when that part of Africa that was under French colonial rule was divided into small countries, Gaston Defferre, a Socialist Party politician, played a big role in that.

During the Algerian revolution the French Communist Party was telling the Algerian Communist Party not to fight for independence but to ask for community with France. And that explains why the Algerian Communist Party played no role in the revolution.

It is the same in Guadeloupe, the French colony in the Caribbean. Only now has the Guadeloupe Communist Party taken a stand for independence. Before, it also fought for community with France.

Manuel. You've had a short time here in the United States. What have been your impressions?

Gakunzi. I have seen the United States before only in pictures of the big buildings. When I arrived in New York, and I saw the homeless and the misery, I couldn't believe it. The richest country in the world and there is so much poverty.

But I have learned much about the rich history of struggle in this country. About the civil rights movement. About Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey. I really enjoyed the video of Malcolm X. I have heard much about him but this was the first chance I have had to see him. I hope his works will also be made more widely available in French.

Subscribe to 'Perspectiva Mundial'

Cuban revolution advances

As a reader of the *Militant* you are familiar with our weekly coverage of the struggles of working people around the world.

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*.

In the December issue, PM brings you an interview with Nieves Alemañ, member of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee. She explains some of the progress women are making through the rectification process currently going on in Cuba.

The party is leading the Cuban people in taking giant steps forward in the fight to develop the new men and women, necessary to build a socialist society

Perspectiva Mundial

UNION SOVIETICA
¿Resolvió
perestroika
los problemas
económicos?

ESTADOS UNIDOS
Sindicalista
Mark Curtis
condenado
a 25 años

ANÁLISIS
**Recesión
económica
afectará la
política en
Estados Unidos**

Thomas Sankara:
**Debemos combatir
juntos el
imperialismo**

Subscriptions:
Introductory offer: \$3 for six months; \$9 for one year.

☐ Begin my sub with current issue.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Clip and mail to PM, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

'Oscar a revolutionary till he died'

Playwright Frank Greenwood recently wrote the following tribute to longtime Socialist Workers Party leader Oscar Coover, Jr., who died in Los Angeles October 28. Coover joined the SWP in Minneapolis in 1938 and remained an active party builder until his death.

Greenwood's message was received after meetings to celebrate Coover's life and political contributions were held in New York and Los Angeles in November. An article about those meetings appeared in the December 9 *Militant*.

Greenwood's play *Malcolm X: Reminiscences of a Revolutionary* is widely performed in the Los Angeles area.

All my adult life I have sought freedom for myself and my people. During the 1950s that search led me to the Communist Party, and I joined it enthusiastically.

My comrades frowned on one of my habits — exchanging ideas with persons who differed with the Communist Party, like Oscar Coover. They told me not to associate with him or any Trotskyist; I disagreed. After all, I was seeking more freedom not less.

I began to drift away from the Communist Party, although I still paid dues. Finally, I even stopped dues payments. I never regretted that decision, and have learned to treasure my association with Oscar Coover. Through him and others like him, and continual reading and research, I soon learned why the Communist Party

feared the Trotskyists. My political understanding grew over the more than 20 years I knew Oscar and Della [Rossa, Coover's longtime comrade and companion].

Many times I differed, and argued, with Oscar. But I respected his political acumen, and later I found out that he was usually right. My respect for the man's knowledge grew over the years.

When I came to the end of my one-person play on Mother Jones, I called him to get his advice on what he thought she'd say to us today about what is wrong with this nation, and what must be done by us all to set it right. That was several weeks ago — it was then that I learned of his fatal illness. He was too ill to help me on the final scene of the play. He could have given me many insights if he had been able to.

And yet I do not mourn his demise. I celebrate his life and reflect on the many lessons to be learned from it.

Oscar continually studied and read. He was dedicated completely to the task of revolutionizing this sick capitalist society, and put nothing else before it.

He fought nearly his whole life to gain a world of freedom for all peoples, all over the world. Oscar was a true revolutionary to the day he died.

His life taught us how to die. And his life taught us all how to live and struggle. I can only honor him by emulating his dedication and commitment in my life and work. I, and other revolutionaries, will miss him.

Haiti strike backs workers' demands on Avril government

BY SUSAN LaMONT

Thousands of workers, students, vendors, and others throughout Haiti participated in a 24-hour protest strike November 21, initiated by the Independent Federation of Haitian Workers (CATH), the country's leading trade union organization.

CATH issued a statement the following day calling the strike a success, and explaining that it was "held to call national and international public opinion's attention to the immediate demands being made by the nation" on the government of Gen. Prosper Avril.

These included rehiring workers fired at the Aciérie d'Haiti steel plant in Port-au-Prince, and at other factories, and an end to employer abuse of union activists; government measures to lower the cost of living, such as reducing gas prices; disarming of ex-dictator Jean Claude Duvalier's private thug army, the Tontons Macoutes, who continue to carry out violent attacks; and releasing of soldiers arrested by Avril in October following what he termed a coup attempt. Avril came to power in September as a result of a noncommissioned officers' revolt that ousted Gen. Henri Namphy from the presidency.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide

The strike also demanded that Jean-Bertrand Aristide be allowed to remain active in Haiti. Aristide is one of the Haitian popular movement's most prominent leaders. He is a priest at Jean Bosco Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital. Repeated demonstrations in October prevented the Catholic Church hierarchy from enforcing its order for Aristide to be transferred out of the country.

The November 21 strike was backed by the Haitian Workers Committee; Association of Families and Friends of Patriotic Soldiers; National Popular Assembly; League of Former Haitian Political Prisoners; and other political, labor, peasant, youth, church, and democratic rights associations.

Most students in Port-au-Prince, Jérémie, Saint-Marc, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves and other cities and towns supported the strike by staying out of school. "We see that all the schools in Jérémie have remained closed, so students are not going to school," said one Radio Nationale broadcast, typical of many that day. Transportation within and between Haiti's population centers was also hit hard by bus and truck drivers' participation in the strike.

At some factories in Port-au-Prince's in-

dustrial park, as many as 70 percent of workers observed the strike. Other factories weren't able to open at all.

Commercial activity in the capital was also affected. "The stores are open," Radio Nationale reported, "but there is not the usual heated activity downtown. There has been a slowdown because of the [lack of] public transportation on the Grand Rue. It is pretty empty. Most of the shops and small grocery stores are open, but you do not see the intense activity that is the norm for this area."

The strike was widely observed despite being declared illegal by the military government. Avril himself made a statement attacking the strike because it "has to do with politics."

"Unions are essentially apolitical," Avril stated. "This means that the Constitution does not give a union the right to defend any interests other than its work interests."

The Constitution Avril cited was approved by a popular referendum in March 1987, a little more than one year after Duvalier was forced to flee the country. It was suspended by Namphy last summer before his ouster. Avril has refused demands for its reinstatement.

In an interview conducted in Montréal a few days before the November 21 strike, CATH General Secretary Yves Richard described the systematic victimization of union members at the Aciérie d'Haiti, one of Haiti's largest industrial plants.

"The boss Gilbert Bigio has just fired 80 union workers affiliated to CATH, because workers want to improve their work and health conditions inside the plant," Richard said. "It is hell inside Aciérie d'Haiti."

"Bigio is a notorious Macoute, an associate of Duvalier," Richard continued. After Bigio fired the union members, CATH "took the necessary legal steps with the Ministry of Labor, but the matter was not resolved. We want to deal with matters seriously, and so we have declared a general strike, to protest the insecurity that reigns in the country and the firing of workers for union activity, in violation of international labor law."

"The workers at Aciérie d'Haiti had signed a two-year collective bargaining agreement with the boss," said Richard. "The boss violated the contract by bringing a robot into the factory that forces the workers to do in 15 minutes what used to take one hour. The worker is constantly forced to feed steel to the robot, which has a higher production rate."

Richard also described other employer violations of the contract. When the workers responded by going on strike November 7, Bigio called the army into the plant. After the strikers returned to work under protest, he fired 80, including the core of activists most widely identified with the union.

Art Young in Montréal contributed to this article.

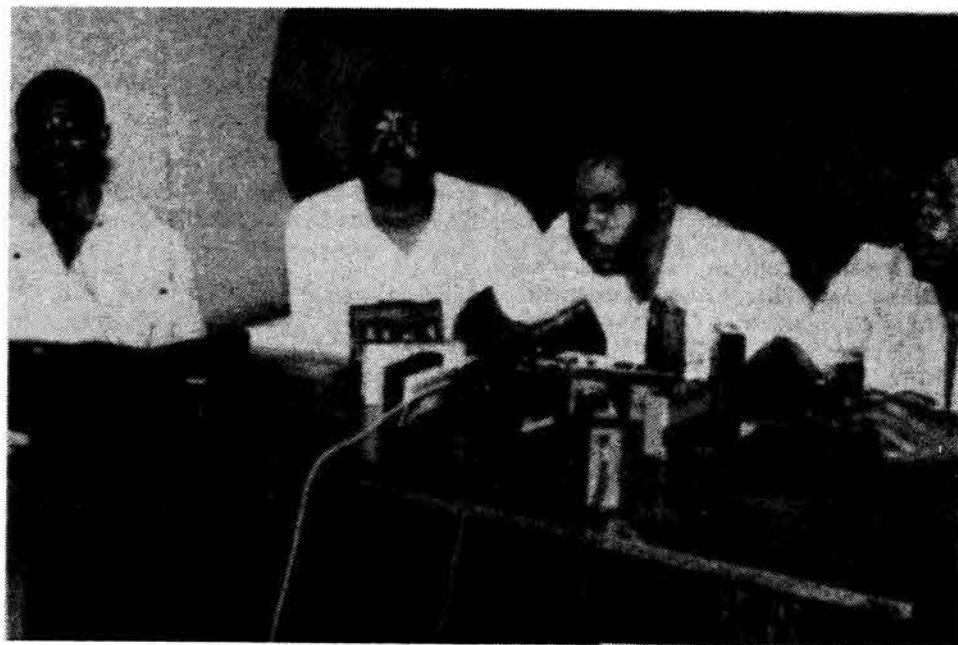
Antiracist march set for Jan. 16 in N.Y.

