

## Clashes at Paris meeting on chemical weapons

BY FRED FELDMAN

Representatives of more than 140 governments, including 80 foreign ministers, gathered in Paris January 7-11 for a conference on chemical weapons.

According to French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, whose government hosted the meeting, it was called to reaffirm the 1925 agreement barring use of chemical weapons and to spur negotiations now taking place in Geneva, Switzerland, over the terms of a treaty barring production and or stockpiling of such weapons.

President Ronald Reagan proposed the conference in a speech to the United Nations last September.

He acted after the massive use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi government against Iran in the Persian Gulf war and against Iraqi Kurds had aroused concern and outrage around the world.

Tens of thousands of Iranians and Iraqi Kurds were killed or injured by poison gas, which the Iraqi government eventually admitted using.

Both Washington and Paris backed Iraq in the war with Iran. The French government had supplied the Iraqi government with at least \$12 billion in weapons. As the Saddam Hussein regime was using poison gas to push back Iranian forces and crush Kurdish resistance, a U.S. naval and air armada in the Persian Gulf attacked Iranian ships and planes there.

Sponsoring the conference was a way for Reagan and French President François Mitterrand, who gave the opening address, to distance themselves from the Iraqi actions and lay claim to leadership of the international opposition to chemical warfare.

The conference was structured to minimize discussion of the actual use of chemical warfare in the Persian Gulf conflict. Informal ground rules discouraged criticism of any country by name.

### Kurds barred

Representatives of the Kurds were barred from attending the meeting on the grounds that it was restricted to delegations from states. The French government barred Hoshyar Zebari, the European representative of six Iraqi Kurdish parties, from entering France. And opponents of the use of chemical warfare against the Kurds were prevented from demonstrating near the conference site.

"Why did this conference not meet after Iranian cities fell prey to chemical weapons?" challenged Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

The U.S. delegation headed by Secretary of State George Shultz portrayed the proliferation of chemical weapons to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as an "urgent" challenge "to world security." Some 20 countries have chemical weapons today, and most of the weapons produced are in the imperialist countries.

The prospect, Shultz said, that countries "with histories of the conduct of terrorist violence" might gain access to nuclear or chemical weapons, was "a nightmare for us all." This was a reference to Libya and other semicolonial countries that Washington labels terrorist.

In deference to conference protocol, Shultz did not mention Libya, which the U.S. government claims has built a chemical-weapons plant.

A delegate from India pointed out that

Continued on Page 13

## Cuba: 'faithful to our principles' for 30 years

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA, Cuba — "We want peace and we must fight for peace, but peace for all peoples, peace with rights for all the peoples of the world," declared Cuban President Fidel Castro here on January 4 in the international rally celebrating the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban revolution.

"Peace with respect, peace with rights, peace with independence, and peace with

### Fight in UN Security Council over transition proposal for Namibia, page 3.

security for all the peoples of the world. That is the peace for which everyone must fight."

Speaking before more than 20,000 Cubans and hundreds of "brothers and sisters who have come from other countries," Castro delivered a three-hour talk reviewing the major accomplishments of Cuba's revolution and its unique contributions to building socialism.

He also devoted a major portion of his time to explaining Cuba's position on disagreements that have emerged in the United Nations Security Council over the implementation of Resolution 435, which lays out the steps that will lead to Namibia's independence.

In the concluding portion of his remarks, Castro returned to themes he took up in a major address on December 5. "There are two kinds of survival and two kinds of peace: the survival of the rich and the survival of the poor; the peace of the rich and the peace of the poor," Castro emphasized in his speech a month ago.

"The news that there may be peace, that nuclear weapons may be reduced, that there may be détente between the United States and the Soviet Union does not necessarily mean that there is going to be peace for us, that there is going to be security for us or for other revolutionary peoples or simply for independent Third World countries," he said in December. (For full text of speech see *Militant*, January 13. Copies are available for \$1.)

Noting that less than a month had passed since that speech, Castro cited the current U.S. aggression against Libya as an example of what he had been referring to.

"We must state very clearly and very sincerely," the Cuban president said, "we fully support the peace policy of the Soviet



Militant/Mary-Alice Waters

Members of Blas Roca Contingent of volunteer construction workers listen to Cuban President Fidel Castro at January 4 gathering in Havana.

Union. We must clarify this," Castro continued, "because the press in the imperialist nations tries to emphasize contradictions between Cuba and the Soviet Union, or to exaggerate contradictions that might exist. And they do exist on some issues, of course," he stated. But this in no way constitutes a source of friction between the two nations, Castro stressed. Our relations "are based on full respect for the paths followed by each country in the building of socialism."

Cuba not only fully supports the Soviet Union's peace policy, Fidel reiterated, but highly appreciates it. Cuba, more than anyone, realizes the importance of stopping the arms race and avoiding the dangers of nuclear war, he said. This is vitally important for all Third World countries. How can anyone be opposed to peace, he asked?

The problem is that imperialism "applies its own peculiar concepts" of peace and peaceful coexistence. Imperialism, he continued, "understands peace as being peace among the great powers, while reserving the right to oppress, exploit, threaten, and attack Third World countries such as Nica-

ragua, Cuba, and other nations."

Stressing that Cuba is in favor of the elimination of all chemical weapons, Castro noted that there is no international agreement banning their production, and the United States is the largest stockpiler and producer of chemical weapons in the world. It has no right to decree that other nations may not possess them.

Libya denies it is building a chemical weapons factory, Castro noted. But even if they were, he asked, what right does the United States have to bomb it? "Is that their interpretation of peace? Of détente? What Third World country can be at peace under these circumstances?"

### ExpoCuba opened

Among the most prominent international guests attending the anniversary celebrations were Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and Sam Nujoma, president of the South West Africa People's Organisation.

The presence of Miloš Jakeš, general secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and V.I. Vorotnikov, a member of

Continued on Page 2

## Israel's workers hard hit by austerity

BY HARRY RING

Working people in Israel were jolted January 1 to learn that overnight the cost of milk, eggs, chicken, bread, and gasoline had a shot up 12 to 26 percent.

This was the result of government "belt-tightening" moves to cope with deep-going economic difficulties.

Israeli inflation is now estimated at 17 percent. Unemployment increased by more than a fifth the past year, and the official rate is now 7.2 percent.

In addition to wage restraints and cutbacks in social spending, the government devalued the shekel twice in five days for a total of nearly 13 percent.

A plan approved by the Israeli cabinet January 5 sliced \$550 million from a \$26.5 billion budget. Subsidies on food and gasoline prices alone were reported cut by \$220 million.

Thousands of government workers may lose their jobs.

Cost-of-living increases in wages and benefits will be curbed.

There will be a registration fee for secondary school students, and university tuition will go up.

It will cost more to use the national health plan.

One Israeli daily estimated that the cutbacks will cost the average family an extra \$100 a month for basic needs.

The budget was crafted by Finance Minister Shimon Peres, who said these were only initial steps. He promised more cutbacks to come, as well as measures to boost profits for industrialists and exporters.

The economic downturn is the worst since the slump in 1982. For 1988, Israel's

growth rate was but 1 percent. This despite the massive injection of U.S. dollars.

Israel is the biggest recipient of U.S. aid money. With \$14.3 billion to distribute worldwide in 1989, Congress allocated \$3 billion for Israel. Of this, \$1.8 billion is for weapons, and \$1.2 billion for economic aid.

Israel's economic slide has been accelerated by the high overhead of its efforts to stamp out the Palestinian uprising in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Because of the uprising, there has been a reported 30 percent drop in tourism, a principal source of foreign exchange.

In addition, the sale of Israeli goods to the West Bank and Gaza population has dropped sharply. The government estimates a sales loss of \$600 million.

Perhaps most decisive has been the re-

Continued on Page 13



# Cuba celebrates 30 years of revolution

**Continued from front page**  
the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was also singled out for special note by the Cuban press. Other delegations came from the leaderships of fraternal parties and organizations throughout the world, with the largest numbers from the countries of the Americas.

At the center of the celebration on January 4 was the opening of the Permanent Exposition on the Economic and Social Development of Cuba. ExpoCuba, as it is popularly called, is a vast exhibition center with some 25 separate pavilions, each one dedicated to showing the accomplishments of the Cuban revolution in a particular field, such as health, education, numerous branches of agriculture and industry, and science. Built in less than two years' time by the Blas Roca volunteer construction contingent, the exhibition center is a fitting tribute to the revolution's 30th anniversary.

In the front rows of the audience at the rally were a thousand members of the celebrated contingent, formed in September 1987. The brigade's impressive construction projects, completed in full and on time, with high quality work, have already won its members a place among the vanguard of workers who are leading the movement called the rectification process in Cuba today.

This revolutionary mass movement, built around 35,000 volunteer workers participating in mini-construction brigades, is transforming political consciousness in Cuba. The minibrigade movement is engaged in building hundreds of apartment buildings, child-care centers, schools, hospital extensions, doctor's offices, sports complexes and other such facilities. It is demonstrating in practice that revolutionary working-class methods of organized, collective labor can begin to solve Cuba's pressing social needs, despite the severe economic limitations that are imposed on Cuba, as on other Third World countries, by imperialist domination of the world market. In addition, Cuba has faced a 30-year economic blockade by the United States.

In his enumeration of the unique contributions that the Cuban revolution has made to the world communist movement and the collective experience of the international working class in building socialism, Castro singled out the place of such volunteer labor in Cuba, which, he said, "has grown to levels unreached in any other country of the world." The minibrigades, he noted, have provided a powerful answer to the needs of social development, building more child-care centers in two-years' time than would have been built in 100 years relying on the old mechanisms that were truly "fatal" for the revolution.

## New challenge in Namibia

In the portion of his remarks dealing with the differences that have recently

emerged in the UN Security Council over the steps that will lead to supervised elections in Namibia and independence for that country after seven decades of South African colonial rule, Castro stressed that he was speaking from written materials, because he did not want to improvise on so important an issue.

He outlined the counterposed positions being presented by the five permanent members of the Security Council (Britain, China, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States), and the seven countries currently represented on the Security Council that belong to the Movement of NonAligned Countries (Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal, and Yugoslavia).

The permanent members of the Security Council, he explained, propose to reduce from seven to three the number of UN-sponsored battalions to be sent to Namibia to guarantee that elections be held free of intimidation by South African-organized military and paramilitary forces. This reduction is being motivated, he noted, on the grounds that it is necessary to cut costs, and that the accords recently signed by Angola, Cuba, and South Africa have created more favorable conditions for the transition to independence in Namibia.

The seven nonaligned countries on the Security Council are opposed to any reduction in the number of troops originally foreseen.

The fact is, Castro pointed out, that if there is any modification called for in the conditions for implementing Resolution 435, the number of battalions should be increased, because the population of Namibia has grown since the resolution was adopted in 1978, as have the military forces of South Africa.

Moreover, the allegation that the recent tripartite accord "permits the reduction of troops at the Angolan border is at variance with reality," Castro noted. "This area has never been a destabilizing factor in the Namibian independence process. It was the borders with South Africa that were always

considered the areas that especially needed to be watched during the decolonization process."

What is under discussion, Castro continued, "is not some new resolution, text, or declaration. What is at stake is something infinitely more important, for which tens of thousands of Namibian fighters have given their lives, as well as Angolans supporting the liberation struggle of the Namibian people, and for which our sons and daughters have given their blood in Angolan territory during 13 years of battle against South African arrogance."

"What is at stake is whether the United Nations' mechanisms are capable of guaranteeing the legitimate aspirations of the Namibian people," as demanded by the international community in Resolution 435.

## Democratization of United Nations

Castro went on to raise another issue that he said has been placed on the agenda by the current Security Council dispute over Namibia.

This is the first time in the history of the UN, Castro noted, that the viewpoint and criteria upheld by the permanent members of the Security Council are the opposite of those upheld by the representatives of the Third World countries on the Security Council, on a question of such grave importance for the Third World countries as the struggle against apartheid and the elimination of the last remnants of colonialism.

This unusual factor, Castro stated, "raises the issue of the democratization of the United Nations."

What kind of democracy exists in the UN, he asked, if what is left of the old British empire, "50 million inhabitants of one country, have the right to veto the resolutions of the Security Council, while a country like India, just to mention one, with 750 million inhabitants, that is, 15 times the population of Great Britain and a former British colony, does not have a similar right?"

The Third World countries, with some 4 billion inhabitants, "can witness their most sacred interests, hopes, and aspirations being frustrated by the veto of any one of the five permanent members of the Security Council," Castro stressed, and the time has come for this issue to be addressed.

Castro concluded his remarks on the current situation in southern Africa by noting that there are many ways to reduce the costs of the UN forces in Namibia without reducing their numbers, and that Cuba hoped this issue could be resolved. Cuba hopes "that there will be no arrogance on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council" he stated, "and that a reasonable, just negotiated formula will be worked out with the representatives of the Third World countries in the Security Council."

## True to principles

In his final remarks to the 30th anniversary rally, Castro pointed to the fact that

the roots of the Cuban revolution went deep into the history of the working-class movement, that it was the product of centuries of struggles.

"It is the fruit of the Paris Commune," he noted, "and of the October Revolution. It is the fruit of the struggles of all peoples to create a world without slavery, a world without exploitation, a world in which there is real justice."

Likewise today, without international solidarity, without the generous aid of all the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, without the support of all the progressive and democratic forces of the world, the Cuban revolution could not survive.

"The secret of this revolution," Castro noted, "is that it has been true to its principles from beginning to end, for 30 years. It has not been intimidated by anything. It has not allowed anyone or anything to deflect it from its course."

"That is the most important legacy we can leave to new generations," Fidel stated. "This is what we offer our friends throughout the world."

## Washington's drive against Libya is losing steam

The United Nations Security Council voted 9-to-4 January 11 for a resolution deploing the shooting down of two Libyan planes by U.S. jets a week earlier. U.S., British, and French delegates vetoed the measure. Canada's delegate also voted no.

Delegates of Algeria, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia voted yes.

On the day of the vote, the U.S. government announced it was canceling planned naval air maneuvers near Libya.

On January 7, reacting to Reagan administration allegations that his government supported U.S. claims that Libya has constructed a chemical weapons plant, French President François Mitterrand stated that he "did not know" if the plant could produce such weapons.

Mitterrand pointed out that the production of such weapons is not illegal under existing international agreements.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze agreed on January 8 to study the U.S. data concerning the plant. The following day, the Soviet official stated that Secretary of State Shultz "showed me some construction plans, but that does not prove anything."

As of January 10, only the governments of Canada, Britain, and the Netherlands have so far publicly indicated support for the U.S. claims. These governments, however, have not voiced support for Reagan's threat to use force to remove the plant.

## New York City Report back on 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution

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# Fight erupts in UN Security Council on Namibia transition

BY SAM MANUEL

UNITED NATIONS — "We want to express our alarm at the proposals being made by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to reduce the number of UN Peacekeeping forces to be sent to Namibia," explained Zambian Foreign Minister Luke Mwananshiku.

The foreign minister spoke at a January 5 press conference here on behalf of the southern African countries known as the Frontline States. Mwananshiku was accompanied by the foreign ministers of Botswana and Zimbabwe. The Frontline States also include Angola, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

"Such measures," Mwananshiku explained, "would increase South Africa's ability to interfere in the Namibian independence process." South Africa has militarily occupied Namibia since 1915.

At a December 22 UN ceremony, South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha signed an agreement with Angola and Cuba setting April 1 as the date to begin implementation of a UN plan for the independence of Namibia. That plan was outlined in Resolution 435/78, adopted by the UN 10 years ago. The agreement between the three countries capped eight months of negotiations mediated by U.S. government representatives.

The talks began after Angolan, Cuban, and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) forces scored a significant victory against South African and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) troops last March. That victory occurred in a strategic battle for the southeastern Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale.

Under the provisions of resolution 435/78, the UN is to send a UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) of 7,500 soldiers to oversee the withdrawal of some 50,000 South African troops and colonial administrators. The force is to also oversee UN-sponsored elections to establish the government of Namibia.

Washington, supported by the other permanent members of the Security Council — China, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union — has proposed that the force be cut to 3,000 troops. Ten other UN-member countries are elected to the council on a rotating basis.

Seven of the rotating members, Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal, and Yugoslavia, are also members of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries. They have placed a countermotion before the Security Council to send the originally proposed number of UN forces to Namibia.

The permanent members of the council need the support of each of the remaining rotating members — Brazil, Canada, and Finland, — to win a majority for their proposal. But according to UN rules, any one of the members of the permanent group

could veto the Nonaligned proposal should it win a majority.

## S. African troops in Namibia

Mwananshiku emphasized that the South African military presence and administration in Namibia has been substantially increased since Resolution 435/78 was adopted 10 years ago. "If anything, the UN should be considering increasing the number of its forces to be sent to Namibia," said the Zambian official.

Washington argues that the force can be reduced because it was originally intended to prevent attacks by SWAPO during the election, but SWAPO has agreed to cooperate with the peace plan. In his speech at the December 22 UN ceremony, however, South African Foreign Minister Botha asserted that only those groups that are prepared to cease violence should be allowed to participate in the elections.

