

Curtis defense effort gains wider backing

Atlanta rally shows growing support for Curtis in South

BY SUSAN LaMONT

ATLANTA — The Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice has voted to add its name to the growing list of prominent individuals and organizations demanding freedom for Des Moines, Iowa, frame-up victim Mark Curtis. Curtis, a packinghouse worker and political activist, was framed up last year on rape and burglary charges, and is now serving a 25-year prison term. The Des Moines-based Mark Curtis Defense Committee is spearheading an international campaign to win Curtis' release.

The Southern Organizing Committee's decision to become an endorser of the Curtis Defense Committee was announced by Joan Levitt at a rally held here January 28 on behalf of the imprisoned unionist. Levitt, a Curtis supporter from Birmingham, is a member of the United Mine Workers of America Local 2368 in Brookwood, Alabama. She and other defense committee activists from Birmingham have spoken about the Curtis case before organizations in southern Alabama, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

'They understand frame-ups'

"The international campaign to win justice for Mark Curtis has won special and growing support here in the South," Levitt explained. "Out of the decades-long fight against racial oppression, out of the struggles of farmers and workers, have emerged many respected fighters in the cities and rural areas of the South. They understand frame-ups all too well and see Mark Curtis' fight as their own."

"The Southern Organizing Committee has a rich history of defending victims of racism and injustice," continued Levitt. "Its cochairpersons are veteran civil rights leaders Anne Braden, Ben Chavis, and Fred Shuttlesworth."

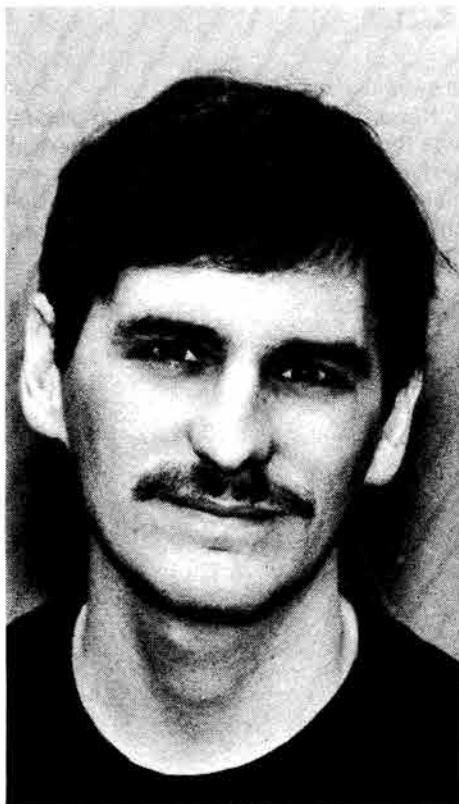
Levitt also announced that Shuttlesworth had recently joined Anne Braden as an individual sponsor of the committee.

The Atlanta event, held at the downtown City Centre Hotel, reflected the growing support Curtis' fight for justice is winning in this region, where the civil rights battles that brought down the system of Jim Crow segregation were centered.

Nearly 150 unionists, Black rights fighters, students, anti-apartheid activists, and other supporters of democratic rights attended the Atlanta event, including several members of the Atlanta chapter of the African National Congress of South Africa. Participants came from cities, towns, and campuses in Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina, and Mississippi.

The rally, sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum, was one of six being held in January and early February in conjunction with regional political conferences organized by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. They took place in Oakland, California, Pittsburgh, Chicago, as well as here in Atlanta; and will be held in Los Angeles and New York.

Willie Mae Reid, a member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union from Houston, chaired the rally. Reid, a

Militant/Margaret Jayko
Mark Curtis in Anamosa, Iowa, prison.

longtime Black rights and women's rights fighter, was the 1976 Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice-president.

The featured speaker was John Gaige, national farm director for the Socialist Workers Party and SWP organizer in Des Moines.

Gaige explained the stakes for workers and farmers in beating back the frame-up of Curtis.

Because Curtis is a fighter — who not only defended immigrant workers at the Swift packing house where he worked, but fought for unity among all the workers there — he was framed up, Gaige explained.

A number of messages sent to the rally from Curtis supporters around the South
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Interview with Curtis in Iowa State men's penitentiary

BY MARGARET JAYKO

ANAMOSA, Iowa — According to the Chamber of Commerce, Anamosa has a population of just under 5,000, including the 940 prisoners in the Iowa State Men's Reformatory and Iowa Prison Industries, the second-largest employer in this town. The jail is about 80 prisoners over capacity.

As I set up my camera gear and tape recorder in the conference room where I was going to interview Mark Curtis on January 31, I saw him in the adjacent room. In preparation for the interview, his hair and throat were checked, presumably for smuggled items, and his body was patted down.

Then he came in with his counselor, who sat with us for the half hour that had been allocated by the warden. Curtis was dressed in a blue T-shirt and dungarees and looked thin but healthy. He has just begun serving a 25-year sentence on phony charges of rape and burglary.

I asked Curtis about John Knox, another prisoner in Anamosa whose case, like Curtis', has received lots of media coverage in Iowa.

Knox was convicted in Des Moines on Nov. 23, 1988, of first-degree sexual abuse and first-degree murder in the death of a Marshalltown teacher. This was despite the fact that experts testified that a bloody palm print found on the bed of the victim didn't belong to Knox.

"How ... can they convict somebody when they got a palm print?" Knox asked when the verdict came down. "Everybody talks about justice, everybody talks about

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Proposal to cut UN's forces for Namibia opposed

BY SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK — United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar issued a January 24 report that proposes reducing the number of UN peacekeeping forces to be sent to Namibia from 7,500 to 4,650. The force is scheduled to arrive before April 1 when a UN plan to bring about the country's independence from South Africa is to begin.

The 2,850 soldiers cut from the proposed force are to be held in reserve. They could be called into service at the discretion of Pérez de Cuéllar with the agreement of the UN Security Council.

The proposal immediately met opposition from the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries and the Executive Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

"We are disappointed and very seriously disturbed by the recommendations ... made by the UN secretary-general to the Security Council," said Ide Oumarou, secretary-general of the OAU. "Those recommendations basically reflect the concerns of the permanent members of the council," he said.

The day before the report was issued the Nonaligned group's coordinating bureau issued a communiqué charging that some permanent members of the Security Council were subjecting the secretary-general to "undue pressures" to propose reducing the Namibia peacekeeping force.

The "downsizing of the military component of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group can only be aimed at strengthening the hand of the South African Administrator-General and his forces to manipulate the electoral process" leading to Namibian independence, said Isack Mudenge, chief Zimbabwe representative to the UN. Mudenge read the communiqué to a news conference on behalf of

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Des Moines socialist runs for city council seat

BY MARGARET JAYKO

DES MOINES, Iowa — Nan Bailey will be the Socialist Workers Party candidate in the upcoming special election to fill the vacant city council seat in Des Moines' 1st Ward.

Bailey, 36 years old, recently started working at the Swift meat-packing plant here and is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431. Prior to that, she worked at the Oscar Mayer plant in Perry, Iowa, which shut down on February 3.

Bailey ran for Congress last year in the 4th Congressional District.

The election was scheduled after liberal Democrat Elaine Szymoniak resigned from the city council following her election to the Iowa Senate. The 1st Ward covers the northwestern part of Des Moines, which includes a section of the city's Black community as well as the Drake University area.

Several other people have announced they're considering running in this officially nonpartisan race, including Human Rights Commission Chairperson Alfredo Alvarez, and two prominent figures in the Black community, Richard Daye, elder of

the New Friendship Church of God in Christ, and former councilwoman Willie Glanton.

If there are more than two candidates in the race, a primary election will be held March 7. Voters will then choose between the two frontrunners on April 4.

To achieve ballot status, candidates must collect 138 signatures of ward residents who are eligible to vote. The petitions must be filed by February 15.

Bailey's supporters are mobilizing February 4 to begin collecting the signatures. On February 11 Bailey will give a talk at the socialist campaign headquarters, which is located in the same premises as the Pathfinder Bookstore.

"There are good examples right here in Des Moines of the economic and social crisis that is afflicting workers and farmers around the world," said Bailey. She cited homelessness, farm foreclosures, layoffs, U.S. military aggression abroad, plant closings, cop brutality, attacks on abortion rights, and the frame-up of political activist and union militant Mark Curtis, as some of the issues her campaign would be addressing.

To help get Nan Bailey on the ballot,



Militant/Sara Lobman

Nan Bailey

contact the campaign at 2105 Forest Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695.

'Militant' renewal drive to start Feb. 11

BY SAM MANUEL

Supporters of the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* will begin a four-week international subscription renewal campaign on February 11. Those who decide to renew their subscriptions to one or both of those publications will also be encouraged to purchase individual copies of the Marxist journal *New International*.

According to *Militant* circulation director Norton Sandler, the aim of the renewal campaign is to take advantage of last fall's successful introductory subscription drive to increase the long-term readership of

these communist publications. "By long-term reader we mean someone who has subscribed for a longer period than our introductory offers," he explained.

"As a result of organized circulation efforts the long-term readerships of the *Militant* and *PM* increased modestly from December 1987 to December 1988," Sandler explained. In that year the long-term readership of the *Militant* rose from 1,873 to 1,908. For *PM* it rose from 317 to 375.

Sandler reported that in the first three weeks of January, without an organized effort by *Militant* and *PM* supporters, 139 people have renewed their *Militant* sub-

scriptions and 11 have renewed *PM* subscriptions purchased during the fall drive.

Over the next four weeks distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International* will contact by mail, phone calls, and/or personal visits each person who subscribed to these publications last fall.

Many subscribers will be contacted more than once, Sandler noted. Distributors will review with subscribers what they thought of past issues of the publications, what they liked about them, and what they would like to read more about. "Those who decide to become long-term

subscribers," he said, "will do so because they have developed a deeper appreciation for what these publications have to say."

Sandler said a collective effort is "always the key to winning new readers and convincing them to become consistent readers of our press. The renewal campaign will be organized through teams that can make phone calls and visits several nights a week. Special efforts will be organized on weekends."

During last fall's subscription drive, *Militant*, *PM*, and *New International* supporters went beyond the immediate cities where they live to sell subs to workers at plant gates, students on campuses, and in working-class communities. This four-week effort offers an opportunity to get back to these areas.

In addition, many trade union supporters will be talking to their coworkers who bought subscriptions last fall, Sandler said.

Getting back to the growing numbers of our readers around the world, he said, will also be an important part of this renewal campaign.

Sandler noted that last fall's campaign registered a continued increase in subscriptions outside the United States. It rose to 19 percent in that drive from the 13 percent obtained in last spring's effort.

The renewal campaign will be followed by a eight-week spring subscription and sales drive from March 25 through May 20.

Sandler said that readers who want to participate in the renewal campaign should contact one of the distributors listed on page 12 or the *Militant* and *PM* business offices, both of which are located at 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone (212) 929-3486.

New York meeting marks 77th anniversary of the African National Congress

BY MERYL LYNN FARBER

NEW YORK — Some 250 people gathered at the Martin Luther King Labor Center on January 27 to celebrate the 77th anniversary of the African National Congress.

Since its founding in 1912 the ANC has led the struggle to overthrow the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The featured speaker of the evening was

Seattle, Portland Vancouver

Attend Socialist Educational Conference
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Hear

Jack Barnes

national secretary,
Socialist Workers Party

On

In Defense of Communism:

- **Perestroika and capitalism**
- **The growing imperialist crisis**
- **The Cuban revolution and Marxist leadership today**

Sat., Feb. 4. Reception 6 p.m., forum 7 p.m.
C.A.M.P., 1722 18th Ave., Seattle.

Class on Che Guevara's "Planning and Consciousness in the Transition to Socialism"

from the book *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*. (pp.203-30)

Sun., Feb. 5. 11 a.m. Lakewood-Seward
Park Community Center, 4916 S. Angeline
St. (at 50th Ave. S.), Seattle.

Donation: \$3 each event. Sponsors: Socialist
Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.
For more information call (206) 723-5330.

Tebogo Mafole, chief representative of the ANC to the United Nations. Mafole outlined the increased attacks on the people of South Africa carried out by the apartheid regime. But, he explained, despite the bannings, detentions, and successive states of emergency, "the people of South Africa have refused to be cowed."

The audience broke into applause when Mafole said, "The apartheid regime is not acting out of strength, it is in a very weak position."

"It was forced to the negotiating table precisely because of the battles fought in Angola, in Cuito Cuanavale," he declared.

Mafole was referring to the agreement the South African government signed following a crushing military defeat in Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, last March dealt by the armed forces of Angola, fighters of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, and Cuban internationalist troops.

'Firm solidarity'

The chief representative declared the ANC's "firm solidarity with the people of Namibia and SWAPO." He added, "The best contribution we can make to the people of Namibia is to intensify our struggle against the apartheid regime."

Other speakers at the celebration were Maha Khoury, representing the Palestine Liberation Organization; Cyprian Majeyo, minister counselor of the Tanzanian mission to the UN; and Cecilia McCall of Women for Racial and Economic Equality.

Donna Katzin of the Mobil out of South Africa Campaign announced actions planned for New York, including a protest at Madison Square Garden on February 24 targeting Mobil Oil. Mobil remains the biggest U.S. corporation in South Africa.

New York Assemblyman Roger Green, and Dennis Rivera, executive vice-president of Local 1199 of the Hospital and Health-care Employees Union, also ad-

ressed the audience.

Rosemary Mealy of WBAI radio moderated the program, which included musical performances by the 4 Parts of the Movement Chorus and Human Condition. Sechaba, a cultural group of the ANC, closed the event.



Militant/Sam Manuel
Tebogo Mafole, African National Congress' chief representative to the United Nations.

Fidel Castro on defending communism today

Our next issue will carry a speech made by Cuban President Fidel Castro on January 4. It was one of three major speeches the communist leader made during the

Coming in our next issue

celebration of the Cuban revolution's 30th anniversary.

This speech describes the achievements of the socialist revolution in Cuba; discusses the significance of the victory by Cuban and Angolan forces last year against South Africa and the debate over the UN peacekeeping force in Namibia; and presents a confident defense of communism as the road forward for humanity.

Also in our next issue will be a report on Nicaragua's new economic measures announced by President Daniel Ortega on January 30.

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Sri Lankan's deportation stirs protests in Britain

BY ANDY BUCHANAN

MANCHESTER, England — At dawn on January 18, more than 100 police officers, some armed with powerful drilling equipment, smashed their way into the Church of the Ascension in the Hulme district of this city.

Their aim was to snatch Sri Lankan-born Viraj Mendis from the church in which he had been taking sanctuary for more than two years. Mendis had been declared an "illegal immigrant" by the British government and was under threat of deportation to Sri Lanka.

After breaking the sanctuary and removing Mendis from the church, police and immigration authorities transported him rapidly to London. On January 20 he was taken to an airliner handcuffed between two police officers and flown to Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

Mendis is an outspoken supporter of the rights of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. And throughout the four-year campaign to win Mendis' right to remain in this country, his supporters had explained that this meant he

would face prosecution and death if he was returned to Sri Lanka.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government, however, was determined to send him to that country. Even as he was being taken to the plane, several other countries were in the course of contacting the British government, offering to accept Mendis. The government ignored these offers.

The speed and brutality of the government action stem from the fact that this case had become the political focus of activity in defense of the rights of "illegal" immigrant workers.

The British government is currently moving to toughen further its immigration laws. In particular, it is removing the right of people served with deportation orders to file appeals against them.

As part of this attack the government is eager to break up the growing sanctuary movement, in which people under threat of deportation have sought refuge in religious buildings. At present it is estimated that more than 70 people are in hiding from the



Viraj Mendis in the church in Manchester, England, where he had taken sanctuary for two years.

immigration authorities in churches, mosques, and safe houses.

The government, however, has declared its intention to hound them out of the country. The January 22 issue of *The Observer*, a national Sunday paper, quoted a Home Office source as saying, "Everything had to wait until Mendis was out of the country. Now the word is to go out and whack them [immigrants]. It is going to be like Mendis — snatched and deported within 48 hours."

Mendis had become a target for special attention from police officials because of the role he had played over several years in campaigning to defend other immigrant workers. The government actions against him were accompanied by a racist campaign in the pages of the local and national newspapers.

The arrest and deportation of Mendis brought a rapid response from the defense campaign and its supporters. On the night after the attack on the sanctuary, some 2,000 people took to the streets to protest the government's actions. The following day business in Parliament was dominated by this issue as Labour Party members attacked the Home Office ministers responsi-

ble for the deportation.

Supporters of Mendis in London held protest actions outside Pentonville prison and at Gatwick airport.

Workers in Manchester factories report that the action against the Sri Lankan activist provoked sharp discussion on the shop floor. Some workers conditioned by years of racist stories in the press, hailed his deportation. Others, however, were shaken by the police action. Some began to give the issue serious consideration for the first time.

Another large demonstration wound through the streets of Manchester on January 20. The marchers were addressed by labor movement leaders, church representatives, and Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign spokespersons. Among the speakers were Bill Morris, the deputy general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, and Labour Party Member of Parliament Tony Benn.

A national protest demonstration in Manchester was scheduled for February 4.

Messages of support should be sent to: VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5AL, England.