BY SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK — A coalition of union officials, Central America solidarity and anti-apartheid groups, women's rights organizations, and elected officials have called a Jan. 16, 1989, march and rally to protest acts of racist violence in New York.

January 16 is also a national holiday honoring the birthday of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. The march will assemble at City Hall at 2:00 p.m.

Among the initial sponsors of the action are: Black rights activist Herbert Daughtry; New York State chair of the National Women's Political Caucus, Gail Brewer; executive vice-president of Local 1199 Hospital and Health Care Employees, Dennis Rivera; Chinese Progressive Association leader Mae Ngai; and chair of the New York State Assembly Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, Roger Green.



Haiti-Progrès

Representatives of organizations backing November 21 strike held news conference a week earlier to explain aims of strike. (From left) Hébert Beauchard, Association of Families and Friends of Patriotic Soldiers; François Pierre-Louis, National Popular Assembly; Jean-Auguste Mesyeux, CATH; Idly Cameau, Haitian Workers Committee.

—WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

Revolt in Argentine army put down

A revolt by a section of Argentina's army began in the Buenos Aires area December 1 when 53 members of a coast guard unit robbed an arsenal and deserted their base. The next day, 400 more soldiers took over the infantry school at the Campo de Mayo military complex 22 miles northwest of the city. The soldiers later shifted their base of operations to the Villa Martelli arsenal, in a residential area nine miles outside Buenos Aires.

The rebels, led by Col. Mohamed Ali Seineldín, demanded amnesty for officers convicted of, or awaiting trial for, human rights abuses committed during what Argentines call "the dirty war." This refers to the repression carried out by the country's military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 during which at least 9,000 people — including many "disappeared" — were killed.

The soldiers were also demanding changes in the top military command and better pay and equipment.

The same demands were raised during two similar army revolts in April 1987 and January 1988. Following the April revolt, the Argentine government agreed to halt the trials of middle- and lower-level military officers. Convictions of former military junta members and other top officers, however, were left intact. Ten are serving sentences of up to life in prison.

Seineldín is known as a sympathizer of Col. Aldo Rico, who is awaiting court martial for leading the two previous revolts.

On December 2, President Raúl Alfonsín ordered the rebellion put down, and fire was exchanged between rebel and loyalist troops. Five people were reported wounded. The night of December 3, some 30,000 people demonstrated against the revolt.

The next day, hundreds of people opposed to the army rebellion converged at the Villa Martelli base. At least three civilians were killed and 35 wounded in a confrontation with the rebels. Seineldín surrendered soon after, following a negotiated settlement reached with the government.

While Alfonsín denies making a deal with the rebels, he expressed some sympathy for their demands in a speech given December 6. Alfonsín was elected president in 1983, replacing a succession of military regimes.

Mandela moved to prison farm

On December 7, South Africa Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee announced that African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela had been moved from the Constantiaburg Clinic outside Cape Town to a house on a prison farm about 50 miles away.

Mandela, who was sentenced to life in prison by the apartheid regime in 1964, was hospitalized in August for tuberculosis. Last month, South African officials indicated that he would not be returned to Pollsmoor Prison.

The *New York Times* reported December 8 that Mandela's lawyer, Ismail Ayob, issued a statement confirming the transfer. Ayob also said that anti-apartheid leader Winnie Mandela, Nelson Mandela's wife, would not accept the unlimited visiting hours the government had offered her and her family unless all other political prisoners were afforded the same treatment.

Mandela Reception Committees have begun to be organized in South Africa, according to the December 6 London *Guardian*. The first, formed in the Western Cape, distributed a leaflet in Cape Town appealing to people to prepare for the release of "our leaders."

"Let us set up structures in our communities; hold meetings in your homes, meetings in your streets, meetings in your class, meetings in your factories," the leaflet said. "Make time available to prepare together with the Mandela Reception Committee for a welcome fit for the leaders of our country."

The committees are also aimed at creating a broad, new anti-apartheid front to replace the banned United Democratic Front, the dispatch said.

Toxic waste ship reappears — empty

At the end of November, the freighter *Khian Sea* — now renamed *Pelicano* — was reported anchored in international waters off Singapore, empty of the 28 million pounds of toxic ash it has been trying to dump for more than two years.

The toxic ash came from municipal and industrial incinerators in Philadelphia. After the waste was rejected by the Bahamian government, the ship wandered the Caribbean for 18 months. Last January, more than 3,000 tons of the waste were dumped in Gonaïves, Haiti, before protests there and in the United States forced the ship to leave. It then tried to enter the Delaware Bay between New Jersey and Delaware. Bermuda, Panama, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde are some of the other countries where the freighter tried unsuccessfully to unload its poisonous cargo.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported that the ash contained toxic dioxins, aluminum, arsenic, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, and zinc.

Reporters who visited the ship when it reappeared off Singapore confirmed that it appeared empty, but a man identifying himself as Capt. Arturo Fuentes refused to say where the ash was dumped. The environmental group Greenpeace says it was dumped in the Indian Ocean.

Namibia pact

Continued from front page

3,000 Cuban troops would return to Cuba. Within three months of that date South Africa would reduce its estimated 50,000 troops and 24,000-strong territorial force in Namibia to 1,500.

On August 1 all Cuban forces would be moved north of the 15th parallel in Angola, about 200 miles from the Namibian border.

By the November 1 elections in Namibia, Cuban forces would move north of the 13th parallel, about 350 miles from the Namibian border. Half of the Cuban forces would have returned to Cuba by then. The Cuban withdrawal would be completed in July 1991.

Thousands of Cuban troops were sent to Angola at the government's request to repel a massive South African military invasion in 1975. Cuban forces have remained ever since to aid in the defense of Angola's independence.

Under the provisions of the protocol, Angola, Cuba, and South Africa would exchange prisoners of war, and set up a joint commission that would resolve disputes arising from the agreement. The U.S. and Soviet governments would serve on the commission as observers. Namibia would become a full member of the commission following the November 1 elections.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Report from Nicaragua. Speaker: Seth Galinsky, correspondent with *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial's* Nicaragua Bureau. Fri., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

Glasnost — Perestroika: Is Gorbachev Democratizing the USSR? Will Capitalist Methods Solve the USSR's Economic Crisis? Speaker: Thabo Ntweng, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Gorbachev's Reforms in the Soviet Union: Their Meaning for Working People. Speaker: Dana Burroughs, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 5488. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 17, 6 p.m. 6826 S Stony Island Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (312) 363-7322 or 363-7136.

Canada

Active Workers Conference

Sat., Dec. 31, 1988 —
Mon., Jan. 2, 1989

Topics and speakers:

Canadian Nationalism, Social Democracy, and the Struggle to Build a Communist Leadership. Speaker: John Steele, member Revolutionary Workers League Political Committee.

Rise, Decline, and Transformation of Industrial Unions in Canada. Speaker: Steve Penner, executive secretary of the RWL.

Next Steps in Building a Communist Party Rooted in the Industrial Unions. Speaker: Margaret Manwaring, member of the RWL Political Committee.

All classes translated into Spanish, English, and French. Librairie Pathfinder, 4274 Papineau, Suite 302, Montréal. Donation: \$10 for conference, or \$3 per session. Sponsor: RWL and Young Socialists. For more information call Montréal (514) 524-7992, or Toronto (416) 861-1399.

Forum: **30 Years of the Cuban Revolution: The Role of Cuba in Politics Today.** Speaker: Steve Clark, director of Pathfinder publishers and author of *The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop*. Sat., Dec. 31, 7 p.m. New Year's Eve party to follow. Donation: \$5. Call for location information.

IOWA

Des Moines

Children in Debt. Film about the Latin American foreign debt and its devastating effects. Translation to English. Presentation and discussion to follow. Speaker: Pat Smith, Young Socialist Alliance, member International Association of Machinists Local 1513. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-1695.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Cuba and Angola: "Response to the South African Escalation." Video showing of Cuban documentary on the defeat of the apartheid army in Angola. Speakers: representatives of United Nations missions of Angola, African National Congress of South Africa, South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia. Sat., Dec. 17. Video 2 p.m., reception for guest speakers 6 p.m., panel discussion 7 p.m. Maryland Institute College of Art, Station Building Auditorium, 1400 Cathedral (near Mount Royal). Sponsors: Pathfinder Bookstore, Maryland Institute College of Art. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

The Battle of Algiers. Video showing of film on the revolutionary struggle for Algerian independence from France. In French and Arabic with English subtitles. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 831-1177.