"These are racist and colonialist views of things," explained Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Ricardo Alarcón at a press conference following the December 22 ceremony. "Impeding the return of SWAPO military personnel to Namibia has nothing to do with the letter or spirit of Resolution 435," Alarcón added.

The role of the UN transition force "is above all to bring about the minimum security guarantees for the Namibian people, for the returning refugees, to participate in the election, to guarantee the population of Namibia for the first time in their history the opportunity to express themselves freely," the Cuban official explained.

## Walvis Bay

The Frontline foreign ministers also criticized the South African government's contention that the Namibian central coast point at Walvis Bay should not be returned to Namibia. The apartheid regime claims that Walvis Bay is part of South African territory.

Walvis Bay was annexed by Britain in 1878 and administered by the old Cape Colony from 1884 and later by the Union of South Africa. During negotiations with the UN in 1977 for Namibian independence, the South African regime unilaterally transferred the administration of Walvis Bay to the Cape Province, placing it under Pretoria's direct jurisdiction.

"For us the issue of Walvis Bay is quite clear," SWAPO Secretary for Foreign Relations Theo-Ben Gurirab told reporters following the press conference. "Walvis Bay is an integral part of the territory of Namibia and has been reaffirmed as such in UN Security Council Resolution 432/78."

The agreement signed by Angola, Cuba, and South Africa also calls for "noninterference in the internal affairs of the states of southwestern Africa" and prohibits the use of their territories "by any state, organization, or person in connection with any acts of . . . violence against any state of southwestern Africa."



Militant/Sam Manuel

Zambian Foreign Minister Luke Mwananshiku criticized proposal to reduce UN forces for Namibia.

The South African government has often claimed that its military strikes into Angola have been in pursuit of troops of SWAPO and the African National Congress of South Africa.

"The ANC has readily agreed to move its military presence from Angola so as not to allow the racists and their allies to use the presence of the ANC military facilities in Angola as an excuse for delaying the process now in motion," stated ANC President Oliver Tambo in a January 8 ANC National Executive Committee statement.

"The armed struggle, however, will continue and will be intensified," said Tambo.

Despite their role as mediators of the agreement, U.S. government officials have repeatedly stated that Washington will continue military and financial support to UNITA. Washington has demanded that the Angolan government agree to negotiations aimed at setting up a coalition government with the contra group.

Andimba Toivo ja Toivo, secretary general of SWAPO, announced from his office in Luanda, Angola, that the South African government had begun organizing a contra military force in Namibia. Some members of the group are being trained at UNITA bases in southern Angola, according to the SWAPO leader.

## Socialists to host conferences in 6 cities

The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance will be hosting regional political conferences in six cities in January and February.

Members and friends of the SWP and YSA and supporters of the Militant will hear reports on and discuss major developments in international and U.S. politics today. They

will discuss perspectives in the international campaign to defend Mark Curtis, a framed-up Iowa packing-house worker serving a 25-year jail sentence.

Each conference will feature a public talk by an SWP leader on the political stakes involved in the fight to defend Curtis.

Host city	participating	Host city	participating
<b>January 21-22</b>			
Oakland	Portland San Francisco Seattle	Pittsburgh	Baltimore Charleston Cleveland Detroit Morgantown Washington, DC
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## Seattle rally hits racist violence

BY DAN FEIN

SEATTLE — An antiracist rally of 350 protested a neo-Nazi gathering on Whidbey Island near here on December 10. A week later, 150 marched through downtown Seattle to say no to racist violence.

In November racist skinheads using baseball bats beat to death Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian worker in Portland, Oregon.

In July, Raymond Hill was stabbed by a skinhead in a Spokane, Washington, supermarket parking lot. On December 14 a jury found Billy Wayne Worl, the attacker and a white supremacist, guilty of attempted second-degree murder and malicious harassment.

The December 10 neo-Nazi assembly was to commemorate one of their leaders, Robert Mathews, who was killed by the FBI in a shoot-out in the Whidbey Island state park four years ago.

The Aryan Nation — which is centered around Richard Butler's white supremacist church in Hayden Lake, Idaho, near Spokane — is trying to organize young skinheads. Butler and Tom Metzger, leaders of the White Aryan Resistance and hosts of the public-access TV show "Race and Reason", announced plans for the December 10 "vigil." The Seattle media gave the racists headline publicity for a week before their event.

However, only 10 neo-Nazis were present by early afternoon, while the 350 anti-racists picketed and rallied outside the state park. Park officials said later that the racists had paid for 22 campers.

Several teenage punk rockers came to the antiracist protest. One of them spoke at the rally and explained that the racist skinheads hardly represent the thinking of young people. He said he and his friends support equal rights for his Black, brown, and red friends.

## The Political Fight to Free Mark Curtis

Hear **John Gaige** National farm director for the Socialist Workers Party and SWP organizer in Des Moines, Iowa.

**San Francisco, Sat., Jan. 21, 7 p.m.**

**ILWU Local 34 Hall**

**34 Berry Street**

For more information call (415) 282-6255 or (415) 420-1165.

Hear **James Warren** Socialist Workers Party national organization secretary.

**Pittsburgh, Sat., Jan. 21, 7 p.m.**

**Sewell Center, Robt. Morris Business College**

**Narrows Run Road**

(near Days Inn Motel at airport)

For more information call (412) 362-6767.









Curtis addresses defense rally last July at San Francisco union hall

# Frame-up rooted in sharpening class struggle

BY MARGARET JAYKO

(Last of a series)

DES MOINES, Iowa — "Your honor, since my arrest in March many thousands of people from Des Moines to the Philippines to New Zealand have asked that the charges against me be dropped, that this frame-up be ended, and that I be allowed my freedom.

"It's a common feeling people the world over have. They don't like to see an innocent person go to jail. They have respect for democratic rights and a hatred of injustice. And even more so, they rightly see this railroad job — that's what it is — as an

## The Mark Curtis Story



attack on their rights too, as an attempt to put a little bit of themselves in jail along with me."

That was how Mark Curtis began his statement to Judge Harry Perkins on Nov. 18, 1988, in the Polk County Courthouse just prior to being sentenced to 25 years in jail.

Why has the plight of this young worker in Des Moines, Iowa — arrested last March on phony rape charges, beaten by cops, convicted, and thrown into prison — become such an important international political fight?

The answer lies in who Mark Curtis is, and the degree to which he's a part of the intensifying struggles internationally between conflicting social classes. Unless the Mark Curtis story is viewed from this angle, the reason for the broad support and the big political stakes in this fight, are incomprehensible.

The roots of the antagonisms that led to the frame-up of Curtis have been described in this series. They begin well before Curtis was grabbed by the cops and extend far beyond Des Moines and Iowa.

They lie in the resistance by workers and farmers around the world to the employers' austerity drive, to the crisis facing exploited farmers, to cop brutality, to attacks on the rights of immigrants, and to U.S. military intervention abroad.

Curtis was a packinghouse worker in an area of the country that had seen a wave of union struggles against takeback demands of the meat-packing employers. This desire to resist concessions is not limited to packinghouse workers, as local strikes by rail workers, auto workers, rubber workers, and others have revealed.

Rural Iowa has been the scene of many fights in the past decade by farmers trying to defend their land and livelihoods from profit-hungry bankers.

Just before Curtis' arrest, there had been the largest Black rights mobilization in the area in years to protest cop racism in the Des Moines suburb of Clive.

This was followed, less than a month later, by a series of protest activities against an immigration raid at the Swift plant where Curtis worked. Seventeen workers were rounded up, thrown in jail, and charged with felonies for not having proper identification papers. Thousands of Latin American and Asian immigrants have moved into Iowa in the past decade.

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

Shortly after Curtis was arrested, a major scandal erupted in the Des Moines Police Department exposing grotesque racist and sexist abuse by the police against each other.

It was in this situation of heightened class struggles and tensions that Curtis was framed up. Curtis was involved in all the struggles of workers and farmers here. He worked at Swift, a packing plant known for its low wages and dirty and dangerous conditions. He was a rebellious young worker, one who walked off the line when he was injured, and then won his job back through support from his coworkers. He involved coworkers and his union in solidarity activities with other packinghouse workers who were on strike throughout North America, as well as farmers who were fighting for their rights.

Curtis speaks Spanish and could communicate with his fellow workers from Mexico and El Salvador. He defended their right to have a job and was part of the fight against the immigration raid at the plant. Curtis was one of those workers who, while recognizing how conservative the union officialdom was, turned to the union to demand that it defend him and his fellow workers from Swift management and from the government.

Curtis had participated in the Clive anti-racist protest and had been spied on by the FBI for his antiwar activities in Birmingham, Alabama, from 1981-1985. And he is a member of the Socialist Workers Party who carried out his political and union activity with an eye toward educating, organizing, and mobilizing working people to overthrow the big-business-run government and establish a workers' and farmers' government — a government which will abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism.

It's because Curtis was *part* of the struggles waged by a vanguard layer of his class and his generation that he ended up in jail.

### Not unusual

In many ways what happened to Curtis is not unusual at all. In a speech to a Sept. 4, 1988, international defense rally in Des Moines, Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes explained that cop beatings and frame-ups occur "every day, all over this country. One of the most common charges is that a young person used their head to try to smash the flashlights and blackjacks of a police department somewhere. . . . If you don't speak the language of the cops, if you speak Spanish, if you speak Chinese, if you don't have the kind of papers they want, or if they assume you look like the kind of person who probably must be a 'mojado' ['wetback'] and don't have papers — the presumption is they can do what they want to you."

"As the cops swung at Mark's head," Barnes said, "they told him what the charges were. He was called a 'Mexican-lover.' He was accused of going to some effort to learn at least one other language of people he works with other than the one he was born into. He was accused, in the good old American tradition, of being a 'nigger-lover.' He was accused of having AIDS. Because if all this was true, he must be 'queer' too. He was told all this while they beat him."

Also not unusual were the actions of the cops who arrested Curtis when they fabricated "evidence" to back the rape charge by pulling down Curtis' pants. Or Curtis' conviction on the basis of the arresting officer's perjured testimony.

Nor was the internal police investigation anything out of the ordinary. The cops cleared themselves of the charge of police brutality, concluding that Curtis ended up with a shattered cheekbone as a result of his attempt to grab a cop's empty holster,

while Curtis was naked in a roomful of police officers!

These aspects of Curtis' frame-up are business as usual in capitalist society, the type of things that happen to young workers every week, in every city, in every country where the bankers and businessmen run the government. And that's one reason workers and farmers from Auckland, New Zealand, to Stockholm, Sweden, so readily identify with Curtis.

### Presumption of innocence

Much to the chagrin of the prosecutor and other ruling-class servants in Des Moines, most working people who are approached to take a stand on the fight to free Mark Curtis don't start with the question, "How do I know he's innocent?" or "Prove to me that he's innocent." No one can "prove" with 100 percent certainty that Mark Curtis did not attempt a rape on a Des Moines porch March 4, 1988.

Workers, however, cherish the right to presumption of innocence. This is a right for which the toilers have fought over hundreds of years. In his speech to the rally last September, SWP leader Barnes explained that the presumption of innocence "is one of the most important milestones on the march to human solidarity and to the ability of the great majority of the world to act as fully human beings. No one in the world is obligated to prove Mark Curtis' innocence."

For serfs under feudalism, for Blacks under slavery, and for women during most of the history of class-divided society, there was no such thing as the presumption of innocence, he noted. There was, simply, the lord's, slavemaster's, or husband's property.

"It's not that you are innocent until proven guilty. You are innocent. Innocent," Barnes continued. "This is a country where everything is the opposite. It's the presumption of guilt that dominates in the 'democratic' United States. Saturday night is open season on any young Black man in the United States . . . for every young Puerto Rican. It's open season on women much of the time. It's not the presumption of innocence but the horror of guilt."

Curtis didn't get a fair trial, as the motion for a new trial filed by his attorney, Mark Pennington, detailed. (The motion has been reproduced by the defense committee and copies are available.) It is impossible for workers and exploited farmers to get a fair trial under capitalism, because the court system — from the jury to the judge — is stacked against them from the beginning.

During Curtis' trial, the presumption was that Curtis is a liar and is guilty and that the arresting officer was telling the truth. And every important piece of evi-

dence that could have challenged that presumption of guilt — including discrediting the cop's testimony — was excluded by the judge.

### Ruling-class' goals

The rulers' goals, Barnes explained in his speech, are "large in this case. They want cities like Des Moines not to be places where people will fight for social change. They want people like Mark Curtis to quit moving to Des Moines to look for a job."

"But on that they will fail. They want workers in the packing industry, paperworkers, miners, workers of all kinds who will fight, to get the message that there are limits on your fighting."

The conflict over this frame-up, however, has grown into something quite a bit bigger than what the ruling class was bargaining for. "There are two sides forming on a world scale," emphasized Barnes. "This truly will win or lose as an international battle in which the stakes are: Can this be gotten away with? Or will the attempt to do this to working people at this stage in history cost them more than it's worth?"

The ruling class didn't believe the Curtis defense effort would be able to rally workers, farmers, Blacks, Latinos, women, elected officials, socialists, communists, and religious figures, in a unified way, around this issue.

"Most important of all," said Barnes, "I think they misjudged the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. It would be very easy for us to simply embrace Mark and Kate [Kaku, Curtis' wife] as our own, as they are, and ask for everyone's help for us in this battle."

"But I think we have found out something in this fight. Mark is part of all these supporters. Fellow workers in New Caledonia, fighters in Central America, miners in Nottinghamshire, all turn to Mark as a brother, as one of them. Mark has become, and Mark's defense has become, theirs."

Barnes concluded by explaining that if this international defense effort continues and increases, "There is no way on earth they can succeed in their goal. They will not put Mark in prison for 25 years. They will not get him down on his knees. They will not prevent him from continuing to be the same person he is today, fighting for the same things, believing the same deeply held convictions, saying them openly to the entire world. That he will continue to do no matter where he finds himself, for however long."

"And if we can believe that, we know it's our obligation and our opportunity to fight in the same way. To use the language they indicted Mark for, *Unidos venceremos!* (United we will win)."

## How you can help

• **Win sponsors for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.** So far, 1,000 people from around the world have signed cards adding their names as sponsors. They include union officers, farm activists, government officials and leaders of political parties, antiracist and women's rights spokespersons, prominent civil libertarians, student leaders, and other frame-up victims.

Sponsor cards are available from the defense committee, along with a variety of literature on the case. Buttons that read: "Justice for Mark Curtis! An injury to one is an injury to all!" are also available.

• **Raise money.** The defense committee needs to raise \$50,000 in order to cover legal and publicity expenses. Con-

tributions should be sent to the Des Moines defense committee. (Checks for large tax-deductible contributions may be made out to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc.)

• **Write to Mark Curtis.** He is incarcerated in the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa, Iowa. He can receive letters, cards, and photos, only, not packages of any sort or money. Address letters to: Mark S. Curtis, No. 805338A, Box B, Anamosa, Iowa 52205. The defense committee would like to receive copies of the correspondence.

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



# Gov't bailouts for S&Ls point to bigger crisis for U.S. banks

BY SUSAN LaMONT

During the closing weeks of 1988, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's Washington, D.C., offices were the scene of a series of multibillion dollar deals aimed at selling, merging, or closing some of the more than 500 U.S. savings and loan associations — S&Ls — that are currently insolvent. The FHLBB is the government agency that regulates the 3,000 or so U.S. savings and loan associations and oversees the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp. — FSLIC. (See box.)

Far from easing concern over the effect of mounting S&L bankruptcies, these bank board-organized deals instead underscored the U.S. banking system's growing vulnerability as the next recession approaches — a trend that government agencies, regulations, and policies are powerless to reverse.

In its proposed budget for 1990, the Reagan administration called for a \$64 billion bailout of the S&Ls over five years. Many think the actual price tag will be higher.

During 1988, 222 insolvent S&Ls — also known as "thrifts" — were sold or merged by the board. At year's end, the bailout activity got more and more frantic as government officials and financiers scrambled to conclude deals before January 1 — the deadline for certain tax breaks. Seventy-five thrifts were sold in December, 34 of them in the last five days of the month alone.

The FSLIC committed \$38.6 billion in government funds to make these deals possible for financiers, corporate executives, and pension fund managers anxious to make a profit out of reorganized and refinanced thrifts.

"Our belief is that this is a sector that is undervalued and provides a lot of profit potential," said a spokesman for Robert Bass. Bass recently acquired American Savings and Loan Association of Stockton, California, with \$30 billion of assets — the largest insolvent S&L. For an investment of \$500 million over the next three years, Bass received \$1.7 billion in federal guarantees against future losses.

Bass's deal was typical. For relatively small amounts of money, those buying the bankrupt S&Ls took over millions, and sometimes billions, in assets. They received government guarantees against losses when some of the S&L's assets — like a tract of land or half-finished shopping center — are sold to liquidate bad loans. The bank board also agreed to pay the interest the S&Ls would have received on loans that are now uncollectible.

## Some economic terms

- The **Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp. (FSLIC)** is the government agency that is supposed to insure savings and loan deposits. The **Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC)** does the same thing for commercial bank deposits. Both were created in 1933 and cover deposits of up to \$100,000.

- The FSLIC is overseen by the **Federal Home Loan Bank Board**.

