

Progress of anti-apartheid fight marked at S. Africa meeting, UN

Historic meeting in S. Africa

BY RONI McCANN

The Conference for a Democratic Future, the broadest assembly of forces opposed to apartheid to meet in South Africa in more than three decades, convened December 9 at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

The historic event registered more than 4,600 delegates representing 2,100 organizations with a combined membership of 15 million South Africans of all races. Delegates discussed, debated, and adopted resolutions charting a course of action for the continued fight against apartheid.

The conference agreed to intensify the struggle on all fronts, evaluated recent moves made by the minority government, and addressed the question of negotiations with Pretoria and the need for increased international pressure on the apartheid rulers.

A statement released by the broadly representative conference convening committee noted that although debate was sharp at times, "conference business was concluded in a spirit of unity unprecedented in any gathering" of such diverse forces. The conference's "roaring success... has underscored the basic assertion of the liberation movement



Walter Sisulu (center with white hair), shown here with other recently released ANC leaders. He addressed December 9 anti-apartheid conference in South Africa. At far right is COSATU's Jay Naidoo.

that the only way to defeat apartheid is by broadening the base of the anti-apartheid forces," the committee said.

"Friends, the history of our struggle teaches lessons of the urgency of unity as the

steady platform from which we combat the exploitation of our people," said longtime African National Congress leader and former ANC secretary general Walter Sisulu in his

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Session on apartheid held at UN

BY RONI McCANN

UNITED NATIONS, December 12 — "This is a truly momentous occasion for our movement, the African National Congress, and the people of our country," ANC Secretary General Alfred Nzo told the 16th Special Session of the UN General Assembly.

The special session, which convened today will consider the question of apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa. It will run through December 14.

The UN General Assembly decided by consensus in July 1989 to hold the special session, the first ever on apartheid. Nzo, based in Lusaka, Zambia, at the exiled headquarters of the ANC, led the ANC delegation, accompanied by Jay Naidoo, secretary general of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Member countries, those with observer status, and liberation organizations recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) addressed the General Assembly. Many speakers representing African countries described firsthand the destructive role of the Pretoria regime in the region. Without exception, all speakers condemned the apartheid system although opinions were varied on what action was needed to contribute to its eradication.

Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi, minister for foreign affairs of Mozambique, said that his country and Angola were targets of destabilization and aggression by Pretoria. He reported that in Mozambique 700,000 people had been killed in terrorist actions and infant mortality for children up to five years old was 325 per thousand in 1988. This is the result of a war waged by South African-backed mercenaries.

The representative to the UN from Britain said his government deplored apartheid but was against sanctions because they would

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Protest wave shatters Czechoslovak and E. German Communist parties

BY PETER THIERJUNG

The Stalinist parties of East Germany and Czechoslovakia have been reduced to shambles, as millions have pressed the fight for democratic rights and an end to police-state restrictions and repression imposed on them for more than 40 years. These events have now spurred protests in Bulgaria and stirred new debate in the Soviet Union.

Celebrations were held in the streets of Czechoslovakia December 11, the day after President Gustav Husak resigned. Despite massive demonstrations, a countrywide protest strike, and a wave of resignations by other Communist Party leaders in recent weeks, Husak had refused to relinquish his post. He was the last remaining top CP official among those who came to power on the heels of the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia

which crushed a popular reform movement.

Attempts by Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec to maintain the CP's grip on power collapsed as opposition groups led by the Czech-based Civic Forum and its Slovak ally, the Public Against Violence, threatened another protest strike.

Adamec resigned December 7 and a new 21-member coalition government, in which the Communist Party holds 10 seats, was sworn in by Husak just prior to his departure. Husak's office also announced pardons and an amnesty to halt legal proceedings for all those charged with the political crimes of subversion, slandering the state, leaving the country without permission, and illegal religious activity.

One of the tasks of the new government

will be to organize elections, which are expected to be scheduled for 1990. Civic Forum has named Vaclav Havel as its official candidate for president. Havel, a writer, was a prominent dissident under the previous government and is a leader of Civic Forum.

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Eastern strikers hold Dec. 8 actions

BY SELVA NEBBIA

December 8 was "Stand Up to Lorenzo Day" for Eastern Airlines strikers and their supporters. Activities were held in several cities to show that after more than nine months, the Machinists' walkout at Eastern remains solid, despite recent decisions by the officials of the pilots' association and flight attendants' union to end the sympathy strikes at the carrier. The International Association of Machinists and the AFL-CIO called the activities.

In New York, some 700 strikers and supporters gathered at Washington Irving High School for a labor solidarity benefit to back the Eastern strikers, miners on strike at

Pittston Coal Group, and workers at NYNEX phone company who recently returned to work after a successful four-month walkout.

Earlier in the day, some 100 unionists also participated in an Eastern strike support rally at the World Trade Center, sponsored by the New York Central Labor Council.

Eastern strikers from Newark, New Jersey, and Philadelphia joined both New York events.