MINNESOTA

Austin

South Korea: The Struggle for Democracy and Reunification. Speaker: Ken Shinya Kawakubo, Socialist Workers Party, member Local 155 Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sun., Dec. 18, 7 p.m. 407 1/2 N Main St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (507) 433-3461.

MISSOURI

Kansas City

U.S. Aid for Nicaragua Now! Two-part presentation by Harvey McArthur, former correspondent with the *Militant's* Nicaragua Bureau. 1. "The Fight for Land in the Nicaraguan Revolution." Sun., Dec. 18, 2 p.m. Followed by dinner. 2. "Eyewitness Report on Hurricane Joan and the Challenges Facing the Nicaraguan People." Sun., Dec. 18, 5 p.m. 5534 Troost. Donation: \$2 per class. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 444-7880.

St. Louis

Children in Debt. A video film on the Latin American debt crisis and its effects on children. Speaker: Pat Barker, chairperson of St. Louis Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Palestine and the Arab Fight for Liberation. Speakers: Diane Shur, Socialist Workers Party and member United Steelworkers of America Local 1361; member of General Union of Palestinian Students. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

information call (402) 553-0245.

Massive Worldwide Aid Needed for Nicaragua. A fund-raising event. Sun., Dec. 18, 3 p.m. Chicano Awareness Center, 4825 S 24 St. Sponsors: Witness for Peace, Pledge of Resistance.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Venceremos Brigade and Cuban Revolution's 30th Anniversary. Fund-raiser party. Salsa, calypso, merengue, funk; DJs Will K. Wilkins and Emory White. Sat., Dec. 17, 9 p.m. — 2 a.m. Casa de las Americas, 104 W 14th St. (between 6th and 7th aves.). Donation: \$7 in advance, \$8 at door. Sponsor: N.Y. Regional Venceremos Brigade. For more information call (212) 349-6292.

Celebrate the Victory of Héctor Marroquín. Speakers: Héctor Marroquín, Mexican-born socialist who recently won 11-year fight for residency in the U.S.; Rafael Anglada López, attorney for the Hartford 15, framed Puerto Rican activists; Jon Haines, regional director of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Peter Krala, member International Union of Electronic Workers Local 244 at Norden Systems, Norwalk, Connecticut, fired for political and union activities. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. American Federation of Musicians, 330 W 42nd St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: supporters of Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Peace and Autonomy on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Speakers: Stuart Crome, Socialist Workers Party; Katherine McCleod, recently returned from the Atlantic Coast. Sun., Dec. 18, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

The Housing Crisis: A Marxist Analysis. Speaker: David Paparello, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2744 Germantown Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (215) 225-0213.

TEXAS

Houston

The Economic Crisis and Changes in U.S. Politics: The Battles Ahead for Working People. 1. Forum. Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party and member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2. Class. "The Fight for a Shorter Workweek." Speaker: Randy Warren. Sat., Dec. 17, 3:30 p.m. 3. Class. "Cancel the Third World Debt." Speaker: Leona Hershkovitz. Translation to Spanish. Sun., Dec. 18, 11 a.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: forum \$2, \$1 each class. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

UTAH

Price

Defend Rights of Immigrant Workers. Discuss INS Raid in Southeastern Utah. Speakers: Pat Fernandez, Socialist Workers Party; Bob Hill, Socialist Workers Party, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 294. Sun., Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. 253 E Main. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 637-6294.

NEW ZEALAND

Come to a

Socialist Educational and Active Workers Conference

Dec. 28-31, Hamilton

Discuss coming world economic crisis and building party of communist workers

Program includes:

The Workers' States and the Renewal of Communist Leadership. Speaker: Jack Barnes, national secretary Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

One Year After the Stock Market Crash: Political Perspectives for Working People

Speaker: Russell Johnson, national secretary Socialist Action League of New Zealand.

The Growing Importance of Pathfinder Books and Pamphlets to Rebuilding the World Communist Movement. Speaker:

Jonathan Silberman, Pathfinder London.

Key Challenges in Building a Revolutionary Workers' Party Today. Speaker: Mike Tucker, editor of *Socialist Action*.

Also:

• Hear a report on the international Mark Curtis defense campaign • Video showing of documentary on the defeat of South African troops by Cuban and Angolan forces • International panel of participants in farmers' movement against foreclosures.

For further information contact Socialist Action League: **Auckland**, 157a Symonds St. Phone 793-075. **Wellington**: 23 Majoribanks St. Phone 844-205. **Christchurch**: 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Phone 656-055. Or write P.O. Box 3025, Auckland.

Salt Lake City

Political Perspectives in the U.S.: Into the 1990s. Speaker: William Arth, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Why the Minimum Wage Should Be Raised. Speaker: Deborah Lazar, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 14287. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston

Defend Abortion Rights. Speakers: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party; others. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

—IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP—

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, and *Nouvelle Internationale*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 1306 1st Ave. N. Mailing address: P.O. Box 11963. Zip: 35202. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

ARIZONA: Phoenix: 1809 W. Indian School Rd. Zip: 85015. Tel: (602) 279-5850. **Tucson:** c/o Ursula Kolb, P.O. Box 853. Zip: 85702-0852. Tel: (602) 795-2146.

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. **Oakland:** 3702 Telegraph Ave. Zip: 94609. Tel: (415) 420-1165. **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255. **Seaside:** c/o Brian Olewude, 1790 Havana St. Zip: 93955. Tel: (408) 394-7948.

FLORIDA: Miami: 137 NE 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. **Tallahassee:** P.O. Box 20715. Zip: 32316. Tel: (904) 877-9338. **GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd Floor. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 6826 S. Stony Island Ave. Zip: 60649. Tel: (312) 363-7322.

INDIANA: Muncie: c/o Brian Johnson, 619 1/2 N. Dill St. Zip: 47303. Tel: (317) 747-8543.

IOWA: Des Moines: 2105 Forest Ave. Zip:

50311. Tel: (515) 246-1695.

LOUISIANA: New Orleans: P.O. Box 53224. Zip: 70153. Tel: (504) 484-6418.

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

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: SWP, YSA, 605 Massachusetts Ave. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

MINNESOTA: Austin: 407 1/2 N. Main Zip: 55912. Tel: (507) 433-3461. **Twin Cities:** 508 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI: Kansas City: 5534 Troost Ave. Zip: 64110. Tel: (816) 444-7880. **St. Louis:** 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Zip: 63113. Tel: (314) 361-0250.

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

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 141 Halsey. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341. **New Brunswick:** c/o Keith Jordan, 149 Somerset St. Zip: 08903. Tel: (201) 828-1874.

NEW YORK: Mid-Hudson: Box 1042, Annandale. Zip: 12504. Tel: (914) 758-0408. **New York:** 79 Leonard St. Zip: 10013. Tel: (212) 219-3679 or 925-1668. Pathfinder Books, 226-8445.

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

OHIO: Cleveland: 2521 Market Ave. Zip: 44113. Tel: (216) 861-6150. **Columbus:** P.O. Box 02097. Zip: 43202.

OREGON: Portland: 2730 NE Union. Zip: 97212. Tel: (503) 287-7416.

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 2744 Germantown Ave. Zip: 19133. Tel: (215) 225-0213. **Pittsburgh:** 4905 Penn Ave. Zip: 15224. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS: Austin: c/o Mike Rose, 7409 Berkman Dr. Zip: 78752. Tel: (512) 452-3923. **Houston:** 4806 Alameda. Zip: 77004. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

UTAH: Price: 253 E. Main St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 758. Zip: 84501. Tel: (801) 637-6294. **Salt Lake City:** 147 E. 900 South. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3165 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 797-7699, 797-7021.

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

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

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

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 181 Glebe Point Rd., 2nd floor,

Glebe. Postal address: P.O. Box 153 Glebe, Sydney NSW 2037. Tel: 02-660 1673.

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut, SE1 8LL. Tel: 01-401 2293.

CANADA

Montréal: 4274 Papineau, Suite 302, H2H 1S9. Tel: (514) 524-7992.

Toronto: 410 Adelaide St. W., Suite 400, M5V 1S8. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

Vancouver: P.O. Box 69742, Station K, V5K 4Y7. Tel: (604) 873-8898.

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klappartíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: (91) 17513.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 157a Symonds St. Postal address: P.O. Box 8730. Tel: (9) 793-075.

Christchurch: 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 656-055.

Wellington: 23 Majoribanks St., Courtenay Pl. Postal address: P.O. Box 9092. Tel: (4) 844-205.

SWEDEN

Stockholm: P.O. Box 5024, S-12505 Älvsjö. Tel: (08) 722-9342.

Better yet, how about condos? — New York's Mayor Koch favors charging rent in city shelters. "We have people making hundreds of dollars a week living in



Harry Ring

our shelters," he confides. "We have people who go to work with briefcases."