- A **mortgage** is an interest-bearing loan obtained from a bank in order to buy property, such as a house or land. If payments on the loan are not made, the bank can repossess the property.

- "**Freddie Mac**" and "**Fannie Mae**" are names for the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. and Federal National Mortgage Administration, quasi-government agencies that buy up mortgages and resell them as securities.

- **Securities** are interest-bearing certificates traded on stock exchanges or capital markets, such as stocks and bonds.

- For banks, deposits are **liabilities**, since they have to be repaid, and loans are **assets**, since they generate income through interest payments.

In addition, the S&Ls' buyers received sizable tax breaks. Revlon Inc. chairman Ronald Perelman, for example, put up \$315 million to buy five Texas S&Ls, with assets of \$12 billion. In return, at least \$600 million in future profits from his new acquisitions won't be taxed.

The billions put up by the federal government to back the buy-outs of the S&Ls sold so far have not solved the broader crisis facing these banking institutions, however. S&L losses are increasing at a rate of \$1 billion per month, and overall losses are estimated between \$50 and \$100 billion to date.

In addition to the hundreds of bankrupt S&Ls that haven't yet been packaged and resold, another 500 are effectively insolvent, but just haven't been designated so by the FSLIC. And many of the remaining "healthy" thrifts are shaky. "Nothing fundamental has been changed by these deals that would lead you to call them resolutions" of the S&Ls' crisis, said one banking consultant recently.

## What happened to S&Ls?

S&Ls, which date from the mid-1800s in the United States, are banking institutions whose main activity consists of accepting deposits from the public and investing those deposits in long-term mortgages, usually from 15 to 30 years. They used to be known more commonly as "building and loans."

S&Ls first came under federal regulation in 1933 when Congress passed legislation aimed at reviving the collapsed banking system. Bank deposits, including those in federally chartered S&Ls, were covered by federal deposit insurance for the first time — up to \$5,000 for S&L deposits.

Since then, the federal government has increased the size of S&L deposits covered by insurance. The most recent raise was from \$40,000 to \$100,000 in 1980.

For many years, thrifts provided the majority of U.S. home loan mortgages, particularly during the period of capitalist expansion after World War II. Recently, however, others have gotten into the mortgage business, including commercial banks and corporations like General Motors and Sears. As a result, the portion of mortgages held by S&Ls had dropped to 39 percent by 1987, down from 48 percent a decade ago.

The current S&L crisis began in the late 1970s and early '80s.

In the face of an inflationary explosion and the dollar's decline in relation to other imperialist countries' currencies, the U.S. rulers moved decisively at that time to raise interest rates. By 1981 the prime rate was almost 20 percent.

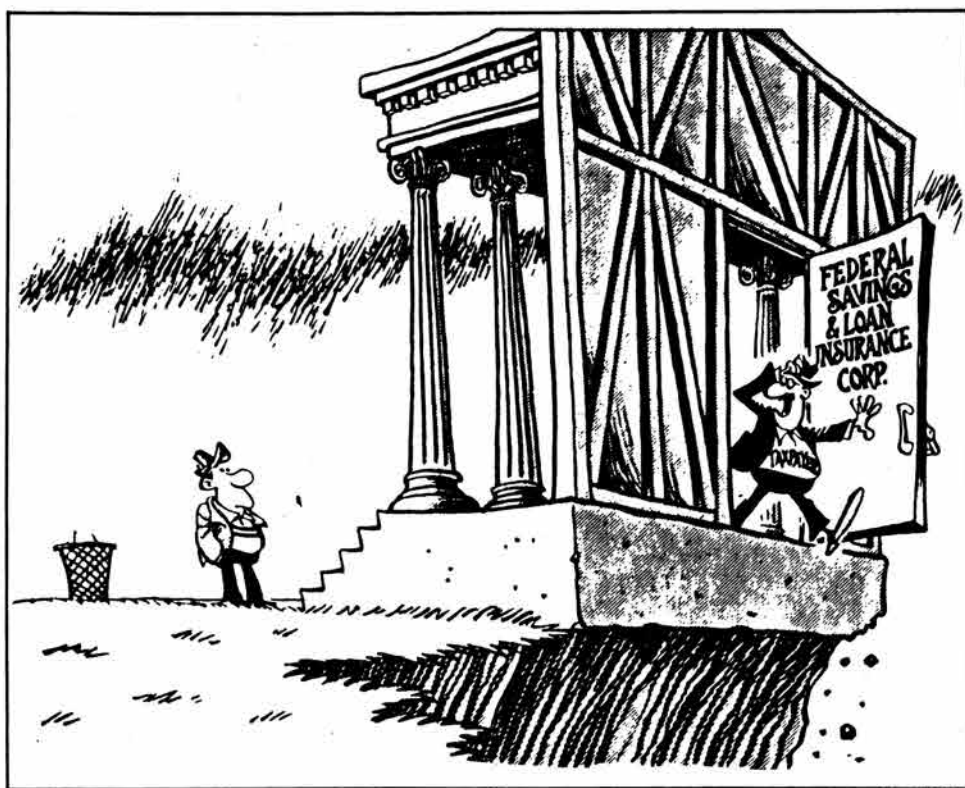
The higher interest rates then began pulling funds away from the S&Ls into other banks and funds until the government in 1980 lifted the ceiling on interest rates the S&Ls could give on deposits.

S&Ls then had to pay out higher interest to their depositors, while only taking in fixed-rate mortgage payments based on earlier, lower interest rates. They began to lose money in a big way.

In 1981 and '82, government rules were changed — "deregulation" — to allow S&Ls to offer variable-rate mortgages so their revenues could rise along with the interest rates they pay to depositors. They were also permitted to diversify their financial dealings, in an effort to increase their income. The amount of capital required by thrifts to back up new lending was lowered.

Depositors anxious to cash in on S&Ls' higher interest payments poured billions of dollars into the thrifts. This in turn prompted S&L owners to go after new loans in order to generate more income. The looser government regulations made it possible for them to get into commercial loans, office buildings, and even fast-food operations.

"With their new-found cash, some thrifts plunged into unfamiliar investments and loans," said the authors of an October 31 *Business Week* article on S&Ls. "Butterfield S&L in Santa Ana, Calif., quin-



"My insurance company? Why, the FSLIC, of course. Why do you ask?"

tupled its assets in 1983, to \$492 million. It bought Wendy's and Love's BBQ franchises and lost heavily on both. Sunrise S&L in Boynton Beach, Fla., exploded from \$5 million to \$1.5 billion in assets between 1980 and 1985, often investing in speculative, 'no money down' real estate loans."

Texas was a center for much of this speculative financial activity, based on high oil prices and a boom in real estate values. But in 1986 oil prices plunged, real estate values collapsed, and foreclosures reached all-time highs. By 1988, 47 percent of Texas S&Ls were insolvent.

The S&L crisis extends well beyond Texas, however, and now financial analysts are concerned that the Northeast may be the next region to be hit especially hard by S&L failures.

## Mortgage trading

The economic upturn that began after the 1981-82 recession has been fueled by a speculative binge that the S&Ls' owners, along with other bankers, are right in the middle of.

Faced with declining profit rates, the owners of U.S. banks and corporations have been issuing "junk" bonds to finance an orgy of mergers and takeovers — like the recent \$25 billion RJR Nabisco leveraged buy-out — and sinking their capital into a mushrooming variety of paper securities. Business, government, consumer, and mortgage debt has reached astronomical levels.

The huge amounts of cash that flowed into S&Ls in the '80s also caused the explosive growth of the mortgage-trading business.

Now, quasi-government agencies like "Freddie Mac" and "Fannie Mae", engineered by big Wall Street investment firms, buy up blocks of mortgages from local S&Ls, bundle them together into standardized pools, provide guarantees against default, and resell them as interest-bearing securities to investors, which include big insurance companies and pension funds.

"A few years ago, such rapid trading in mortgages barely existed," the *Wall Street Journal* reported August 17. "Last year, however, \$238 billion of mortgages were bundled together and resold as securities, according to [Wall Street investment firm] Salomon Brothers Inc. Though down slightly from the 1986 record, that's nearly as much as U.S. companies raised by selling stocks and bonds in 1987."

Last year, Freddie Mac bought \$77 billion of mortgages from S&Ls, banks, and other lenders, and made \$301 million in profits.

## Solutions to S&L crisis?

The depth of the crisis in the S&L banking system, and the size of the government's bailout, has prompted debate in Washington and on Wall Street about what to do.

One proposal is to merge the FSLIC and FDIC, which insures deposits in commercial banks. The FDIC, while in somewhat better shape than the FSLIC at the moment, lost money for the first time in its history in 1988 — between \$3 billion and \$4 billion.

Its reserves now stand at around \$15 billion.

Other proposals include separating the FSLIC from the Federal Home Loan Bank Board; increasing the cost of premiums the banks pay for federal deposit insurance; lowering the amount of deposits covered by insurance; charging depositors themselves for the cost of insurance; and tightening up on S&L lending policies.

More proposals may be raised in Congress, where the House Banking Committee began hearings on the S&L crisis January 10.

Regardless of what other changes get made, the government bailouts will continue for the time being, however, in order to protect for as long as possible the wealthy shareholders and bondholders who stand to lose billions when banks go under.

## Other banking problems

The S&Ls are not the only wing of the U.S. banking system that's in trouble.

In 1988 at least 213 commercial banks failed, more than the 203 that went under last year and the highest in the FDIC's 55-years of existence. According to FDIC chairman L. William Seidman, "nonperforming loans" on the books of the 13,239 U.S. banks jumped significantly last year, and the banks made only \$3.6 billion in profits, the lowest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Some financial analysts argue that the FDIC is on the way to joining the FSLIC in bankruptcy.

The main government agencies that lend to farmers are also experiencing difficulties. Last year Congress had to pass a \$4 billion rescue bill for the Farm Credit System, which controls federal land banks. The FCS holds more than \$50 billion of the \$160 billion debt owed by U.S. farmers.

Now the Farmers Home Administration, which also provides loans to farmers, says that it has amassed losses of \$36 billion.

In addition, the debt owed by the semicolonial countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia to U.S., British, Canadian, French, Japanese, and other imperialist banks now stands at \$1.32 trillion.

These growing difficulties for banks and other lending agencies pose the prospect of a collapse of the banking system with the next serious economic downturn. This was avoided when the stock market plunged in October 1987, but the conditions for it continue to get ripe.

The S&L crisis serves to underscore how illusory is the belief that government insurance can protect the small deposits of working people.

The FSLIC is already running on empty, and the FDIC is headed in the same direction. Yet more than \$3 trillion is deposited in supposedly insured bank, savings and loan, and credit union accounts in the United States. In addition to losing their jobs and farms when the next recession comes, millions of workers, farmers, and small businesspeople will also lose their life savings.

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# How British imperialism created Jordan

BY HARRY RING

(First of two parts)

Washington's decision to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization was a result of the year-long Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But it reversed its course on recognizing the PLO only after unsuccessful tries for other alternatives.

Secretary of State George Shultz had searched fruitlessly for non-PLO Palestinian "leaders" to deal with. And he had no better results with efforts to persuade various Arab regimes to undertake negotiations with Washington and Tel Aviv with an eye toward ending the uprising.

For a number of years, Washington has regarded Jordan's King Hussein as a likely ally in efforts to contain the Palestinian movement and has taken a favorable view of the "Jordanian option" as a means of curbing the Palestinian struggle.

Back in 1982, President Ronald Reagan floated the idea of a Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. "Self-government by the Palestinians with Jordan offers the best chance for durable . . . peace," he suggested.

At the time, the Israeli regime rejected the Reagan proposition. But recently the idea was revived by Shimon Peres, who was until recently Israel's foreign minister.

In a December 21 guest column in the *New York Times*, Peres wrote that "the suggestion of an independent Palestinian identity is based on the notion of artificially dividing the Palestinian people."

He continued: "With Palestinians in Jordan and the West Bank sharing a common culture, dialect, heritage, and family ties, the Jordan River can serve neither as a knife nor as an iron curtain severing links that do not end at river's edge."

While reiterating his government's refusal to deal with the PLO, Peres suggested there might be a solution "within a Jordanian-Palestinian framework."

He conceded there was a difficulty with his proposal since Hussein had severed his administrative and financial ties with the West Bank last July. However, Peres wrote, Hussein's decision may be "reversible."

Peres' talk of a confederation solution may be nothing more than a trial balloon and an effort to conjure up a more "reasonable" image for himself in the United States.

Regardless of his motivation, there is purpose behind focusing on Jordan and Hussein. Like Reagan, Peres knows that Hussein has a long record of trying to cooperate with the Israeli rulers at the expense of the Palestinian liberation struggle and that he has aimed many blows at that struggle and its leadership.

The Jordanian monarch lives with an abiding fear that victory for the Palestinian freedom movement would mean the end of his rule, and he has acted accordingly.

To understand why this is so, it's useful to take a look at the history of Jordan — at how the country was created by Great Britain, and at its relations with Israel and the United States, the neighboring Arab countries, and the Palestinian people.

Jordan — first called Transjordan — was established only 68 years ago. It was created by British imperialism, which dominated that part of the Mideast at the time.

For some six centuries, the area that was to become Transjordan had been a part of the Ottoman Empire. Put together by the Turks beginning in the 1300s, at its peak the empire ranged from Hungary in Europe across Arabia and into North Africa.

## Ottoman Empire disintegrates

By the 18th century, the empire was beginning to disintegrate. The Turkish rulers faced rising national rebellions and rivalry from contending European powers.

In the late 19th century, British and French imperialism began moving in and establishing spheres of influence. Their aim was to take over.

When the imperialist rulers launched World War I in 1914, an already badly crippled Ottoman Empire aligned itself with the German-led Central Powers. It did not survive the defeat that followed.

Even prior to the Ottoman defeat, the British had established links with various



Shaded areas show West Bank and Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since June 1967 war.

Arab politicians, including members of the Hashemite clan, which later provided the three kings of Jordan.

The first of these was Hussein ibn Ali, then sharif of Mecca. During the world war, he obtained British support for a rebellion against the Turks. He thought he had British support for Arab independence, but this proved to be a serious misunderstanding.

After the war Hussein wanted to proclaim himself "King of the Arab Lands." But the victorious British and their allies vetoed this. Instead, Hussein was installed as king of Hijaz, an area now part of Saudi Arabia. Nine years later, he was overthrown and died in exile in Jordan.

Hussein's sons, Abdullah and Faisal, were also politicians. Abdullah became foreign minister of Hijaz, and Faisal became king of Syria. But the French, who had taken over Syria, booted him out.

Abdullah led troops toward Damascus to avenge his brother's honor. But the British and French agreed this was a poor idea.

## An offer he couldn't refuse

Winston Churchill, then British colonial secretary, persuaded Abdullah of a different course. He would be made head man in a British-controlled principality that had been part of Syria during the Ottoman period.

The "nation" of Transjordan was declared, and Abdullah was crowned as its emir, or prince, in 1921.

Transjordan was an impoverished, largely barren strip of land along the east bank of the Jordan River.

Most of the area was desert, populated by nomadic Bedouin tribes of camel and goat herders.

There were few schools and no colleges, libraries, or medical facilities. The postal system was so minimal that until 1927, Jordan didn't have its own stamps.

Abdullah's regime had to be financed by the British.

This was a minor handout for the British rulers, who had gained a big, rich chunk of the Mideast.

With the end of World War I, the Allied

Powers divided among themselves the former colonial possessions of their defeated rivals.

The carving up of the Mideast was agreed on at a 1920 meeting in San Remo, Italy, convened by Britain, Italy, France, Japan, Greece, and Belgium.

To give such naked plunder a veneer of legality and respectability, the League of Nations was created.

It was agreed that the league would issue "mandates" to the winners to administer the various colonies they had grabbed.

The mandates were intended to create the fiction that the stolen colonies were to be administered on behalf of the league for a "temporary" period; the mandates would remain in effect only until the colonies were "ready" for self-rule.

## 'Civilizers'

This, according to the league statute, was to protect "peoples not yet able to stand by themselves" whose "well-being and development . . . form a sacred trust of civilization."

To this end, the fate of the colonies would be "entrusted to advanced nations . . . as mandatories on behalf of the League."

Three types of mandates were created — "A," "B," and "C." Those awarded the "A" classification were deemed to be civilized enough for independence — but not quite ready. Those graded "B" and "C" were seen as at a stage where there was no need to speak of projected independence.

Regarding the Mideast, it was agreed that France be given "A" mandates for Syria and Lebanon. Britain was given the same for Iraq (then Mesopotamia) and for the area embracing both Palestine and what was to become Transjordan.

Iraq wrested independence from Britain in 1930. And in 1936 France signed independence agreements with Syria and Lebanon. Britain held onto Palestine and Transjordan until the end of World War II. By then it had lost control of the area.

That outcome had been foreseen by the British rulers, and from the outset they tried to stave it off.

While World War I was still going on, the British colonialists realized that with victory they would be faced by a rising Arab independence movement. They began preparing the groundwork to thwart such a development.

A key move was to enlist the support of the Zionist movement. In Europe, Jewish immigration to Palestine was being promoted by the Zionists with the claim that this was the Jewish "homeland."

In November 1917 Britain's foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour, issued a declaration that his government viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" and pledged Britain's "best endeavors" to help achieve this.