Editors of pro-Palestinian paper sentenced in Israel

BY HARRY RING

In an unexpected move, the Israeli government made a plea bargain with four editors of a left-wing Israeli paper who were prosecuted for alleged links with a Palestinian "terrorist" organization. One of the four was released, and the others received relatively minimal sentences.

The most serious charge against the four — "contact with a foreign agent" — was dropped. In return they pleaded guilty to other charges relating to asserted membership in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The DFLP is an affiliate of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is outlawed by the Israeli regime.

The four were editors of *Derech Hanitzotz* (Way of the Spark). Published in Hebrew and Arabic, it was an outspoken partisan of the Palestinian uprising.

The paper was shut down by the government last February. The editor of the Arabic edition, Ribhi al-Aruri, was jailed without charges for six months and then released. During his incarceration, Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience.

The other four had been held without bail since last spring and faced possible 40-year sentences. Their legal defense team was headed by the noted rights attorney Felicia Langer.

With the plea bargain, Yakov Ben Efrat was sentenced to 30 months, with the sentence retroactive to his imprisonment six months ago. According to Israeli law, he will be eligible for release for good behavior after completing two-thirds of his sentence, 11 months from now. But it is not assured that this will be granted.

Michal Schwartz and Assaf Adiv were given 18-month sentences and qualify for release in three months.

Ronnie Ben Efrat was sentenced to nine months, the time she had already served. She was released January 25, the day the court approved the plea bargain.

In a telephone interview from Jerusalem, Ben Efrat said that "a very big factor" in winning the plea agreement was the opposition developing within Israel to the government's drive to strangle the Palestinian uprising.

Ben Efrat said there was wide agreement in the media that the plea bargain represented a big retreat by the prosecution and by Shin Bet, Israel's secret security police.

She added that another factor was the broad support won for the defendants in Is-

rael and internationally.

"Instead of creating a public image of us as dangerous 'terrorists,' 'demonizing' us," Ben Efrat said, "the exact opposite was happening. We were getting a lot of sympathy."

"We were accused of having contact with the PLO," she observed. "Now members of parliament are publicly declaring their intention of meeting with the PLO."

This, she said, put the government case "in a ridiculous light."

Also, she added, the prosecution ran into particular difficulty when the court began hearing defense evidence relating to confessions the defendants made and then repudiated. These confessions had been wrenched from them illegally by Shin Bet and the prison police.

They were subjected to harsh prison conditions and lengthy nighttime interrogation, a practice banned by law.

And the two women defendants were subjected to humiliating sexist abuse.

It was further established that the prosecution had withheld information about the case from the court.

International support for the defendants was extensive. Their release was demanded by the U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists. With TV news broadcaster Walter Cronkite as its honorary chair, its board of directors includes Dan Rather of CBS News and Gil Noble of WABC-TV.

In Israel, protests came from peace and civil liberties groups and prominent journalists and academic figures.

In a column in the Israeli daily *Hadashot*, legal commentator Moshe Negbi noted that *Derech Hanitzotz* was the first Hebrew-language paper to be permanently shut down, "while in the past this extreme punishment was used only against Arabic newspapers."

This means, he warned, that press freedom cannot be divided "and that the suppression of human rights cannot be stopped at the 'green line'" (the West Bank and Gaza Strip demarcation lines).

Meanwhile, trial proceedings are under way in a similar case, that of Michaël Warszawski and the Alternate Information Centre, of which he is the director.

Warsawski and the center are charged with "rendering typesetting services" to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a PLO affiliate.

Warsawski faces a possible 23-year

Continued on Page 12

Socialists hosting regional conferences

On February 4 and 5 the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance are hosting the last of six regional political conferences.

Members and friends of the SWP and YSA and supporters of the *Militant* will hear reports on and dis-

cuss 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 packinghouse worker serving a 25-year jail sentence.

Host city	participating	Host city	participating
February 4-5			
Los Angeles	Phoenix Price, Utah Salt Lake City	New York City	Boston Brooklyn Newark Philadelphia

For more information call: Los Angeles (213) 380-9460; New York (212) 219-3679.

Militant Labor Forums

The Political Fight to Free Mark Curtis

Los Angeles: Hear **James Warren** SWP national organization secretary.

Sat., Feb. 4, 7 p.m. Holiday Inn-L.A. Convention Center Windsor Room, 1020 S. Figueroa (downtown, corner of Olympic) For more information call (213) 380-9460.

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

Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. P.S. 41, 116 W. 11th St. Manhattan (near 6th Ave.) For more information call (212) 219-3679.

'Only one conclusion: Curtis was victim of cop frame-up'

BY MARGARET JAYKO

CHICAGO — More than 200 people turned out here January 28 to hear Socialist Workers Party Organization Secretary James Mac Warren discuss the stakes in the fight against the frame-up of political activist and union militant Mark Curtis. The meeting attracted participants from throughout the Midwest, as well as Canada.

Curtis was tried and convicted in Des Moines, Iowa, last September on phony charges of rape and burglary. He is currently serving a 25-year prison term in the state penitentiary in Anamosa, Iowa. More than 30 Curtis supporters from Des Moines attended the forum here.

Susan O'Neal and Juan Villegas chaired the program. O'Neal is a law student and works as a paralegal for the foundation that provides free legal services to those who can't afford to pay for them. She is a member of the United Legal Workers, which is organized under District 65 of the United Auto Workers.

Became convinced it was a frame-up

She opened the meeting by explaining how she got involved in the fight to defend Curtis. "I am a feminist and a rape victim. Thus I am just the kind of person that the people who framed up Mark Curtis were counting on to not support him," she explained.

"The state knew what Mark's politics are and the type of people who would naturally be inclined to support him. That's why they chose the charge of rape, in order to try to dissuade people who fight against sexism and violence against women from joining the defense effort to get out the truth and free Mark Curtis.

"However, having some experience with the ways that the minds of police work, this did not dissuade me from inquiring last summer as to what this was all about. After full consideration of all of the facts available to me, there was only one conclusion that I could make: Mark Curtis was indeed the victim of a police frame-up.

"I traveled to Iowa last Labor Day weekend and convinced one of my coworkers to come along. I was able at that time to see for myself the spirit of the growing defense effort, and was also able to talk to Mark Curtis for a while." O'Neal was referring to the international Curtis defense rally held in Des Moines on the eve of the trial.

"Since that time, I've been doing what I can to tell Mark's story to all who will listen," she continued. "During these times, it is becoming easier and easier for people to know that this all rings true and that they could be next.

O'Neal introduced Juan Villegas, an organizer for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. He represents some 400 workers who grow, pick, and pack mushrooms. Villegas explained that he was fired from his job last March because of his union activity. Curtis was victimized, said Villegas, because he was protecting immigrant workers, just like Villegas and his colleagues are doing.

"On March 1, 1988, dozens of federal agents invaded the Swift meat-packing

plant in Des Moines. They arrested 17 immigrant workers — 16 Mexican workers and one Salvadoran worker. They handcuffed them and carted them off to jail. They showed us in a very graphic way the conditions of life for millions of working people, on the land and in the city, in this country and throughout the world," began Warren.

The Swift 17 are like millions of other workers from that part of the world that has been devastated as a result of domination by the rich countries of the world, explained Warren. When they come to the United States and other imperialist nations, these workers are forced to work in the worst jobs, with the lowest pay and the fewest rights, and the threat of deportation constantly hanging over their heads.

The Swift raid was a nationally organized probe to see how far the government could get away with undermining the federal amnesty program for undocumented immigrants. "But the authorities were surprised by the resistance of the workers and their families," said Warren. These workers reached out for support and got it. "And one of their biggest and firmest supporters was Mark Curtis," he added.

Curtis is one of thousands of young workers who are out in front, resisting the attacks by the employers that have come down in the past decade. "But since organizing and fighting for workers is not illegal in the United States today, the bosses have to use frame-up methods to victimize those they want to get rid of," said Warren. "They charged Mark with crimes — rape and burglary — not with fighting to defend working conditions and wages."

Usually when the authorities do this, said Warren, they're able to make it stick. What makes Curtis different is that from the beginning, he waged a successful international campaign to get support for the fight against this frame-up. And by defending his own rights, he contributed to the victory of the Swift 17 in getting the felony charges against them dropped.

"Curtis' trial was supposed to be the

high point for those who were pursuing this frame-up," said Warren. "This would be when they would prove that Curtis was guilty. But it turned out to be their weakest point — even though the entire process was stacked against Mark from the beginning."

"While we weren't strong enough to win the fight to keep Curtis out of jail," the SWP leader stressed, "we will make them pay a very high price for this attempted frame-up, and we will politically vindicate Mark Curtis."

To accomplish this means a shift in the activity of defense committee supporters, said Warren. It is now necessary for activists in every area to draw up a list of all those individuals and organizations who stand for and are associated with the fight for democratic rights and social justice — from government officials to union and farm leaders, from civil libertarians to church figures — and convince them to sign up as endorsers of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

"If we do this," Warren concluded, "we will win the fight for justice for Mark Curtis."

'Cops had no right to beat him like that'

In the discussion period after Warren's talk, Robert Berry, a member of the Iowa Socialist Party and a defense committee activist, explained that he decided to support Curtis when he first received a piece of literature that showed a picture of Curtis' face with his cheekbone shattered as a result of a beating by the cops after he was arrested.

"When I saw that picture, I said it doesn't matter if he's innocent or guilty — the cops had no right to beat him like that," said Berry.

O'Neal introduced a number of special guests who were in the audience: Kate Kaku, Curtis' wife; Paul Curtis, Mark's brother; Myung Kim and Kevin McGhee, Central America solidarity activists from Decorah, Iowa — Kim testified at Curtis' trial; Héctor Marroquín, a Mexican-born socialist who recently won an 11-year fight for permanent residence status; and four



Militant/Stu Singer
Curtis after he was beaten by Des Moines cops last March.

SWP candidates who are running for mayor of their respective cities: Tom Leonard, St. Louis; Joe Swanson, Omaha, Nebraska; Omari Musa, Chicago; and Wendy Lyons, St. Paul, Minnesota.

'I've been fighting ever since'

Hazel Zimmerman, secretary of the defense committee, wrapped up the meeting. She commented on the authorities' surprise at the support for Curtis around the world and in Des Moines and then added, "I never expected me to be a Mark Curtis supporter. I'd never been a fighter for anything before. But I got angry at what the U.S. government was doing to immigrants. Then I met Mark, and it seems like I've been doing nothing but fighting ever since."

Zimmerman announced that Curtis will be filing a suit against the police for violation of his civil rights. She appealed for funds for that and other ongoing legal expenses, as well as for the international political campaign to defend Curtis. The collection at the rally netted \$3,442, including a \$1,000 contribution from a supporter in Missouri.

Messages were sent to the forum from Robert Bartlett, vice-president of United Transportation Union Local 577; Marcela Tardy of the Midwest region of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES); and Steve Millen of the Committee for Democracy in Latin America, Indiana University at Bloomington.

Curtis interview in Iowa prison

Continued from front page

fairness. I'm getting two life sentences for something I haven't done." And, he added, "I'm Black and she's white. That's enough. Where's justice at?"

Knox's first trial in June ended in a hung jury. He is facing two mandatory terms of life in prison without parole.

Since the trial, Knox's lawyers have pressed for a new trial based on evidence that the jury foreman is a member of Posse Comitatus, a right-wing, white supremacist group.

Curtis first met Knox at a political event in the prison on January 15 organized by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Organization.

More than 100 men came to hear recorded excerpts from King's speeches,

music, and poetry written and read by prisoners.

The meeting was open to everybody, and a number of prisoners who are Native American, Hispanic, and white attended, in addition to Blacks. "It was a good opportunity to meet others interested in politics. In my contribution I mentioned the case of John Knox, and after the program he introduced himself to me. He knows of my case and said he's on our side in this fight — mutual support," said Curtis.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Organization has scheduled a series of programs for February, Black History Month, and has asked Curtis to make a presentation on February 15.

"This is a young population," Curtis said. Most prisoners, he thought, were in their twenties. "The people coming in especially, are very young. Of course, if you're here and you have a big sentence then you won't be so young when you get out, so there's a number of people who get old while they're here.

"In fact, they have what they call an old man's group, which meets regularly and discusses problems. That's open to people 30 years old and over, so I'm going to be in the old man's group." Curtis turned 30 on January 7, almost one month to the day since he arrived at Anamosa.

The prisoners are working people — construction workers, packinghouse workers, farm workers, and others. "There's whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and recent immigrants from El Salvador, Cuba, Mexico, and from Southeast Asia, too," said Curtis.

I asked Mark about the civil suit he intends to file against the police, in response to the beating he received by the cops at the police station when he was arrested last March.

"I think this is an important suit. And it comes in the context of the exposé of the Des Moines police department." He was referring to the months-long series of scandals about the racist and sexist abuse Des Moines cops mete out to each other, which prompted a federal investigation of the department.

"But my suit will go after one important thing that hasn't really been touched in this whole controversy — and that's police brutality in Des Moines. This suit will take that up directly. And I think that's important, not just for me, but for everybody opposed to this kind of thing."

'I've seen police brutality in progress'

Curtis showed me some of the many letters he receives each week. One was from a member of the Women's Auxiliary of United Mine Workers Local 1332. She lives on the Navajo reservation in Window Rock, Arizona. She told Curtis that she has worked for the police department on the reservation and has "seen police brutality in progress and seen where they actually get away with it."

After his arrest, the cops called Curtis a "Mexican-lover" and a "colored-lover" while they beat him. "It reminded me right away of who I was," Curtis said, "and why they would be dragging me in there, why it wasn't some kind of crazy mistake or something."

The most important thing to do now, said Curtis, "is to continue to unite and mobilize forces opposed to these kinds of attacks on anybody's rights, and get them to understand why it's important to fight. So there's a lot for ordinary working people and political activists to think about. There's a lot at stake for them."

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.

El Salvador rebels propose election plan

BY FRED FELDMAN

The General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front has offered to participate in the presidential election in El Salvador, if it is rescheduled and reorganized. The FMLN is the bloc of organizations waging an armed struggle against the U.S.-backed, military-dominated government.

A January 24 FMLN statement called for a six-month postponement in the election (currently scheduled for March 19), an end to military repression, a ban on interference in the election by the army and the U.S. government, and other steps. The FMLN stated that it would accept President José Napoleón Duarte remaining in office until the elections are held.

In exchange the FMLN offered to "respect the activity of the parties and electoral bodies throughout the country"; decree a truce for the two days prior to and after the voting; "call upon its entire social base to participate in the electoral activity, encouraging its base to support and vote for the platform and candidates of the Democratic Convergence"; and "accept the legitimacy of the electoral results."

The offer came in the midst of a devastating social and economic crisis in El Salvador after a decade of civil war. The recent coffee harvest is reported to have been the worst in more than 10 years, and more than half the work force is without full-time jobs.

Grip weakened

Despite the presence of U.S. military advisers, \$3.2 billion in U.S. aid, and a counterinsurgency war in which an estimated 70,000 people have died, the government's grip on the countryside has recently been weakened further. The governing Christian Democratic Party is divided.

Support for Duarte, elected in 1984 with the help of U.S. government funds as a stable and "moderate" alternative, has been eroding as the social crisis has deepened. Moreover, Duarte now has terminal cancer of the liver.

Alfredo Cristiani, presidential candidate of the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), is currently regarded as the front-runner in the current electoral race.

In July another bloc entered the electoral field — the Democratic Convergence. Established in December 1987, it includes two political parties that belong to the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), which is allied to the FMLN, plus the Social Democratic Party.

The presidential candidate of the Democratic Convergence is Guillermo Ungo, a leader of the FDR who returned from exile to El Salvador in 1987.

There were conflicting responses to the FMLN proposal.

President Duarte declared January 25 that he would not accept it. "This is not a peace proposal, but a proposal for war," he said.

Duarte said he would negotiate with the FMLN only if it renounced violence and entered the current electoral process.

He added the next day that the proposal "has introduced a very important point. For the first time in history," Duarte claimed, "the FMLN has accepted that there is a method other than violence for reaching power: the democratic and electoral method." He stressed, however, that the proposed steps were "unconstitutional."

ARENA candidate Cristiani denounced the proposal more sharply, calling for an unconditional cease-fire by the FMLN.

"Many consider this a substantial change in the guerrilla position, and I do as well," said Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas,

head of the Catholic church in El Salvador. "I hope," he continued, that the government "reconsiders its position and looks at the possibilities for a dialogue to take place."

Democratic Convergence nominee

Ungo charged that the government was "losing a historic opportunity by trying to hide behind the constitution, which they violate constantly."

U.S. State Department spokesman Charles Redman responded to the FMLN declaration with the statement that "any proposal such as this is worthy of serious consideration."

Editorials in the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Christian Science Monitor* called for probing the possibilities for a negotiated settlement raised by the FMLN stand.

In Mexico City, FMLN representative Salvador Samoyoa described Duarte as under "extreme pressure from the far right."

"We cannot consider" the government's response to be "definitive," he said.

"For eight years," he told reporters, "the U.S. has been saying that the only obstacle to a political solution in El Salvador was our demand for a formula for power sharing before the elections. We are removing that obstacle for the U.S. It's their move."