P.S. — Koch, who resides rent-free in a city mansion, says paying

rent will build character among the homeless.

How about the local jail-house? — Rich people may not be as dumb as they look. Across the bay from San Francisco, in Tiburon (median income \$70,300), the town fathers came up with a novel way of meeting a low-cost housing quota — counting servants quarters as low-income housing units.

Most convincing story of the week — "MEXICO CITY — A former Israeli official involved in the Iran-contra affair who was killed in a plane crash in Mexico was in the country in connection with a private business deal to buy avocados, Mexican and Israeli au-

thorities said." — News item.

Dead men tell no tales — Asked why Israeli intelligence agent Amiram Nir made his last flight under a fake name, a Mexican police official responded, "He's dead, so I can't ask him why, can I?"

Give 'em a fighting chance — U.S. delegates torpedoed a proposed international pact to "endeavor to prevent" youth from 15 to 18 being sent into combat. A U.S. proposal favored keeping children under 15 from the firing line.

A no-no? — "HASTINGS, Mich. — The former treasurer of

the antidrug Just Say No Club pleaded guilty to passing two bad checks written on the club's account to help support her cocaine habit." — News item.

Practically Darwinians — The Institute for Creation Research is appealing a California ruling barring it from issuing masters' degrees in science. Declared a school official, "Our program is completely scientific. There is no religion in it. . . . We assume that animals were created by God and did not evolve. Everything else we teach is the same as in standard science courses."

Fair day's pay for fair day's

work — The bankers who arranged the financing for the \$24.7 billion RJR Nabisco buyout will pocket fees of over \$700 million.

Ushering in the kinder, gentler society — A New York fashion show will feature custom-made clothing and furs with bullet-proof linings. Up to \$80,000 depending on the quality of the furs and leathers.

Be well — "More competition among profit-seeking providers of medical care may lead to increased cases of price-fixing and other antitrust violations, say law enforcement officials and experts in health care." — News item.

Sylvia Bleeker, 1901-88: a pioneer communist

BY HARRY RING

NEW YORK, — Sylvia Bleeker, a pioneer communist, died here November 23. On December 25, she would have been 87.

She participated in the Russian revolution of 1917 and was an early member of the U.S. Communist Party and a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party.

She is survived by her lifelong companion, Morris Lewitt, also a pioneer communist. For many years he was a national leader of the SWP, and she was a leading activist in the New York party. In the mid-1960s, beset by health difficulties, they withdrew from the party.

At the time of the Russian revolution, Bleeker lived in the town of Slusk in Belorussia, a region of Eastern Europe bordering on Poland. She was 15 when the

revolution came to power.

She undertook a project of organizing and teaching kindergarten classes. The new government then sent her to Minsk, the principal city in Belorussia, for further study in this field.

In 1920, the area was occupied by Poland, and her family decided to emigrate to the United States, taking her with them.

Among the boatload of immigrants was Morris Lewitt and his family. They met on the boat, and their personal and political lives continued together from then on.

In the United States, they soon joined the young Communist Party, then an underground organization.

Bleeker became immersed in political and educational activity among immigrant

Jewish workers in the city. She helped to form educational clubs that provided a base for the founding of the Young Communist League, the CP's youth organization.

She obtained work in the millinery industry and soon emerged as an important figure.

In that period, before the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), the American Federation of Labor (AFL) organized workers primarily on a craft basis, accepting into membership those deemed to be skilled.

The Millinery Workers Union included the men who worked as machine operators and as blockers of hats. The women, who trimmed the hats, were not in the union.

Bleeker sparked a drive to organize the trimmers. They succeeded in founding Local 43 of the Millinery Workers, with a peak membership of 4,000. It was the biggest women's local in the AFL. Bleeker became secretary-treasurer of the local.

In 1930, she was selected as the Communist Party candidate for Congress from New York. But in the midst of the campaign she, and Morris Lewitt, were expelled from the party for "Trotskyism."

They were thrown out for being among those who defended the program of Leninism against the political degeneration that marked the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. The process of Stalinization was spreading throughout the Communist International, including the U.S. party.

Lewitt and Bleeker became early members of the Communist League of America. The CLA was a forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party.

In the early 1930s, Bleeker and Lewitt helped to win a layer of Jewish workers, many from the New York garment industry, then known as the needle trades, to support of the CLA. Lewitt, a member of the plumbers' union, worked in the construction in-

dustry until he suffered a back injury in the 1950s.

In 1932 they launched a Yiddish-language magazine, *Unser Kampf* (Our Struggle). An eight-page tabloid, it was published twice a month for about a year.

Lewitt was the editor and Bleeker the business manager. Advancing the views of the Communist League, it attained a circulation of 3,000 here and abroad.

But in that depression period of meager resources and a small membership, the venture could not be sustained.

In the late 1930s, Bleeker became the manager of Pioneer Publishers, which undertook to publish a number of the writings of the Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, and leaders of the SWP. It published numerous popular pamphlets. Pioneer Publishers was the founding predecessor of Pathfinder.

In 1946, the SWP launched its first New York state election campaign, nominating Farrell Dobbs for governor and Joseph Hansen for U.S. senator. Dobbs was then editor of the *Militant* and Hansen associate editor.

Bleeker was on the ticket as the party's candidate for state attorney general.

The energetic campaign waged in support of the ticket helped to lay the base for the party's first presidential bid, with the nomination of Dobbs in 1948.

For several decades, Bleeker was a leading activist in the New York SWP.

A skilled, popular speaker with an engaging personality, she was a stalwart at party street corner meetings. She spoke often in the garment district and on the Lower East Side, an area that then included many immigrant Jewish workers.

Speaking in English and Yiddish, Sylvia always drew a crowd. And, invariably, in the crowd there would be a few old-timers who remembered her with respect and affection for her militant role among the millinery workers.

U.S. gov't to talk with PLO

Continued from front page

years for freedom and that we will not stop until we get legitimate recognition for our basic human rights."

The abrupt U.S. reversal came as the intifada entered its second year, despite Israeli repression that has resulted in the killing of at least 322 Palestinians and 20,000 casualties, including victims of shootings, beatings, and tear gas.

The bloody repression and the continuing Palestinian protests discredited and isolated the Israeli regime to an unprecedented degree around the world.

And Washington's efforts to bolster its Israeli partner by boycotting the PLO made the U.S. government's position increasingly untenable. It created growing tensions even with proimperialist regimes in the Middle East, and with Western European governments.

The extent of the discomfort with the Washington line was dramatically registered when the UN General Assembly voted 154-2 to hold an unprecedented special session in Geneva, Switzerland, so that Arafat could be heard despite the U.S. ban on him.

At the December 13 Geneva meeting, Arafat was escorted to the podium by the UN chief of protocol, a ceremonial procedure reserved for heads of state or government.

In his speech to the UN body, the PLO leader concretized the stand taken by a mid-November meeting in Algiers of the Palestine National Council, which acts as a leading body of the PLO.

The PNC called for recognition of Israel, as part of the basis for negotiations, and reaffirmed the PLO's opposition to terrorism.

The PNC moves included proclamation of a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, which has since obtained some form of diplomatic recognition from about 70 countries.

The PNC meeting opened a diplomatic offensive by the PLO, aimed at pressuring the U.S. and Israeli governments to enter into peace negotiations.

Arafat presented a three-point proposal

to the UN.

The first was that the UN secretary general undertake to prepare the way for an international peace conference.

Secondly, that the UN supervise a withdrawal of Israeli forces "from our occupied Palestinian land."

Thirdly, that the PLO would seek international settlement of the conflict on the basis of UN resolutions 242 and 338. These resolutions call on Israel to withdraw from the territories it seized from its Arab neighbors in a 1967 war. At the same time, the resolutions provide that Israel's right to "secure" borders be recognized.

Reiterating PLO rejection of terrorism "in all its forms, including state terrorism," Arafat told the UN assembly, "This position, Mr. President, is free and clear of all ambiguity. And yet I, as chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, hereby once more declare that I condemn terrorism in all its forms, and at the same time salute all those sitting before me in this hall who, in the days when they fought to free their countries from the yoke of colonialism, were accused of terrorism by their oppressors."

Following his speech, representatives of West European governments and the Soviet Union spoke in support of his stand. Formal endorsement was given by the 12-member European Economic Community.

The Swedish government and others reportedly undertook to negotiate between Washington and the PLO.

Arafat then convened the Geneva press conference, December 14. There he declared that the PLO accepted "the right of all parties concerned in the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security."

This, he said, includes, "the state of Palestine, Israel, and other neighbors."

With this, Washington declared its conditions had now been met and Reagan authorized the opening of a "substantive dialogue" with the PLO. He reiterated the U.S. commitment to the Israeli regime.

Meanwhile, in his press statement, Arafat declared: "Let it be absolutely clear that neither Arafat, nor any for that matter, can stop the intifada, the uprising. The intifada will come to an end only when practical and tangible steps have been taken toward the achievement of our national aims and establishment of our independent Palestinian state."