Despite the Balfour Declaration, history soon made it plain that British imperialism had no interest in creating a separate state for Jews in Palestine.

Rather, it saw Jewish immigration there as a potentially effective counterweight to the aspirations of the Palestinian and neighboring Arab peoples.

(In 1948, when it could no longer hold on, the British government turned its Palestine "mandate" over to the United Nations, successor to the League of Nations. This opened the way for the creation of Israel.)

While Britain saw the Zionist settlers as a counterweight to the Palestinians, they also saw Abdullah and Transjordan as a counterweight to the Zionists.

The 1922 League of Nations mandate incorporated the Balfour Declaration supporting the "objective" of a Jewish homeland. But it specifically precluded Transjordan from this proviso.

Churchill met Abdullah in Jerusalem and convinced him to accept the not-very-attractive post of emir of Transjordan by suggesting that it was a stepping stone to the throne of Syria — provided the French government agreed.

But the French rulers never agreed. Yet Abdullah served British imperialism loyally until he was killed by an assassin in 1951.

Abdullah's regime was formally launched by the British in 1921. One of his first acts was the creation of a military force, financed by the British government and commanded by an Englishman.

## Arab Legion

Comprised mainly of Bedouin soldiers, this force was known as the Arab Legion. Initially, it functioned as a desert police patrol assigned to stamp out conflicts between various warring Bedouin tribes. In World War II Arab Legion troops fought alongside the British in Iraq and Syria. The British used the Legion during this time to crush an uprising in Iraq.

Abdullah's rule in Transjordan was autocratic, consisting largely of passing on orders given to him by an assigned British "Resident."

In 1928, Jordan was declared formally independent. Its financial affairs and foreign policy, however, continued to be determined by the British Resident.

With no base of his own in the country, Abdullah had little choice but to accept this. Jordan's economy was almost exclusively based on primitive agriculture and stock-breeding. Industry was limited to turning out soap, cigarettes, and matches. Its first cement factory didn't open until 1966.

Yet Abdullah continued to aspire to a bigger role in the Arab world, casting across the border to Palestine.

He developed ties with prominent Palestinian families. At the same time he tried to work out a deal with the Zionists. In 1930 he agreed to and encouraged Jewish settlement in Transjordan. But local opposition and a British veto ended that.

In 1946 Abdullah negotiated an "independence" treaty with Britain. He was proclaimed king, and in 1948 Transjordan became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

A parliament was created with an elected lower house and a senate appointed by the king. The king can dissolve the parliament. He also appoints the prime minister and judges.

As part of the independence agreement, the British government agreed to cover budget deficits and to continue financing the Arab Legion, which would continue to be commanded by a British officer.

(To be continued)



# 'Moderate' Nicaraguan paper starts up

## Seeks 'third road,' hopes for divisions among Sandinistas

BY LARRY SEIGLE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — A grouping of self-proclaimed "moderate" opponents of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has begun publishing a weekly newspaper here. The tabloid, *La Crónica* (The Chronicle), has been selling about 4,500 copies weekly since it was launched in November, according to Edwin Yilescas Salinas, its managing editor.

"Moderate, critical, balanced," says Yilescas, when asked to define the paper's point of view.

Financing for the new publication is coming from a Dutch foundation known as NOVIB. "We have enough money for at least six months, and possibly a year," Yilescas told the *Militant*. He says the paper hopes to raise additional money from advertisements, "mainly from professional people and small businesses."

Yilescas is a deputy of the Democratic

democratic outlook. "We have been evolving toward broader and more democratic positions," said Sánchez several months ago. "We have given up dogmatic positions learned from books."

### A 'third road'?

*La Crónica* wants to become a pole of attraction for those who reject both the FSLN's leadership and the openly pro-U.S. opposition forces. In seeking to chart a "third road," the paper's editors also hope to attract some who are currently members of the FSLN. "The problem is not *sandinismo*," Yilescas emphasizes, "but the errors of the Sandinistas."

The FSLN "appears to be a prisoner of anachronistic ideological conceptions, with an obsolete political program," *La Crónica* wrote recently.

The editors don't challenge the FSLN's policy of maintaining what is called the

other state entities as well."

He added, "In the Soviet Union one of the fruits of perestroika is the formation of private and cooperative businesses, which in a short time have shown much greater efficiency than the state enterprises." That lesson should be applied in Nicaragua, Miranda said.

But, he continued, there are "two indispensable conditions for the success of such measures: private businessmen must have sufficient guarantees to confidently invest, and workers must act maturely and not obstruct administrative and management efforts."

### Businessmen unconvinced

For its part, *La Crónica* reacted to Lewites' announcement by reporting the opinion of "entrepreneurs" who are suspicious because "the Minister of Tourism's apparent turn toward détente with private

alition government. The hope is for a split in the FSLN that would open the door to such a possibility.

With its eyes already on the elections scheduled for 1990, *La Crónica* predicted, "There are two possibilities. One is to develop an arrangement behind the scenes (a section of the opposition and the FSLN), presenting a front of the social democratic style. The second is for an opposition to emerge in the last months from within the FSLN itself and present a program in the Mexican style."

### Cheers for perestroika

*La Crónica's* enthusiasm for private enterprise in Nicaragua parallels its unabashed support for Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika policy. Praise for Gorbachev is a regular feature of the paper, where it is often combined with denunciations of the "dogmatic" policies of the Cuban Communist Party.

Yilescas makes no bones about the editors' affinity for the Soviet president. "Gorbachev is proposing to correct the mistakes of the past. He doesn't have an ideological mentality," Yilescas says.

One article in *La Crónica* asserted, "The Soviet leader offers the olive branch of peace. He doesn't want to continue being a military giant and an economic and technological dwarf. He is discarding confrontation and raising the banner of dialogue and compromise in its place."

"He wants to continue and deepen understanding with the United States in all possible areas. Gorbachev is committed to carrying through to the end his revolution against political orthodoxy and ideological dogmatism."

"In contrast, Fidel Castro clings to obsolete positions and methods inherited from Stalinism and from the recent Brezhnev era. He is the self-proclaimed jealous guardian of the sacred dogmas."

"He rejects all reforms as bourgeois deviationism or weak-kneed revisionism. He believes it is better to remain rigid to the end, rather than run the risks of error at the dawning of a new era."

### Views of significant layers

While it is too soon to gauge the degree of success *La Crónica* can expect, it is evident that the paper's political outlook reflects the thinking and inclinations of some significant layers of middle-class people, both in and out of government.

At the same time, it has some features aimed at attracting a broader readership interested in politics generally. One of these is its relatively extensive international coverage, which contrasts markedly with the scanty reporting on important world developments in *Barricada*, published by the FSLN, and in *El Nuevo Diario*.

One early fan of *La Crónica* has been the *New York Times*, which published a complimentary article by its Nicaragua correspondent, Stephen Kinzer. For the *Times* editors, the new publication seems to represent a step toward a more effective internal opposition to the FSLN, distanced from the failed contras.

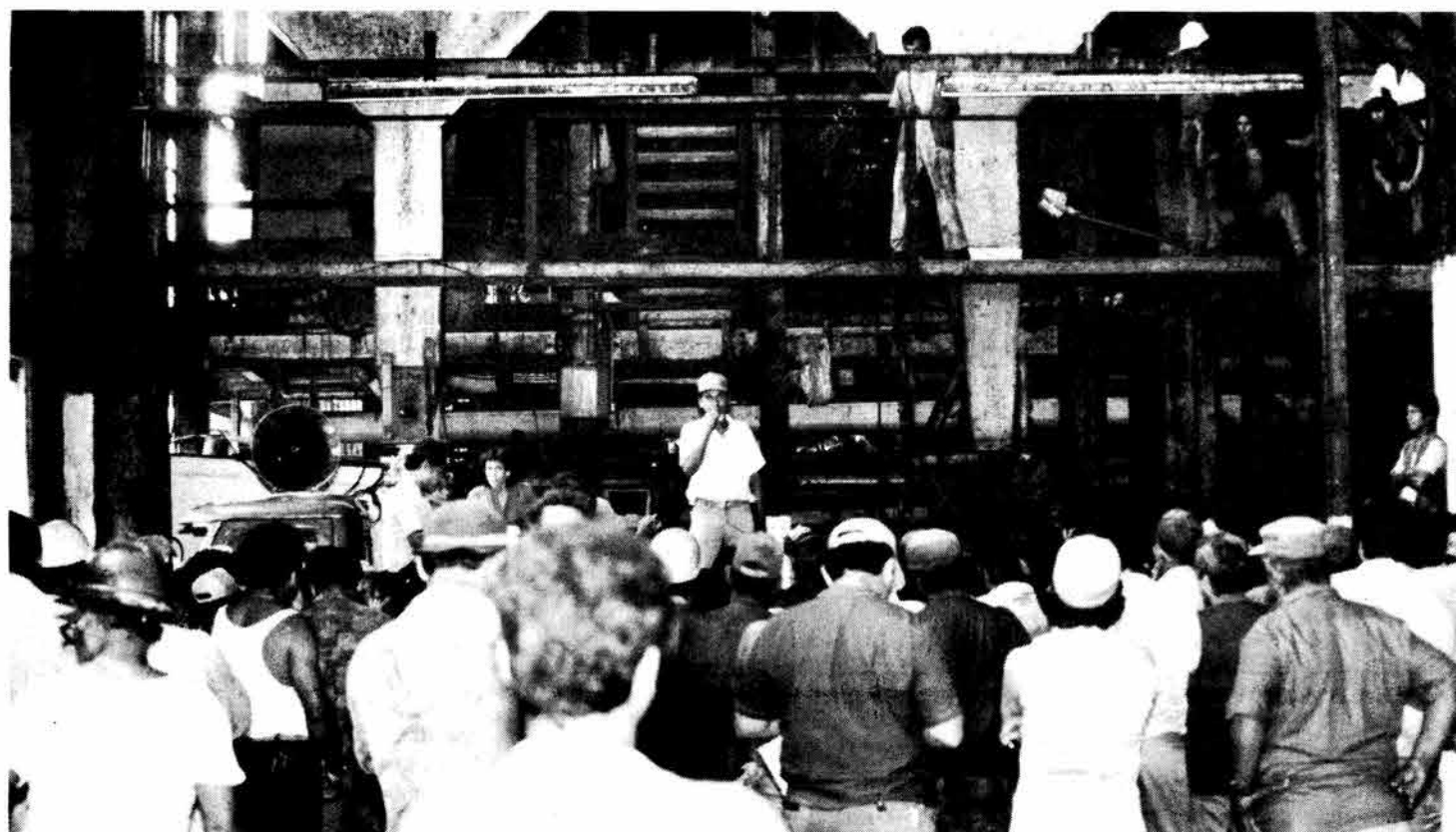
*La Crónica*, in turn, reprinted the *New York Times* article in full, saluting Kinzer for being "an expert on Nicaraguan reality in all its aspects."

FSLN leaders have greeted the new publication politely, but none have publicly expressed any opinions on it. In fact, the closest thing to a direct political comment so far has come from *La Semana Cómica*, a weekly that combines often sharp political satire with dirty jokes and pictures of nude women in provocative poses.

The paper's editor, Roger Sánchez, who is also the cartoonist for *Barricada*, drew "Christmas baskets" for Nicaragua's newspapers.

The basket for *El Nuevo Diario* was stuffed with dismembered limbs and victims of robbers and rapists, in honor of the paper's notorious sensationalism. *Barricada's* basket contained a copy of "What Is Not to Be Done," by Lenin, along with the "Complete Speeches" of the FSLN.

*La Crónica's* basket included a bottle of American whiskey and a bottle of Russian vodka, together with a packet of Dutch condoms.



Recently nationalized San Antonio sugar mill. *La Crónica* voices the anxieties of mill's former owners and other entrepreneurs fearful of further confiscations.

Conservative Party in the National Assembly. The PCD is an offshoot of the old Conservative Party, the traditional capitalist opposition party in the days of the Somoza regime. It is the largest opposition party in the assembly, with 14 of the 96 seats.

Joining Yilescas as editors of the new paper are two colleagues from the National Assembly's opposition benches. The paper's editor-in-chief is Luis Humberto Guzmán of the People's Social Christian Party. The PPSC platform favors "Christian-inspired socialism."

The international editor, Luis Sánchez Sancho, is one of two Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN) deputies in the National Assembly. The PSN, founded in 1944, used to be Nicaragua's traditional Communist Party, following Moscow's policies. It opposed the FSLN's revolutionary strategy during the fight against the Somoza dictatorship, and has been in opposition to the FSLN since the victory of the revolution in 1979.

Recently, the PSN leadership has been talking about explicitly adopting a social

"mixed economy." But they demand a guarantee that the FSLN won't move in the future toward eliminating capitalist ownership of factories and big farms and establishing a planned economy.

This question was posed anew recently when the government minister in charge of tourism, Herty Lewites, announced plans to "reprivatize" several restaurants and hotels that are now run by Inturismo, the government tourism agency.

The plan itself isn't particularly controversial, and few have argued for continued state ownership of the tourist spots. But Lewites' announcement was seen as connected to a broader discussion about the direction of the revolution.

The decision was greeted enthusiastically, for example, by Adolfo Miranda, whose column in the progovernment daily *El Nuevo Diario* regularly promotes the current Soviet policy of *perestroika* as a model for Nicaragua. From Miranda's perspective, privatization represents the road forward "not only for Inturismo, but for

investors contradicts the political direction being taken by the Sandinistas."

In particular, *La Crónica* complained, a recent statement by Jaime Wheelock, minister of agrarian development and reform, that the profitable Flor de Caña rum company might be nationalized has provoked a "wave of anxiety" at the company. Flor de Caña is owned by one of Nicaragua's wealthiest families.

"The concept of the mixed economy, according to Nicaraguan investors," *La Crónica* said, "has been vague for six years as a result of the political style of the FSLN, which contributes to the capital flight and a growing incredulity among private entrepreneurs."

"Industrialists and entrepreneurs in the private sector are skeptical about making investments as long as the Sandinista Directorate continues carrying out confiscations."

The political guarantee that *La Crónica* demands from the FSLN is nothing less than agreement to form some kind of co-



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# Economic earthquake pushes Latin America deeper into crisis

BY LARRY SEIGLE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The accumulating pressures in the world capitalist system pushed the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean further into economic crisis in 1988.

No longer confined to a few "trouble spots," the crisis has become generalized. And it is cracking the foundations of capitalist political stability from Mexico to Brazil.

In 1988, per capita production in the region as a whole declined by 1.5 percent, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. All signs point to a continuing, and even accelerating, contraction in the coming year.

Per capita income is lower in many, if not most, countries in the hemisphere than it was 10 years ago. But the per capita income figures veil the real extent of the calamity that has struck the toilers because the statistics lump together the well-to-do with the worst off.

For the vast majority of workers and peasants, the human toll of this man-made catastrophe exceeds even the most devastating natural disaster.

- Today, four out of every 10 people in Latin America and the Caribbean live in poverty, half of them in extreme poverty. A decade ago the figure was three out of 10.

- Seven hundred thousand infants die every year from diseases that are easily curable.

- Forty percent of families consume less than the minimum daily caloric intake required by human beings.

- In 27 countries, at least one-third of the population has no running water.

- An estimated 44 percent of the work force is unemployed.

Moreover, depression conditions are now being combined with accelerating inflation. In the region as a whole, the rate reached 200 percent in 1987, and the pace in 1988 was at least as high.

## Collapse of 'economic miracles'

Although the economic earthquake hasn't struck with equal force everywhere, no country has been exempt. Since the crisis began at the beginning of the decade, there have been sharp downturns in countries such as Mexico and Brazil, which in the 1970s were often pointed to as economic miracles proving that "free enterprise" is the road to development and progress in Latin America.

Between 1970 and 1981, per capita production in Brazil grew by 82 percent. But from 1982 to 1987, the per capita growth rate shrank to under 4 percent.

In Mexico the change was equally sharp. Per capita production grew by 49 percent from 1970 to 1981. But from 1982 to 1987, it contracted by 14 percent. And real wages, which had climbed by 15 percent in the 1970s, have shrunk by more than 30 percent since the crisis began.

In the 1980s, per capita production has fallen by 28 percent in Guyana, 26 percent in Bolivia, 16 percent in Haiti, 17 percent in Nicaragua, 20 percent in Guatemala, and 14 percent each in El Salvador and Honduras.

## Strangulation by debt

The peasants and workers of Latin America and the Caribbean are caught in the ever-tightening grip of the declining imperialist-dominated world economy. The pressures that were behind the October 1987 international stock market crash have already had devastating consequences throughout the continent.

More and more of the value that is produced by the labor of the working people of the colonial and semicolonial countries is being sucked up by the ruling families in the imperialist nations. A major mechanism for this intensified exploitation is the foreign debt.

The result has been what even the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations calls "a massive, perverse redistribution of income" from the poor to the rich. Every year since

1982 there has been a net outflow of capital from Latin America and the Caribbean to the imperialist countries. Between 1982 and 1987, \$147 billion was transferred out.

Taking the region as a whole, almost one of every three dollars earned from exports in 1987 went to the foreign debt. But in some countries, the figure was higher. Argentina, for example, paid 53 percent of what it made from exports to service its debt.