"We will last one day longer than Lorenzo," said Tom, an Eastern striker from Syracuse, New York, at the World Trade Center rally. "I walk the picket line every day and I feel great about being here." Frank

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Jury finds Miami cop guilty

BY TONY THOMAS

MIAMI — On December 7 a Dade County jury convicted Miami cop William Lozano of two counts of manslaughter for the January 1989 killing of two young Black men. Lozano shot at them while they were riding a motorcycle in the community of Overtown on Martin Luther King Day. Clement Anthony Lloyd died of gunshot wounds and his passenger, Allan Blanchard, died from injuries in the crash that resulted.

The verdict was welcomed by many in Miami, especially in Black communities where the news of Lozano's conviction brought cheers. Horns were honked and people danced in the streets of Overtown.

More than 200 people rallied in an Overtown park after a march led by People United for Justice. Demonstrators chanted, "Lozano is a murderer — he could go to jail!" Billy Hardeman, co-chair of People United for Justice, warned of Lozano's appeal and his getting off with a light sentence.

Jackie Floyd, the other co-chair of the group, thanked the community for winning this conviction, "especially those courageous

young people who protested in the streets of Overtown when nobody else would."

Lozano is free on \$10,000 bail until he is sentenced January 24. Sentences for manslaughter range from probation to 45 years in prison. In two other killer-cop trials in the 1980s, juries with no Black members, half-hearted prosecution efforts, and relocation of the trials out of Miami secured acquittals.

Roy Black, Lozano's lawyer, will appeal the verdict, based, in part, on Judge Joseph Farina's refusal to move the trial out of Miami or to allow evidence alleging Clement Lloyd was a drug dealer.

The appeal, however, will center on Farina's ruling that Roy Black's challenge to juror Ezra Simmons, who is Black, was racial bias. Simmons is vice-president of the Miami mail-handlers' union. The jury of two Blacks, three whites, and one Latino elected Simmons as jury foreman.

Right-wing Cuban and Colombian radio stations, which identify with the Nicaraguan contras and anti-Cuban terrorists, are raising the funds for the appeal.

Socialists at San Francisco meeting look to coalfields

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

SAN FRANCISCO — New political developments taking place in the world, including in the U.S. labor movement, were discussed here December 9-10 at a political conference sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party.

The meeting — like similar conferences held recently in St. Louis and New York — registered further advances in deepening the Socialist Workers Party's orientation to the coalfields and to participation in the Eastern Airlines strike and other labor battles. Side by side with other fighting workers, socialist activists are gaining new experiences and helping to advance these struggles, many conference participants noted.

Some 175 members, supporters, and friends of the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance from the West Coast, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City and Price, Utah, attended the conference. Many were union activists.

They were joined by a delegation of four members of the Revolutionary Workers League from Vancouver, Canada; a member of the African National Congress of South Africa; and a Machinist on strike against Eastern Airlines.

On the evening of December 9, more than 250 people attended a Militant Labor Forum on "The 'Failure of Socialism' and the Future of Communism." The talk was presented by Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*.

Conference participants discussed and approved a report presented by Mary Zins, a member of the United Mine Workers of America, that described the deepening resistance to employer attacks developing in the ranks of the UMWA.

The activists enthusiastically agreed with the proposals made by Zins to help deepen solidarity with the UMWA's strike against Pittston Coal Group. Together with the nine-month-old strike at Eastern Airlines, the fight at Pittston is at the center of a changing pattern of struggle in the labor movement, Zins explained.

The conference also agreed to take immediate steps to help strengthen the branches of the SWP in the coalfields and to take responsibility for organizing a series of sales teams

'Militant' holiday schedule

We want to alert our readers to our holiday printing schedule. This issue is the last for the year. We will not print issues for the following two weeks but will return with the *Militant* dated Jan. 12, 1990. It will be mailed to our subscribers and distributors on January 4.

to bring the *Militant* newspaper to miners and their families in western coal mining areas.

More than 50 people volunteered to participate in one- or two-week teams to those areas between now and May. The first two teams were making plans to leave as the conference ended, one heading for Utah, the other to Wyoming and Montana. More than \$400 was pledged or donated at the conference to help get teams on the road.

Fight of entire UMWA

Zins reviewed the evolution of the battle at Pittston and the way it has become a deeply felt fight of virtually the entire UMWA membership, not just the Pittston strikers. The six-week walkout by 44,000 miners last summer to support the strike and the development of Camp Solidarity in Virginia as the center of strike support have helped draw miners from all over the country into the struggle.

Since the strike began April 5, more than 45,000 supporters have traveled to Camp Solidarity from every state except Alaska and from many other countries.

Zins herself recently went with two co-workers from her mine in southern Illinois. During their visit they met paperworkers from Roanoke, Virginia, who were on their third trip to the camp. Especially inspiring, the paperworkers told Zins, was the way the entire UMWA is standing together in the strike. Not having this kind of unity, they felt, had been a weakness in strikes by paperworkers a couple of years back.