Militant/Steven Fuchs

Antirepression protesters ducked for cover as police opened fire on demonstration in capital city of San Salvador last July 11.

FMLN's proposals to Duarte gov't

The following proposal on presidential elections was presented to the government of El Salvador on January 24 by the General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The English-language translation is taken from the *Bulletin of Radio Farabundo Martí*, published in San Francisco, California.

The General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, considering:

1. That the previous five elections have not resolved the fundamental problems of the country.

2. Our people no longer have confidence in elections because they consider them fraudulent, and because they have been unable to end the conflict and resolve the serious economic crisis that deepens the social struggle.

3. The total dependency of our country on the United States has forced the traditional parties, Christian Democrats and ARENA [Nationalist Republican Alliance], to seek the approval of the United States government instead of that of the Salvadoran people.

4. The tendency toward fraud and crisis within the legislative, judicial, executive, and military powers is turning the debate on the electoral law into an unresolvable problem. This is transforming the next elections into the detonator of a major political crisis that would create a vacuum of power.

5. The intensification of violence resulting from the increase of repression against the people who demand solutions to their problems presents the armed forces with a dilemma: committing genocide and provoking an insurrection, or awaiting a power vacuum and an insurrection caused by hunger.

6. An international environment in which most regional conflicts are being resolved through negotiations.

The FMLN — making its last efforts to avoid a social explosion by providing an improved blueprint for elections that would enable them to contribute to a lasting peace — makes the following political proposal:

To postpone the elections scheduled for March 19 for approximately six months and hold them on September 15, day of our national independence; and to carry out these elections under the following conditions:

1. An immediate cessation of abductions, assassinations, and repression against demonstrations, strikes, and all activities of the popular movement; and complete respect by the armed forces for the electoral activity of all parties.

2. The guarantee that the army, paramilitary, and security forces remain in-

side their garrisons on election day, and that they have no participation in the elections.

3. The integration of the Democratic Convergence into the Central Electoral Council. The formation of a Monitoring Council for the elections, made up of religious, humanitarian, and civic organizations that would assume the role of maintaining order on election day and would convene and coordinate all international observers.

4. The establishment of an electoral code that would represent a consensus among all parties.

5. The establishment of the right to vote for all Salvadorans abroad and guarantee, with international support, the conditions so that they can exercise that right.

6. The U.S. government must remain outside of the electoral process and not provide support to any party.

The FMLN then would assume the following commitments:

1. Respect the activity of the parties and electoral bodies throughout the national territory.

2. Respect the mayors if they dissociate themselves from the plans of the army.

3. Decree a truce beginning two days before and continuing until two days after the elections; withdraw any military presence from the towns and voting places.

4. Call upon its entire social base to participate in the electoral activity, encouraging people to support and vote for the platform and candidates of the Democratic Convergence.

5. Accept the legitimacy of the electoral results.

6. In order to facilitate the implementation of this proposal, the FMLN would accept that the present government remain during the transition period.

An electoral process held under the conditions that we propose would make possible an irreversible political solution to the conflict, transforming the elections into a major contribution to peace.

This proposal contains elements that obviously diverge from the existing legal order — which the forces in power constantly accuse each other of violating.

We propose to place peace above the laws now in effect, and we say to the forces with decision-making power that if the war continues their economic and political order will collapse.

The conditions in which the present elections are to be held renders them illegitimate. For this reason, the FMLN has rejected them and, insofar as this situation does not change, the FMLN will maintain its position of accompanying the people in rejecting elections that aggravate the war.

In contrast, this proposal is a contribution to peace. The FMLN calls upon all social forces of the country to take a position on this proposal and expresses its willingness to discuss it with the government, the Legislative Assembly, the armed forces, and all political parties without delay.

The archbishop of San Salvador, Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas, can contribute to convening these discussions, which would augment the efforts of the church toward a national consensus.

March 18 protest called in New York

BY JON HILLSON

NEW YORK — Activists from more than 40 organizations voted here to mobilize opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador with a March 18 march and rally in New York City.

The decision to call the protest action was made at a January 24 meeting initiated by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and the Central American Refugee Center (Crecen). The meeting was held in response to a national appeal for protest against Washington's war in El Salvador, which was signed by more than 160 organizations and individuals. These included Central America solidarity and peace activists, union officials, and political office holders.

The New York meeting also set Monday, March 20 as a day of nonviolent civil disobedience to take place at the Federal Building.

Both events will be coordinated by the

newly formed New York Coalition to Stop the U.S. War in El Salvador.

Similar protests will take place across the United States. New York CISPES leader Scott Bradwell reported they will coincide with elections called by the U.S.-backed regime in El Salvador, set for March 19.

Ernesto Joffre, business agent for Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 169 and chair of the New York Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, said that an early February meeting of the committee will put a high priority on building labor support for the March 18 protest.

The next meeting of the coalition is Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Musicians Local 802, 330 West 42nd Street, 2nd floor.

For further information call (212) 431-9251.

Speech by Tomás Borge Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution

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Shantytowns show crisis for homeless in New York City

Landlords, gov't promote luxury housing

BY JON HILLSON

NEW YORK — Winter means death for homeless New Yorkers.

Three men died of exposure in a 24-hour period January 5-6 when 30-mile-an-hour winds brought already frigid temperatures down to a chill factor of -20 degrees Fahrenheit.

One died under a bundle of rags, another was discovered shoeless and hatless, while the third victim was consumed by flames when sparks from a fire built outside his shanty, an abandoned automobile covered with cardboard, set his refuge ablaze.

He was the ninth to die so far this winter. These recent deaths came as all of New York's major news dailies were publishing extensive articles on the housing crisis here and around the country.

The information reinforces what working people see daily: a cruel, deepening social crisis of massive proportions.

- Scores of homeless people — victims of city, state, and federal cutbacks in mental health services — sleep under benches, bridges, and in restrooms in New York's Central Park, foraging for food in the daytime and huddling under piles of old sleeping bags at night. Nearly 14,000 New Yorkers dependent on mental health disability benefits were slashed from programs and forced out of hospitals and halfway houses in 1983 to fend for themselves. Thousands more needing such care today lack any programs or clinics.

- Hundreds of homeless workers have begun to erect small shantytowns, from Manhattan's Lower East Side to the Bronx and Brooklyn. A string of makeshift huts composed of rags, cardboard, and garbage bags dots the debris-strewn southern extension of the West Side Highway, closed to traffic in the 1970s when it began to collapse.

- Subway walkways and cars, railroad train platforms, and waiting rooms have become places of refuge for thousands of homeless people seeking a buffer against the cold. Many refuse to stay in city-owned shelters, which provide beds, a hundred to a floor, barracks-style. One homeless person described the shelters, with their metal detectors and abusive guards, as being like a jail, where "the guards shake you down for money." About 10,000 people stay in the shelters, according to human service agencies.

- Five thousand children under five in New York are homeless. A third of the children living in "welfare hotels" — privately owned, aging former hotels sustained by direct welfare payments — don't attend school and cannot eat "at home" because rooms are without kitchens.

Of every 1,000 babies born to mothers

Infant mortality rate keeps falling in Cuba

In 1988 Havana, the capital city of Cuba, achieved its lowest infant mortality rate ever — 10.6 for every 1,000 live births. An article in *Granma*, the daily newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, reports that this was a drop from 11.2 in 1987.

With a national average of 11.9 last year, Cuba is one of the 20 countries with the lowest infant mortality rates in the world. In 1987 the rate was 13.3.

Granma reports that Cuban family physicians, who live and work among the people they care for, played an important role in the decreased rate in Havana. Sixty-three percent of the capital's residents are attended by these doctors. The infant mortality rate was 9.5 in the areas of Havana where there are family doctors.

In Havana the rate of women dying in childbirth dropped from 2.09 per 10,000 births in 1987 to 1.8 last year.

living in such buildings, 25 die before reaching their first birthday. And New York City's welfare department pays up to \$20,000 a year for family occupants to the owners of the hotels.

In late December, New York Mayor Edward Koch bowed to years of protest and began slowly phasing out use of the hotels, which house thousands of residents in 46 buildings.

- While estimates of the homeless population vary, housing rights advocates place the number at about 100,000. But even that figure may be low. In early January, New York City Department of Health spokesman Samuel Friedman stated that 200,000 are homeless in the city's five boroughs.

Based on 1988 figures, the Coalition for the Homeless estimated there would be 30,000 evictions in 1989. These evictions are a direct result of the profit drive of New York banks and real estate barons and landlords, and the policies of the Koch administration.

Rising rents

One million \$300-a-month apartments have disappeared as a result of rent hikes in the last 12 years. From 1984 to 1987, years of "good times" for New York's well-heeled, the elimination of low-rent units was greatest. Apartments renting for under \$200 a month decreased by 39 percent.

As well, there were 35 percent fewer apartments for under \$300 a month.

At the same time, landlords raised rents an average of 43 percent. Today 99 percent of all apartments of \$300 a month or less are rented.

Tenants caught in this profit squeeze, according to the East Harlem Tenement Task Force, "make up the bulk of the city's homeless."

Many of those thrown into the street work for a living — at \$3.35 an hour, the legal minimum, or less.

A U.S. Conference of Mayors survey estimated that 22 percent of the nation's 3 million homeless held full or part-time jobs in 1987, up from 19 percent the year before.

While New York City owns more than 50,000 apartments, it refuses to allocate them for low-rent public housing. Most are



Militant/Jon Hillson

Part of small shantytown homeless workers in New York have erected on an old highway now closed to traffic. The estimate of 100,000 homeless in the city may be low.

sold to private developers and landlords for rent at market prices.

An additional 50,000 privately owned units are currently being "warehoused" — withheld from the rent market — to maintain scarcity while keeping rents high. At the same time, older apartments are turned into expensive condominiums or tenant-purchased "co-ops," at prices out of reach of most working people. One-quarter of all New York construction is for luxury housing, where studios start at \$300,000 purchase prices and one-bedroom apartments are rented for \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month.

One million New Yorkers now spend more than 40 percent of their incomes on rent — and 437,000 of these working people pay more than 50 percent of their wages to keep a roof over their heads.

But a roof doesn't guarantee heat.

Otis and Ola Onasanya spend \$500 a month for their Harlem apartment. He's a handyman, she wants to be a nurse. But between his wage, the rent, and food, there's not enough money to keep the burners on the stove going — since the landlord won't fix the boiler.

The cold threatens the life of their baby, born December 1. The three of them sleep under blankets, quilts, and clothing in a living room where a tiny space heater keeps the nighttime temperature at 45 degrees.

Had it been that warm in a Staten Island tenement on January 4, the two-month old infant there wouldn't have died of exposure.

During two recent cold snaps, the city's Heat Complaint Bureau got more than 10,000 phone calls demanding emergency

attention, choking the lines for hours.

But many don't call. They can't afford phones, or they live in violation of occupancy codes, crowding up to 20 people, including children, into two- and three-room apartments.

Many are immigrant workers, including thousands who work in some 3,000 non-union garment sweatshops throughout the city. They are part of an estimated 500,000 city households that subsist on incomes below the federal poverty level.

In addition to the hellish conditions in city-run shelters and the misery of life on the street, there's no access to health care for the homeless in the city's overcrowded, understaffed public hospitals. Debilitating, untreated diseases and drug addiction are common.

According to a report prepared by the Partnership for the Homeless released here January 5, there are between 5,000 and 8,000 homeless people with AIDS struggling to survive in New York City.

Without immediate emergency steps, the report predicts this figure could rise to 30,000 within five years, with city residents "literally stepping over people who are homeless and dying."

The report recommends that the city build housing for homeless men and women with AIDS and set aside for them over the next three years 100 of the 10,000 city-owned apartments that become vacant every year.

The Koch administration responded by stating it had plans to make "beds" available for 800 homeless AIDS victims in the next two years.

Immigration cops arrest Utah miners

BY DAVE HURST AND DAVE PRINCE

PRICE, Utah — Three miners and a former miner at an underground coal mine in this area face deportation to Mexico. The three, employed or formerly employed by Co-Op Mine, were arrested late last year by immigration cops. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents also conducted a sweep in Green River, Utah, an agricultural and tourist center.

The Co-Op Mine is known around here — the center of underground coal mining in the western states — for its unsafe conditions and low pay. The arrested miners earned \$4.50 an hour, compared to the approximately \$15 an hour paid to miners covered by the 1988 United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) underground contracts and to other nonunion miners in the area.

Even the officer in charge of the INS Salt Lake City office said, "The quarters that the mine was providing these illegal alien employees were probably some of the filthiest, worst-kept quarters that I've seen in my 20-year career," the Salt Lake City *Deseret News* reported.

The arrests prompted a discussion among working people in the area's coal

mining towns. While many workers sympathize with the conditions faced by the Co-Op miners, some think undocumented workers take jobs away from U.S.-born workers. In 1988 a record 18 million tons of coal were mined in Utah with 1,000 fewer miners than produced 16.5 million tons in 1982.

In response to the INS arrests, the Militant Labor Forum here sponsored a public meeting titled, "Defend the Rights of Immigrant Workers: Discuss Recent INS Raids in Southeastern Utah." Several local residents involved in defending those arrested, including a former UMWA official, along with family and friends, attended.

Pat Fernandez of the Socialist Workers Party opened the discussion by explaining how the international debt crisis forced many workers to leave depression conditions in Latin America, Asia, and Africa to seek work in North America and Europe.

Responding to the charge that these workers are "stealing" jobs, she said, "We as workers and unionists must stop supporting policies and measures that divide us as a class." She stressed the need for unity among workers internationally to defend themselves against the effects of a coming worldwide depression.

Fernandez called for cancellation of the

Third World debt to the big bankers in New York, London, and other imperialist financial centers.

Bob Hill, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union here, appealed for support in the fight to free Mark Curtis, a unionist and political activist recently sentenced to 25 years in prison on frame-up sexual abuse and burglary charges. Curtis, a meat-packer from Des Moines, Iowa, was active in defending 17 Mexican and Salvadoran coworkers arrested at the Swift meat-packing plant where he worked. They were threatened with deportation by the INS.

During the discussion, one participant raised fear of deportation among miners as an obstacle to organizing the UMWA at the Co-Op Mine, and explained that workers with papers also face harassment and ongoing threats of deportation from the INS.

Another person said that all workers — with or without papers — should have full democratic rights, and that defense of undocumented workers was a moral issue.

Participants also discussed how to convince U.S.-born workers of the need to defend immigrant workers' rights, and how to involve the UMWA and labor movement as a whole in this fight for labor solidarity.



Morris Starsky in 1976 at Pathfinder bookstore in Chicago

Cincinnati meeting hails life, work of Morris Starsky

Militant

BY FRED FELDMAN

CINCINNATI — "Morris Starsky was good for something — not good for nothing like some people — because he always kept something going," Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth told a January 29 meeting honoring the life and political activity of the communist fighter who died at 55 on January 20.

"If something wasn't going, then he thought it ought to be going, and I think the same thing," said Shuttlesworth, a leader of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s who has continued to press for civil liberties and Black rights. "That's what an activist is."

More than 50 people attended the gathering at the Cincinnati office of Hospital Workers Local 1199. In addition to neighbors, other friends, and cofighters of Starsky's from Cincinnati, people came from Cleveland; New York; Pittsburgh; Los Angeles; Muncie, Indiana; and other parts of the country.

"Morris never boasted about his past achievements," stated Valerie Libby, a General Electric worker and Socialist Workers Party member who chaired the meeting. "He lived in the present. He fought for social change in the present. He was attuned to and participated in the very difficult course of the march of the working class toward its emancipation."

In addition to Shuttlesworth and Libby, the meeting heard Tony Spachholz, a longtime political activist who had known Starsky well in the 1960s; Sheri Kaufman Katz, past president of the Cincinnati chapter of the National Organization for Women; Ove Aspoy, a steelworker and SWP member from Pittsburgh who worked closely with Starsky in Cincinnati; and Elizabeth Stone, a member of the National Committee of the SWP.

Rebellion against capitalist injustice

The talks at the meeting provided a vivid picture of Starsky as a person whose life was shaped for four decades by rebellion against capitalist injustice and identification with working people and their struggles. They also portrayed a lively and humorous human being for whom struggle was a pleasure.

Born into a working-class family in Rochester, New York, Starsky began as a teenager to think and increasingly act in defiance of the Cold War, witch-hunt atmosphere of the late 1940s and '50s.

Starsky opposed the Korean War and began to think of himself as "some kind of communist" because "I hated racism and fascism."

When a local filter factory attempted to hire Starsky and other college students as scabs, he helped organize "an antiscab student movement," Starsky wrote shortly before his death.

"I got my picture in the paper waving my fist in a scab's face as he tried to drive through the picket line."

During these years, he also developed the love of reading and learning — along with the love of good food and jokes — that stayed with him all his life.

Fair Play for Cuba Committee

He also participated in protests against the witch-hunting House Un-American Activities Committee and became active in

the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which was initiated after the revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro came to power in 1959.

After studying at several universities, Starsky was hired as an assistant professor at Arizona State University. There his political activism reached a new stage — one that was to bring him national renown.

He played a leading role in organizing a campus teach-in in the fall of 1965, the first antiwar protest in the state.