For the Central American countries taken together, the debt ate up 40 percent of all export earnings in 1987. But for Nicaragua, hit by Washington's contra war and economic blockade, the figure was an astonishing 70 percent.

International organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are continuing to demand that the governments of the hemisphere reduce social spending, drive down wages, and cut back what scanty health, safety, and environmental protection the toilers have won.

According to the Pan American Health Office, five countries have reduced spending on public health by at least 40 percent, four countries by 25 percent, and four by 20 percent.

The bankers' only goal is to keep the interest payments flowing in on the continent's debt, which now totals \$430 billion. Interest on this debt adds up to \$40 billion a year.

The result is brutal austerity policies promoted by capitalist governments as necessary to pay the debt. Even the hope of investment in economic development is disappearing.

Nonetheless, the debt is unpayable. Literally. Half the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have been forced to unilaterally reduce service on the debt.

## Trade restrictions

In addition, as competition in the world market intensifies, the imperialist ruling classes increasingly resort to import quotas, tariffs, and other trade barriers against products exported by semicolonial countries.

For example, Washington has acted to protect profits of the giant sugar monopolies by continually lowering the quotas for sugar imported into the United States. In 1988 the overall quota was the lowest it has been in a century. One of the results has been that Caribbean sugar and other exports to the United States have declined by a third in this decade.

At the same time, Latin American and Caribbean exports fetch lower prices on the world market, while goods imported from the imperialist countries command higher and higher prices.

In 1987, world market prices for the main exports of Latin America and the Caribbean were only 60 percent of what they had been in 1980. In 1988, prices of metals and many agricultural exports rose, temporarily improving the situation. But the long-term trend is in the other direction.

Even under the most favorable terms of trade for the Third World, there is a built-in inequality in trading relations between the imperialist ruling families and semicolonial countries. This is because the average productivity of labor in the imperialist countries is higher due to their greater industrial development. That is, a commodity produced with an hour's labor time in an industrialized country is usually sold on the world market for the same price as a similar one embodying many hours of labor in a semicolonial country. The result of this inequality is a constant, hidden transfer of value to the capitalists in the imperialist countries.

## Coming depression

The economic crisis plaguing Latin America and the Caribbean is intensifying despite the fact that the U.S. economy is still in the upswing of its business cycle. When the inevitable downward plunge comes, it will likely lead to a very sharp recession. The last serious recession in the United States was in 1981-82, but at that



**Brazilian gold miners in the Amazon. More and more of value produced by the labor of working people in Latin America is being sucked up by the ruling families of imperialist nations.**

time there was a net inflow of capital into Latin America. Today, the situation is very different and bears the possibility of a recession leading to a full-scale international depression that will have catastrophic social, political, and economic consequences in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Capitalists in the Third World, with small home markets, are heavily dependent on exporting their goods. They are hit particularly hard by contracting world markets and the accompanying intensified international competition.

A look at the growth rate in Latin America and the Caribbean over the last 20 years leaves no room for doubt on this score. The 1974-75 recession in the United States and other imperialist countries brought the per capita growth rate in the region down virtually to zero in 1975.

From 1976 through 1980 there was some recovery. But when the sharp 1981-82 recession hit the United States, the growth rate descended into negative figures. Per capita production in Latin America and the Caribbean declined by 1.6 percent in 1981, 3.4 percent in 1982, and 4.7 percent in 1983.

Not until 1984 was there even modest per capita growth, and this lasted only three years. In 1987, the per capita growth rate declined to .3 percent. In 1988, as we have seen, it slipped back into negative figures.

## 'Ominous political decay'

The economic crisis is already producing fractures in political structures that have long been relatively stable. The sea change reflected in last year's election in Mexico, ending a half-century of unchallenged domination by a single ruling party, is only one example of the new situation.

In the last few months, there have also been sharpening class battles, with major strikes by steelworkers in Brazil, miners in Peru, and banana workers in Honduras.

For Washington and Wall Street, and their capitalist allies throughout the hemisphere, the signals are alarming. A recent *New York Times* dispatch reported, "Latin American officials are now warning that in country after country, falling living standards are breeding a hopelessness that is beginning to translate into ominous political decay."

But for working people in the United States and other imperialist lands, the crisis has a different meaning.

The future of the toilers in the imperialist countries has become more closely linked than ever before to the fate of the workers and peasants in the semicolonial countries. No effort to unify working people in the struggle for justice in the world, and to defend our own standard of living, can succeed unless it includes a fight to change the relations that perpetuate the oppression of the Third World by the capitalists in the imperialist countries.

The call by the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party for a struggle to demand that Washington and other imperialist governments cancel the Third World debt offers a basis for forging a united struggle.

## Third World debt has doubled since 1982

According to the World Bank, the Third World debt has doubled since the debt crisis broke out in 1982. The figure now stands at \$1.32 trillion.

The swelling of the debt is largely the result of new loans issued to pay the interest on old loans that are rescheduled.

One of the consequences has been a further increase in the outflow of resources to the imperialist countries. Net payment from the Third World to the advanced capitalist countries increased from \$38 billion in 1987 to \$43 billion last year.

The decline in living standards for the toilers in the semicolonial countries has intensified. According to the World Bank, per capita income in Africa is 25 percent lower than a decade ago.

These facts, the bank warned in a recent report, point to the danger of "erosion of political support for national governments and prudent economic policies and the radicalization of attitudes."

Moreover, there is no prospect of significant economic growth. According to the report, "the immense uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the debt crisis, and, in some countries, the sheer size of the debt relative to economic capacity are daunting to all investors — internal and external."

Nonetheless, World Bank officials dismiss the idea of even moderate debt relief. "Being realistic, we just don't see this coming," Jean Baneth, director of the bank's international economics department, told the *New York Times*. — L.S.



# N.Y. meeting hails 10th anniversary of Kampuchea victory

BY FRED FELDMAN

NEW YORK — A January 7 meeting celebrating the 10th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) heard Trinh Xuan Lang, Vietnam's ambassador to the United Nations, announce an offer by the Vietnamese and Kampuchean governments to complete the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea by September 1989.

More than 100 people, including Kampucheans from New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, attended the gathering. Hosted by Casa de las Américas, the meeting was cosponsored by the Khmer Association in the U.S.A. — which organizes Kampucheans living in this country — and the Committee in Solidarity with Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos.

The meeting commemorated the ousting of the Pol Pot regime and the Jan. 7, 1979, proclamation of the PRK, headed today by President Heng Samrin and Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The Pol Pot government, which was established in 1975 in the wake of the U.S. war in Indochina, was toppled by a combined drive of Kampuchean opponents of Pol Pot and Vietnamese troops.

The Pol Pot regime had followed policies, including mass executions, that resulted in the deaths of well over 1 million Kampucheans.

The regime also waged a border war against Vietnam that resulted in many deaths, the destruction of scores of villages, and the flight of hundreds of thousands of peasants.

## Support from China, U.S.

After his regime was ousted, Pol Pot's forces were granted bases along Thailand's border with Kampuchea and massive aid from the Chinese government and other sources. At U.S. government urging, the United Nations has continued to recognize the Pol Pot-dominated forces as representing Kampuchea.

Washington openly provides aid to rightist groups that are part of a U.S.-sponsored coalition with Pol Pot.

At the New York celebration, a Kampuchean instrumental group performed traditional Khmer songs.

Vietnamese Ambassador Trinh made his announcement as one of the featured speakers at the event.

Since July, he reported, progress had been made toward a pact on Kampuchea "through serious discussions and consultations among the countries concerned, including the big powers." He said that the proposed withdrawal in September 1989 would take place as long as an agreement was reached on a cease-fire and the end of all aid and sanctuaries provided to antigovernment groups operating out of Thailand.

If no agreement is reached, the ambassador stressed, the Vietnamese government is committed to withdraw all its forces by the end of 1990.

"After total withdrawal," he said, "the responsibility for eliminating the danger of the return of Pol Pot to power will lie with the world community."

The ambassador said that the 10th anniversary was taking place in the midst of "a fast-changing situation in the world" characterized by a shift "from confrontation to détente and dialogue to solve all problems, including regional problems."

He cited as examples recent agreements concerning Angola and Namibia; Afghanistan; the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war; and the diplomatic events surrounding the Palestine Liberation Organization's proclamation of a Palestinian state.

Thong Sam Ann, representing the Khmer Association in the U.S.A., hailed the overthrow of Pol Pot as the "sweetest" of "the great moments in the history of Kampuchea."

He described the association's efforts to aid the rebuilding of Kampuchea. Recently the group organized the establishment of a classroom, two Buddhist pagodas, and three small medical clinics.

"We will keep this revolutionary recovery going forward," he said. He appealed for support in unseating the Pol Pot forces at the UN, and in forcing the U.S. and other governments to end the aid and sanctuaries for Pol Pot and his allies.

Other speakers included Eileen Blumenthal, an associate professor at Rutgers University, who presented slides of her recent visit to Kampuchea; Ambassador Saly Khamy, ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the UN; Chan Bun Han, representing both sponsoring organizations; and Merle Ratner of the Committee in Solidarity with Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos, who chaired the event.

## Soviet paper admits Stalin role in Trotsky murder

BY DOUG JENNESS

A Soviet historian has published an article in the widely read *Literary Gazette*, a Moscow weekly, connecting Joseph Stalin's regime with the assassination of Leon Trotsky on Aug. 20, 1940.

Trotsky, a prominent leader of the October 1917 Russian revolution and of the Soviet government in its early, revolutionary years, was living in exile in Mexico. He had been driven out of the Soviet Union by Stalin for fighting to maintain the Marxist policies carried out by the government and the Communist Party under V.I. Lenin's leadership.

According to a dispatch from Reuters, a British news agency, picked up by major dailies in the United States, historian N. Vasetsky said that Leonid Eitingon, a Soviet police agent, recruited and trained Spanish-born Jaime Ramon Mercader and his mother to be part of an assassination squad. Mercader gained access to the Trotsky household on the outskirts of Mexico City and struck the revolutionary leader on the head with a mountain climber's ice ax.

"Stalin could not forget old insults..." Vasetsky wrote, according to Reuters. "Either he himself took the decision or let his entourage know that it was time to put an end to Trotsky."

What most concerned Stalin, however, was not a personal grudge over "insults." Trotsky by 1940 was the sole survivor of the Bolshevik leadership team put together by Lenin who was fighting to maintain an international organization with a communist program in the interests of workers and farmers.

An article in the Sept. 9, 1988, *Pravda*, the Soviet Communist Party's daily newspaper, also carried a report linking Moscow to Trotsky's death. In that article — excerpts from a forthcoming book on Stalin — historian and Soviet army general Dimitri Volkogonov said Stalin's state security chief, Lavrenti Beria, organized the details of the murder and was promoted afterwards.

## Public acknowledgement in USSR

These reports mark the first public acknowledgement in the USSR of the Soviet government's responsibility for Trotsky's assassination. The official line for nearly 50 years has been that a disillusioned follower of Trotsky killed him.

Many of the facts, however, of the Stalin government's involvement have been widely known and accepted for many years by most everyone who has studied these events.

Mercader, who used several aliases, never admitted his true identity, even during the nearly 20 years he was in a Mexican prison. But there was ample evidence at the time of his trial connecting Stalin's regime to the murder operation.

Then, in 1950, Dr. Alfonso Quiroz Cuaron, an investigator for the Mexican government, conducted a six-month examination of the evidence and discovered documentary proof establishing the identity of the assassin. This is summarized in *The Mind of an Assassin*, a book by Isaac Don Levine published in 1959. Levine de-



Jan. 7, 1979, in Kampuchean capital, insurgents celebrate defeat of Pol Pot regime, which caused the death of more than a million Kampucheans during its four-year rule.

tails how Eitingon, a high officer of the Soviet secret police (NKVD), recruited Mercader in Spain and brought him to the USSR for training. Within the NKVD was a Division of Special Tasks, set up by Stalin to liquidate political enemies on foreign soil.

## Mercader ordered deported

When Mercader was released from prison in 1960, Mexican authorities ordered him deported as an "undesirable alien." The Czechoslovak government provided him with a diplomatic passport for his exit from Mexico under one of his assumed names and granted him citizenship in Czechoslovakia.

This was additional evidence of his identity as Mercader, an agent of Stalin's secret police.

Mercader died in October 1978 in Havana, Cuba, where he was being treated for cancer. Information on his illness and death was released to the press in Moscow by his younger brother Luis, a lecturer at a radio communications institute there. This implicitly revealed that Ramón Mercader and Trotsky's assassin were one and the same, information that Luis Mercader is unlikely to have revealed to the press without official permission.

Mercader's remains were sent to the

Soviet Union for burial.

The recent public admissions of Stalin's role in murdering Trotsky came in the context of the government's removal of criminal charges against many former Soviet Communist leaders, including Nikolai Bukharin, Gregory Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev, who were executed during Stalin's wave of terror in the 1930s and '40s.

On January 5 the CP's central committee announced plans to extend these exoneration to include millions of citizens executed or imprisoned during the Stalin purges.

The frame-up charges against Trotsky have not been lifted, although several articles in the Soviet press in the past six months have hinted that this might be done.

Much of the revolutionary leader's writings are in print and available from Pathfinder, a New York publishing house. These include such works as *In Defense of Marxism*, *History of the Russian Revolution*, *Revolution Betrayed*, and *The Third International After Lenin*. Moreover, Trotsky was one of the central leaders of the Communist International in its early years. He drafted many of its resolutions and gave many reports that are part of Pathfinder's multivolume work-in-progress of the documents of the Communist International.

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The January issue of PM features a speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro to the Second Meeting of the Women's Continental Front Against Intervention held in Havana in June 1985.

Castro's speech centers on the grave economic, social, and political crisis gripping the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. He explains that the debt owed by these countries is "immoral, illegal, and unpayable."



# Canada: an attack on Québécois and immigrants

The following statement was released on Jan. 3, 1989, by the Revolutionary Workers League Political Committee in Montréal.

The Canadian ruling class has just launched a major attack on workers and farmers in this country with its reactionary, chauvinist campaign against Québec and its announcement of racist and repressive measures that will lead to the deportation of thousands of refugees.

On December 28, Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall announced that the Canadian government is going to spend \$100 million to "accelerate" the review of 85,000 requests for asylum. These cases have been on hold under the former immigration law.

On January 1 a new law came into effect. It imposes severe restrictions on the entry of refugees into the country.

According to the government, the only refugees who can stay in Canada are those who prove that their lives would be endangered if they returned to their own country. Hundreds of refugees have already been deported over the past year.

The overwhelming majority of refugees come from countries dominated by imperialism, including Canadian imperialism.

mediate response by the French-speaking population of Québec, which constitutes 6 million people in the province. Just hours before Bourassa's announcement, close to 20,000 people attended a rally in Montréal to denounce the court ruling and defend Law 101.

The Québécois are an oppressed nation in Canada. They have been victims of systematic discrimination based on the fact that they are French-speaking. In the past, the ruling class hasn't hesitated to use all its power to stop the Québécois from exercising their right to self-determination.

In 1977, after 15 years of often massive struggles against language discrimination, the Québec government adopted Law 101. It aims to make French the standard language of work, education, government, and business. It is, in fact, an affirmative action measure that is massively supported by the French-speaking population of the province.

The English-language media and the Canadian ruling class responded to the Bourassa government's decision by launching a hysterical, chauvinist campaign against the Québécois and Law 101. On both a federal and provincial level, the Liberal, Conservative, and New Democratic parties have unanimously con-

defend ourselves — unity. And we can only achieve unity by defending those of us who are the most oppressed and the most vulnerable.

This is why support to the government's two latest attacks by the union movement leadership and the New Democratic Party, (NDP), a party based on the unions, is so criminal.

While maintaining certain criticisms, the NDP "praised" several of the federal government's new antirefugee measures. Several of the central leaders of the NDP are leading the reactionary attack on the Meech Lake Accord. And the leadership of the Canadian Labour Congress, which organizes more than 2 million members, has until now remained silent on these two key questions facing the working class.

This divisive policy is a logical follow-up to the chauvinist, Canadian nationalist campaign by the entire NDP and labor movement in Canada against the Free-Trade Accord between Canada and the United States. It is going to gravely weaken the entire working class in Canada.

Only the Québec NDP, the three Québec union federations, and the Québec Union of Agricultural Producers have denounced the attack on Law 101.

However, their defense of Law 101 is completely undermined by their support to the plan for a unilingual French Québec, their defense of the articles in Law 101 that impose unilingual French signs in public, and their opposition to the Bourassa government's decision to authorize the use of other languages on signs inside businesses.

This stance creates an obstacle to de-

fending the national and language rights of Québécois workers and the unification of the working class in Québec and throughout the country.

Workers and farmers throughout Canada have a real interest in fighting for a law that forces the capitalists to use French on signs in Québec, something that they often refused to do before Law 101 was adopted.

All working people need to defend those aspects of the law aimed to make French the standard language of work and education.

At the same time, we have no interest in banning the use of other languages — whether in Québec or elsewhere in Canada.

This kind of policy is discriminatory and calls on the repressive force of the capitalist state to enforce it. It has its biggest effect on immigrant workers. It divides us. And it hands over to the ruling class on a silver platter a pretext for attacking Law 101.