Two miners from the Boonville, Indiana, area who were at Camp Solidarity told Zins about their active support for the Eastern strike. At an Eastern hiring session for flight attendants in Evansville, they said, they organized 25 miners in full camouflage to "apply for jobs." Wearing camouflage has become a symbol of the strike against Pittston. At a hiring session for scab mechanics, 40 other miners turned out to greet Eastern bosses.

During the discussion period, a Machinist who works at United Airlines in Los Angeles described her own experience on a delegation to Camp Solidarity several months ago. The California group included an Eastern striker and several other union members and officials. Activists at the conference agreed to make a priority of helping to organize more delegations.

Zins reviewed earlier developments in the coalfields that set the framework for today's battle at Pittston, including the defeat dealt to the UMWA in the 1984-85 strike at A.T. Massey. Many miners, Zins said, felt the full power of the union had not been brought to bear in that fight.

But Zins stressed that the Pittston fight was also framed by important battles that won

victories for the UMWA in the western coalfields beginning in 1987. Peabody Coal, Zins explained, is the largest coal operator in the West with seven mines in Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico. Mines in Kayenta and Black Mesa, Arizona, in the Navajo Nation, were at the heart of the strike against Peabody in 1987. Despite efforts by the employers to divide the Navajo Nation and the UMWA, the miners — who are 95 percent Navajo — resisted and won.

Even at the Decker and Big Horn mines near Sheridan, Wyoming, where a strike was lost, miners have joined in the union's current battles and have organized three trips to Camp Solidarity as well as a trip to Denver to back striking Eastern workers.

The experiences in western coal helped to strengthen the UMWA and prepare the membership for the battle at Pittston. "What you see happening today," Zins said, "is a full-scale social struggle in southwest Virginia." While the state government has lined up behind Pittston, the miners have won support from workers and others throughout the mining communities, including among small businesspeople who are dependent on miners and their families.

As the struggle to win the Pittston strike has broadened throughout the ranks of the mine union, a rank-and-file leadership has begun to develop in the UMWA and socialists who are miners are part of it, Zins said.

Miners are discussing how to advance the strike and searching for ways to maximize the use of union power. A big question, said Zins, is how to shut down production. Many miners recognized the strength of the Eastern strike when it was able to keep the planes on the ground.

The growing nationwide resistance among UMWA members poses new challenges and opportunities for socialist workers, Zins said. UMWA contracts in western coal begin to



Militant/Nancy Boyasko
Navajo miners helped win UMWA's 1987 western coalfield strikes. Above, a UMWA member pickets at mine near Kayenta, Arizona, that year.

expire in early 1990. Many miners will be eager to read the news that will be available in the *Militant* about the Pittston and Eastern strikes. This underscores the importance of the *Militant* sales teams in the West.

These teams will be part of an effort to distribute the *Militant* in coalfields throughout the country. In addition, Zins explained, the SWP plans to strengthen the orientation of the party to coal miners by reinforcing SWP branches in coal mining areas and seeking to increase the number of socialist activists in the mines. She urged conference participants to consider making themselves available to move to those areas which include Charleston and Morgantown, West Virginia; Pittsburgh; Birmingham, Alabama; St. Louis; and Salt Lake City and Price, Utah.

The conference also discussed and adopted a report on the Eastern Airlines strike presented by Ernie Mailhot, a strike leader at New York's La Guardia Airport.

On the first day of the conference, the Young Socialist Alliance held a regional meeting of 25 young people who discussed launching an international youth appeal to defend framed-up political activist Mark Curtis.

Coalfield sales drive starts strong

BY RONI McCANN

The first *Militant* sales team to hit the road as part of a new drive to increase the paper's circulation in the coalfields met a warm response from miners and their friends and families in southern West Virginia.

Miners bought 96 copies of the *Militant* at portals in the area, including at several nonunion mines, and 23 subscriptions in the first week of the sales effort, which began December 6. The best reception was from miners and families in Buffalo Creek, Logan County. It was here that 125 people were killed in 1972 when a poorly built dam — owned by Pittston Coal Group —

gave way, releasing a wall of toxic water. The team of supporters also made a swing through eastern Kentucky. In all, 209 single copies were sold.

This week three more teams got started: one in western Kentucky and southern Indiana, another in southern Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and a third in the western coalfields beginning with mines and coal towns of Carbon and Emery counties in Utah.

On December 15 a team of *Militant* supporters will fan out to visit mine portals and communities in Wyoming, where several strikes at strip mines took place in 1987.

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Editor: DOUG JENNESS

Circulation Director: NORTON SANDLER

Nicaragua Bureau Director: LARRY SEIGLE

Business Manager: JIM WHITE

Editorial Staff: Susan Apstein (Nicaragua), Seth Galinsky (Nicaragua), Yvonne Hayes, Arthur Hughes, Susan LaMont, Roni McCann, Greg McCartan, Selva Nebbia, Peter Thierjung.