In 1968 he became an elector in Arizona for the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket of Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle. In the eyes of the FBI and the big-business interests that controlled the university, that became "my most serious crime," Starsky wrote.

A 1968 FBI report paid grudging tribute to his effectiveness:

"It is apparent that New Left organizations and activities in the Phoenix metropolitan area have received their inspiration and leadership almost exclusively from members of the faculty in the Department of Philosophy at Arizona State University, chiefly Assistant Professor Morris J. Starsky."

The bureau opened a campaign to have him fired, including concocting a poison-pen letter to the regents, purportedly from an anonymous "concerned alumnus."

In 1970 Starsky joined the SWP. Later that year the state board of regents fired him — despite a faculty committee recommendation, accepted by the university president, that he be kept on. One pretext was his dismissal of a class in order to speak at an antiracist protest in Tucson.

Wide support across the country

Starsky's fight to keep his job won wide support across the country.

A campaign continued to win support for his court challenge to the firing. In 1972 a court found the firing unconstitutional and ordered him reinstated. Later, another court upheld the ruling but denied reinstatement on a technicality.

In 1981, Starsky was paid \$25,000 in back pay by the university. This was part of an agreement to lift the censure that the American Association of University Professors had imposed on the school because of the firing.

In 1974 the documents showing the FBI's role in the campaign to fire Starsky were made public. He became a coplaintiff in a suit brought by the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance against the FBI and other police agencies, which was won in 1986.

Starsky carried out a national speaking tour in support of his case and the suit, organized by the Political Rights Defense Fund and the American Association of University Professors.

"Morris always stressed that he wasn't fired for what he thought, but for what he did," Stone said.

Not an 'armchair Marxist'

"He loved to teach, loved organizing conferences and other activities relating to philosophy. But he was not an armchair 'Marxist professor' whose political life was in the classroom or the library," she continued.

"Marxism can't be taught or learned in a classroom," she said. "It is simply what

can be learned from the struggles of the working class, and Morris understood that there's no such thing as a Marxist who isn't part of those struggles, who stands aside from them. Morris was first and foremost a struggler. Above all, he wanted to be a participant."

Starsky's communist activism continued after he left Arizona — and led to his losing other academic posts as well. He was elected organizer of the newly formed San Diego branch of the SWP. He also participated in branches in Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, and finally Cincinnati.

Although a degenerative heart condition made it impossible for him to maintain his former pace after 1977, he never stopped being an activist.

Starsky supported the party's 1978 decision that the growing difficulties of world capitalism, and the prospect of sharper class polarization and struggles, necessitated getting most of the party membership into industrial jobs and unions.

'150 percent in favor'

"Morris was 150 percent in support of turning the party toward the mines, mills, and rail yards," Aspoy said. "I say 150 percent in favor because Morris was never just 100 percent in favor of anything." Aspoy described Starsky's disappointment when his heart condition made it impossible for him to take an industrial job, or any job.

"But Morris found other ways to participate in discussing politics with workers," Aspoy said. "He'd pick up Lorraine [Lorraine Starsky, who was married to Morris] after work at the General Electric plant, and they'd go to a bar or bowling alley and talk politics, talk socialism, and tell jokes with her coworkers. And when his health permitted, he would be out participating in sales of the *Militant* at the GE plant gate."

In 1982, Aspoy explained, Starsky successfully fought the attempt by the Social Security Administration to cut off his disability benefits. In the end, however, widen-

ing cutback measures eliminated his benefits.

"If something needed to be done, Morris was always there," Aspoy said. "If there was a demonstration on Central America or abortion rights, he would be there. When workers would go on strike, Morris would walk the picket line and often fire off an article to the *Militant* so that more people would know about it. If a public meeting with a panel of speakers had to be organized, Morris would take it on. If sponsors or supporters were needed for a civil liberties fight, Morris would go to work on it. If a press statement needed to be written, he'd do it."

Aspoy and other speakers described how Morris and Lorraine used their home as a political center. Katz recalled "the wonderful annual New Year's party, with Morris in one part of the room politicking and loudly talking about what is happening in the world. He was a man who lived his life for the ideas he believed in."

Mark Curtis case

"Morris was moved by the case of Mark Curtis," Stone said. "Curtis was a meat-packer, a young socialist who was framed up and jailed for his activity in the struggles of workers in that industry. One thing they had in common was they both lost something in the first round of the fight. Morris lost his job, and Mark is in prison."

"During the last year of his life, one of the things he focused his precious energy on was defending Mark Curtis, helping prepare mailings and making phone calls to win new support for freeing this young working-class fighter."

"Morris Starsky was a fighter and his life made a difference," Stone concluded. "He was part of that chain of generations of fighters who are builders of the communist movement, a movement that is changing and transforming this world. And knowing him was a privilege and an inspiration for all of us."

Youth demonstrations in Minnesota protest racist 'skinhead' violence

BY KEN SHINYA KAWAKUBO

MINNEAPOLIS — Antiracist demonstrators marched here January 15 to protest the highly publicized activities of racist skinheads in the city.

The 100 marchers gathered in front of the University of Minnesota's Dight Institute, a laboratory named after a Nazi sympathizer. They condemned the university's slow pace of divestment from South Africa and the arrest of students for trying to paint over racist graffiti.

Proceeding to a bridge near the campus, protesters covered up racist slogans with "Fight racism" and "Abolish apartheid."

The evening before, 70 people participated in a discussion in St. Paul on strategies for fighting racist violence. The meeting was sponsored by the Militant Forum and Young Socialist Alliance.

Alexander Roberts, a junior at South High School in Minneapolis, described his group, Anti-Racist Action, as an organization of youth interested in combating racism through education and direct action.

Their studies include the history of Black slavery and the genocide inflicted on Native Americans in the United States, the system of apartheid in South Africa, and liberation struggles of Central America.

Denise McInerney, chairperson of the Twin Cities Young Socialist Alliance, spoke about an attack on antiracist activist Jason Kimnach, a 15-year-old YSA member. Kimnach was assaulted when he posted a leaflet at his junior high school for the January 14 forum. He suffered a fractured wrist.

Other speakers at the forum included Chris Nisan of the Africana Cultural Center; Geraldo Sanchez, director of La Raza Cultural Center; and Pascal Gasirabo of the Progressive Student Organization.

Participants at the forum included members of a group of youth attending the first meeting of Midwest antiracist skinhead organizations. Some 150 youth from Chicago, Milwaukee, Kansas, Nebraska, and Ohio met in the Twin Cities to exchange information about the situation in their cities.

Prospects for communism today

Is euphoria over 'crisis of communism' based on real gains by capitalism?

BY DOUG JENNESS

"Less than seventy-five years after it officially began, the contest between capitalism and socialism is over: capitalism has won." That judgment is the opening sentence from an article by Robert Heilbroner in the January 23 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine.

An editorial in the January 14 issue of the British weekly *The Economist* similarly declared, "It was an idea that threatened to take the twentieth century by storm. Communism swept the Bolsheviks to power in Russia, rattled regimes around the globe and replaced a string of rickety ones in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Yet communists the world over now peer fearfully into the next century, out of puff, out of converts, and increasingly out of ideas for recovering their lost glory."

The *New York Times* ran a three-part series January 22-24 on "Communism Now: What Is It? — In the Words of the Faithful," which presents the questioning of many "communists" throughout the world about the prospects for communism today. Fifty people were interviewed in 23 countries, and excerpts from some of the interviews were published with the articles.

This is all part of an avalanche of coverage in the capitalist press hailing the triumph of capitalism and gloating about the "communist crisis."

There are three points to be made about this capitalist propaganda offensive.

- It is not based on any advances in the capitalist countries. Rather, the boasting stems from the mounting difficulties in countries where capitalist property relations have been overturned and where there is increasing reliance on and unabashed enthusiasm for using capitalist marketing methods and profitability to try to raise labor productivity.

- The crisis is not one of communism, as the capitalist propagandists assert, but of Stalinism, which for many decades has attempted to present itself as the continuity of communism. It is a crisis for the politics and policies of the privileged bureaucratic castes in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China and of the parties in capitalist countries that have been educated or influenced by them. These policies treat working people simply as one element in production, not as thinking human beings with the potential to become politically and socially conscious and determine their own destiny.

- Far from being in crisis, developments in the world today are making a powerful case for the viability, relevance, and prospects of communism. That is, for communism as it was described by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*. They said communism is neither a doctrine nor based on ideas or principles that have been invented by "this or that would-be universal reformer."

Rather, it is a movement of "the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country," which, based on the experience of the class struggle,

understands "the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."

Capitalism's catastrophic future

The doomsayers of communism would be hard-pressed to make their case based on the achievements of their own system, capitalism. The evidence is too overwhelming that capitalism can offer only greater misery, devastation, and war; not peace and prosperity.

The catastrophic conditions in the semicolonial countries bear this out. Capitalist politicians offered the promise of industrial development and a corresponding rise in living conditions for the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But this has become a cruel joke as the outflow of revenue to pay skyrocketing interest payments on debts owed to imperialist bankers continues to mount, and working people's standard of living is driven lower and lower.

Cuban President Fidel Castro expressed this very concretely in a speech on December 5. "Every day," he said, "40,000 children die in the Third World who could be saved; every three days — and these are statistics given by the UN agencies — 120,000 children die in the Third World who could be saved. Every three days as many children under five die as the number of people killed by one of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima or Nagasaki, just children under five! And those who die later on or experience the horrible consequences of malnutrition and hunger — which not only shorten life but impair the mental and physical development of millions and millions of people — are the consequence of something worse than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki fallout."

"Something more that could be said here," the Cuban leader stressed, "is that as many human beings as those killed in World War II die every year in the Third World, as a consequence of the colonial plunder of our countries, as a consequence of neocolonialism, as a consequence of unequal terms of trade, as a consequence of poverty, as a consequence of the existence of unjust relations in the world, as a consequence of the imperialist policy."

Myth of rising prosperity

Moreover, in the United States and other imperialist countries, the myth of rising prosperity — with each generation of workers living better than the previous one — has been shattered.

The long-term decrease of capital accumulation and intensifying price competition between capitalists internationally has led the employers to bolster falling profit rates by trying to force more out of the hides of working people.

Real wages in the United States have been pushed back to their level at the beginning of the 1960s. The workweek in manufacturing has reached its highest level since World War II. And speedup is squeezing more and more profits out of

working people at the expense of safety and health.

Class inequality in the distribution of income in the United States has increased too. Those with incomes in the top 10 percent of the U.S. population saw their reported income increase by 16 percent since 1977, and the top 1 percent saw it leap by 50 percent.

Over the same period, however, those below the top 20 percent of the population have seen their real buying power go down. And those in the bottom 20 percent have seen their share in total real income drop from 6.8 percent in 1980 to 4.6 percent in 1986.

What has come to be considered "normal" or "acceptable" rates of unemployment in the imperialist countries today is much higher than during most of the period between World War II and the 1974-75 world recession.

While a small, but visible layer of professionals and other middle-class people who are Black have fared better in recent years, the increase in housing segregation and job discrimination has disproportionately worsened conditions for millions of workers who are Black.

Per capita income for Blacks, as a percentage of white income, has fallen steadily over the last two years. Poverty rates for Blacks rose in 1987, while rates for whites dropped slightly.

Unemployment of Blacks in the first nine months of 1988 averaged 11.8 percent compared to 5.4 percent for the working class as a whole.

Perhaps the figure that most dramatically demonstrates the hollowness of the cheers for capitalism is that for the first time in the 20th century, the life expectancy of Blacks in the United States declined for two consecutive years — 1985 and 1986 — while that of whites continued to rise.

Working farmers in the United States, Canada, and other imperialist countries have been hit by depression conditions as the annual income of tens of thousands has been driven below a living wage. Of the 2.43 million farms in the United States in mid-1981, some 260,000 — 11 percent — were no longer operating by mid-1987.

All of these conditions indicate that millions of working people are the victims of a creeping crisis created by the capitalist employers' and bankers' attempt to squeeze more and more profits out of their labor power.

At the same time, the capitalist banking system, as a result of an unprecedented debt structure, is increasingly more vulnerable to collapse. The next severe recession, a second drought year, or a major default of payments from debt-burdened Third World countries could trigger an economic and social catastrophe for working people worldwide.

Capitalism has also been unable to bring peace. Since World War II, millions have died in wars waged by the imperialist powers against colonial and semicolonial peoples who wouldn't kneel to the imperial profiteers. And as long as the world is divided between exploited and exploiting classes, the irrepressible profit drive of the imperialists will result in more slaughter.

Crisis for Stalinism

One effect of the deepening crisis of capitalism — the dominant economic system in the world — is that it is also exacerbating economic difficulties stemming from stagnant labor productivity in the countries where capitalist rule has been overturned and state property forms established.

And the true colors of the bureaucratic castes that dominate politics in Eastern Europe, China, and the Soviet Union is being more fully exposed as they step up their use of capitalist methods to try to overcome these difficulties.

The use of capitalist economic incentives to spur workers and farmers to work harder and better, however, isn't new. Many of the worst features of capitalism were long ago incorporated into the policies and practices of the bureaucratic layers in these countries — especially those

measures that appeal to workers' individual self-gain instead of advancing the social interests of working people as a whole.

What's new is the more open assertion of capitalism's "positive" features and the increased downplaying or virtual absence of projecting communism as a perspective for emancipating humanity from class exploitation and oppression.

Roy Medvedev, a Soviet historian, told the *New York Times* that members of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union who support the "new thinking" introduced by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev no longer speak of themselves as Communists. "I think the time will come," he said, "when nobody talks of 'Marxism-Leninism' any more. Our system will be called something else, something like 'developed socialism.'"

A Soviet lawyer and "strong ideological supporter of Gorbachev's policies" told the *Times*, "It seems to me there is a serious crisis in Communist ideology, especially in our country. We are now reevaluating what was done before and are trying to find new paths of orientation."

Targeting Lenin

Part of this Soviet Communist Party member's reorientation includes challenging policies of V. I. Lenin, the principal leader of the October 1917 Russian revolution and of the Communist International in its first years. The lawyer explained that while he respects Lenin, the communist leader "was also responsible for many of the things that led us to the situation of the '20s and '30s."

The progressive communist policies of Lenin are placed in the same trash can as the reactionary ones of Joseph Stalin.

Martin Jacques, editor of *Marxism Today*, a British magazine, told the *Times*, "Where I think the Marxist tradition is becoming more problematic in explaining the new world we are moving into is that historically there was a confidence that socialism would represent the natural completion of modernity."

"The fact of the matter," he continued, "is that the new wave of modernization has been riveted to an innovation of capitalism..."

Jacques, too, targets Lenin, arguing that the Marxist leader's views bore the characteristics of Russian backwardness, and that "Stalinism, intellectually and ideologically, was a sort of predictable degeneration, if you like, of Leninism."

That the Soviet bureaucracy and its supporters and apologists aren't communists is not a new development; the current generation, in fact, never has been. What's new is that some of them are beginning to stop referring to themselves as communists or paying lip service to communist aims. That's good for working people throughout the world, because the biggest crime of the Stalinist bureaucracy has been to taint the name of communism with its own reactionary policies, thus prejudicing millions of working people against communism.

Gorbachev has not yet explicitly challenged Lenin. Rather, he presents himself as the only true continuity with the communist leader. Nonetheless, when he spoke before the United Nations General Assembly on December 7 about international perspectives, he never once referred to communism or the perspectives of the international working-class struggle — even to tip his hat.

Gorbachev's world outlook

To the contrary, he emphasized that we don't live in an age of class struggle or coming world revolution. He said, "Today, we face a different world" than existed at the time of the French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917. And "we must seek a different road to the future."