This is why the Bourassa government's decision to maintain French-only signs on the outside of businesses, while allowing the use of other languages on the inside, is as undemocratic as the previous article in Law 101 on this question.

A significant proportion of the French-speaking population in Québec, if not the majority, already supports the right to use another language alongside French on signs.

**Fight all deportations!**

**No to all attacks on the national and language rights of the Québécois!**

**No to all forms of language discrimination, no matter what language!**



Twenty thousand Québécois demonstrated December 18 in Montréal to defend French-language rights law.

They are fleeing repression, war, and the misery and underdevelopment caused by the plunder of the big imperialist banks and transnationals.

The Canadian government doesn't aim to stop refugees and immigrants from entering the country. Instead it wants to terrorize them into accepting miserable wages and stop them from standing up for their rights.

This attack by the Canadian government comes just two weeks after the ruling class unleashed a virulent campaign against Québec's national and language rights. The pretext was the Québec government's decision, announced December 18, to use the "notwithstanding" clause in the Canadian Constitution in order to exempt a section of the Québec French Language Charter — Law 101 — from constitutional jurisdiction.

The Liberal government of Québec Premier Robert Bourassa did this in order to maintain a section of articles in Law 101 that imposes unilingual French signs in public. Three days earlier the Supreme Court of Canada had ruled that these articles violate freedom of expression guaranteed in the Canadian Constitution.

This judgment by the highest court in the country precipitated a massive and im-

demned the Bourassa government.

A significant wing of the Canadian bourgeoisie has stepped up its attacks on the Meech Lake Accord under the pretext that it cedes too many "concessions" to Québec.

The Meech Lake Accord was adopted in June 1987 by the Canadian federal government and the 10 provincial premiers. It acknowledges the "distinct character" of Québec, though it gives this character no content. In exchange, the Bourassa government is prepared to recognize the 1982 constitution. Up until now, Québec has refused to sign the constitution because it removes several important rights from the province.

Today the Canadian capitalists are attacking the rights of refugees and the Québécois in order to weaken and divide working people in this country; to create a layer of workers who have less or even no rights; and to lower the value of labor power of the entire working class.

In the context of the growing crisis of their international system of exploitation and the coming world depression signaled by the 1987 stock market crash, these attacks are a question of life or death for the capitalist class.

Workers and farmers throughout the world only have one weapon to protect and

## —WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

### Sunday work divides W. German union tops

West German union officials are divided over whether to make concessions to a national management drive to include Sundays as part of the workweek. Federal law in West Germany bans factories from operating on Sundays unless a plant gets a waiver on technical grounds.

The law allows factories to operate on Saturdays, but the large majority of union contracts prohibit any weekend work. Most unions are still pressing for a reduction in the average workweek to 35 hours for 40 hours or more in pay.

The IG Chemie chemical workers' union officials announced at the end of last December that they were ready to negotiate with management on Sunday work where allowed by West German law.

"I would rather have companies invest their money in German jobs than in Spain or Greece," said Hermann Rappe, head of the 655,700-member chemical union.

Officials of the 2.5 million member IG Metall union, West Germany's largest union, remain opposed to the bosses weekend work drive. "We refuse to even discuss the institution of Sunday work ... and most of the other unions agree on this. IG Chemie is on its own," an IG Metall spokeswoman explained.

Officials of the printers' and food-processors' unions backed IG Metall.

### Venezuela to defer payment on debt

Venezuela's Finance Minister Héctor Hurtado announced at the end of last December that his country would suspend principal payments on most of its estimated \$26 billion debt to foreign banks. Hurtado has called a meeting with the country's main creditor banks.

The banks, which will form a negotiating committee, include the largest U.S. lenders to Venezuela. They are: Bank of America, Chase Manhattan, and Manufacturers Hanover. Each of them has a total of \$700 million to \$900 million in loans to Venezuela.

What's significant about the Venezuelan government's announcement is that Venezuela, unlike most other Latin American countries, has continued to pay debt principal to its foreign bank creditors since 1982.

According to a report in the January 3 *Wall Street Journal*, Venezuela's suspension of payments is almost certainly the first in a series of significant New Year developments in the Latin American debt crisis.

Mexico and its U.S. creditors are discussing new approaches to its \$100 billion foreign debt. Argentina is about \$2 billion in arrears on interest payments on its \$54 billion foreign debt.

For the first quarter of this year Venezuela is set to make total principal payments to foreign banks of about \$340 million, nearly a quarter of the estimated bank principal payments of the \$1.37 billion that are due in 1989.

Venezuela, which depends heavily on revenue from oil exports, is especially burdened by the drop in international oil prices. As a result the country's foreign exchange and gold reserves dropped from \$11 billion to \$7 billion in 1987.

### Apartheid opponent's home is firebombed

The home of Irwin Manoim was firebombed January 6. He is a white co-editor of a leading Johannesburg anti-apartheid newspaper, *The Weekly Mail*. The bombing is another in a series of such attacks on anti-apartheid targets. Manoim was not home during the attack.

The house was occupied, however, by Obed Bapela, a codefendant in the trial of Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). Mayekiso, Bapela, and three others were released on bail last month by a Johannesburg court after more than two and a half years in jail. Bapela was not injured in the bombing.

NUMSA is South Africa's counterpart to the United Auto Workers (UAW) in the United States. Both unions are affiliated to the International Metalworkers Federation. UAW President Owen Bieber has convened the American Jurists Committee, which is monitoring the trial of Mayekiso and his codefendants. The committee will attempt to send an observer to the trial when it reconvenes in February.

The *Weekly Mail* has recently resumed publication after being suspended by the government for four weeks for violating emergency restrictions.



## ALABAMA

### Birmingham

**The Struggle for Black Rights Today.** Speakers: Saahara Glaude, announcer for WENN Radio; Colonel Stone Johnson, chairperson Birmingham chapter National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression; representative Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 1306 1st Ave. N. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (205) 323-3079.

## ARIZONA

### Phoenix

**Affirmative Action and the Fight for Jobs and Education Today.** A panel discussion. Sat., Jan. 21, 7 p.m. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (602) 279-5850.

**Abortion Rights Under Attack.** A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 28, 7 p.m. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (602) 279-5850.

## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**A March and Demonstration to Free the Children of South Africa.** Mon., Jan. 16, 11 a.m. March from former site of South African consulate, 9107 Wilshire Blvd. (Gibraltar Bldg.), Beverly Hills, to its new location, 50 N La Cienega. Sponsor: Los Angeles Student Coalition, Southern Christian Leadership Conference. For more information call (213) 250-5500.

**The Movie Mississippi Burning: Is This the Real Story of the Civil Rights Movement?** Speaker: Nelson Blackstock, participant in the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer, former staff member of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and author of *Workers in the Changing South*. Showing of segment of "Eyes on the Prize." Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**Defend Abortion Rights!** A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

## GEORGIA

### Atlanta

**The Struggle for Black Rights Today.** Speaker: Derrick Adams, member United Steelworkers of America Local 2401. Video showing of "Eyes on the Prize." Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

## ILLINOIS

### Chicago

**Nelson Mandela and the Freedom Struggle in South Africa.** A photo exhibit. Jan. 14 to 28. Hours: Tue. to Thurs. 4-6 p.m.; Fri. and Sat. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 6826 S Stony Island Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (312) 363-7322 or 363-7136.

**What Is Apartheid? and The Fight Against Apartheid Today.** Class and forum, Sat., Jan. 14. 1. Class with Jim Little, Young Socialist Alliance, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 39 C. 2 p.m. 2. Forum with representative Socialist Workers Party, others to be announced. 6 p.m. 6826 S

Stony Island Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (312) 363-7322 or 363-7136.

**Fight for Abortion Rights!** Speaker: Robin Trilling, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 1608 U; others. Sat., Jan. 21, 6 p.m. 6826 S Stony Island Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (312) 363-7322 or 363-7136.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**U.S. Hands Off Libya!** A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

**Abortion Rights Under Attack.** A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

## MICHIGAN

### Detroit

**Stop Nuclear and Toxic Waste Dumps.** Speakers: Mary Sinclair, co-chair, Don't Waste Michigan and founder, Great Lakes Energy Alliance; Mike Keegan, chairperson, Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Great Lakes, anti-Ferri 2 nuke activist; Audie Shelby, chairman United Auto Workers Region 1A Toxic Waste Squad, UAW Local 898. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 831-1177.

## MINNESOTA

### Austin

**The Significance of the Civil Rights Movement.** Speaker: August Nimtz, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 14, 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

**Stop the Threats Against Libya!** Sun., Jan. 15, 6 p.m. 5534 Troost. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 444-7880.

**A Victory Against Apartheid.** Showing of Cuban TV documentary "The Response to the South African Escalation," on the Angolan and Cuban victory over South African troops in Angola. In English and Spanish. Sat., Jan. 21, 6 p.m. 5534 Troost. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 444-7880.

### St. Louis

**U.S. Hands Off Libya!** Speaker: Ellen Haywood, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 16. Sat., Jan. 14, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

**The Freedom Struggle in South Africa Today.** Speakers to be announced. Sat., Jan. 21, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

## NEBRASKA

### Omaha

**Young Socialist Alliance Class Series. 1. "Cuba: Celebrate 30 Years of Revolution."** Speaker: Aaron Ruby, Young Socialist Alliance. Thurs., Jan. 19, 7:30 p.m. 2. "The Struggle to Defend Women's Rights." Speaker: April Kimnach, YSA. Thurs., Jan. 26, 7:30

p.m. 3. "The Working-Class Road to Peace." Speaker: Erich Christiansen, YSA. Thurs., Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m. Classes held at 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2 each. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Greensboro

**Celebration of 30 Years of the Cuban Revolution.** Showing of the video "Response to the South African Escalation." Speaker: John Cox, Young Socialist Alliance. Translation to Spanish. Sun., Jan. 15, 3 p.m. University of North Carolina Student Center, Sharpe Lounge. Student Center. Sponsors: Pathfinder Books, Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

## OREGON

### Portland

**Nicaragua: Challenges Facing the Revolution.** Speakers: Millie Thayer, free-lance reporter in Nicaragua who has written on aftermath of Hurricane Joan; Markie Wilson, Socialist Workers Party, recently returned from six weeks in northern Nicaragua. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 2730 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**Defending the Gains of the Civil Rights Movement.** Speakers: Willie Mae Reid, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4367; Earl L. Davis, Shell worker involved in a discrimination suit against the company; Ester King, community activist; Evelyn Jones, Coalition to Free Clarence Brandley. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

**U.S. Hands Off Libya!** Speaker: Jeff Pike, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 2228; Ada Edwards, member Free South Africa Committee; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

## UTAH

### Price

**Keep Abortion Safe and Legal.** Speakers: Nancy Labahn, community educator for Planned Parenthood in Price; Judy Stranahan, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Jan. 15, 5 p.m. 253 E Main. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 637-6294.

**Celebrate 30 Years of the Cuban Revolution.** Speaker: Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party, visited Cuba 1968-69 and 1981. Sun., Jan. 29, 5 p.m. 253 E Main. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 637-6294.

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Charleston

**International Solidarity vs. Protectionism.** Speaker: Joanne Murphy, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 1855. Showing of video "We Are Driven" about conditions faced by Japanese workers. Sat., Jan. 14, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

### Morgantown

**Crisis in the Soviet Union: Will Gorbachev's**

**Reforms Work?** Speaker: Bruce Kimball, Socialist Workers Party, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

## CANADA

### Toronto

**Cancel Third World Debt: Canadian Imperialism in the Caribbean.** Speaker: Susan Berman, recently returned from a four-week, five-island Caribbean tour to promote Pathfinder books. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Socialist Voice Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

## ICELAND

### Reykjavik

**How Do Workers Confront the Economic Crisis?** A meeting and discussion forum. Sat., Jan. 28, 10:30 a.m. Pathfinder Bookstore, Klappartíg 26. For more information call (91) 17513.

## Life in an Iowa penitentiary

### Continued from Page 4

is 90 cents, popcorn 10 cents. I splurged and bought an AM-FM radio, \$35! It's the kind that sells for \$17 at Best Buy. There is a lot of bitterness at the way some items are marked up here over retail stores. A nine-inch color TV is \$250. Cassette decks are \$40. A black-and-white TV is \$85 (not bad).

Most guys have connections to family and friends and get money and many have TVs. But for others it's pretty tough. Besides being mandatory, and a way of earning "good time," work is important to live beyond "three hots and a cot."

There is a sign shop (road signs), metal stamping, wood shop (desks), furniture (steel beds), and soap shop. Many others work as orderlies, in the kitchen, laundry, yard crew, etc. There is a farm outside the walls, too, but I don't know anything about it. There is a gym, a decrepit weight room, a recording studio, a library of 10,000 books, law library, rec hall, and high school.

So that's a brief tour of the Iowa State Men's Reformatory, a so-called "medium security facility in a maximum security setting," according to the officers. It's an old place. They've got some license plates up on the wall of the shop from 1911.

There are many, many rules detailing infractions from riot, killing, and insurrection, to spitting, not making your bed, and loitering. The guards sport union buttons, but they write a lot of tickets. You can get a minor report, and four in 60 days add up to a major, which can get you dropped down a level or put in the hole.

The food is indescribable.

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**Sense of humor?** — People living near the Seabrook nuke plant in New Hampshire are receiving free calendars from the state.



Harry Ring

Complete with color photos, the calendars include maps, directions for leaving the area, and advice on what to take along.

**National security?** — Private papers of former British prime minister Harold Macmillan con-

firmed that his government kept secret the details of a 1957 nuke plant accident that contaminated milk at about 800 farms with deadly strontium 90. No action was taken to prevent milk from being produced or consumed in the area.

**Foolproof** — U.S. nuclear power plants reported 2,940 mishaps last year and at least 430 emergency shutdowns. Plus a record high of 104,458 incidents in which nuke plant workers were exposed to measurable doses of radiation.

**Like, for instance, mayhem and murder** — "The Israeli Army has been taking measures to prevent demonstrations and head off

violence" — Caption on *New York Times* West Bank photo.

**A caring corporation** — For 30 years Shell Oil and the army used part of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal to dump nerve gas and pesticides, which have leaked into area drinking water supplies. With people there concerned for their health, Shell offered free medical exams.

**Taking care of business** — In a crackdown, the Environmental Protection Agency imposed a \$47,500 fine on Rockwell International for violating hazardous-waste laws at the government-owned Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in Colorado. The fine, however, will be paid by the Department of Energy which sees it

as an "allowable cost" for a contractor.

**The rest never worked enough to qualify** — Of the 35,875 people who reported incomes of more than \$1 million in 1986, only 65 had income from unemployment compensation.

**Hard day's work** — "It's tough for these people. They have to stay current with things." — John Gallahue, director of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Retirement Board explaining why the board had to spend \$6,000 to send him and four board members to an "educational" confab in Hawaii.

**Easy come, easy go** — "If someone wants a crocodile hand-

bag, and last year it was \$1,200 and this year it's \$1,400, that customer doesn't really care. Two percent of the U.S. population can buy at any price." — A Gucci spokesperson.

**How about "Ethical Treatment for People"?** — People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) leaned on a Washington-area restaurant to turn over the half dozen lobsters in the window tank. PETA flew them to Portland, Maine, (\$240 one way) where a cooperative Coast Guard provided a boat to release them at sea.

**Left-handed compliment?** — "He doesn't stand in the same box with Gorbachev as far as I'm concerned." — Reagan on Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

## Clashes at Paris meeting on chemical weapons

Continued from front page

the U.S. stand on proliferation favored "certain countries" that already have "vast stocks of chemical arms" — a reference to the United States and Soviet Union.

"How can any member of the international community proclaim a right it denies others?" Libyan Foreign Minister Jaddalah Azouz al-Talhi said, referring to U.S. production of chemical weapons. "Agreed international rules must be applied to all parties without discrimination."

A Vietnamese delegate reminded the conference of Washington's use of chemical weapons during the war in Indochina.

Representatives from governments of Arab countries argued that it was one-sided and or wrong to condemn the proliferation of chemical weapons, which some Arab countries now possess, without condemning the Israeli regime's nuclear arsenal.

Farouk Charaa, foreign minister of Syria, asserted that to prohibit use of chemical weapons without also forbidding use of nuclear arms would amount to "unilateral disarmament" by the governments of Arab countries. Egyptian, Libyan, and Iraqi delegates were among those echoing this stand.

Prior to the conference, Cuban President Fidel Castro commented on the proliferation issue.

"What kind of a world is this; what kind of an order is this if this is the way the empire interprets the law?" he said December 24 in response to Reagan's threat to bomb the Libyan plant.

The U.S. government, he said, "can make nuclear weapons or chemical weap-

ons, anything. If a small country somewhere wants to make these weapons — I don't want to say that it's a good idea to make chemical weapons; I'm not discussing that aspect — they have the right to manufacture any type of weapon, just as the United States does."

In the face of widespread opposition, the U.S. delegation dropped its proposal to include condemnation of proliferation of chemical weapons in the final conference resolution.

Critics of the U.S. stance had touched on issues that the U.S. delegation preferred to keep out of the Paris spotlight — particularly the U.S. role today as the number one producer of chemical weapons.