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Dec. 22, 1978

Just how dim the shah of Iran's prospects of survival are was indicated by the enormous demonstrations of December 10 and 11. Opposition leaders asserted that 7 million protesters — one-fifth of the country's population — marched in opposition to the regime on December 10.

An estimated 1.5 million marched in Tehran alone. "The sheer weight of numbers of the procession took even seasoned observers by surprise," Tony Allaway reported in the December 11 *Christian Science Monitor*. "More than a quarter of Tehran's population had turned out to register their protest."

THE MILITANT

Published in the interests of the Working People

Dec. 23, 1963

Price 10¢

From Brooklyn's slum-ridden Bedford-Stuyvesant district to Manhattan's over-

crowded, under-repaired Harlem, Negro and Puerto Rican tenants are declaring — "No service, no rent!"

In Harlem the Community Council on Housing has organized the people in 60 buildings. These tenants have committed themselves to withholding their rent money. Their object is to force city agencies, such as the Buildings Department — which have adequate legal powers — to clean up completely the unhealthy and dangerous housing conditions in the city's ghettos.

Jesse Gray, director of the Community Council, emphasizes that rent-strike demands are not primarily concerned with reductions of rent. "Rent strikes," he said, "have been defeated in the past by slumlords reducing rent while the strike is going full steam, and then raising rents once the excitement dies down."

Mark Brown, Gray's assistant, says, "Tenants are on strike for a decent place to live, for heat and hot water, and painting and repairs."

A recent leaflet of the Community Council calling a rent-strike rally, stated, "Let the landlords know, we are not going to pay rents for rats to eat our children, no heat and no hot water, stopped-up toilets, leaking ceilings, or any other violation."

Subscribe to
the Militant

The irrepressible conflict

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, speaking at the United Nations on December 7, called for a "joint effort" by UN members "to put an end to the era of wars, confrontation, and regional conflicts. . . ."

These could be halted, he said, through forging "a universal human consensus." World politics, he stated, "should be guided by the primacy of universal human values."

"Two great revolutions, the French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917," Gorbachev said, "gave a tremendous impetus to mankind's progress."

"But today," he continued, "we face a different world, for which we must seek a different road to the future."

He placed high priority on "untying knots of regional problems" in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Referring to "regional problems," however, demeans and obscures the stakes in the just struggles being waged by workers and farmers in the most oppressed and exploited countries of the world.

The so-called regional problems are struggles ranging from the Nicaraguan revolution and Washington's efforts to reverse it; to the Palestinians' struggle against the Israeli regime that rules over their homeland; to the battles in southern Africa against the apartheid regime.

These are irrepressible conflicts between oppressor and oppressed, rich and poor, exploiter and exploited. They are rooted in revolts by workers and farmers against intolerable conditions imposed by the handful of imperialist billionaires who hold most of the world's wealth in their grip.

Struggles of this kind will not end as long as the imperialists are driven to maintain and expand their exploitation of toilers everywhere; and as long as workers and farmers refuse to bow to ever-increasing plunder and misery as the price of an illusory peace.

The fact is that no universal consensus exists for such objectives as peace; ending starvation, illiteracy, and infant mortality; and the right of oppressed nations to self-determination.

These goals must be fought for by hundreds of millions of workers and farmers. Their struggles face the violent opposition of the imperialist rulers.

But it has been through these struggles that the embattled toilers have advanced the fight for peace — be it by defeating the contras in Nicaragua or driving the South African army out of Angola.

It is true that big changes have occurred in the world since 1917, when the workers and farmers in the Russian Empire overthrew tsarism and capitalist rule; and since 1789, when the French masses began to settle accounts with feudalism. But far from concluding that revolutionary struggles are no longer on the agenda, they force the opposite conclusion.

The economy and politics of countries throughout the world are integrated and interdependent as never before. As a result, the worldwide impact of crises and social struggles in any part of the world is experienced much more quickly and is more explosive.

Today the accumulating economic difficulties in the capitalist countries are setting the stage for a social and economic catastrophe. The \$1.2 trillion foreign debt that the governments of Asia, Africa, and Latin America owe to bankers in the United States, Britain, France, Japan, West Germany, and other imperialist countries is one of many worsening symptoms.

The coming international capitalist depression will have devastating effects on the working people of the United States and other imperialist countries, as well as those of the colonial and semicolonial countries. To counter the effects of the crisis and find a way out of it, workers and farmers will have to wage revolutionary struggles that are more widespread and on a scale that has not been seen for decades.

What Cuban President Fidel Castro said of Latin America in a speech in October is becoming more true of the world. Citing the examples of the French and Russian revolutions, he stated, "I feel that the objective conditions that gave rise to the great revolutions of history are accumulating. . . . the objective conditions that in the past led to the great historical revolutions."

Victory in these battles will enable workers and farmers to rid the world of warmaking imperialism and forge a society in which the values of peace, equality, and the meeting of human needs will be truly universal.

I thought I heard the tsar speaking

BY DOUG JENNESS

When Mikhail Gorbachev flew to Armenia after an earthquake devastated large areas of that Soviet republic, he ran smack dab into a hornet's nest. Unlike the accolades from U.S. government officials, newspaper editors, and TV broadcasters that were still ringing in his ears from his trip to New York, the Soviet leader was met by angry protests.

Some Armenians jeered, whistled, and spit on the ground as the Soviet leader inspected the damage. They

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

were bitter about the way the Moscow leadership was handling the relief effort and wanted to debate the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. This region is claimed by both the Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the controversy has been the source of massive protests since February.

Gorbachev said he was disgusted by the preoccupation with this discussion of national rights. Those to blame, he said, are "striving for power. They should be stopped, by using all the power at our command — political and administrative. Let God judge them. It's not for them to decide the destiny of this land."

My first reaction after reading this was that I'd suddenly been transported back to the early part of the century when the Romanov dynasty still reigned in the Russian Empire. The tsars were also keen on appealing to God and deciding other people's destinies.

But I rubbed my eyes and looked at the date on the newspaper again, and yes, it was 1988.

The fact is that Gorbachev's threats epitomize the Soviet bureaucracy's long-time arrogance toward oppressed nationalities and national rights in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The nationalist protests that are beginning to arise today, spurred by the mounting economic and social crisis in the Soviet Union, reveal the depth of national oppression by a bureaucracy based in the historically dominant Russian nationality.

Under tsarist rule, the Russian state conquered peoples in bordering areas — both in Asia and Europe — and brought them directly under its rule. The boundaries of the empire were considered absolute, and nationalist fighters from Azerbaijan to Poland, who demanded a say in their destiny, were savagely repressed.

The monarchy's oppression of nationalities was also used to inculcate chauvinist attitudes among workers and peasants of the Russian nationality and to pit oppressed nationalities against each other.

The politically most conscious section of the working class, led by the Bolshevik party headed by V.I. Lenin, attempted to overcome this disunity. They sought to unite the workers and peasants in a struggle to overturn tsarist oppression and capitalist-landlord rule.

The Bolsheviks proposed granting the right to self-determination to all oppressed nationalities, including the right to separate from the Russian state. Although they were attacked from nearly all quarters for proposing the breakup of Russia, history proved that their course was the only one that could unify working people.

The Bolshevik policy of support to self-determination was not only key to workers and peasants successfully establishing their own government in October 1917. It also proved essential to beating back counterrevolutionary armies and imperialist invaders in the civil war of 1918-20.

The revolutionary government did what it said it would do — granted independence to Finland, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, even though these countries had capitalist governments. One of its first acts was to issue an appeal "To all Muslim Toilers of Russia and of the East" declaring, "Your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are henceforth free and inviolable. Organize your national life in complete freedom. You have the right."

What a breath of fresh air compared to Gorbachev's call for the Almighty's judgment and the Soviet army's heavy hand.

Under Lenin's leadership the conditions began to be laid for moving toward socialism and eliminating chauvinism and national inequalities. But this Marxist course was derailed by the privileged bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin that based itself on the Russian nationality and reinstituted the domination of peoples that had for many years been oppressed by the tsarist empire.

When working people once again awaken politically in the Soviet Union and develop confidence in their own capacities and begin to fight for the road to socialism, their fight will go hand in hand with the struggle for national rights. Like their predecessors in 1917, working people will again unify themselves — not by holding Russia's borders sacred, but by fighting for the right to self-determination. And that, it is guaranteed, will tear the Stalinist empire asunder.

\$45 billion for weapons plants?

Continued from front page

for safety reasons at the Savannah River plant in South Carolina must quickly be brought back on line to produce tritium. Otherwise, officials warn, some of the thousands of nuclear bombs may have to be dismantled. Officials concede that the plant will not meet the DOE's safety standards when it starts up.

Tritium, a key radioactive component of many nuclear weapons, decays at a rate of 5.5 percent annually. The tritium has to be replaced periodically or else the weapons must be junked.

While details concerning what measures to take and how much to spend are being debated in Congress, there is a broad consensus in ruling circles on priorities. An editorial in the December 9 *Times* cited three problems facing the weapons makers: "production capacity, environmental cleanup, and long-term nuclear waste disposal."

"The first," the editors insisted, "is by far the most urgent."

The needs of U.S. working people are radically different. Our interests require shutting down the weapons-making system now.