"Today, we have entered an era when progress will be shaped by universal human interests," the Soviet politician contended. "The awareness of this dictates that

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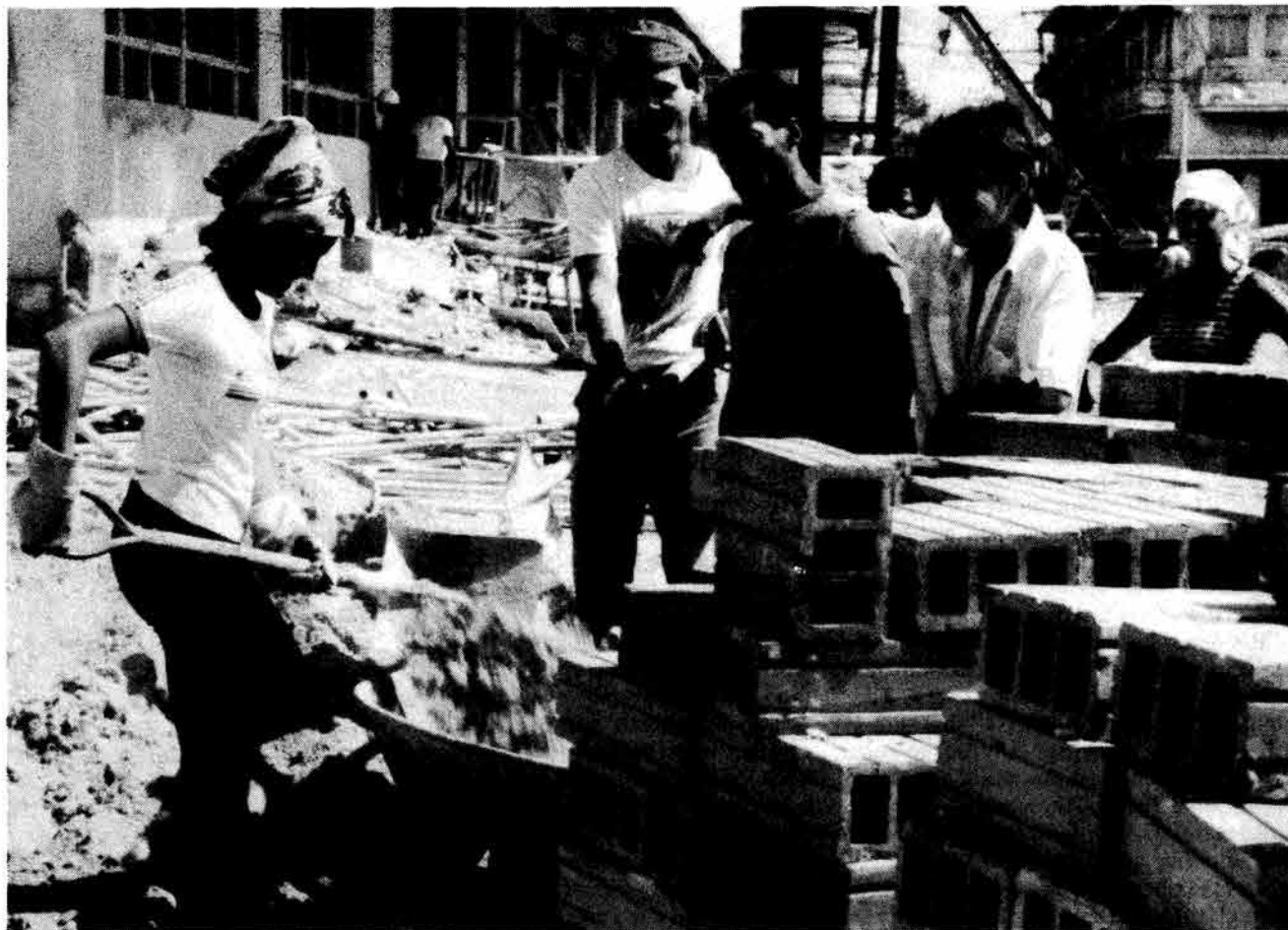
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Michael Abramson



Militant/Monica Jones

Above, voluntary work brigade builds hospital in Havana. Cuban people's growing achievements, made possible by deepening commitment to communist perspective, stand in sharp contrast to toll taken by declining capitalism. Left, Bronx, New York, tenant in unheated apartment. Increasing numbers of workers and farmers in capitalist countries are suffering joblessness, low wages, lack of housing, discrimination, famine, and devastation, contrary to claims of procapitalist propaganda.

world politics, too, should be guided by the primacy of universal human values."

In a world divided between exploited and exploiting classes and oppressed and oppressor nations, however, there can be no talk of "universal" values. The capitalist profiteers and imperialist oppressors have their own values, which dictate that they will employ military aggression and brutal police force to defend their property and accumulation of profits. The health, safety, and welfare of the great majority of humanity is of little concern to them.

Working people are organizing to defend themselves from the consequences of the capitalists' course and, in the process, developing their own values — international solidarity and the strength that comes from waging a collective struggle to advance all of humanity. These are very different values than those held by the big bankers, merchants, industrialists, and landlords.

Case being made for communism

While it's obvious that the world today is different in many respects than it was in the period leading up to 1789 and 1917, on the decisive point of comparison Gorbachev makes with those revolutions, the evidence shows the opposite. We, indeed, are heading into a momentous crisis of the capitalist order, which will generate the conditions for revolutionary mobilizations of working people.

In a speech to the Third Meeting of the Women's Continental Front Against Intervention held in Havana last October, Castro explained that "the objective conditions that gave rise to the great revolutions in history are accelerating, and I feel that they are accumulating in Latin America."

On January 8 the Cuban president stated, "This is a decisive moment in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. We perceive a great ebullience, a great rebellion in those countries against imperialist domination, never before witnessed. These are truly new times."

And the conditions are also accumulating that will bring a catastrophic crisis in the imperialist countries and massive struggles of working people.

The problem today isn't that wiser policies are needed to make capitalism work better — more rationally and humanely. The current development of capitalism is the way capitalism works, according to its own laws of evolution.

Working people by the tens of millions will face the choice of hitching their futures to the crumbling capitalist system or of moving along the road toward communism. There is no third alternative. There is no mixture of socialist and capitalist ideas that will help working people develop the political self-confidence and independence capable of mobilizing a

movement that can overturn capitalist rule and advance toward socialism.

The politically advanced detachments of the workers' movement have already reached that conclusion and will play an ever more indispensable role in giving leadership to the combatants who will emerge from the coming battles.

The *New York Times* said that for its series, it "sought to interview Cuban Communists both individually and through Government officials, but none of the interview requests were granted."

"We can say," Castro continued, "that our thousands of mass work groups are not working and doing what they are doing because we are placing a carrot in front of them."

In his December 5 speech Castro affirmed, "Socialism is and always will be hope, the only hope, the only road for the peoples, the oppressed, the exploited, the plundered to follow; socialism is the only alternative! And today, when our enemies want to question it, we must defend it more than ever."

The Cuban leader stressed the role of the Cuban revolution in setting an example and helping to lead the fight for socialism internationally. "Whereas this has always been our duty, it is our duty more than ever

today, because today our country has great international responsibilities, great responsibilities! Not because it is a powerful country, but because it is a great example of revolutionary spirit, of internationalism, of heroism, of bravery in its ability to face up to the empire, in its audacity to build socialism right next to the empire."

Castro said that what Cubans do inside Cuba to advance toward socialism "is not only good for our country but for the world, it is good for our cause, and, above all it is good for the peoples of Latin America and the peoples of the Third World; it is good for all peoples, even the peoples of the socialist countries, and it is also good for the workers of capitalist countries."

While the capitalists attempt to pump as much propaganda as they can out of the "crisis of communism," their euphoria will be short-lived. Their own system is about to be hit by an earthquake of its own making, and the communist forces that will lead working people forward are today pointing the way.

The paper didn't report what, if any, reasons were given for this decision. But whatever they were, it's clear that the entire framework of the *Times* series and interviews — that a crisis for "communism"

exists — is very different than the stand of the Cuban Communist Party.

In response to the imperialist campaign applauding capitalism and portraying socialism as a failure, Castro has, in a series of recent speeches, repeatedly defended the communist perspective.

"The fact that our country, blockaded by the empire for 30 years," he told a December 5 rally in Havana, "has reached the social and material successes that Cuba has reached is thanks to Marxism-Leninism and thanks to socialism!"

A month later, Castro explained to a rally of youth celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution that Cuba "was perfecting socialism without resorting to the mechanisms and style of capitalism, without being capitalistic."

He cited the significant achievements of volunteer labor in Cuba. "The principles that are being followed by those labor forces have nothing to do with capitalist methods or with capitalist organizational methods. . . .

"These contingents proved what man can do and what man is able to do when there is faith and trust in men and when we do not see men as animals, as animals that do things only if you place a carrot in front of him."

Communist group in Canada sends greetings to Castro, Cuban people

MONTREAL — The Revolutionary Workers League of Canada marked the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution by sending greetings to President Fidel Castro and the Cuban people.

The RWL pointed to the example offered to workers and farmers throughout the world by Cuba's 30 years of progress in health care, education, agricultural and industrial production, and defense.

Cuba "remains an unequalled example of internationalism," the message said. It has been in the vanguard with the peoples of southern Africa in the struggle to tear down the apartheid system, and "working people throughout the world recognize the crucial role played by the Cuban government and armed forces in the historic victory [over South African troops] at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, — a victory which is a turning point in the liberation movement throughout Africa."

Cuban leadership in the struggle of Third World countries to get out from under their crushing burden of foreign debt is another example of internationalism, the RWL continued. This effort is summed up in the demand, first put forward by Castro, that

imperialist banks and governments cancel the debt.

The revolutionary renewal process going on in Cuba during the last three years, where the Communist Party has led in reestablishing the norm of voluntary labor to take care of critical needs of society, was singled out by the Canadian communists for emulation. Rectification, as the process is called, "is showing the world that there is only one way to build a truly socialist society: through the mobilization, education, and collective, conscious work of those who produce all of society's wealth — the workers and farmers."

The statement said the Cuban revolution marks a turning point in modern history in that "it is the concrete, living proof that the road opened in 1917 by the workers and peasants of Russia is the only road through which the vast majority of humanity . . . can take their destiny into their own hands."

The message concluded, "As communist workers in one of the major imperialist countries, we will continue and deepen our work to explain the lessons and example of the Cuban revolution to our coworkers in

the factories, to the students in the schools, and the many activists in the international solidarity and social protest movements.

"This task is inseparable from the construction of a communist party in Canada and on a world level."

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Women's brigade helps bring in Nicaragua's coffee harvest

BY JUDY WHITE

EL CRUCERO, Nicaragua — "I like it better in a harvest brigade than just being on my own," stated Luisa Cruz, a 17-year-old peasant who has been picking coffee since she was seven years old.

"It's better because we are all women," piped up another of the young participants in this brigade of 26 peasant women. The group was organized by the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) to help in the coffee harvest on the Carlos Espinoza State Farm. The women's brigade joined some 30 other farm workers who are picking coffee at the farm.

Most members of the group have worked picking coffee before, but this is the first time they have participated in such a brigade. They come from towns and villages in the area around Managua. Most of them are wives or daughters of men who are members of cooperatives or collective farms.

This is the second year UNAG has organized women's harvest brigades. Last year 75 women participated. This year 516 are organized in brigades, reported Berta María Vargas of UNAG. The expansion has been made possible by the organizational efforts of the women who participated last year, Vargas said. They are heading up this year's women's brigades.

Another of the gains from the last brigade has been the establishment of 28 new child-care centers in the countryside, Vargas added. Women who participated in the brigades last year played a key role in this after they returned to their communities.

"We consider that during these years when we are in a process of convincing the family that both men and women should be integrated into production as members of the cooperatives, it will be easier to do so through separate women's harvest brigades," Vargas said.

Lola Roa, the organizer of the women's brigade at El Crucero, was a member of last year's contingent. She is now working full-time for UNAG.

"I went to the area with the most economic problems to begin recruiting for the brigade" because more people there would be looking for the chance to make extra money during the harvest, Roa explained.

For the women involved, Roa said, "the brigade is like a school where they practice what it is like to be part of a collective farm."

The participants are organized in work squads, each with a leader. They keep track of the amount of coffee picked by each *brigadista*, make sure they receive the correct pay, and collectively organize the cleaning of their living quarters, health care for the group, and obtaining supplies they need for daily life.

A class series on the cooperative movement and the agrarian reform law is conducted every evening after supper.

"We want to recruit these women to join collective farms and cooperatives when they return home," Roa said, "but we want them to understand the responsibilities of membership in the movement first. Otherwise, when the first difficulties arise, the group falls apart. UNAG has had experiences of this sort, and not just with women."

Roa explained, "Although many of the women have picked coffee before, this is the first time they have gone away, leaving their husbands and small children." This has been a difficult step for most of them, she noted, but once they realize they can do it, it does wonders for their self-confidence.

The step is also good for the rest of the community, Vargas pointed out. "The women leave behind their other tasks, like picking beans," she said. "Who is going to do these tasks? The women's brigade begins to change concepts of what is women's work, what is men's work, and what is the work of the family."

Julia Tinoco is the leader of a group of 20 women in her community. They have requested recognition as a collective and land to cultivate. Six members of her group came to El Crucero.



Militant/Larry Seigle

A young picker on the first Nicaraguan coffee brigade made up entirely of peasant women, January 1988. This year 516 participated in such brigades.

"We are working with UNAG because they are going to help us get land. If we work together on the land, we have the chance to make money all year round," Tinoco said, not just earn wages during the coffee harvest.

Norma Flores left her three-year-old with her husband to come on the brigade. "The conditions are worse here than they were where I picked coffee before in the north," she said. "We have problems here with the water," she continued, referring to the fact that there is no clean drinking water available at Carlos Espinoza, which has led

to sickness among many of the harvesters. "It's important to be in an organization," interjected Ercilia del Carmen Suárez. "UNAG coordinates the effort to get better conditions. It is the responsibility of the whole brigade to solve the problems that arise."

Suárez is a member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. "I've always liked picking coffee," this mother of nine said. She and her husband own a small farm.

She too likes the fact that the brigade is all women. "The peasant woman is taking the lead along with the man. We have won that right."

Grand jury resister released after 7 months in jail

BY SELVA NEBBIA

NEW YORK — On January 31 Puerto Rican independence activist Nelson Ramírez was released from the Metropolitan Correctional Center after serving seven months of a 15-month sentence for refusing to present himself before a federal grand jury.

"This victory is the result of a broad campaign organized in my behalf," Ramírez explained in a phone interview the day after his release. "Judge Platt was flooded with telegrams, petitions, and phone calls demanding my release."

On December 16 his lawyer, Colleen McGuire, petitioned federal court in Brooklyn for Ramírez' release.

At the hearing McGuire argued that after six months in prison, it was clear that Ramírez is not going to comply with the requests of the grand jury. She stated that the grand jury was being used as a "punitive and not as a coercive device."

Ramírez' motion included a series of affidavits sent to the court by other independence fighters who had been jailed because of their refusal to collaborate with grand juries.

One of these came from Norberto Cintrón Fiallo, who resides in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He declared, "From May 1981 to November 1982, I was incarcerated for refusing to collaborate in two federal grand jury investigations . . . the grand jury has always been used to persecute the labor and independence movement and the people in general . . . and at all times the character of said institution has been both punitive and coercive."

Carlos Noya Murati, also a resident of Puerto Rico, submitted an affidavit too. He served time from October 1980 to March 1982 for refusing to collaborate with a federal grand jury investigation in Puerto Rico and again from July 1984 to December

1985 for refusing to collaborate with a grand jury in New York.

After the defense presented its case before Judge Thomas Platt at the December hearing, U.S. District Attorney Charles Rose presented the government's case against Ramírez' release.

As the hearing was ending, Rose gave notice both to the defense and to the court that if Judge Platt decided in favor of the defense motion, the government would present criminal charges against Ramírez.

"This is a new attempt at coercion," Elizabeth Ramírez said. She is Ramírez' wife and an activist in the Friends and Family Committee of Grand Jury Resisters.

"This is very serious," said Rafael Anglada López after the hearing. He is one of the lawyers participating in the defense. "It represents a serious escalation of the U.S. government's repression against the Puerto Rican independence movement."

On December 30 Daniel Meyers, another of Ramírez' attorneys, presented a habeas corpus motion on behalf of Ramírez.

The motion was filed to try to stop any criminal prosecution or civil proceedings brought by the government's attorney against Ramírez and to have Judge Platt disqualified from any rulings relating to Ramírez' right to liberty.

On January 5 the FBI subpoenaed Samuel Sánchez, a close friend of Ramírez', to appear before a grand jury. Sánchez had been operated on the day before to replace a part of his skull that had been removed to save his life last May.

For more information on the Ramírez and Sánchez cases contact: Friends and Family Committee of Grand Jury Resisters, c/o Rafael Sención, P.O. Box 20068, New York, N.Y. 10025-1510.

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Polish gov't, union agree to negotiate

BY FRED FELDMAN

The national executive commission of the Solidarity trade union movement in Poland voted January 22 to accept an offer for negotiations from the central committee of the ruling Communist Party. The offer included proposed terms for legalizing the union.

"The possibility of negotiations concerning Solidarity and the affairs of the country has been created," the union's leadership body declared.

A central committee resolution published January 19 came out "in favor of lifting — in conditions of national agreement — restrictions on creating new trade unions." It demanded that "new trade unions" — a reference to the outlawed Solidarity — "abide by the constitutional order"; "act in favor of economic development"; "rely on financial sources in tune with the law in Poland"; and "counteract attempts to violate social peace and undermine the stability of the state."

In a speech to the central committee meeting, Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski called on Solidarity to accept a two-year moratorium on strikes.

At a January 19 news conference, President Wojciech Jaruzelski promised that "everything is negotiable" concerning the "timing and forms" of legalizing Solidarity.

Workers' protests continued as the central committee meeting was taking place. Workers at a textile plant in Pabianice staged a strike January 17 to demand a pay increase and the legalization of Solidarity.

Solidarity leader Lech Walesa has offered to negotiate an "anticrisis pact" with the government.

Walesa said January 28 that his goal in the talks would be to try to alter "the existing monopoly of the party and its union, the economic monopoly," which he said were responsible for the crisis in Poland. He cautioned that "in economic issues, there will be no immediate effect" from the discussions.

Recently, some union officials have advocated that the union, in exchange for legality, agree to abide by 1982 legislation that restricts strikes and to collaborate in joint factory councils with the government-sponsored union organization.

Banned since 1982

Solidarity, the only trade union in Eastern Europe that is independent of the government, has been banned since 1982. The ban was imposed after President Jaruzelski imposed martial law in December 1981.