### U.S. production

Since 1980 the U.S. government has poured \$1.5 billion into research, development, and production of these weapons. Spending in 1987 was more than \$250 million — five times the amount allocated in 1980.

Tons of nerve gases — which disable or kill by damaging the central nervous system — and skin-blistering agents are stored in nine U.S. military depots. Artillery casings for lethal chemicals are coming off the production line at an Arkansas factory. And research is under way on "Bigeye," a bomb designed to dispense clouds of deadly nerve gas.

The U.S. government has shifted to the production of new binary weapons — in which the chemicals that make up the deadly agent are separated until the weapon

is detonated. These are said to be safer to produce, store, and use.

In 1969 President Richard Nixon proclaimed a moratorium on the production of chemical weapons, which the Reagan administration ended in 1987.

### Chemical war in 'self-defense'

The Soviet government instituted a moratorium in 1987. At the conference, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze announced that the Soviet government would continue the moratorium and begin destroying some of its stockpiles.

In response to the Soviet move, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director William Burns stated, "I think now is the wrong time to try to eliminate unilaterally our deterrent stocks. We're not going to give up our deterrent capability until we have a fully negotiated, verifiable treaty."

The U.S. delegation also opposed including condemnation of all use of chemical weapons in the final resolution. They demanded instead that the resolution authorize use of chemical weapons in "self-defense" against chemical attack.

The wording suggested by the U.S. delegation would provide a fig-leaf of legality should the White House decide to use

chemical weapons or supply them to U.S.-backed forces in a wide range of conflicts.

### Fidel Castro on the Latin American debt crisis

#### War and Crisis in the Americas Speeches 1984-85

Includes interview with *Excelsior* on need to cancel the debt. 268 pp., \$9.95.

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## —10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

ASOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE 25¢  
Jan. 19, 1979

In a rapid military drive, 100,000 Vietnamese troops together with 20,000 Cambodian insurgents captured virtually all of eastern Cambodia this month, taking the capital city of Pnompenh on January 7. Pressing westward from Pnompenh, the Vietnamese-Cambodian force moved rapidly toward the Thai-Cambodian border.

The invasion brought down the regime of Pol Pot. This government had ruled Cambodia since the collapse of the U.S.-backed Lon Nol dictatorship in April 1975. The new Cambodian cabinet is composed of figures from the Vietnamese-backed Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, which was formed December 3. Most of the new officials are former supporters of the Cambodian regime who fled to Vietnam after reportedly attempting an uprising against Pol Pot in May 1978.

Heng Samrin, a former military commander under Pol Pot, was named as president of the People's Revolutionary Council of Cambodia.

According to the January 8 *New York Times*, the new regime promised to ease the brutal repression that scarred Cambodia under Pol Pot: "The front pledged to let families reunite freely and return to their cities of origin. Former city dwellers... were told that they could return 'when the situation in the whole country permits.' The front promised freedom of religion and the building or repair of destroyed temples....

"The front promised also to provide general health care, which has been virtually nonexistent since 1975, and to build schools

for all children, 7 to 10 years old. Schools also virtually vanished under the Pol Pot regime."

The front also promised to "abolish compulsory marriage and encourage free choice in marriage" and to "establish an eight-hour workday with pay according to labor."

### THE MILITANT

Published in the interests of the Working People  
Jan. 20, 1964 Price 10¢

In the case of three Indiana University students indicted in Bloomington, Indiana, under the state's 1951 sedition law, the prosecution has revealed blatant use of police-state spying methods.

Prosecutor Thomas Hoadley recently admitted to the press that he had used a high-powered listening device to eavesdrop on private conversations of the defendants in a private apartment rented from a local landlord. Hoadley also indicated he had consulted with the notorious House Un-American Activities Committee in connection with the Bloomington case.

These revelations follow scandalous efforts by the prosecutor and local newspapers to prejudice the public against the students by somehow — no matter how far-fetchedly — dragging Kennedy's assassination into the case.

Ralph Levitt, James Bingham, and Tom Morgan, officers of the IU chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance, were indicted May 1 for allegedly assembling on March 25 to advocate the violent overthrow of the Indiana and U.S. governments.

## Israel's workers hard hit

Continued from front page

duction in the availability of low-paid Gaza and West Bank labor. Over the years, immigration to Israel has slowed to a trickle. This has made Israeli employers increasingly dependent on the low-wage pool of West Bank and Gaza workers who normally commute daily to jobs across the "green line," Israel's pre-1967 borders.

Since the uprising, frequent strikes by these workers, coupled with the military curfews imposed on them, have cut into the dependability of this low-cost labor supply.

Moreover, the Israeli government's need to call up reservists for military duty in the West Bank and Gaza has added to the economic squeeze.

Initial Israeli protests against the cut-backs were greeted with scorn by the finance minister.

"We have to stand on our feet and stop feeling sorry for ourselves," Peres declared.

(Meanwhile, it was disclosed that buried in the budget was an estimated two-thirds of \$1 million for the finance minister's special needs. These include a woman to do his ironing, a waiter, a full-time photographer, and an apartment for his chauffeur.)

Unlike Peres, the working people of Israel face tough times. In the context of deepening world economic difficulties, the

attack on their standard of living will intensify.

To resist this attack, Israeli workers will have to deal with the problem of a union officialdom totally tied to the capitalist rulers and their government.

Histadrut, the Israeli labor federation, owns a network of factories and other commercial operations. Outside of the government, it is the country's biggest employer.

Its official are key cogs in the machine of the capitalist Labor Party, which recently renewed its governing bloc with the Likud.

Finance Minister Peres, who is wielding the "austerity" ax, is the top Labor Party leader.

The economic slump coincides with the growing political difficulties of Israel's ruling class — difficulties triggered by the continuing Palestinian uprising.

The uprising and the political gains being registered by its leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization, are creating fissures within the Israeli population and among its rulers.

Thousands of Israelis joined a Peace Now march in Tel Aviv December 24 demanding that the government begin negotiating with the PLO. A day earlier, a poll showed that 54 percent of Israelis now favor such negotiations.

The demonstration was described as the biggest since the giant march organized by Peace Now during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.



## U.S. arrogance on chemical arms

At the international conference in Paris on chemical warfare, the U.S. government attempted to exploit the worldwide revulsion against the production and use of these fiendish weapons.

International outrage was most recently fueled by the Iraqi military's use of poison gas to slaughter Iranian and Kurdish civilians and soldiers.

Washington's goal at the Paris meeting, however, had nothing to do with eliminating chemical weapons and chemical warfare. The U.S. government's sincerity on this issue was shown when it helped quash United Nations investigations of the Baghdad regime's use of chemical warfare during the Iraq-Iran war.

It was only after the Iranian government accepted a cease-fire that President Reagan donned the mantle of a crusader against chemical war.

At the Paris conference, the U.S. delegation not only affirmed that its government would continue to produce more deadly poisons, but even asked the meeting to endorse the U.S. military's right to wage chemical war in "self-defense."

Secretary of State George Shultz conducted a campaign aimed exclusively at barring access to these weapons by governments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He crusaded in Paris not against chemical weapons, but for barring countries that Washington regards as actual or potential foes from obtaining or producing them.

The chemical war issue became a moral cloak for the U.S. claim to the right to dictate to the peoples of the Third World. Libya was singled out in order to give an odor of sanctity to the operation, since the Qaddafi government has been painted by Washington as a "renegade" and "terrorist."

In fact, as Washington's actions toward Libya and other countries have shown, no other government in the

world holds a candle to the U.S. government when it comes to international terrorism.

The countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America that are oppressed by the U.S. and other imperialist powers have the right to self-determination. That means they have the right to build whatever factories they wish, and to produce or purchase the weapons they think they need — without facing military aggression or other interference from the United States or other imperialist big powers.

Abolishing chemical weapons, nuclear bombs, and other instruments of mass killing requires disarming the imperialists — not their potential targets in the oppressed countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The drive of the rulers of the United States, Britain, France, and other imperialist countries to control the resources and exploit the labor of the world is the central cause of wars today and of the development of ever more destructive weapons.

Big gains in staying the hands of the imperialists and raising the political costs of using nuclear weapons, poison gas, and other horrible weapons have not been won at conferences like the one in Paris or in treaty talks. Negotiations and conferences only register the gains and losses that working people have experienced in struggles.

The struggle against war took a giant stride when the peoples of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea forced Washington to pull their troops and planes out in 1975; when the Nicaraguan workers and farmers defeated the U.S.-organized contras; and when Angolan troops and Cuban internationalist volunteers halted and then drove back South African troops in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale last year.

The gains that have been won in such battles have increased the confidence of workers and strengthened their determination and capacity to fight to prevent such crimes as nuclear and chemical war.

## Back abortion rights on April 9

The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to review a 1986 Missouri law that placed major restrictions on women's access to abortion poses a serious challenge to all supporters of abortion rights. It underscores the need to redouble efforts to build the April 9 abortion rights demonstration in Washington called by the National Organization for Women.

The preamble of the Missouri law asserts that life begins at conception. It bans the use of public hospitals for abortions not necessary to save a woman's life. It bans the use of public funds for "encouraging or counseling" women to have abortions. And it prohibits public employees from performing or assisting at an abortion. It also requires weight and lung tests on fetuses 20 weeks or older to "determine" whether they are capable of surviving outside the womb.

In his request for the review, Missouri's attorney general William Webster, Jr., further asked the court for a reversal of the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973, which made access to abortion a constitutional right. The U.S. Department of Justice announced in a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the Reagan administration that it supports the Missouri appeal and encourages the court to overrule *Roe v. Wade*.

Antiabortion groups have staged rallies and sit-ins at abortion clinics over the last year. These actions aim to

blockade clinics, intimidate women, and forcefully deny them their right to abortion.

In many cities across the country the blockade attempts have been met with countermobilizations by abortion rights supporters to keep the clinics open. Abortion rights activists are mobilizing January 12-14 to defend abortion clinics in New York City. Those actions should be strongly supported.

The antiabortion campaign was dealt a setback when U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop sent a letter to President Ronald Reagan stating that no conclusive evidence exists that abortion negatively affects the mental or physical health of women. Reagan asked the surgeon general last year to study the effect of abortions on women's health and expected the conclusion to be negative. Koop is an opponent of abortion rights and coauthor of a book on post-abortion trauma.

The April 9 abortion rights action has also been endorsed by the Coalition of Labor Union Women. There is widespread support among working people, men and women, in defense of abortion rights. Working women and their families will suffer most from any weakening of abortion rights. All abortion rights supporters should help to build the broadest possible backing for and participation in the April 9 march on Washington among unionists; fighters for women's equality; Black, Latino, and Asian rights organizations; and students.

## 'Too little, too late'

New York City, with the largest number of AIDS victims of any city in the world, does not have one nursing home for AIDS patients and only one small residential center for them.

More than 5,000 people need such nursing home services now, and the numbers are growing each day. At least 400 new AIDS cases are reported in the city every month.

Yet the city's current plans for two AIDS nursing homes and a nursing-home hospital ward and health center have a projected capacity of only 364.

The need for housing for AIDS patients is equally great. Yet the city's plans call for residences for only 784 patients by 1991. Many of those pressing for improved care for AIDS victims say they are met with only monumental inertia on the part of city officials.

"We are doing a pretty miserable job — a case of too little, too late," commented Dr. David Rogers recently. "Actually what we are doing for homeless people with AIDS is scandalous." Rogers should know. He's chairman of Mayor Edward Koch's committee on services for people with AIDS. Koch, for his part, says he's committed to doing whatever's necessary for AIDS victims.

Apparently he thinks that isn't much.

Most victims of the AIDS epidemic are those the city's rulers care least about. The impoverished intravenous drug-users, most of whom are Black or Latino; homosexual men; babies born to drug addicts; and homeless work-

ers and young people who suffer from AIDS can simply be shunted aside.

The scope of the AIDS epidemic underscores the degree to which the corporate executives, bankers, and politicians who run the city are guilty of criminal neglect.

There are at least 200,000 people infected with the AIDS virus in New York City, according to official estimates; others put the figure at 400,000. In the last eight years, 9,000 New Yorkers have died from the disease.

Fifty to 60 percent of New York's 250,000 intravenous drug addicts are now infected with the AIDS virus. A majority of those now dying from the illness in the city are drug-users.

Up to 5,000 of the city's 100,000 homeless people, many of whom also suffer from drug addiction, have AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses. Of the city's 20,000 homeless youth, 1,500 are estimated to have the AIDS virus.

New York is spending \$334 million for AIDS services in the current fiscal year, an amount utterly inadequate to meet current — much less future — health and housing needs of AIDS patients. The amount allotted by the federal government nationally is equally deficient.

There is an urgent need for working people, students, political activists, and supporters of human rights throughout the city to add their support to the fight for decent medical care, adequate housing, and other social services for all victims of AIDS.

## Israel's growing vulnerability

BY DOUG JENNESS

The *intifada* — as the uprising on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is called in Arabic — has confirmed the historical viability of the struggle for Palestinian liberation.

Even though it's been 40 years since Israel was set up and more than 20 years since Israeli military forces occupied the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinians' fight to establish a state on their homeland has proved to be a po-

## LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

tent and relevant political force. This is underlined by the recent declaration of the Palestine National Council calling for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and by the decision by Washington to finally relent and hold discussions with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The question of an independent Palestinian state is getting a bigger hearing internationally than it has in a long time, and it will be posed even more sharply as the struggle continues.

Some supporters of the Palestinian movement, as well as some within the movement itself, question the viability of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. But recognition of Palestinian control over even part of the land that was robbed from them by the Israeli settlers would register a major advance and help inspire the fight necessary to overturn the Israeli capitalist government and liberate all of Palestine.

Palestinian control over the West Bank and Gaza would surely not be a problem for Palestinians in the context of the political situation that exists there today. But it would be a big thistle in the craw of the Israeli rulers, which is why they so fiercely resist it. Palestinian control over these areas now under Israeli military rule would radically change the situation for the colonial-settler state.

It may seem strange to say, but it's Israel — not Palestine — that is not historically viable. Its situation is more tenuous than it might appear today by simply looking at its formidable military power and its strong backing from Washington.

The original Zionist goal was that after Israel was set up in 1948, massive immigration would furnish the labor necessary for building an advanced capitalist economy. While many Jewish settlers came in the first years, the flow soon slowed down and today is only a trickle.

The Israeli capitalists were driven to pursue their expansionist course to seek labor and markets. The conquest of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 opened up a large pool of labor to exploit. Driven off their land and largely prevented from setting up their own businesses, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became wage workers in Israeli-owned factories, farms, and construction companies.

But by drawing substantially more Palestinian workers into the Israeli economy, the Israeli employing class has entered a dance of death. A combative sector of workers, who are especially brutalized, has become indispensable to the Israeli economy. The substantial economic losses resulting from the current uprising are a sign of the potential vulnerability of the Israeli rulers.

Moreover, it will become even clearer as the struggle deepens that the political fate of the Israeli capitalist rulers is locked together with the setbacks and advances of Palestinian working people and their fight against oppression and for a Palestinian state. Every gain for the Palestinian struggle will strengthen the working-class forces that live and work in Israel, who will someday help overturn the Israeli capitalist government.

Another sign that the Israeli capitalists' future doesn't look too bright is the country's highly unstable and crisis-ridden economy. It is plagued by chronic inflation, stagnation in economic growth, worsening trade deficits, continuous currency devaluations, and high unemployment. Without the \$3 billion a year from the U.S. government, the entire economy would collapse.

The Israeli economy is particularly vulnerable to the next sharp recession. The 1987 stock market crash, the deepest plunge in the market in this century, is a warning that the next downturn in the capitalist business cycle could be very severe. The effects will be particularly devastating in Israel.

One sure consequence will be the radicalization of the Israeli working class — the Palestinian workers and those who are Jewish too. They will develop an increased ability and inclination to view themselves as one working class, fighting against oppression and exploitation as part of a world working class. The road will then be opened for working people to mobilize a massive political movement that can lead to the overturn of the Israeli rulers.

The outcome of this struggle will depend on how effectively working people — Oriental and European Jews and Palestinians — join together in struggle. The perspective around which this unity can be achieved is the fight for a democratic, secular Palestine, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians can live and work together in peace.



# The fight to protect children, women from abuse

BY CINDY JAQUITH

(Second of two parts)

NEW YORK — In last week's "As I See It" column I wrote that Mayor Edward Koch is wrong to say the right to privacy prevents New York City officials from doing much to stop child abuse.

Abuse of children within the family — as well as violence against women by their male companions — are not private or personal matters at all. They are of concern to society as a whole, and the government bears responsibility for protecting victims of such abuse.

## AS I SEE IT

The current trial here of Joel Steinberg, accused of murdering six-year-old Lisa Steinberg, has underscored this. There has been extensive testimony at the trial charging that Steinberg physically and sexually abused Lisa from birth and routinely beat up his companion, Hedda Nussbaum, breaking many of the bones in her body.

Today these acts are increasingly viewed as crimes, in violation of specific laws. But a little more than a century ago the law would have favored Steinberg, not his victims. Until the late 19th century, for example, a husband's "right" to beat his wife was written into all state laws in this country. Massachusetts and Alabama repealed such laws in 1871, and by the turn of the century they were no longer on the books anywhere in the United States.