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

Cuba will defend socialism 'to the last'

Castro speaks at ceremony for Cubans killed abroad

BY SELVA NEBBIA

"There are historic events that nothing and no one can erase," said Cuban President Fidel Castro. "The hundreds of thousands of Cubans who carried out military and civilian internationalist missions will always enjoy the respect of present and future generations."

Castro was speaking December 7 at funeral ceremonies in Havana honoring the 2,289 Cubans killed in Angola and other parts of the world while carrying out solidarity missions. Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos was present at the Havana ceremonies, and other services were held throughout the country.

"There has been no just cause in Africa that could not count on the support of our people," Castro explained. He went over some of the countries in which Cubans have fought during the past three decades: Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Algeria, and Zaire, formerly the Congo. Cuba also fought alongside "the courageous sons of Namibia," Castro added.

It was through "selfless" and "altruistic" solidarity that "our courageous internationalist spirit was forged," said Castro. It "achieved its highest peak with the socialist revolution."

"Imperialism thought that we would hide our losses in Angola," Castro stated, "as if they were a dishonor or a stain on the revolution. The imperialists dreamed for a long time that the blood would be shed in vain, as if one who dies for a just cause could ever die in vain." Cuba's presence in Angola lasted 14 years.

"The enemy believed the return of the combatants would create a social problem because of the impossibility of giving them a job," explained Castro. But all those who carried out internationalist missions were assured a job, the Cuban president pointed out.

Those who volunteered right after high school could either return to a job or continue their studies. "Not one of them has been forgotten," said Castro.

Victorious return

"Today our troops who have been to war return victorious," stated Castro, "The whole people welcome them with warmth and emotion. Peace was reached with honor."

"The country that they find on their return is involved in a titanic struggle for development," the Cuban president explained. "At the same time it continues to face with exemplary dignity the criminal blockade of imperialism, to which now is added the crisis that has arisen in the socialist camp."

Castro devoted a significant part of his

speech to the current political situation in the countries of Eastern Europe.

"It is not about anti-imperialist struggle or the principles of internationalism that they speak today in the majority of those countries. Those words are not even mentioned in their press. Such concepts have been practically erased from the political dictionaries there," Castro pointed out. "On the other hand, the values of capitalism are gathering unusual force in those societies."

"Capitalism, its market economy, its values, its categories, and its methods can never be the instruments that will pull socialism out of its current problems and rectify errors that may have been made."

Capitalism means, Castro pointed out, "unequal trade with the peoples of the Third World, exaggeration of individual egoism and of national chauvinism, the reign of irrationality, anarchy in investment and production, ruthless sacrifice of the peoples to the blind laws of the economy, the reign of the strongest, and the exploitation of man by man."

But above all, he stressed, capitalism means "the plunder of the underdeveloped nations by the industrialized capitalist countries."

"Now imperialism wants the socialist countries of Europe to take part in this tremendous plunder," Castro stated. "The theoreticians of the capitalist reforms don't seem to find this at all distasteful. That is why in many of those countries nobody talks of the tragedy of the Third World."

In the Soviet Union, some publications have even begun to demand that the USSR cease its just and equitable trade relations with Cuba, Castro said.

They are urging the USSR to begin "to practice unequal trade with Cuba, selling its products at higher and higher prices while buying our agricultural products and raw materials at lower and lower prices," Castro said. They urge that "the USSR, ultimately, join the Yankee blockade against Cuba."

"It is well known that a large part of the wealth of the advanced capitalist countries comes from unequal trade" with the countries of the Third World, Castro pointed out. For centuries these countries were plundered as colonies, he continued.

Third World debt

"Today they are impoverished through the interest on an infinite and unpayable debt," Castro explained. "Their financial and human resources are taken through the flight of capital and of brains. Their trade is blocked by dumping, trade tariffs, and import quotas."

"It has been stated that socialism should improve," said Castro. "No one can be opposed to this."

"But is it by abandoning the most elementary principles of Marxism-Leninism that socialism can be improved? Why do the so-called reforms have to go in a capitalist direction?" he asked.

"If such ideas had a revolutionary character, as some claim," Castro said, "why do they receive the unanimous and elated support of the leaders of imperialism?"

"In an unheard-of declaration, the president of the United States called himself the number one defender of the doctrines that today are being applied in many countries in the socialist camp."

"Never in the course of history has a genuinely revolutionary idea been received with such enthusiastic support by the head of the most powerful, aggressive, and voracious empire that humanity has ever known," Castro stated.

The U.S. rulers talk of peace, Castro pointed out, "But of what peace? Of peace among the great powers while imperialism reserves the right to openly intervene and attack the countries of the Third World?"

"The imperialist government of the United States demands that nobody help the Salvadoran revolutionaries," explained the Cuban president. "It tries to blackmail the USSR, demanding that it stop all economic and military supplies to Nicaragua and Cuba, because we are in solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries."

On the other hand, Washington "aids the genocidal government and sends special combat units to El Salvador," he continued.