The latest admissions from the DOE came December 6, when the agency issued a ranking of environmental hazards at the plants.

The most serious damage, the DOE now admits, took place at the Rocky Flats plant, a few miles from Denver. Toxic wastes from the plant have been leaking into underground water supplies and have already contaminated the soil in the surrounding area.

A successful suit by local landholders forced the release of documents. They revealed, according to the December 12 *Washington Post*, that "in just over 35 years of operation, Rocky Flats has experienced hundreds of small fires and at least two major blazes that likely involved significant radioactivity releases."

Public health officials believe that the plutonium dust contaminating the land surrounding the plant has been carried far from there by the wind. Environmentalists termed the situation "a creeping Chernobyl."

The DOE describes the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory near Idaho Falls as one of the most contaminated sites in the weapons industry. Operations there discharged radioactive and toxic wastes into disposal lagoons and wells that have contaminated the Snake River aquifer — the principal water source for eastern Idaho.

The DOE says that \$110 billion will be needed over the long term to repair and limit the damage already caused by the nuclear weapons production plants.

The DOE is requesting another \$30 billion to process and store the nuclear wastes that have been produced by

the plants, and up to \$10 billion to attempt to decontaminate and dismantle several hundred unusable facilities.

The recently completed storage center in Carlsbad, New Mexico, which was scheduled to open last October, is riddled with leaks into the surrounding groundwater. The opening of the center, once portrayed as a leak-proof answer to the waste storage problem, has now been put off indefinitely.

This is the price — the enormous human, environmental, and financial price — that the people of the United States and the world will be forced to pay as long as Washington is committed to maintaining its nuclear arsenal. There's no such thing as safe production of nuclear weapons.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, in his December 7 speech to the United Nations General Assembly, announced that the Soviet government would unilaterally reduce its armed forces by 500,000 — about 10 percent of the total — and withdraw 50,000 troops and 5,000 tanks from countries in Eastern Europe.

He also urged the U.S. government to join in agreements to reduce nuclear weapons by 50 percent and to eliminate chemical weapons.

President Ronald Reagan insisted the next day that significant U.S. cuts "can't happen with our defense spending until we have reached a parity."

Gorbachev's initiative increased the pressure on the U.S. rulers and their allies in Europe, and heightened debate in Congress and the U.S. big-business media over reducing U.S. arms spending as part of efforts to limit the government's budget deficit.

Nonetheless the administration is seeking to rally bipartisan support in Congress for spending tens of billions to refurbish the nuclear weapons plants and create new ones. New plants, we are promised, will be immune to leaks and other disasters — just as the current ones were said to be not too long ago.

The Soviet government's offer to cut its troop strength in Europe provides an opening to demand that Washington withdraw all its troops, nuclear weapons, tanks and other military hardware from Europe now.

- U.S. nuclear weapons plants must be shut down for good as well, and the nuclear stockpiles destroyed. All commercial nuclear reactors should be shut down too.

- The billions now spent on the U.S. military budget should be used instead to meet the needs of working people. High on the list are massive programs to repair the environmental damage done by nuclear plants, work toward a solution to the problem of nuclear waste disposal, and provide the free health care that workers at nuclear plants and millions of people who have lived in harm's way are entitled to.

Report details baby-trafficking in Guatemala

BY SUSAN LaMONT

A report released in October by the Paris-based International Human Rights Federation (IHRF) gives a detailed picture of a "vast trade in babies" taking place in Guatemala. The report was based on an investigation carried out during the summer by two IHRF representatives sent to Guatemala and Haiti in response to reports of babies being sold to obtain organs for use in transplants. While no evidence of this practice was found, the delegation did find ample evidence of trafficking in babies for adoption.

Each year, the report says, more than 300 babies destined for adoption by parents in the United States,

AS I SEE IT

France, Italy, and other imperialist countries are bought or stolen from their mothers in Guatemala.

Lawyers figure prominently in the baby trade, arranging the adoptions, working out how to "comply" with the laws, and profiting handsomely in the bargain. The IHRF report says that each child is sold for about \$10,000.

The infants are often kept in secret "nurseries" while arrangements are made for them to be sent to, or picked up by, their new parents. Newspapers regularly report the discovery of such nurseries by police; conditions in them are frequently "sub-human," according to the IHRF.

The newspaper *Prensa Libre* showed a picture of one uncovered last year in which seven children were laid out on a battered mattress on an iron cot. The woman in charge said she was paid \$35 a month to care for the chil-

dren, but didn't know where they were to be taken.

Another woman discovered running a nursery in June told police that she took one baby to the Sheraton Hotel in Guatemala City, where a couple from the United States and a lawyer were waiting for the infant.

Most of these children are kidnapped from their families; few are ever returned. One exception was 18-month-old María Enelvina Calderón, who was kidnapped with her eight-year-old brother Mario and bundled into a truck that already had eight other young children in it. Mario was later abandoned in a distant part of the city.

When the mother went to the police for help in finding her baby, she was visited by two women who threatened her life. One of them turned out to be a social worker who was subsequently arrested and charged with kidnapping children. Nine days later, María Enelvina's parents got a phone call telling them where the baby could be found.

Other children are "bought" from their mothers. Baby sellers anxious to avoid charges of kidnapping hire spies to keep an eye out for mothers in financial distress, who are then coerced into "giving away" their babies for a small payment.

Guatemala's adoption laws are circumvented in a variety of ways, including paying women to register kidnapped children as their own and then "give" them away for adoption. In April 1988, authorities uncovered one 42-year-old woman who declared she had borne 33 children between 1965 and 1985, eight of them between 1965 and 1970.

This summer, evidence of similar baby-trafficking in Brazil came to light when an Israeli court ruled that a two-year-old child who had been kidnapped as a baby in

Curitiba, Brazil, had to be returned to her parents. The director of the Association for Private Adoption in Israel estimates that 2,000 infants from Latin America have been adopted by Israeli parents. Others say the number of adoptions from Brazil alone is higher.

In August, Brazilian police reported breaking up an operation in Cunha Pora where babies were "bought" from their mothers — with the help of a lawyer — for adoption in West Germany and France. Police also arrested a French couple trying to leave town with three of the children.

The Centre for Protection of Children's Rights in Bangkok, Thailand, says that 6,000 children have been kidnapped for adoption from that country over the past 10 years.

Piet Stoffelen, a Labour member of parliament in the Netherlands, issued a report last fall documenting, among other forms of child exploitation, the international trade in children for adoption from Latin America and Asia. "The adoptable child is, bluntly speaking, a commercial object commanding five-figure prices," Stoffelen said. His report cites El Salvador, as well as Guatemala, as a "source" of babies for the United States and Europe.

Stoffelen hits the main point: the growing international trade in children is an example of capitalism at work. Because the number of children available for adoption in the United States and other imperialist countries has declined, a lucrative market has been created for adoptable babies — although racism still prevents the adoption of many U.S. children who are Black. Capitalist businessmen fill the demand with babies from Latin America and Asia, where imperialist domination makes such traffic easier.

—FROM OUR READERS BEHIND BARS—

This week we devote the letters column to our brothers and sisters who are in prison.

The *Militant* receives numerous letters from our readers behind bars. We are able to print only a small part of these. And many are abridged.

Many of the letters are from prisoners without funds who request subscriptions to the *Militant*, as well as a wide range of other literature. The *Militant's* special prisoners' fund makes it possible to send these subscriptions and where possible, to fill requests for other literature. To help in this important effort, send your contribution to the *Militant's* Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

South Africa

Revolutionary greetings to all the readers of this wonderful paper.

I'm writing you to pay homage to our brothers and sisters in the struggle who have fallen heroically on May 4, 1978, and June 16, 1976, through murderous actions perpetrated by the racist troops of South Africa.

These days are memorable not only in the life and history of the people of Africa and the Caribbean, but for the whole of mankind in the struggle against social injustice.

A prisoner
Auburn, New York

Malcolm X

I'm writing this letter to all the readers of the *Militant* on remembering Malcolm X.

With his razor-sharp wit, dynamic speaking abilities, and pinpoint analysis of racism and national oppression, Malcolm radicalized a whole generation of African Americans, Third World people, and white progressives. Malcolm, like no other person, represented the cutting edge of the Black movement in its struggle for justice, equality, and self-determination.

We're living in a time when the white ruling class has launched a blistering counteroffensive to erase the political, economic, and social gains made by the civil rights and Black power movements in the 1950s and '60s. It is a time when capitalism seeks to blame the Black family, Black youth, etc.

for the problems facing the Black community, to divert attention from its own inability to provide a decent life for the majority of African Americans.

The strength, dedication, and militant action symbolized by Malcolm X must again be brought to the forefront.

A prisoner
Auburn, New York

Like Curtis

This letter is written in the hope that your paper might take an interest in my welfare and the ongoing injustice I am suffering because of my politics. The Canadian True North is not strong and free! Mark Curtis and I have much in common perhaps.

On Oct. 28, 1986, I was about to get my dog and papers from my car and take a taxi home to my apartment when I was grabbed from behind by two Toronto cops. I had recently returned from a holiday in British Columbia. Earlier that night I had taken some photos of the African National Congress headquarters on Danforth Avenue for a story I was doing about the conflict in South Africa with reporter Mike Wang of the *Kingston Whig Standard*, a Kingston, Ontario's paper.