The organization was never completely suppressed, however, and continued to function in defiance of the ban.

Although it has never regained the level of support that it had in 1980 and 1981 — when millions of workers adhered to it — the organization has experienced growth

recently due to the deepening social and economic crisis in Poland.

"The last year," wrote Jackson Diehl from Warsaw in the January 23 *Washington Post*, "has seen the union's still-illegal structures swelled by tens of thousands of young workers."

In May a wave of relatively isolated job actions took place. In August a broader outbreak spread to a number of coal mines, shipyards, and rail depots, and factories. The central demand in both sets of protests was the legalization of Solidarity.

The August actions ended only after top government officials met with Solidarity leaders and agreed to include the union in broad "round table" discussions of economic and political policies.

Jaruzelski and other top officials of the bureaucratic caste that governs Poland stalled on opening the talks. As the economic, political, and social crisis in Poland deepened and threatened new explosions of protest, however, they changed tactics.

Today inflation in Poland is reportedly running at 70 percent, the foreign debt stands at \$40 billion, and there are spreading shortages of housing and other needs.

The worsening living conditions of working people have contributed to impelling a layer of young workers into strikes and other protests.

Workers' hostels

For tens of thousands of young men who have joined Poland's industrial work force in the 1980s, Diehl reported in the November 21 *Washington Post*, the regime "has offered little more than a bunk bed, military-style austerity, and a 50-year waiting list for a regular apartment." About 350,000 workers now live in crowded hostels, and 70 percent of them are under 30. In many of the hostels, three workers share a single room.

"Workers' hostels in the coal mining region of Silesia, where the August strikes began," Diehl reported, "generally have no kitchens or even hot water, and residents make do with hot plates, portable hot water heaters, and vodka. In Jastrzebie, starting point of the strikes, workers had a trenchant name for their dormitory: 'The Bullpen.'"

The hostels, Diehl continued, "are filled with people who believe that they have nothing to lose by protesting or striking and who see the banned Solidarity union as the sole hope for change."

The Jaruzelski regime has responded to the deepening crisis with measures bearing similarity to *perestroika*, the economic restructuring that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev proposes for the Soviet Union. These steps call for moving away from administratively centralized economic planning in favor of greater reliance on market forces and profitability to stimulate growth.

Grenada leader regains passport

BY SAM MANUEL

Einstein Louison, a leader of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement of Grenada had his passport returned to him on December 29. The passport was delivered by senior immigration officer Denzil Lloyd. In a telephone interview Louison said he was given no explanation for why the passport was being returned.

Neither was an explanation given some three and a half years ago when Louison's passport was seized by the U.S.-backed regime on the island. Only after Louison filed legal action against the seizure was he told that the government had taken the passport in order to prevent him from leaving the country. The regime charged that Louison was a "risk to national security."

The passport was returned without any specific restrictions. However, Lloyd told Louison that the commissioner of police, Cosmos Raymond, who is also the chief immigration officer on the island, said that if Louison uses the passport for "subversive" activities it would be withdrawn again.

"I told them very frankly this is an attempt to single me out, in the same way as when they seized my passport and tried to paint a picture of me as a security risk," Louison said.

"The seizure of my passport was illegal," Louison said, "because there was no law at that time giving the government power to withhold anyone's passport." Louison explained that one year later the government rammed through legislation empowering it to confiscate passports.

Several international organizations including the Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States had appealed to the Grenadian government to return Louison's passport.

Louison had been deputy minister in the Ministry of Defense and chief of staff of the army under the People's Revolutionary Government headed by the late prime minister Maurice Bishop. Bishop and several of his cabinet members were killed in a coup on Oct. 19, 1983, led by then deputy prime minister Bernard Coard. U.S. armed forces invaded the island one week later.



Strikers in Lenin Shipyard during strikes last May. These were followed by broader outbreak in August. Worsening economic crisis is spurring layer of new generation of workers into struggle.

On December 23 the Polish government lifted all limits on the number of workers a privately owned firm can employ. Previously firms could hire no more than 150 workers. Foreign investors will now be al-

lowed to own up to 100 percent of firms.

The government has announced plans to shut down the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk and is threatening to close down up to 150 factories regarded as inefficient.

—WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

Chilean general linked to killing of Letelier

José Miguel Barros, a retired Chilean diplomat, filed documents with the Chilean Supreme Court on January 25 asserting that high-ranking Chilean military officials knew of plans to kill Orlando Letelier.

Letelier was a cabinet minister and ambassador to Washington in the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende. Allende was killed in a military coup that brought Gen. Augusto Pinochet to power in 1973. Letelier was killed when a bomb exploded in his car in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 21, 1976. Ronni Moffitt, Letelier's coworker at the Institute for Policy Studies, was killed with him.

In the documents Barros stated that during a meeting at the Interior Ministry on April 27, 1978, he was told by air force Brig. Gen. Enrique Montero Marx that the Letelier killing was ordered by Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras, who was head of the Chilean intelligence unit known as DINA. Montero, who is also undersecretary of the interior, was involved in an investigation of the killing by the Chilean government.

If Barros' account is confirmed, it will be the first time Chilean officials have acknowledged their government's connection to the killing.

An initial investigation by the FBI led to Michael Vernon Townley, a U.S. citizen who lived in Chile and worked for DINA. Under pressure, Townley was expelled from Chile in April 1978. Once in the United States, he confessed to having overseen the building and planting of the bomb. Townley said he acted on orders from General Contreras and his deputy, Col. Pedro Espinoza.

Africa's foreign debt tops \$200 billion

The foreign debt owed by African nations to imperialist bankers reached \$218 billion at the end of last year. That figure accounts for 44 percent of the combined Gross National Product of the African countries and is three times greater than the value of the continent's total annual exports. Africa's debt is growing at a rate of \$20 billion a year.

Interest payments on the debt consume up to 50 percent of earnings from exports of several African countries.

Sudan and Mozambique, for example, owe more in interest payments to foreign banks than they earn from exports each year.

At a summit conference in Toronto last June, the U.S., Canadian, British, West German, French, and Japanese governments agreed to assist the poorest African countries. Only those African countries with International Monetary Fund-approved austerity measures in operation or scheduled for implementation would be eligible for aid.

Among the list of IMF "economic reforms" is reductions in food subsidies. That measure has led to explosive protests in Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Zambia in the past few years. Income in sub-Saharan Africa fell by 25 percent between 1982 and 1987.

Hyundai thugs attack S. Korean workers

Han Yu Dong, managing director of Hyundai Engine and Machinery Co., was arrested in Ulsan, South Korea, on January 11. Han admitted to police that he planned an assault on union organizers and workers in which 19 people were injured and at least four hospitalized. They were attacked with baseball bats and steel rods.

Some 30,000 Hyundai workers and their supporters held protest rallies in the days following the company-organized attack.

Many South Korean and foreign companies have been hit by strikes this month. Among them are Hyundai, Samsung Group's Shipbuilding and Heavy Industries Co., several government research institutes, Motorola Korea Ltd., and IBM Corp.

Last year, South Korea's manufacturing output was set back \$4.39 billion, and exports were set back \$696 million due to strikes, according to figures cited from the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Since January 13 of this year, about 22,000 workers have been locked out of the Hyundai Heavy Industries shipyard in Ulsan following a strike that began December 12 over bonuses. Hyundai Engine and Machinery has locked out another 2,300 workers.

In the past two years strikes have forced wage increases of more than 13 percent a year on average and up to 20 percent a year at many large export-oriented companies.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

U.S. Aid to Nicaragua Now. A two-part presentation by Harvey McArthur, *Militant* reporter in Nicaragua for past three years. Sat., Feb. 11. Part I: "Peasants Fight for Land in the Nicaraguan Revolution." 4 p.m.; dinner 6 p.m. Part II: "Eyewitness Report on Hurricane Joan and the Challenge Facing the Nicaraguan Revolution." 7 p.m. Translation to Spanish. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$4 for both presentations, \$3 for dinner. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (602) 279-5850.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

What's Behind the Miami Rebellion. Speaker: Thabo Ntweng, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Report on 30th Anniversary Celebration of Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Ron Poulsen, member of Australia-Cuba Friendship Society. Translation to Spanish. Sun., Feb. 12, 3 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

San Francisco

El Salvador Radio Aid Project. A cultural-political event featuring the film *Las Masas*. Sat., Feb. 4, 7 p.m. Women's Building, 3543 18th St. Donation: \$5. Sponsor: San Francisco CISPES. For more information call (415) 626-8829.

Black History Month Book Sale. 20 percent off books by Malcolm X at Pathfinder Bookstore, 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). For more information call (415) 282-6255.

Film: Autobiography of Malcolm X. Thurs., Feb. 16 and Fri., Feb. 17 at 7:30 and 9:15 both nights. York Theatre, 2789 24th St.

An Injury to One Is an Injury to All! An evening of poetry with Piri Thomas. A benefit for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Sat., March 4, 7 p.m. Dolores Street Baptist Church (15th and Dolores). Sponsor: Supporters of Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call (415) 282-6255.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Release Nelson Mandela and All Political Prisoners! Speaker: Tsitsi Moleho, leader of Release Mandela Committee and activist with United Democratic Front of South Africa. Sat., Feb. 11, 3-5:30 p.m. Atlanta-Fulton Co. Public Library, Room 314 (downtown at Margaret Mitchell Sq.). Sponsor: Georgia Coalition for Divestment in Southern Africa; Mozambique Support Network; Socialist Workers Party; Southern Africa Education Project/AFSC; others. For more information call (404) 688-7422.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Cuba: 30 Years of Revolution. Speakers: Don Gurewitz and Betsy Soares, trade unionists just returned from Cuba. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Cuito Cuanavale: The Defeat of South African Troops in Angola. Showing of the Cuban

documentary "Response to the South African Escalation." In English. Sat., Feb. 4, 2 p.m. Mayflower United Church of Christ, 7301 Curtis St. Sponsors: African National Congress, Pan-African Student Union - WSU, Rev. Daniel Webster Aldridge, Jr., Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (313) 831-1177.

East Lansing

Will Michigan Be the Radioactive Waste Dump for Seven States? Protest rally. Tue., Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m. State Capitol. Speakers: Mary Sinclair, founder of Don't Waste Michigan and Great Lakes Energy Alliance; Michael Nye, state representative, Hillsdale; Lana Pollack, state senator, Ann Arbor. Sponsors: Don't Waste Michigan, Hillsdale Organization for Preservation of the Environment. For more information call (517) 487-6873.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Celebrating 30 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speakers: Mary Zins, Socialist Workers Party, member United Mine Workers of America Local 2295; Ted Kayser, Young Socialist Alliance, member United Auto Workers Local 2250; Diane Roling, visited Cuba in January 1988. Sat., Feb. 4, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Miami Rebellion: What's Behind It? Speaker: Pat Wright, Socialist Workers Party, long-time Black activist, resident of Miami. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

New York-Nicaragua Construction Brigade's Winter Dance. Food, fun, raffle, music with D.J. Will K. Wilkins. Sat., Feb. 4, 9 p.m. Taller Latinoamericano, 63 E 2nd St. Donation: \$8. For more information call (212) 475-7159.

Celebrate Black History Month with Dr. Rafael L. López Valdez of the Cuban Academy of Sciences. Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. Casa de las Américas, 104 W 14th St. (near 6th Avenue). Donation: \$7. sponsored by Casa de las Américas and Venceremos Brigade.

After the Storm: A Benefit Concert for Nicaragua Hurricane Relief. Belle, Ruben Blades, Herbie Hancock, Richie Havens, Kris Kristofferson, and the Border Lords. Tues, Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m. The Beacon Theater, 2124 Broadway at 75th St. Tickets: \$25, \$50 available through Teletron (212) 947-5850, or from box office (212) 496-7070. \$20 tickets available. Tickets beginning at \$150 for preferred seating and a postconcert reception with the artists available through Madre (212) 627-0444. For more information, call Madre.

Solidarity with the Palestinian Uprising! A panel discussion. Speakers to be announced. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

Protest Israeli Occupation. Weekly vigil to support Palestinian uprising. Every Wed. 5-6 p.m., from Feb. 15 to March 29, at the Israeli UN mission, 42nd St. and 2nd Ave. Sponsor: Palestine Solidarity Committee. For more information call (212) 964-7299.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Origins of Women's Oppression: A Marxist View. A weekly seminar beginning week of Feb. 5. 2219 E Market. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

OHIO

Cleveland

The Last Year of Malcolm X, Internationalist and Revolutionary. Speakers: Ned Measel, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 1104; Batseitsi Miygo, South African student. Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. 2521 Market Ave. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (216) 861-6150.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Abolish the Death Penalty. Speakers: Michael Pennock, Socialist Workers Party; representative of Western Pennsylvania Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS

Houston

Defend the Rights of Immigrant Workers. Eyewitness report from the Rio Grande Valley. Speaker: Brad Downs, Young Socialist Alliance, member United Steelworkers of America Local 2228. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

Celebrate Cuba's 30 Years of Building Socialism. Classes and forum, Sat., Feb. 11 and Sun., Feb. 12. "Cuba's Role in Angola," class, Sat., 3:30 p.m. Forum with Prof. Zuberi Mwamba; Stephen Gittens, member Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement; and Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 4-227, Sat., 7:30 p.m. "Che Guevara's 'Socialism and Man,'" class, Sun., 11 a.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

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MINNEAPOLIS

Celebrate 30 Years of the Cuban Revolution

Speakers: **Don Rojas**, Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America; **Mary-Alice Waters**, Socialist Workers Party; **Tomi-Riva Nuumbala**, South West Africa People's Organisation; **Rev. Curtis Herron**, Zion Baptist Church.

Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.

Cowles Auditorium
Hubert H. Humphrey Center
University of Minnesota West Bank
Reception to follow program
Donation: \$3 - \$10. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee

Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement. Speakers: Tony Prince, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 73A; excerpts from "Eyes on the Prize." Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

The Palestinian Struggle Today. Speaker: Steve Iverson, Socialist Workers Party; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

CANADA

Toronto

Celebrate Black History Month. Showing of *Malcolm X Speaks*, a video presentation. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W. Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Socialist Voice Forum and Young Socialists. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

Editors sentenced

Continued from Page 3

sentence and the center the threat of being shut down.

The center, and its publication, *News from Within*, have been a source of information on the Palestinian struggle and a voice of opposition to Israeli repression.

The prosecution elaborated its charges at an Oct. 19, 1988, session of the trial and then moved to defer the next session until February.

It argued that the center had produced material for the PFLP, notably a handbook advising detainees on how to conduct themselves under police interrogation.

It was also charged that material had been typeset for West Bank organizations, including a student group at Bir Zeit University and a Palestinian women's organization. It was also asserted that leaflets had been printed for what the cops declared to be "front" organizations of the PFLP.

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Speak for yourself, Pete — Appearing along with Reagan at a New York anti-abortion-rights gathering, Peter Grace, chairman of H.R. Grace, declared: "Everybody



Harry Ring

who's for abortion was at one time themselves a feces. And that includes all of you out there. You were once a feces."

And some beads? — On Mar-

tha's Vineyard, Indians are resisting moves by Jacqueline Onassis to take over a half-acre strip of beachfront tribal land they consider sacred. She wants to add it to her 400-acre estate. Her lawyer, Alexander Forger, says the Indian land is being eroded by the ocean and will be gone in 10 years, but Onassis is willing to swap them a better location.

That takes care of that — With a recent outbreak of salmonella food poisoning in Britain, the Thatcher government responded decisively. Shortly, it indicated, it will shut down the leading research center on food-borne diseases such as salmonella.

Lip readers' special — To help bail out savings & loan owners, George "no-new-taxes" Bush proposed a 25-cent tax on every \$100 deposited in banks. But, he explained, it's not a new tax, merely a "fee," like the entrance fee at a national park. His aide, John Sununu, said it was an insurance premium and "an adjustment upward."

Just plain folks — Recalling their banker father, George Bush's brother says, "We never felt that Dad had any kind of wealth at all. We had a cook and a maid and a chauffeur, but other kids had a lot more." A sister adds: "Mother was strict with us, and frugal. We had to bring in our own tennis rackets

when it rained."

Profit-thirsty — Britain's water supply will be taken over this year by 10 privatized water companies. A not-for-publication memo indicated they're looking for higher rates, immunity from pollution prosecution, and no strengthening of environmental controls.

Ask the expert — "In a sense, I'm uniquely qualified to deal with the issues we've talked about." — Jeb Magruder, who did seven months in jail for the Watergate caper, and was recently appointed chairman of the Columbus, Ohio, Commission on Ethics and Value.

Sit back and enjoy your flight — New studies show that airplanes can trigger lightning bolts when none are naturally occurring, suggesting that planes are at greater risk of being struck than previously believed. Also, the studies found, many protective devices for lightning are inadequate.

Things-are-tough-all-over — Only a fraction of the expected shoppers turned up for the annual post-Xmas sale at Harrod's, London's plush department store. That despite the presence of actor Tony Curtis, a jazz band, and "dancing girls." Plus such steals as a \$290,000 necklace marked down to \$145,000.

Top UN officer reports on plan to cut Namibia force

Continued from front page
the Nonaligned group.