"Consecration of the right of a great power to universal intervention is the end of inde-

pendence and sovereignty in the world," said Castro. "What peace and security can our countries expect unless it is that which we ourselves are capable of conquering through our heroism?"

Nuclear disarmament

"It's wonderful that nuclear arms disappear," he pointed out. But "imperialism does not need nuclear arms to attack our countries. Its powerful fleets distributed throughout the world, its military bases everywhere, and its conventional arms that are more sophisticated and deadly every day are enough to carry out the role of boss and gendarme of the world."

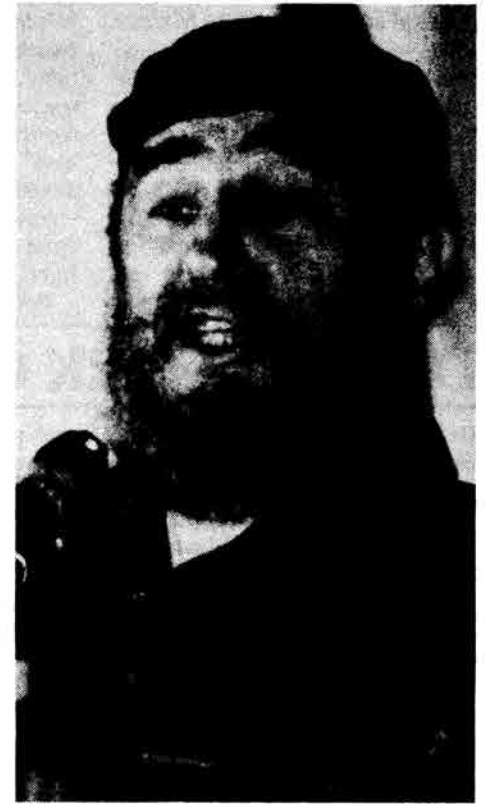
U.S. imperialism, stated Castro, believes "that the new situation in the socialist camp will allow it to undertake a relentless effort to force a change in the course of our revolution."

"The Cuban communists and the millions of revolutionary fighters who make up our heroic and combative people," Castro explained, "will know how to fulfill the role laid before us by history, not only as the first socialist state in the Western hemisphere, but also as the unfailing frontline defenders of the noble cause of the world's poor and exploited."

"A communist above all, has to be courageous and revolutionary," Castro stated. "The duty of communists is to fight under any circumstance, no matter how adverse it might be. The Paris communards knew how to fight and die defending their ideas."

"The banners of the revolution and socialism are not handed over without a fight. To surrender is for cowards and people who are demoralized," stressed Castro, "not for communists or for revolutionaries."

If Cubans were one day to find themselves among the last defenders of socialism, he stated, "we would know how to defend its



Militant

Cuban President Fidel Castro

banner with the last drop of our blood."

The men and women who are honored today, concluded Castro, "died for the most sacred values of our history and of our revolution. They died fighting against colonialism ... against racism and apartheid ... against the exploitation and plunder of the peoples of the Third World ... for independence and sovereignty of the peoples ..."

"They died for the ideas of Martí and Maceo ... Marx, Engels, and Lenin ... for the ideas and the example that the October Revolution extended all over the world. They died for socialism ... for internationalism. They died for the revolutionary and dignified country that Cuba is today."

NEW ZEALAND

Socialist Educational & Active Workers Conference

Hamilton, December 28 - 31

Event is being held in conjunction with a decision-making conference of the Communist League. Sessions will include:

- Cuba, Eastern Europe and the new opportunities for building world communist leadership
- The working class and the fight for full equality for Maoris
- Celebration of the Pathfinder Mural
- Building solidarity with Cuba
- Organizing sales of the *Militant* at factory gates
- Meeting to relaunch Young Socialists
- New Zealand premiere of video on the frame-up of Mark Curtis

For information on agenda, transport arrangements, and costs, contact the Communist League at the listings under New Zealand on page 16.

CANADA

7th Convention of the Revolutionary Workers League

Montréal, Dec. 29 - Jan. 1

Comité Social Centre-Sud, 1710 rue Beaudry (metro Beaudry)

The New Framework of World Politics & the Struggle for Communist Leadership Today

The disintegration of Stalinist parties in Eastern Europe: an enormous step forward • The weight of the German Question • Why Cuba and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa are in forefront of resolving the crisis of leadership of the world working class

Speaker: **Steve Penner** executive secretary of the Revolutionary Workers League. **Fri., Dec. 29, 8 p.m.**

The Strikes Against Eastern and Pittston: Vital Lessons for All Working People

Ernie Mallhot member International Association of Machinists and Eastern strike leader
Mary Zins member United Mine Workers of America. **Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m.**

Celebrate 31 Years of the Cuban Revolution & the International Expansion of Pathfinder Press

Jack Barnes national secretary U.S. Socialist Workers Party
Doreen Weppeler leader of Communist League of Britain and member National Union of Railwaymen

Michel Dugré Central Committee Revolutionary Workers League. Showing of video *The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis* and party to follow. **Sun., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m.**

Young Socialists National Conference

Sun., Dec. 31, 4 p.m.