At the 53rd Division of the Toronto Police my white hat and pants and white running shoes, beige parka, and camera were stripped from me and I was handcuffed to a radiator. Interrogators kept me awake and first tried for hours to make me confess to a child's murder! Later they tried to make me confess to beating up a woman at an underground parking lot.

They made it clear that my story with the *Whig Standard* would be suppressed. I have left out a lot of the details, but it was abundantly obvious my arrest was political.

I was then 36 years old, 6'1", 195 pounds, with glasses and receding blonde hair. A Mary Sue Fitzkerry was apparently punched and kicked by someone she described as 5'8", 160 pounds, with a reddish leather coat, black shoes (not running shoes), and black pants. This occurred on Oct. 28, 1986, about half a mile from the pub I was in.

Eventually I was convicted after one and a half years in custody of three counts of assault and three of choking a female. My sentence, which started May 25, is 12 years,

with no chance of parole.

A prisoner
Kingston, Ontario

Political prisoners

The jails are full of political prisoners who are brainwashed into believing they are criminals. Their crimes came from a denial of their share of America by the wealthy fat cats who run this nation via corporate influence while attempting to meddle in the affairs of other nations. Then after incarceration they are further violated as human beings by brainwashing techniques to dehumanize them as the "perpetrating class."

Keep up the good reporting.

A prisoner
Pikeville, Tennessee

Master of deceit

I have just read J. Edgar Hoover's book about what the communists are doing to bring America to its knees, the so-called masters of deceit. Funny, isn't it, coming from the master of deceit himself. I wonder what he would call the FBI and CIA — angels of trust?

A prisoner
Lovelady, Texas

Discrimination

For years we have tried to have prison reforms instituted, but we are constantly encountering the opposition of Texas Department of Corrections prisonrats, administrators, and members of the legislature and Board of Pardons and Paroles.

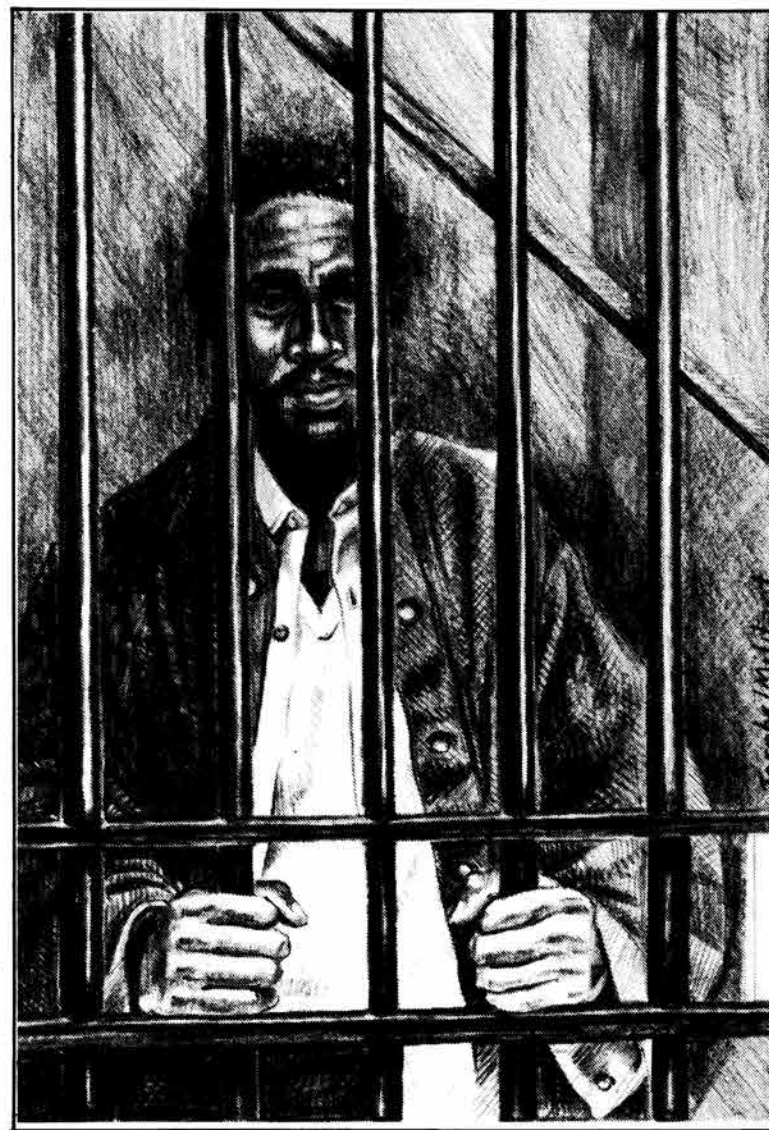
Not only is prison reform needed, but discriminatory practices must be eliminated. Asiatic/African/Black prisoners constitute the biggest percentage of the prisoner population (50 percent, I think), yet the parole ratio by race almost has us at the bottom of the line. There is no way this can be explained, or justified, except when discrimination and discriminatory practices are at work!

A prisoner
Tennessee Colony, Texas

Victory

Two books have come to my attention involving the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance's legal battle and victory over the government of the United States. They are *Cointel-pro* and *FBI on Trial*. I would like to receive these from you.

I would also like to receive *The*



Wretched of the Earth, by Franz Fanon, and *The System of Dante's Hell*, by Leroi Jones.

A prisoner
Rosharon, Texas

Young people

I would love to keep receiving the *Militant*. In the unit I'm on now there are a lot of young people and by them getting a hold of this paper, they just may have a new outlook on life.

A prisoner
Navasota, Texas

George Jackson

I would like to extend a firm embrace of solidarity to you and all who disseminate the literature and vital information exposing the farce behind the mask of world events and the true nature of imperialism, which is the highest stage of capitalism.

I have been incarcerated within the beast's belly for seven and a half years now. I have recently begun reading and analyzing the works of George Jackson.

I am a 24-year-old African freedom fighter currently in San Quentin's hole who already receives the *Militant*. If you have a copy of *Blood in My Eye*, I would greatly appreciate it if you could forward it to me. I am in contact with some eager learning people.

A prisoner
San Quentin, California

Nicaragua

From within the belly of the beast, I am very thankful for the subscription to the *Militant*. I'd also like to receive a copy of *Nicaragua, the Sandinista People's Revolution*.

A prisoner
Tamal, California

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.

Protests hit antiabortion disrupters

Atlanta: 'No to Operation Rescue'

BY KATE DAHER

ATLANTA — More than 200 abortion rights supporters turned out to picket an anti-abortion leadership conference organized by Operation Rescue here December 9.

Operation Rescue, a national organization opposed to legal abortion, has been blocking entrances to abortion clinics and hospitals since last July in an unsuccessful attempt to shut them down.

Although it has organized disruption efforts against women seeking abortions in several cities, most of its actions have been held in Atlanta where 1,200 of its members and supporters have been arrested.

Operation Rescue bills its activities a national campaign of "nonviolent civil disobedience." Anti-abortion protesters sit down and block clinic entrances to keep patients and staff from going in. Clinics and hospitals must use volunteer escorts to help women get through the gauntlet of protestors who scream at the women and attempt physical attacks.

Keynote speaker at the anti-abortion rights conference of 600, many from out of state, was right-wing figure Jerry Falwell. According to local press reports, he claimed that the anti-abortion movement parallels the civil rights movement of the early 1960s that overturned the racist system of legal segregation. "Martin Luther King is everybody's American hero," Falwell said.

Outside the conference, abortion rights advocates demonstrated. Banners and placards read, "My body, my choice," "Atlanta says no to Operation Rescue," "No return to backstreet butchers," and "Legal abortion is pro-life."

Many of the demonstrators were young women from local campuses, including Agnes Scott College and Emory University.

Lynn Randall, executive director of the Feminist Women's Health Center, which has been targeted by Operation Rescue,

said that the actions of the anti-women rights activists were "awakening a sleeping majority of people who have taken for granted their right to an abortion." She explained that this was the "largest pro-abortion rights action in Atlanta in 10 years."