The last summit conference of the Nonaligned Movement was held in Zimbabwe in 1986. That meeting focused on building international opposition to apartheid. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe was elected chairman of the movement.

The permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, Soviet

Union, China, France, and Britain — have demanded that the UN troops going to Namibia be reduced from 7,500 to 3,000.

Ten other UN member countries are elected to the council on a rotating basis. Seven — Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal, and Yugoslavia — are also members of the Nonaligned group. They have placed a counter-motion before the council to maintain the force to

be sent to Namibia at a minimum of 7,500.

Before the troop reductions proposed by Pérez de Cuéllar can take effect they must be approved by a majority of the Security Council and the General Assembly. According to UN rules, a majority vote of the council for the Nonaligned proposal could be vetoed by any one of its permanent members.

Under the provisions of the UN plan to

bring about Namibian independence, known as Resolution 435/78, the peace-keeping force would oversee the withdrawal of 50,000 South African troops from Namibia and also oversee UN-sponsored elections to establish the government of the southwest African country.

The apartheid regime has militarily occupied Namibia since 1915.

Implementation of Resolution 435 was made possible after the South African government signed an accord with Angola and Cuba on December 22 agreeing to withdraw from Namibia and to end its 13-year-long war against Angola. That agreement was the result of a major defeat for South African troops and the forces of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The blow was dealt by Angolan government, Cuban, and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) forces last March in the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale.

The permanent members of the Security Council have cited South Africa's signing of the accord as justification for cutting the size of the Namibia peacekeeping force. Leaders of the Angolan and Cuban governments and of SWAPO have repeatedly expressed their opposition to any reduction of that force.

Mark Curtis gains new support in South

Continued from front page
were read by Reid and Levitt.

"I regret that I am unable to be with you today," wrote Eddie Carthan of Tchula, Mississippi. "However, my family and I extend to all of you our support, spirit, and best wishes. Mark Curtis is a symbol of political prisoners all over the world who struggle for freedom, justice, and peace. I share and endorse efforts that you are putting forth today to free Mark Curtis and other political prisoners." Carthan and six others from Tchula were victims of a racist frame-up in the early 1980s. Carthan, who was sent to prison, was finally freed through a national defense effort on his behalf.

Spiver Gordon, president of the Greene County, Alabama, chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and a Eutaw city councilman, wrote to the rally, "As one who has been the victim of a political frame-up, I add my voice to those who

demand freedom for Mark Curtis.

"The 'crime' for which Mark Curtis was sentenced to 25 years in prison was not the false charges of rape and burglary.

"He is in prison today for standing up against exploitation and injustice, for defending the rights of immigrant workers at the Swift meat-packing plant in Des Moines, and for encouraging others to do the same.

"Now we must encourage all who are committed to justice to stand up for Mark Curtis," Gordon concluded. Four years ago, he and other Black rights activists in rural Alabama were framed-up on vote fraud charges for exercising their voting rights. After a long fight, all the defendants were eventually acquitted.

Johnny "Imani" Harris has been in prison in Alabama for 18 years — 14 of them on death row — on frame-up charges of robbery, rape, and murder. Although an international defense effort was able to get his death sentence overturned last year, Harris remains behind bars.

"Johnny is a strong supporter of Mark Curtis," said Levitt, before reading excerpts from the message Harris sent to the rally. "He does work from prison on Mark's behalf, and sees Mark's fight as his own."

"The myth of equality under the law would have us believe that everyone is subject to society's laws and that those who violate the laws are subject to prosecution," wrote Harris. "Yet, in criminal courts across the country, it can be easily observed that law enforcement affects almost exclusively the working man and woman who are poor, while the extremely wealthy, the corporations, the landlords... are rarely prosecuted and almost never suffer the criminal court process as defendants.

"Among the people of the world today, there are accused killers who have not shed

blood, and thieves who have stolen nothing, and accused liars who have so far told the truth. I say 'Free Mark Curtis now!'" Harris concluded.

Bobby Singleton, a young activist from Greensboro, Alabama; Arnett Lewis, president of the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center in Lexington, Mississippi; John Studstill, a teacher and leader of the Democratic Socialists of America in Atlanta; and Gladys Buchanan, an activist in the Nicaragua solidarity movement in Atlanta, also sent messages backing Curtis' fight.

More than \$1,430 was collected in contributions for the defense committee's efforts.

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
Feb. 9, 1979

TEHRAN, Iran, Jan. 29 — Determined to block the arrival of the exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the revolutionary explosion his arrival could bring, Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar has launched a bloody crackdown against the movement here.

Yesterday the sickening crackle of machine-gun fire echoed throughout the city all afternoon, along with the screams of the wounded, as the army opened fire mercilessly on demonstrators in Ehsan Square near Tehran University.

As the army opened fire, the drivers of ambulances and buses tried in vain to form barricades that could protect the hundreds fleeing from the bullets that filled the air.

No one knows how many hundreds are dead. The hospitals are filled to overflowing.

The renewed repression began the night of January 25, after Khomeini announced he was flying to Tehran the next day. Iran Air employees had declared they would end their strike for one day to fly Khomeini here on a special "revolution flight." The army then surrounded the airport with tanks and closed it down.

Angry students demonstrated the next day at Tehran University. They were met with army machine guns that killed more than 100.

In the morning of January 27, 160 airmen were executed at Jamshidieh garrison here for anti-shah activities. Some of the airmen had held demonstrations against the shah, others had reportedly gone on strike.

In Isfahan, a hunger strike has been going on by air force pilots who refused orders to bomb Iran's major cities the day the shah was forced to leave the country. The planned bombings were to initiate an at-

tempt at a military coup.

Bakhtiar has been using the threat of such a coup to try to intimidate the masses. But growing divisions within the armed forces and the masses' universal hatred for his regime have forestalled any coup up to now.

A resounding answer to the threat of a coup took place January 27, when 1 million people marched here to condemn the murder of the Tehran University students and to demand that Khomeini be allowed to enter the country.



NEW YORK, Feb. 4 — The potential might of the civil rights forces in this city was demonstrated yesterday with the staging of the biggest school boycott this country has yet seen. The boycott demanded the desegregation of New York City schools.

The usually dry statistics of the Department of Education showed a dramatic jump to 464,361, or 44.8 percent, absences for the day. Since some 100,000, or 10 percent, are absent on any given day, all the newspapers have grudgingly had to credit the boycott with keeping at least 360,000 out of school.

Board of Education Chairman James Donovan, who in the preceding months of negotiations over integrating New York's schools had displayed an undisguised hostility to the Negro leaders, remained consistent in his arrogance when he proclaimed the boycott an extremist "fraud" and a "fizzle." "There comes a time," he told reporters, "when you have to forsake the so-called language of diplomacy. You have to use simple, blunt, Anglo-Saxon that the least educated can understand."

Southern Organizing Committee endorses Curtis defense fight

The following resolution was adopted by the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice at its winter board meeting, held in Birmingham, Alabama, January 21. The Southern Organizing Committee, founded in 1974, is a South-wide network of civil rights, peace, labor, and economic-justice activists.

Whereas Mark Curtis is a longtime union and political activist who has consistently sought to defend the rights and interests of women, Blacks, immigrants, and workers, and has opposed U.S. military aggression abroad; and

Whereas, while working at the Swift meat-packing plant in Des Moines, Iowa, Curtis was involved in a fight to prevent the deportation of 17 immigrant workers at the plant and was subsequently framed up, convicted, and sentenced to 25 years in prison on false charges of rape and burglary for his role in that fight;

Be it resolved that we join with thousands of others in the United States and around the world in protesting this blatant injustice and in demanding freedom for Mark Curtis;

And be it further resolved that we call upon all individuals and organizations committed to the fight for economic and social justice to join with us in this appeal.



John Gaige addresses Atlanta meeting

Militant/Nancy Cole

El Salvador: give peace a chance

Around the world, everyone who opposes war and defends democratic rights should support the proposals issued January 24 by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador.

In issuing a plan for democratic presidential elections, the FMLN has given voice to the deeply felt desires of El Salvador's working people for peace and democratic rights.

For 10 years their country has been torn by a bloody slaughter — bankrolled from Washington and organized by U.S. advisers — that has taken 70,000 lives. Countless others have been maimed, tortured, "disappeared," jailed, or driven into refugee camps or into exile.

The FMLN proposals center on the demand for "an immediate cessation of abductions, assassinations, and repression against demonstrations, strikes, and all activities of the popular movement; and complete respect by the armed forces for the electoral activity of all parties."

Holding presidential elections under the conditions proposed by the FMLN will widen the democratic space in which the contending political parties operate, creating an atmosphere in which Salvadorans can discuss and organize. Unionists, peasants, students, and others would have greater leeway to actively engage in political activity.

Moreover, acceptance by the government of these proposals would contribute to the process of establishing a cease-fire.

Despite the proposal's expression of the people's desires for peace and democratic rights, Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte has so far rejected them.

While not writing the plan off, the Bush administration and the Democratic-controlled Congress have not backed it. The failure of U.S. officials to respond positively shows an utter lack of basic human feeling for the unbearable suffering that is being inflicted on the Salvadoran people.

Moreover, their refusal to back the plan says a lot about their attitude toward democracy, which U.S. officials boast they are bringing to El Salvador.

They portray a Salvadoran government and electoral process as "democratic" in which organizers of death squads and outright fascists are deeply entrenched in the government apparatus and army. These forces have complete freedom to run for office, intimidate voters, and stack elections.

Organizations with support among the Salvadoran masses, on the other hand, are effectively excluded from this "democracy." Many are outlawed, such as the five organizations making up the FMLN. Or they exist on the borderline of legality and under constant threat of official and extralegal repression — such as the unions and the Democratic Convergence, a bloc that is campaigning in the current elections for an end to the war.

The FMLN is proposing an alternative to this made-in-Washington "democracy" and the devastating war that has accompanied it.

Unions, antiwar organizations, and democratic-minded people everywhere have an obligation to step up pressure on the U.S. and other governments to actively support the FMLN's proposals. This demand should be at the center of the protests against U.S. intervention in El Salvador that are being held around the United States in March.

What to do about housing?

Government officials and agencies continue to treat the growing numbers of homeless people as another of those "natural disasters" about which very little can be done, and for which the victims themselves are to be held responsible.

In a December 22 interview with ABC News, Ronald Reagan, still president then, said, "There are always going to be people" who prefer to live in the streets. "They make it their own choice for staying out there."

New York's Mayor Edward Koch warns the homeless not to turn public streets, parks, and buildings into de facto shelters. The mayor also wants to "build character" among the homeless by charging rent to those who do use the city's shelters. "There's nothing free in this world," scolded Koch.

In a lengthy "budget-saving" plan submitted to the state legislature, city officials estimate they could rake in \$2.68 million a year by charging rent to the 10,200 people housed in the city's shelters.

A special panel headed by New York's Lt. Gov. Stan Lundine and Dime Savings Bank's chief executive officer Harry Albright blamed the state's housing crisis on a "cumbersome and fractured bureaucracy." What solution did the panel propose? To revamp the state's 10 housing agencies under a new director.

At a press conference to announce his choice to head the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) President George Bush explained, "Homelessness is not going to be solved by the federal government alone." His HUD director, Jack Kemp, added, "I don't

think government can solve all problems." Both opposed a massive federal program to build affordable housing.

Capitalist politicians and the media initially described the homeless as those who have simply fallen through the cracks in society's safety net — the mentally ill, drug addicts, and alcoholics. But the growing number of homeless people who hold full or part-time jobs illustrates that homelessness is part of the developing economic and social crisis of capitalism.

More and more working people are coming to see the homeless for who they are, fellow workers who are victims of high rents, unemployment, racial discrimination, and other social and economic difficulties. More and more workers know that they may be only one or two paychecks from losing their home too.

Working people, with homes and without, employed and unemployed, members of unions and those who are not, should demand that the government:

- Launch a massive federal program to provide livable and affordable housing and other social needs. The funds could come from the billions of dollars now spent on Washington's military arsenal.
- Immediately enact legislation limiting rents to no more than 10 percent of an individual worker's income.
- Make the withholding of rental units from the market in order to drive up rent a crime punishable by confiscation of those units and heavy penalties to the landlords involved.
- Make all existing rental units public property in order to eliminate profiteering in housing and provide funds for their rehabilitation and maintenance.

The Steinberg verdict

The January 30 conviction of Joel Steinberg on charges of first-degree manslaughter in the killing of six-year-old Lisa Steinberg is a victory in the battle against the abuse of children.

Steinberg faces a maximum prison term of from 8½ to 15 years. The outcome is an affirmation that beatings and other physical abuse of children are not private "family matters," but crimes that ought to bring severe punishment.

The verdict also advances the fight against the battering of women. The evidence showed that Steinberg had also beaten Hedda Nussbaum, who lived with him, for 10 years. Nussbaum became an important witness for the prosecution.

It was only in the late 1960s that child abuse began to be firmly established in the courts as a crime. This marked an important advance for working people, who have an interest in fighting every manifestation of

capitalist society's brutal violence against those who are oppressed, exploited, and — in the case of children — defenseless.

The shift took place as the civil rights movement was changing the thinking of working people about our basic rights and responsibilities as human beings. The women's rights movement was beginning to emerge.

The spotlight thrown by the Steinberg case has revealed how widespread such mistreatment of children still is. And it has exposed how often neighbors, social workers, government agencies, and others refuse to act on unmistakable evidence that it is taking place.

The guilty verdict and the prospect of a stiff sentence in the Steinberg case is likely to inspire more children and women who are victims of abuse to report the crimes. And there will be more pressure on government agencies, police, and the courts to take strong actions against those responsible for such abuse.

The fraud of 'plebiscitary democracy'

BY DOUG JENNESS

At the end of December at least 18 newspapers around the world published an open letter to Cuban President Fidel Castro signed by 163 notables, including film stars, writers, and scientists. Among them were: Susan Sontag, writer and president of PEN, an international organization of writers; Octavio Paz, Mexican poet; Mario Vargas Llosa, Peruvian writer; Federico Fellini, Italian filmmaker; and Jack Nicholson, U.S. actor.

The letter requested that Castro follow the example of Chile's Gen. Augusto Pinochet and call a "plebiscite so that Cubans, by free and secret ballot, could assert simply with a yes or a no their agreement or rejection to your staying in power."

If the no vote wins, Castro is supposed to promptly call "an election where the Cuban people could freely elect its leaders."

Nowhere in their letter, however, do the notables address the election system that does exist in Cuba. If they think there's something wrong with it — that it has func-

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

tioned badly in some way or been an obstacle to the democratic participation of Cuba's working people — they should say so. Instead, they ignore it as if it doesn't exist.

In February 1976 Cuban voters approved a new constitution. This referendum culminated a national discussion and debate that took place in 168,000 assemblies. Thousands of amendments, suggestions, and other proposals were made, and they were incorporated into the final draft.

This constitution codified a system of elected governing bodies called People's Power. The bodies closest to the population are based on neighborhood districts that each elect a delegate. These delegates are working people, well known in their districts. By law every election must have at least two candidates, who are nominated by special assemblies of voters. Once elected, delegates are subject to immediate recall by their constituents. The municipal assemblies elect delegates to provincial assemblies, which in turn elect representatives to the National Assembly, Cuba's highest state body.

This election system developed out of the experiences and advances of working people in Cuba since they took power in 1959. Castro usually adds that the arming of millions of people for defense is also an expression of the country's democracy.

The assumption of the 163 notables seems to be that the forms of elected representation in Cuba are no good and should be replaced with superior ones copied from the capitalist countries.

It's somewhat intriguing, however, that they don't even offer the best from capitalism's electoral experience, but a fifth-rate form — "plebiscitary democracy."

Historically, plebiscites of the kind they propose have been the hallmark of demagogic autocrats who have concentrated considerable governmental authority into their hands. The plebiscite, for example, was a favorite device of Louis Napoleon, who assumed the reins of government after a coup d'état overturned the republic in France in 1851. Napoleon donned the title of emperor.

Another renowned practitioner of "plebiscitary democracy" was Charles de Gaulle, president of France from 1958 to 1969.

Authoritarian rulers like plebiscites because there are no opposing candidates or proposals and the voting is weighted more to those who favor the status quo. Typically, in a plebiscite, voters are told they have the option of voting yes for the policies of the head of state and stability or no for anarchy.

In his final plebiscite in 1870 Napoleon added a special twist by placing a question on the ballot in such a way that it was impossible to express disapproval of the emperor's policy without at the same time opposing democratic reforms.

The emperor won the vote, but less than a year later was overturned by a revolutionary upsurge of the working class, which established the Paris Commune. So much for the democratic pretensions of the plebiscite!

Sometimes autocratic rulers miscalculate and conduct referenda that lead to defeat. Such was the case with de Gaulle when he lost the vote in an April 1969 plebiscite. He resigned, but his supporters won an impressive victory in the next elections.

Likewise, Pinochet misjudged last October when he called a yes-or-no vote on whether his rule should be extended, as a way to try to dissipate mounting opposition. A majority of voters voted no.

The signers of the letter to Castro act as if he's some sort of caudillo that can be convinced that what was good for Napoleon III and de Gaulle is good for the Cuban people.