All events translated to French, English, and Spanish. For more information contact the listings under Canada on page 16.

2 Cuban sentry posts fired on from U.S. base at Guantánamo

"The Yankee authorities at the Guantánamo naval base are fully responsible for these provocations," read a December 7 statement by Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The MINFAR statement was issued in response to the firing of two shots from the U.S. navy's Guantánamo Bay base that were directed at two Cuban sentry posts.

It is not accidental that "these vulgar and dangerous provocations ... have taken place today," the statement continued. On December 7 people throughout Cuba were paying tribute to the thousands of Cuban internationalist fighters killed abroad in the last three decades.

The ministry reported that 2,289 Cuban civilians and members of the military died while on missions in Angola, Ethiopia, and other countries. Some 400,000 Cubans have served in such internationalist missions.

The remains of the dead were brought back to the island between November 27 and December 4.

"The revolutionary fervor and the devotion towards those fallen in internationalist missions," the statement continued, "clearly irritate the U.S. military confined to that corner they illegally occupy in Guantánamo."

The most recent provocation before this took place on Aug. 21, 1987. On that occasion U.S. personnel fired once at another Cuban sentry post.

Curtis case video shown at director Castle's home

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving a 25-year prison term at the state penitentiary in Anamosa on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international campaign to fight for justice for Curtis. For more information about the case or how your can help, write to the Mark Curtis

Curtis' status. "Mark is active in prison. He's the secretary of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Organization," she said. "Mark is fighting for space to be political, while the authorities are trying to demoralize him." Curtis and his supporters are demanding that he be allowed to receive non-English language literature and materials as part of this fight.

Pennington explained that the

DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695.

If you have news or reports on activities in support of Mark Curtis from your city or country, please send them to the *Militant*.

The Los Angeles premier screening of *The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis* drew enthusiastic praise from an audience of 150 December 3. The video's producer, Nick Castle, Jr., who directed the Hollywood films *Tap* and *The Last Starfighter*, hosted the event at his home.

"I volunteered for this project because Mark was in prison and couldn't go out and tell his side of the story," Castle said, introducing the video. "My goal was to make something that would help do it for him, and to show what kind of person he is."

The audience watched in rapt attention as the video marshalled the facts of the young meat-packer's frame-up on rape and burglary charges.

When the video was over, everyone present seemed to agree that Castle had met his goal. Many had known little or nothing about Curtis' case. Their most common reaction was astonishment and outrage that an obviously innocent man had been convicted.

Kate Kaku, Curtis' wife and a leader of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, and Mark Pennington and William Kutmus, Curtis' attorneys in Des Moines, flew in from Iowa for the event and spoke after the screening.

Kaku provided an update on

trial judge's rulings — including a refusal to allow evidence of how Des Moines police beat Curtis and the arresting officer's suspension from the police department for lying in a previous case — "handcuffed the defense," paving the way for the conviction.

"I want to say something about the kind of person Mark is. I've never defended a person like him," Pennington added. "Often, when a defendant is convicted, their true character comes out. Mark's first concern was not himself, but his family and supporters, reassuring them. He even tried to console me on the ruling."

Kutmus, who is appealing Curtis' conviction, discussed the appeal process and Curtis' suit against the Des Moines police for the beating he suffered at their hands after his arrest.

The audience responded with prolonged applause when Castle introduced several local leaders of the Machinists' union who are on strike against Eastern Airlines. Julie Mungai, one of eight Palestinian rights activists whom the U.S. government has tried to deport, also received a warm welcome.

Many in the audience were from the film industry, including five producers, four directors, and several actors. Representatives of a group which supports independent films and videos volunteered to help distribute the new video, Castle said.

An Iranian filmmaker expressed interest in getting the video aired on local Farsi-language television to help educate the Iranian community.

Castle's appeal for funds to sup-



Nick Castle, Jr., producer of new video *The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis*.

port Curtis' defense effort raised \$2,200.

The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis produced by Nick Castle, Jr., is available on VHS video cassette (49 minutes) from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in Des Moines. If you would like a copy to show co-workers, friends, or others, contact the defense committee at the phone

number or address listed at the beginning of this column.

Gerry McGeough, an Irish republican activist presently imprisoned in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), wrote to Curtis' supporters. "I was sorry to learn of Mark Curtis' plight. I recall a conversation we had and remember having been impressed by him,"

McGeough said. "Needless to say, he has my wholehearted solidarity and whatever support I can give him under my reduced circumstances. It's more ironic that we should both find ourselves in jail on false charges and equally ironic that we are the subjects of international campaigns on human rights issues!" Curtis and McGeough crossed paths in Sweden several years ago. McGeough lived in Sweden then, where he built support for the struggle against Britain's occupation of northern Ireland.

"The arrest and jailing of Mark Curtis on the basis of deliberately falsified and racialised allegations demonstrates in a crude fashion the extent to which modern-day capitalism can and is determined to go in its fight for survival," Albert Musarurwa wrote the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. "The duty of every worker throughout the world is to intensify the struggle and never give up." Musarurwa is the legal advisor to the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions in Harare.