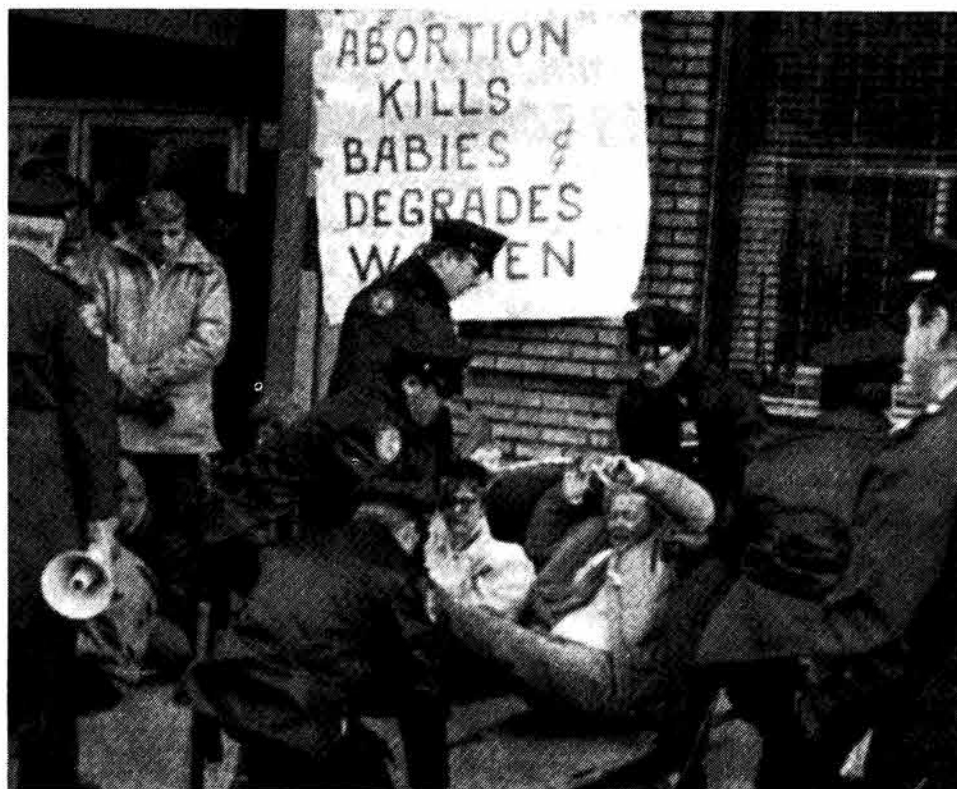
Betty Grant, state president of the National Organization for Women encouraged the demonstrators to organize for the April 9 abortion rights march on Washington, D.C. NOW called the march, which has been endorsed by the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

In other developments, a group of local businessmen, anti-abortion activists, and metro Atlanta pastors have organized a six-month campaign to erect 60 billboards throughout the area that read, "Having problems from an abortion?" Included is a toll-free number that refers women to counselors and lawyers to discuss the possibility of suing clinics and hospitals that perform abortions. According to the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* the business leaders hope to bring lawsuits against the clinics so that their malpractice insurance will be discontinued.

On November 11 Atlanta city councilman and veteran civil rights leader Hosea Williams filed a brief in Superior Court on behalf of anti-abortion protestors who he claims were mistreated by the city during demonstrations last fall and summer.

At a City Hall news conference, Williams declared, "I have acquired legal counsel and filed suit . . . in an effort to stop the Atlanta City Council, the mayor, and the City of Atlanta from misusing police powers to prevent anti-abortion demonstrators from exercising their First Amendment right of free speech."

Williams was referring to an injunction, sought by city council in a 12-to-5 vote and granted by Superior Court Judge Joel Fryer, that establishes fines and penalties for anti-abortion rights demonstrators who



Police allowed disrupters to block entrance to Planned Parenthood clinic in New York for five hours before abortion rights supporters finally forced cops to take action.

block access to abortion clinics or harass women attempting to enter or leave them.

Although Williams and others have compared Operation Rescue to the civil rights movement, some veterans of that movement don't agree with the comparison.

Joseph Lowery, president of the South-

ern Christian Leadership Conference, said, "The civil rights protests were against laws and public policy that denied our rights. These are demonstrations against private choice rather than public policy. They are protesting a private choice," referring to a woman's choice to have an abortion.

N.Y.: clinic blockade defeated

BY PATRICIA FEELY

NEW YORK — Some 300 anti-abortion protesters organized by "Operation Rescue" were unsuccessful in their attempt to close a Planned Parenthood clinic here December 4. Police inaction, however, did

allow the protesters to block for five hours two entrances to the building, where abortions are performed.

The New York Police Department (NYPD) was notified of the anti-abortion blockade at 7:00 a.m. By 8:00 a.m., hundreds of cops, including special units and mounted police, were deployed around the building, three to four deep around the protesters. Several streets around the building were closed off.

Abortion clinic workers, other Planned Parenthood staff, patients, and other supporters of abortion rights quickly organized a spirited counterdemonstration across the street from the clinic. They waved placards that read, "Our bodies, our choice, we will never go back" and "Not the church, not the state, a woman shall decide her fate" and shouted chants in defense of women's rights.

Clinic workers and other abortion rights backers grew increasingly angry with the cops for the long delay in clearing away the demonstrators. "Remove them from the door! NYPD, there's no excuse, five hours and no results," they shouted. Cops threatened abortion rights protesters with arrest, physical assault, and made sexist remarks to them.

Finally, a path was cleared to the clinic's side entrance, and a group of clinic workers, patients, and Planned Parenthood representatives retook the building.

The clinic was opened by 1:00 p.m., and saw 24 of the 40 patients scheduled for that day. Abortion rights supporters continued to demonstrate on the street below.

At about 1:00 p.m., cops started arresting the anti-abortion protesters, removing them one by one on stretchers onto buses and vans. More than 250 were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. They were issued tickets to appear in court at a later date and released. The last demonstrators were arrested at 3:30 p.m. Planned Parenthood is filing complaints with the cops over the excessive delay in arresting the anti-abortion disrupters.

Independent Puerto Rico 'only road'

BY CINDY JAQUITH

NEW YORK — Independence from U.S. colonial rule is the only road forward for the people of Puerto Rico, Carlos Gallisá told a meeting here December 11.

Gallisá is general secretary of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). He addressed 50 people — mainly Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans — at the Casa de las Américas hall here during a brief visit to the United States.

An island of 3 million in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico is denied the sovereign right to draft its own laws and regulate commerce, immigration, and the use of its territory and natural resources. Laws passed by the U.S. Congress, in which Puerto Rico has no vote, are enforced on the island through U.S. courts and police agencies.

Puerto Rican youth are required to register for the U.S. draft and to serve if called up. The island is covered with U.S. military bases. Puerto Rico was a principal staging ground for the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983.

In the 1970s, faced with sizable protests by Puerto Rican youth favoring independence, Washington began an extensive grant program, providing food stamps, rent subsidies, and college scholarships to many residents of the island.

The higher standard of living in Puerto Rico relative to that on neighboring islands is often used as an argument that Puerto Rico is better off under colonial status. Gallisá noted that "this is still the great challenge for independence supporters, providing an alternative to this dependence."

Despite Washington's ability to contain pro-independence sentiment, Gallisá ex-

plained, the colonial issue does not go away. Solidarity with Puerto Rico's right to independence has increased in Latin America, he said.

"Now it's not just the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua that support decolonization, but Panama and Peru," he said, adding that the PSP expects the representatives of Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela to support independence in the next round of United Nations debates on decolonization.

Gallisá predicted that Washington may make some cosmetic changes in the form of its colonial rule in Puerto Rico, but that it will seek to maintain its domination for two reasons: the strategic importance of the U.S. military bases on the island and the profits U.S. companies make from exploiting Puerto Rican labor and material resources tax free.

Gallisá also explained why the PSP supported candidates of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) in the November 8 local elections.

The PIP, traditionally associated with the independence struggle, is a member of the Socialist International. This year, in an effort to increase electoral support, PIP candidates said that a vote for their party did not mean a vote for independence.

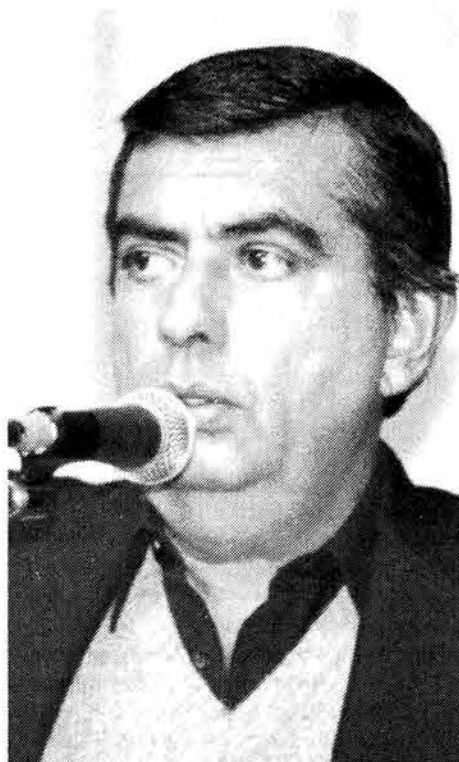
Gallisá said the PSP opposed this line. "The movement paid an ideological price" for the PIP's refusal to defend independence, he argued.

The PSP supported the PIP candidates nevertheless, Gallisá said, because the PIP "is historically identified with independence."

In the election, PIP candidate David Noriega was reelected to the Puerto Rican House of Representatives and Fernando

Martín was elected to the Puerto Rican Senate. PIP leader Rubén Berrios, who ran for governor, received 5.4 percent of the vote.

Candidates of the Popular Democratic Party and New Progressive Party — which oppose independence — won the big majority of seats. Incumbent Gov. Rafael Hernández Colón of the Popular Democratic Party was reelected.



Militant/Cindy Jaquith
Puerto Rican Socialist Party leader Carlos Gallisá.