Children also lacked legal and governmental protection from abuse and exploitation. Only at the beginning of the 20th century did the government begin setting up agencies responsible for the social welfare of children, who had previously been provided for exclusively by charitable and church organizations. The first family court was established in 1910. It wasn't until 1938 that child labor was federally outlawed, one of the conquests of the great labor upsurge of that decade.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, which affirmed the right of Black people to equal protection under the law, began to inspire a new perspective on all layers of society deemed not fully human or not deserving of equal protection — from children, to women,

to the disabled, to homosexuals.

It was in the 1960s, when the women's rights struggle began to appear on the horizon, that the issue of violence against women and against children emerged as public issues.

Prior to this, child abuse and wife beating were rarely officially acknowledged as social problems. Courts avoided taking action on the basis that what happened in a home was a private matter. The "right" of the husband to assault his wife, although no longer the law, remained the assumption.

The new consciousness that began to emerge on women's rights — including their right to be free of violence from their companions — also focused attention on children. Women's rights groups asserted that the care and protection of children was not the responsibility of women alone, nor of the individual family alone, but a social responsibility.

In the late 1960s, courts began ruling that child abuse was indeed a crime. Finally, in 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was passed. It was the first federal legislation ever to deal specifically with the problem of child abuse. The law defined such abuse as physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or negligent treatment toward persons under 18 by the person or persons responsible for their welfare. The law allocated funds for education and prevention.

Today, state laws generally require doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, and the police to report evidence of child abuse. In the 1980s, many state laws have been amended to deal explicitly with sexual abuse as a crime, as well as child pornography and child prostitution.

In all 50 states today, women can press charges for violence by their male companions, with 10 states as of 1983 explicitly outlawing wife beating. In 47 states individuals can obtain court protection orders against child abuse or wife beating.

The scope of the change can be measured by the report of a 1984 Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence, which stated: "The legal response to family violence must be guided primarily by the nature of the abusive act, not the relationship between the victim and the abuser."

The federal government has also been forced to give

some funding to battered women's shelters — places where a woman can go with her children to get away from a dangerous companion.

What has been accomplished thus far shows that indeed — through struggle — working people can make progress in forcing the government to take action against child abuse and wife beating.

But millions of women and children continue to suffer these abuses every year. In many cases the cops or courts refuse to provide protection when it is demanded, although less so than in the past.

Frequently a woman remains in a home where she and her children are victims of violence from her male companion. Fear, guilt, and economic dependence on the man discourage her from walking out. If she leaves with the children, where will they live? How will she support them? What will happen if there is a custody fight? Since the man generally has a higher income, he may successfully win custody of the children.

Mayor Koch notwithstanding, there are a series of demands that working people can fight for today that will advance the struggle to protect children and women from abuse.

Child abuse and wife beating should be explicitly outlawed in every state, with the government compelled to enforce the law and protect abuse victims.

The government should provide low-cost child care for all who need it. It should guarantee an education, medical care, decent housing, and recreation for all children, with no discrimination.

Equal pay for equal work, job training, and affirmative action quotas for women are needed to overcome the discrimination they face in the work force.

All women should have the right to birth control and safe, legal abortion.

Government benefits should be available to all women with children who need them, with special provisions for emergency financial aid and legal assistance when a woman has to suddenly leave her home with her children to escape violence. Battered women's shelters should be expanded and receive full funding from the government.

This is the kind of program that a fighting labor movement will put forward, one that combats the dehumanizing pressures of capitalist society by deepening human solidarity and affirming the dignity and self-worth of all human beings.

## LETTERS

### Pathfinder mural

I was just reading the *Militant* editorial on the harassment of the Pathfinder Mural Project. I am outraged too. But I do not know Mayor Koch's address to which we should send our protest letters. I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

Eddie Mezrami

Brookline, Massachusetts

(The Pathfinder Mural Project is asking that protests be sent to Mayor Edward Koch, City Hall, New York, N.Y. 10007. Copies should be sent to the Mural Project, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014)

### U.S.-Canada trade pact

With respect to your reporting on the Reagan-Mulroney trade deal (*Militant*, Dec. 14, 1988), please note the following:

The Reagan-Mulroney trade deal was supported by: Ronald Reagan; the U.S. Senate; U.S. House; U.S. big business; Brian Mulroney; Robert Bourassa; Business Council in the Public Interest; Canadian Chamber of Commerce; National Citizens' Coalition; Conservative Party; Fraser Institute; Association of Independent Business; all but two major newspapers; the organized ruling class in Canada; and, apparently, the *Militant*.

Jordan Bishop

Sydney, Cape Breton Island  
Canada

### Trade pact II

I find your comments on the U.S.-Canada trade bill less than fully insightful. How about a little historical analysis and understanding of the role this issue has played for each class in the struggles in Canada and in Québec. It ain't that simple!

Keep up the good reporting on Nicaragua.

B.S.

Leverett, Massachusetts

### Cuban documentary

The Maryland Institute College of Art and Pathfinder Bookstore cosponsored a showing of the Cuban documentary "Response to the South African Escalation." Fifty attended the Baltimore event held at the institute.

Following the film, Kuri Tjipangdjara, representative of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) mission to the United Nations, spoke. The documentary details the defeat of the racist South African military at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, by the combined forces of Angola, Cuba, and SWAPO.

Referring to the defeat's historic significance for the freedom struggle in southern Africa, Tjipangdjara stated, "If we have to make every town in Namibia and South Africa a Cuito Cuanavale, we will do that." He also said, "We make a distinction between the policy of the American government [in southern Africa] and the policy of its people. Our struggle is a universal struggle."

Peggy Kreiner

Baltimore, Maryland

### Nicaragua

A tour for *Militant* correspondent Harvey McArthur organized by the Young Socialist Alliance drew workers, farmers, and students in the Des Moines area into important discussions on the challenges facing the Nicaraguan revolution now that the contra war has ended. McArthur has written extensively on the Nicaraguan revolution as a member of the paper's Nicaragua Bureau.

Farmers in the area, themselves facing worsening conditions, were especially interested in speaking with McArthur. Several members of the American Agriculture Movement attended a class titled "Peasants fight for land in the Nicaraguan revolution."

Another meeting was organized

several days later by two farmers at their home outside Kirksville, Missouri. One of them had visited Nicaragua in 1984. After a tour of the farm, eight farmers, teachers, and students sat down for a potluck dinner and several hours of discussion on Nicaragua.

Discussion ranged from the right of peasants to reclaim stolen land to the need for dairy cows in Nicaragua, to what the political implications are to saying the contra war is over.

Sara Lobman

Des Moines, Iowa

### U.S. foreign aid

I recommend the book *Betraying the National Interest: How U.S. Foreign Aid Threatens Global Security by Undermining the Political and Economic Stability of the Third World*, by Frances Moore Lappé, Rachel Schurman, and Kevin Danaher (Grove Press, New York, 1987).

The book explains that the U.S. government does not give away very much in aid to other governments — less than \$20 billion compared to the annual military budget of \$300 billion. More importantly, the book shows that so-called foreign aid does nothing to aid the workers and farmers in the recipient countries.

More than half goes directly or indirectly to arm repressive governments against their own people.

Even the money supposedly earmarked to provide food and money for development doesn't end up helping working people. For example, 12 percent of aid called Food Aid is mainly used for low-interest loans to foreign governments to purchase surplus U.S. grain that they then sell to their own population. The poorest people cannot afford to buy the food even at the lower prices.

And this can actually worsen the food situation by increasing the supplies of basic grains available on the market and lowering



Bohemia

the prices domestic farmers receive, sometimes forcing them to give up their farms.

The U.S. government also uses food as a political weapon. It cut off food aid to Peru for five years after it nationalized U.S. oil companies and has given El Salvador four times as much aid since 1982 as all of drought-stricken Africa in an effort to prop up the Salvadoran government.

Don Davis

Chicago, Illinois

### 'Exploitation of Women'

I am an inmate and a reader of the *Militant*. I'm writing in the

hope that you can forward me *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* and Nelson Mandela's book *The Struggle is My Life*.

Your brother in the struggle for justice,

A prisoner

Dallas, Pennsylvania

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.



## Cuban revolution celebrated in Miami

### Right-wing threats of violence fail to stop broadly attended meeting

BY NANCY COLE

MIAMI — A two-day campaign of threats — organized by right-wing radio stations — failed to prevent the participation of more than 75 people in a Militant Labor Forum here January 7 celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

The forum heard Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters, just back from anniversary activities in Cuba.

The Militant Labor Forum is located at the Pathfinder Bookstore in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood. Several forums have been held on Cuba recently without incident. But this time, two Spanish-language radio stations launched a campaign of intimidation, hoping to disrupt the only public celebration in Miami of the Cuban revolution's 30th anniversary.

One talk show host devoted his entire one-hour call-in show to the meeting, urging listeners to demonstrate outside the Saturday night forum. Both stations told listeners to call the number of the Pathfinder Bookstore to express their outrage.

Pathfinder Bookstore's phone rang continuously late into Friday night and throughout Saturday. Calls ranged from obscenities and hysterical outbursts to bomb threats and at least one vow to "execute" a scheduled speaker. One caller claimed to be from Alpha 66 — a terrorist Cuban exile group — and threatened to bring 10 to 15 demonstrators to the forum.

Supporters of the Militant Labor Forum immediately countered with a campaign to win support for their right to hold the meeting and to pressure police to be present to deter violent attacks.

The result was one of the biggest Militant Labor Forums ever held in Miami. No right-wing demonstrators appeared.

The meeting was translated into Spanish and alternately into French and Creole for the many Haitian participants.

The night before, Waters' remarks on Cuba at the weekly meeting of the Haitian group Veye-Yo had prompted a discussion among the Haitian activists about the revolution's impact in the Caribbean. An announcement at the Veye-Yo meeting about Saturday's forum and the threats against it brought several new people to the Pathfinder Bookstore the next night.

#### Maceo Brigade representative

At the forum, Luisa Díaz represented the Antonio Maceo Brigade. She explained that the brigade is made up of young Cubans who are supporters of the revolution and who work for better relations between the United States and Cuba. Helping to defend the right of this meeting to take place, she said, strengthened the right of all progressive organizations in Miami to be politically active.

She invited everyone present to join the brigade on January 28 for a united meeting to demand an end to the blockade and other criminal activities against Cuba, the right to visit Cuba, and the right to speak out about Cuba in Miami.

Jack Lieberman, representing the New Jewish Agenda and the Latin America and Caribbean Solidarity Association, brought a message in support of the right of the Militant Labor Forum to hold this meeting.

Yves Richard, president of the Haitian union Independent Federation of Haitian Workers, who was visiting Miami, also brought greetings to the meeting and talked about the impact that the Cuban revolution has had throughout the Caribbean.

Rosa Garmendia, a member of the Young Socialist Alliance who was born in Cuba, explained that the "most important thing we can do here in Miami is to help shed light on what is actually going on in Cuba, to help get out the truth. It's very important to have meetings like this," she said, "not to be intimidated, and to discuss and actively participate." She introduced



Just back from Cuba where she attended activities celebrating 30th anniversary of revolution, Mary-Alice Waters (at podium) spoke at January 7 Miami meeting, along with representative of Antonio Maceo Brigade and others.

SWP leader Waters.

"Why does a meeting like this, taking note of this anniversary and discussing its significance, generate such a reaction as has occurred here over the last two days?" Waters asked.

The answer, she said, can be found in a speech by Fidel Castro delivered on December 5 in Havana. Waters quoted from the speech, beginning with Castro's declaration:

"We are the first socialist country in the

Western Hemisphere, the first socialist country in Latin America, the last to free itself from Spain, the first to free itself from Yankee imperialism, the first to establish full domination over its own wealth, the first to disobey the orders of the empire, the first to challenge it, the first to carry out the most profound revolution, based on new concepts, new ideas, new values."

Waters went on to discuss the gains of the Cuban revolution and its place in the world today.

## Puerto Rican activists' trial resumes

BY TIM CRAINE

HARTFORD, Conn. — The trial of five of the Puerto Rico/Hartford 15 on charges of conspiracy in connection with a 1983 robbery resumed here January 5 after recessing on December 19. It is expected to last one more month.

So far the prosecution has failed to make any case against defendants Antonio Camacho Negrón and Roberto José Maldonado Rivera, whom they accuse of transporting stolen money to Puerto Rico through Mexico.

Evidence against two other defendants, Carlos Ayes Suárez and Norman Ramírez Talavera, is also shaky. They are charged with participating in a 1985 Three Kings Day toy giveaway. The prosecution claims, but has been unable to prove, that the money used to purchase the toys came from the Wells Fargo robbery.

Most of the trial has focused on defendant Juan Segarra Palmer. Segarra has admitted knowing in advance that Víctor Gerena was planning the robbery but has denied helping to plan the robbery or in helping Gerena to escape.

#### Tapped phones, bugs

Much of the prosecution's case against the five rests on tape recordings made by FBI agents in Puerto Rico as part of a massive surveillance operation conducted in 1984 and 1985, in which they tapped phones and planted bugs in the defendants' cars and homes.

FBI agents in charge of the case were so careless in their handling of the tape recordings, however, that even Judge T. Emmet Clarie had to throw some of the tapes out as evidence because they had remained unsealed for as long as 80 days. As a result, the case of nine of the defendants has been placed on hold while the govern-

ment appeals this decision.

The defendants argue that use of the remaining tapes in this trial against the five should also be thrown out on the grounds that they violated the constitutional right to privacy.

The judge and the prosecutor have made every effort not to allow the jury any opportunity to hear evidence that places into question the FBI's credibility. Nevertheless, defense attorney Juan Ramón Acevedo was able to bring out systematic discrepancies in the dating for sealing the tapes. For instance, one agent testified that he had sealed a tape on March 27, 1985, while the records show that he accepted custody of the tape on March 28, 1985. Inconsistencies such as these call into question the supposedly meticulous system of record keeping designed to insure the tapes' "purity."

#### Audibility, translations

Beyond the issue of the tapes' authenticity is that of audibility. The conversations on the tapes are all in Spanish. The jury is played a tape and then shown an English translation of a transcript made by a government-employed translator. On some of the tapes there is so much background noise that it is impossible to make out words in any language. But the government translators have been allowed to let their imaginations run wild and hear what they want to hear.

Translator Mayra López admitted to the court that she had to listen to one tape 12 to 15 times. Even so, there are many conversations where the transcripts come out riddled with "U.I.'s (unintelligible) between snatches of conversation, so that the context of the discussion is hard to piece together. Government "voice experts" have

In the discussion after the presentation, a number of Cubans joined in. Several had left Cuba in 1980 during the Mariel boatlift, and their remarks, based on their own personal experiences, helped to clarify the issues so muddled by U.S. propaganda.

Luisa Díaz discussed the support of the Cuban people for their troops in Angola and the struggle against the apartheid regime of South Africa. She offered a personal example. "When I was 16 years old, without telling my parents, I volunteered to fight in Angola," she declared.

Another Cuban, answering the propaganda that Cuban President Fidel Castro is a dictator, explained how he is reelected every five years, in accordance with the provisions of Cuba's constitution. In 1975 the Cuban people approved a new constitution, he explained. "I personally voted in that election, as did more than 95 percent of the population. But the majority of the American people don't know that information," he said.

A third Cuban noted that in the United States a person can be president for only up to eight years. But "the Black population continues to be downtrodden, the poor continue to receive the minimum wage, to be full of drugs, to have bad medical care, to live in the streets."

He concluded, "The next time there's a revolutionary leader somewhere in the world who puts power in the hands of the Black community, of the poor and oppressed, you're going to see that leader around for 30 years as well."

The local CBS TV affiliate covered the forum, interspersing it with footage of the recent arrival from Cuba of three "political prisoners" and their claims about bad conditions in Cuba.

"However," the TV reporter concluded, "Waters says that's not true."

inconsistently identified some of the voices on the tapes, raising further questions about the authenticity of the transcripts.

The prosecution has tried to use the tapes to inflame the jury against the defendants. One tape recording allegedly has the defendants discussing firearms training, which has nothing to do with the charges in this case but that helped paint a picture of the defendants as "dangerous terrorists."

In another tape, played to the jury just before the holiday break so that it would make a lasting impression, an unidentified male is supposedly heard saying that there had been a "rehearsal" of the robbery before it took place in September 1983. This would support prosecution claims of a conspiracy to commit the robbery. Other translations that the FBI has made of this same tape, however, include one in which he says "there was no rehearsal" and one in which the word "rehearsal" is not even mentioned. It appears that the FBI had to go through several transcriptions and translations to get the story it wanted.

Defenders of the charged Puerto Ricans point out that the prosecution has already spent three times the amount involved in the \$7 million Wells Fargo robbery in prosecuting the case. They argue that the motivation behind the trial is to harass and intimidate the Puerto Rican independence movement. Yet any time defense lawyers attempt to bring the issue of colonialism in Puerto Rico before the jury, they are immediately cut off by the judge.

Most of the evidence presented in the trial is in Spanish, but the jury is made up of English-speaking North Americans. The judge, however, has denied defense motions to move the trial to Puerto Rico, where the defendants could be judged by a jury of their peers.