Members of locals 1 and 3 of the General Defense Committee have come to Curtis' side in his battle for justice. The GDC is affiliated with the Industrial Workers of the World. One local is located in the Dayton-Yellow Springs area of Ohio. The other is composed of prisoners at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison, and prisoners at three other facilities. "We all stand behind Mark and his battle for what justice can be had for 'the good fighter,'" a letter from them said.

Other new endorsers of Curtis' defense campaign include: Sara Alatorre, who is affiliated with the Mexican Academy of Human Rights; and Gil Green, a member of the Communist Party USA. Green was jailed in the 1950s as a leader of the CP under thought-control legislation known as the Smith Act.

Nelson Blackstock of Los Angeles contributed to this week's column.

Lawsuit aims to score blows against Curtis defense

BY PETER THIERJUNG

"Supporters of Mark Curtis face a serious new challenge from forces who want to see his frame-up conviction on rape and burglary stick," said John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. "This new challenge is also aimed at undermining the work of his defense committee."

Studer was referring to a lawsuit filed in November against Curtis in Iowa District Court by Keith and Denise Morris on behalf of their daughter, Curtis' alleged victim. The suit claims punitive damages for the "pain and suffering" inflicted on their daughter and asks the court to assign to the Morrises "any monies" received by Curtis "as the result of the commercialization of his acts."

A combined motion to strike the "commercialization" claim and to dismiss the suit will be heard December 18, said Curtis' attorney George Eichhorn. If the judge does not dismiss the suit, it should come to trial within 18 months, but the process can sometimes take longer, the attorney explained.

Workers League

"This lawsuit will be used to step up the smear campaign and disruption effort against Curtis and the Mark Curtis Defense Committee spearheaded by an antilabor outfit known as the Workers League," Studer continued. "It is consistent with their mode of disruptive activity."

The Workers League has aggressively advanced the Des Moines police and prosecutor's frame-up of Curtis and has attempted to undermine support for his fight. The group publicized and organized the circulation of a letter signed by Keith Morris defending the

police frame-up and slandering Curtis' supporters.

"Since Curtis has no assets," Studer said, "one goal of the litigation will be to attack Curtis' suit against the Des Moines police who beat him after his arrest."

Curtis has filed a civil rights suit seeking \$300,000 in damages from the police. Any monies Curtis receives as a result of a victory in this fight could be jeopardized by the suit against him, Eichhorn said. Curtis has also filed an appeal of his conviction.

Curtis' frame-up

Curtis, a political activist and unionist, is now serving a 25-year prison sentence at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa. The frame-up stemmed from Curtis' activities in defense of Latino workers, who had been victimized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the Swift meat-packing plant in Des Moines where Curtis worked.

On March 4, 1988, Curtis was arrested and beaten by the Des Moines police, who called him a "Mexican-lover, just like you love those coloreds." Curtis suffered a shattered cheekbone and required 15 stitches. He was convicted at a September 1988 trial.

Following Curtis' arrest, the Des Moines police and prosecution set out to undermine Curtis' defense effort. They sought to demoralize Curtis and his defenders and to get them to drop their efforts to expose the frame-up. They also tried to win a convincing guilty verdict, one which would have made it more difficult for Curtis and his supporters to press their fight.

At the trial key evidence supporting Curtis'

innocence was barred. Testimony by the arresting officers and the alleged victim were contradictory. The prosecution was unable to provide any physical or medical evidence connecting Curtis to the alleged victim.

While the police and prosecution won a guilty verdict, it was not convincing and they failed to push back and isolate the defense effort. Following the trial Curtis' fight won more support.

A Des Moines police department scandal brought to light around the time of Curtis' arrest and trial revealed widespread racist and sexist practices by cops and led to a Justice Department investigation. This meant police, prosecution, and city authorities were in an even weaker position to counter Curtis' defense campaign.

Following the trial the Workers League spearheaded a systematic countercampaign, aimed particularly at those in the labor movement who have publicly opposed the frame-up of Curtis. Because the Workers League claims to be socialist, it received an initial hearing from some working people who would not otherwise lend credence to a prosecutor's frame-up of a union militant.

Worldwide support for Curtis

This countercampaign was pushed back through the efforts of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and Curtis' supporters, who since the beginning of this year have won the endorsement of more than 6,000 individuals and organizations for the defense effort. Endorsers include prominent unionists, political activists, and defenders of democratic rights from the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, Britain, France, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Canada, Nicaragua, and Cuba,

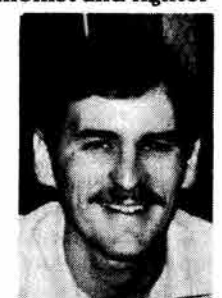
as well as from across the United States.

An August ruling by a Los Angeles federal judge aided the effort to expose the Workers League's disruption campaign.