This proposal is soaked with contempt for the Cuban people, who got rid of capitalist rule 30 years ago and aren't inclined to abandon their present course to accept an offering from the capitalists' arsenal of election maneuvers.

Are the prisons more humane today than in 1790?

The following is from a prisoner in Pikeville, Tennessee.

The first penitentiary in the United States was established in Philadelphia in 1790. It was composed of 24 isolation cells for the incarceration of "hardened offenders." All outside contact was forbidden, with the exception of religious visits.

Eventually this degree of solitary confinement was deemed "inhuman" by prison officials. A work force was created, with prisoners allowed to work under the "silent system," whereby they could not speak even to their coworkers. This was enforced in some states as late

as the early 1960s.

Thus began the organized system of torture that is the prison system in the "democratic" United States. It continues to this day, increasing in sadism as progressive Supreme Court decisions improving the lot of prisoners are eroded by state and federal courts.

Punishment for an alleged crime by the "perpetrating class," a term commonly used by law enforcement authorities, does not end with the separation of the offender from "society." Psychological games, isolationism, ignorance, and brutality are routinely inflicted on unpopular prisoners and those incarcerated for "crimes" that are politically motivated. Under the label "corrections," be-

gins a well-thought-out process of the mental, emotional, and in some cases physical destruction of the prisoner. Political prisoners or those who are outspoken are hidden by the powers-that-be in rural areas to discourage public view and deliberately destroy family relationships. Through transfers the prisoner's family is uprooted, until the eventual destruction of the relationship. Keeping prisoners on the move from institution to institution also prevents friendships, thus preventing the spread of any revolutionary ideas.

Ideas frighten those in power. Elaborate programs of disinformation are set in motion through a network of lackeys to discredit ideas that vary from the "norm" and to create a hostile environment for the unpopular or political prisoner.

The U.S. government refuses to admit that there are political prisoners in the United States and tries to criminalize every activist, revolutionary cadre, or anyone who strikes out against government abuse or refuses to conform to government propaganda that hides its preying upon the underdeveloped Third World countries.

Correspondence is tampered with or denied. Visitation is so inhumane as to be useless as it is meant to harass rather than keep a relationship together or allow effective communication, even between husband and wife. Telephone calls are monitored because this is an excellent source of information for law enforcement agencies.

The elite in prison are the prison guards. Brutality, terrorism, and ignorance are the rule of the day. There are a thousand ways to try to break a prisoner. Isolation is a perfect tool.

Sadism often governs a guard's relationship with the ward placed under his or her care, a superior feeling of "control" over the prisoner in which every aspect of the prisoner's life depends on the whim of the "professional." The suppression of revolutionary ideas is of paramount importance to the prisons because nothing is more dangerous than a prisoner with a mind of his or her own.

There is no prisoner who isn't well aware of the inferior system used in the prisons, as intensely as it is in the free community, against activists and revolutionary cadre.

Within the federal prison system there are "control units" that have received a lot of public outcry for their inhumane conditions, for example at Marion, Illinois, and Lexington, Kentucky. But the states have their own chambers of horror that operate under the same guidelines, without even the restrictive measures that are applied when the public is aware of the purpose of these units.

Outside contact and support of the brothers and sisters within our state and federal prisons should be a priority for those in struggle because the full brunt of the enemy's force falls on the captive. Once the prison gates slam behind those in custody, all pretense is erased. Real faces are shown clearly, the many faces of hell!

Have our prisons become more humane or civilized since the first prison was built in Philadelphia in 1790? Ask the residents of the Marion or Lexington control units or the many state-operated ones.

BEHIND PRISON WALLS

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LETTERS

Union Carbide

Union Carbide's Linde division intends to produce arsine, phosphine, and a mixed gas used in hospitals at its new plant in Kingman, Arizona. At the January 17 ground-breaking ceremonies 150 angry residents marched on the proposed site shouting "Get out."

The residents of this town of 9,000 were also protesting the opening of a plant to extract highly toxic PCBs from transformers. The Carbide plant is expected to employ 40 to 50 people and the PCB facility another 25 to 30.

Protesters pointed to their concern for area water and air, as well as other health risks. Several mentioned the 1984 Union Carbide disaster in Bhopal, India, which resulted in the death of some 2,000 people and the torture and disability of thousands more.

David Salner
Phoenix, Arizona

Resourceful

The *Militant* is a very resourceful newspaper.
A.I.
Logan, Utah

Morris Starsky

I was really disappointed to learn that medical science could find no cure for Morris Starsky, a man so full of enthusiasm for political battles.

Fifteen years ago I met Morris when I was a student at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The Arizona State Board of Re-

gents had canned him from his job as an assistant professor of philosophy, and he was working as a parking lot attendant in Santa Monica. It struck me then that most professors I have known would have been demoralized by that turn of events.

Not Morris.

Before I knew it, he volunteered to donate practically his entire philosophy library to the Los Angeles Young Socialist Alliance to sell to raise our share of an ambitious national fund drive.

Those books were worth a fortune to a lot of students but no longer had any use to Morris. Apparently he had absorbed what Marx said about philosophers — that while they interpret the world, the point is to change it.

My last fond memory of Morris was in Nicaragua where he came to see the Sandinista revolution. Practically everyone had warned him not to come — something about the fierce sun, and what if he had a heart attack?

But Morris came anyway. That was Morris, constantly educating himself, no matter what the cost.
Jane Harris
Jersey City, New Jersey

King Day

The student government at Temple University recently approved unanimously a bill demanding that the administration cancel classes on January 16 in honor of Martin Luther King Day. The bill also authorized a boycott of classes if the administration failed to honor King Day.

On December 1 university officials announced to the press that classes would proceed, and students called for a boycott.

A number of professors canceled their classes. The law school voted to cancel classes, in addition to African-American studies and the political science and psychology departments.

Students organized a day of events on the legacy of King and how to combat racism. The day began with a film showing of *From Montgomery to Memphis* at a nearby church. Later, a rally was organized on campus, followed by a speech by Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) President Joseph Lowery.

Supporting the boycott were the SCLC, African-American Student Union, Temple National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *Temple News*, Student Coalition Organized for Ra-



Wright

cial Equality, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the Young Socialist Alliance.

Richard Gaeta
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Steelworkers locked out

The 480 members of the United Steelworkers of America Local 32U are in a contract battle with Bilt-rite Upholstery Co., better known as Bauhaus. All during negotiations the owner stalled.

At our December 29 union meeting the major concessions demanded by the owner were explained: weakening our right to medical leave and workers' compensation; rescheduling work hours to include the possibility of split shifts; contracting out; and forced overtime.

As well, the company demanded agreement on these concessions before they would talk about wages. We rejected this and gave the bargaining committee a strike mandate.

On January 4 the owner made his "final offer." He withdrew the first two concession demands, and a wage increase of between less than 1 percent and 5 percent over three years was put on the table. All the modest improvements proposed by the union were rejected by the company. We voted the same day, again to reject, with no one voting in favor.

One worker asked the question

that was on all of our minds: "The owner keeps raising the price of his sofas every year. Why can't he pay us a decent wage?"

While we were voting, Bauhaus was moving to lock us out. Trucks moved in and out of the yard and when we arrived to picket the next morning, the gates were locked. After a week of picketing, management and office staff began crossing our line and some trucks have been moving in and out.

Our labor dispute takes place at the same time the Canadian government has begun to deport refugees and to further restrict immigration. This is especially ominous to the brothers and sisters on the picket line who in their vast majority are new to Canada.

But the attacks by the employer on our work conditions combined with the threats from the federal government have not defeated us. After two weeks on the picket line morale is good because we have decided to fight and we are determined to win.

Monica Jones
Toronto, Canada

Missing issues

Something is going on here, because I circulate each and every paper I receive from you. And we have classes and discuss many things we learn from the paper.

But it seems that every time something more important than

the already important events you report on comes up, my paper fails to arrive. For instance, we missed what really happened that caused the United States to shoot down that Iranian Air Bus, because I didn't receive the issue when this was going on. And this time, we were waiting on the *Militant* to inform us about what really happened over the Mediterranean Sea with the downing of Libya's jets.

Is it the institution that is blocking the paper? Because I will let a court decide if this institution has the right to do this. I'll take it as far as the U.S. Supreme Court when it comes to preventing me from reading the *Militant*.

A prisoner
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Corrections

In the article "More storm relief urged for Nicaragua" in the February 3 issue, the correct figure for the amount of aid raised by organizations other than Quest for Peace is \$8.5 million.

The "Union Talk" column in the same issue, "LTV Steel 'profit sharing' plan rips off workers," refers to a union demonstration held in front of LTV headquarters in Cleveland. The demonstration was planned but canceled after LTV and the United Steelworkers reached agreement on the profit-sharing issue.

Haiti strike backs workers' demands

BY SUSAN LaMONT

The growing isolation of the regime of Gen. Prosper Avril of Haiti was demonstrated January 17 when a widely backed protest strike shut down many businesses and schools and halted public transportation in Port-au-Prince and other cities and towns throughout the country.

Thousands of workers, students, vendors, storeowners, and others took part in the strike, which was called by the Independent Federation of Haitian Workers (CATH). CATH, Haiti's leading trade union organization, initiated a similar strike last November that was also widely observed.

The action was called to press a series of economic and political demands on the Avril government, which came to power last September as a result of a revolt by noncommissioned officers that ousted Gen. Henri Namphy from the presidency. The government declared the January 17 strike illegal.

The protest was backed by the Peasant Movement of Papaye, League of Former Political Prisoners, National Popular Assembly, Haitian Workers Committee, Student Concerns Front, and many other popular organizations.

"We are unable to count the number of workers who fall victim to the bosses' reprisals under the pretext that the union is the enemy," stated the January 11 CATH declaration calling the strike.

"For two years, more than 5,000 peasants in Léogane have been asking the government to reopen the Daborn sugar mill, which the government has refused to do.



CATH union contingent in 1987 demonstration against repression held in Port-au-Prince. CATH has played leading role in fight for workers' and peasants' demands since Duvalier's ouster.

The taxes are breaking the backs of the poor peasants. Every day they understand that a lot of money is made off their sweat, without them ever seeing where this money goes. . . . According to the World Bank, in 1985 there were more than 30,000 people

sleeping in the streets of Port-au-Prince. The taxi drivers work like mules all day long trying to make ends meet and are unable to feed their families. . . . Since Jan. 17, 1988, the people of Gonaïves have suffered because of the toxic waste that the

Namphy government let a big foreign country [the United States] dump . . ." the declaration said.

The strike's demands included rehiring of all workers fired for union activity, an increase in the minimum wage, lowering of prices on basic necessities, removal and trial of officials and cops tied to the ousted dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier and his father François, lowering of taxes on peasants, and repair of the country's roads. Strikers also demanded that the Dominican Republic's government grant legal status to Haitian agricultural workers in that country so they can organize, as well as action by the Haitian government to remove the toxic waste from Philadelphia dumped in Gonaïves last year.

The strike also demanded the extradition of Franck Romain, former mayor and chief of police of Port-au-Prince, who was granted safe conduct to the Dominican Republic December 31.

Avril's decision to let Romain leave the country has sparked widespread outrage and calls for the government's resignation. Romain, a notorious Duvalierist, is accused of organizing a massacre at the Jean Bosco Church in Port-au-Prince last September that left 13 people dead and nearly 80 wounded.

In addition, CATH called for Gen. William Regala, who was allowed by Avril to return to Haiti in early January, to be put on trial. Regala was a top army figure under Duvalier and part of the military government that took over after the dictator fled in February 1986. When Avril became president last fall, Regala left the country and came to the United States.

According to *Haiti Report*, published by the New York-based Committee Against Repression in Haiti, "On January 16, 3,000 students took to the streets [in Cap Haïtien] and set up flaming-tire barricades. They chanted 'Uprooting is not finished, Prosper Avril is a Duvalierist.' Soon the army intervened to break up the demonstration with clubs and tear gas. One man was badly beaten." Several students were arrested. A demonstration and sit-in at the police station by other students won their release on January 19.

The Unified Communist Party of Haiti (PUCH) held a celebration of its 20th anniversary January 18-21. This marked the first time the PUCH, long a target of government repression, has been able to organize such a public event. Among those attending were representatives of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua, Dominican Communist Party, Unified Dominican Communist Party, and Uruguayan Communist Party. Delegates from the Communist Party of Cuba and from Panama did not receive visas in time to attend.

Toronto rally protests cop violence

BY GEORGE A. ROSE

TORONTO — More than 500 people, the majority of them Black youth, jammed into a community center in the Toronto suburb of Mississauga on January 28 for a militant rally against police violence.

It was the latest of many speak-outs, marches, vigils, news conferences, and rallies to protest the police murder of Black teenager Michael Wade Lawson — and the first action to be organized especially by a coalition of Black youth. Lawson, who was unarmed, was shot in the back of the head and killed December 8 by Mississauga police.

Charges of manslaughter and aggravated assault were recently brought against the two cops who shot Lawson, and manslaughter charges laid against another cop who killed Lester Donaldson last August. The indictments came "because of our demonstrations and our public pressure," said Dawn Roach, who cochaired the youth rally. "We have to keep it up. The media are trying to squelch this case, but we have to keep driving it home."

Lennox Farrell, a member of the Black Action Defence Committee and prominent fighter against apartheid and for Black rights, announced that another rally will be held February 25 at Queen's Park in downtown Toronto, site of the Ontario provincial legislature. He said it will demand justice for Wade Lawson, Lester Donaldson, and other victims of police killings and brutality.

So far protests have called for charges of murder, not just manslaughter, against the killer cops, their suspension without pay pending trial, and an independent civilian investigation of the killings. Several speakers at the youth rally urged that a civilian review board become the main demand.

Since the indictments of the cops in early January, the police and the daily *Toronto Sun* have been on their own aggressive campaign to try to discredit and isolate the antiracist protesters, and to claim overwhelming public support for the cops.

Arthur Lymer, head of the cop associa-

tion, has been point-man for this operation, demanding that "responsible" Black leaders quell the protests and denounce the Black Action Defence Committee. The BADC has been central in the leadership of actions against the Lawson and Donaldson killings.

Most recently, cops throughout the Peel region, which includes Mississauga, have been given buttons reading "We support 1191 and 1139" — the badge numbers of the two cops who killed Lawson.

Actions over the past two weeks have strongly rebuffed this campaign.

- Three hundred turned out for a memorial service for Wade Lawson on January 15.

- The next day, January 16, some 2,000 to 3,000 people participated in Martin Luther King Day commemorations, including a youth forum of several hundred where discussion centered on the Lawson case.

- Then on January 17 representatives from more than 25 political, labor, religious, and cultural groups attended a meeting to express support for the BADC. In addition to many Black community groups, support came from the Ontario Federation of Labour, Labour Council of Metro Toronto, United Church of Canada, Law Union of Ontario, National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and organizations of Native people, Koreans, and Chinese-Canadians.

The January 28 youth rally marked a further deepening of the antiracist protests. Young people organized buses to attend from Black communities across Metro Toronto. Several carloads of students came from the Coalition Against Systemic Oppression, a Montréal group formed to protest the 1987 police murder of Anthony Griffin, a 19-year-old Black youth.

Rally speakers included both veteran leaders and many of the young activists who are coming forward today.

Garth Bobb, a friend of Lawson, was one of several speakers from a high school group called Unity Force. He linked the killings to a school system that portrays

Blacks in history as uncultured savages. He called on Black youth to study their real history and to "stand up and take leadership." He also pointed to the vital role of Black women in the struggle.

Craig Wellington, a student from York University in Toronto, strongly rejected the notion that the problem comes from a few "bad apples" among the cops. "We can't just 'weed out the bad apples,'" he explained. "We have to look at the whole barrel. We have to look at the tree. We have to look at the whole orchard, and if necessary burn it down and replant it!"

Robert Douglas from Montréal linked the protests in Canada to struggles against racism and oppression around the world. He condemned U.S. threats against Libya (which have gotten full endorsement from the Canadian government), insisting that "Libya can do whatever the hell Libya wants to in Libya."

African National Congress leader attacked in Australia

BY KATE BLAKENEY

SYDNEY, Australia — Late at night on January 27 shotgun blasts hit the home of Eddie Funde, the chief representative in Australia of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC).

Funde had arrived at his home here late that evening and watched taped TV bulletins before quitting the TV room for the hallway. The attackers, obviously close to the house, would have seen his shape through the glass door of the room as he walked toward the hall. Had he lingered in the hall for a few seconds longer, he would have been hit. Narrowly missing Funde, the shotgun pellets ricocheted and went through the door of a bedroom where his wife and one-year-old child were sleeping.

For some months now, right-wing organizations have stepped up their attacks on individuals and groups opposed to the

apartheid regime of South Africa and to racism in Australia. The attacks have included racist slogans daubed on walls, fire bombings, death threats, and the smashing up of cars, windows, and houses.

Funde, in a TV interview, pointed to the South African government as responsible for the attempted assassination. "They have declared they will get the ANC and all its representatives. Whether or not they are directly responsible or their agents, clearly it is supporters of that regime that are behind these attacks."

Contemptuously dismissing the incident, the South African ambassador to Australia, David Tothill, told ABC reporters, "I suspect that whenever news reaches South Africans that ANC representatives are catching flak they would say, 'It couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of guys.'"