The judge ruled that a 10-year harassment lawsuit brought by Alan Gelfand, an attorney employed by Los Angeles County, against the Socialist Workers Party was to "disrupt the SWP" and "was not in good faith." The suit was financed and organized by the Workers League.

from PATHFINDER The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis by Margaret Jayko

This pamphlet tells the story of Mark Curtis, a unionist and fighter for immigrant rights, who is serving a 25-year sentence in an Iowa prison on trumped-up rape charges. 71 pp., \$2.50.



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

Socialist leader urges fight against antilabor disruption

BY GREG McCARTAN

NEW YORK — "We are here tonight to celebrate the victory the Socialist Workers Party has won against the 10-year Gelfand disruption campaign of the Workers League," said Frank Forrester.

Forrester, a leader of the SWP, was speaking on "The Fight Against Antilabor Disruption" at the New York Militant Labor Forum. The December 9 event drew some 75 people, including unionists, students, young workers, political activists, and others.

Alan Gelfand, a Los Angeles attorney, launched a disruption effort against the SWP with a lawsuit in 1979. The suit was heard in 1983 in Los Angeles by U.S. Federal District Court Judge Mariana Pfaelzer.

On Nov. 13, 1989, Pfaelzer rejected a motion by Gelfand to amend her August 1989 ruling against him. The judge also admitted she should have dismissed the suit for lack of evidence in 1983 before the trial opened.

Gelfand's suit is part of a broader campaign of harassment and disruption of the SWP organized by the Workers League, a small U.S. antilabor sect, Forrester said.

"The labor movement and all fighters for social justice can use this victory as their own," he stressed. "The victory is part of an ongoing effort to beat back the insidious antilabor activities of the Workers League."

"More and more working-class fighters — from paperworkers in Pennsylvania to coal miners in West Virginia to Eastern strikers around the country — have also had to confront this group and know that it devotes most of its time and energy to attacking the leaders of every struggle it comes around," Forrester continued.

"As working-class struggles deepen, we will see more antilabor outfits like the Workers League," he said. "The Workers League itself won't just go away. Their disruption and baiting of vanguard fighters as agents of the government and the bosses must be fought and defeated. They target not just the SWP, but all who stand up and fight."

"We will see," Forrester declared, "more organized political and physical disruption of the labor movement as we go into the 1990s. Learning to recognize such outfits and understanding that they can and must be fought is an important weapon in advancing our struggles."

Forrester noted that credit for the victory in the Gelfand case should go to those who have fought against a host of Workers League disruption attempts. "Everyone," he said, "who has gotten to know what the Workers League is like, rejected the temptation to simply hope it will go away, and decided to take its disruptive activities head on, has contributed to this victory."

The victory also belongs to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Forrester pointed out. The committee has waged a fight to push back and expose the Workers League's international campaign on behalf of the Des Moines, Iowa, cops and prosecutors who

framed up Curtis and sentenced him to a 25-year prison term last year.

Purpose was to disrupt SWP

Gelfand had been expelled from the SWP in 1979 after he filed a legal brief in federal court "aimed at undermining the SWP's historic lawsuit against 50 years of government spying on and disruption of the party," Forrester recalled. "Through Gelfand's legal brief the Workers League directly intervened in that fight."

The SWP's suit against FBI spying resulted in a historic ruling against the government in 1986.

After being expelled from the SWP, Gelfand filed suit against the party. In it he charged that the SWP is run by FBI agents, a slander promoted by the Workers League. Gelfand demanded that the court overturn his expulsion from the SWP and remove the party's leadership from office. U.S. Justice Department officials were also named as defendants by Gelfand in the suit.

Gelfand's suit "was prepared, organized, and financed by the Workers League," Forrester said. "The charges by Gelfand — and the fact that they were backed by a group calling itself socialist — may sound outlandish, or seem like an embarrassment. But we have correctly taken it as a deadly serious challenge," he explained.

By recognizing the suit as an assault on the freedom of association, Forrester said, and by organizing a vigorous public campaign to win support for the fight, blows were dealt to the Workers League's disruption efforts.

Reading from the "Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law" issued by the judge in August, this year, Forrester noted she called the suit "abusive, harassing, and in large part directed to matters which could have no probative value in this litigation."

At the November 13 hearing, the judge "also did something unusual," Forrester noted. "She admitted that the court was complicit in harming the SWP."

The judge put into the record that she "never believed that the evidence presented by Mr. Gelfand raised true material facts." She also said in court, "I have always believed that there is more to this case than just a lawsuit."

The SWP was subsequently awarded some of its court costs. In an earlier, out-of-court settlement the SWP recovered from Gelfand's first set of lawyers part of the money the party has had to pay for attorney's fees since the suit began.

The judge noted that by allowing the suit to continue she participated in helping to "drain the party treasury." The party leadership had to devote considerable time to the suit because "I allowed Mr. Gelfand to carry out extensive pretrial discovery procedures," the judge added.

Forrester explained that Gelfand has until January 12 to appeal Pfaelzer's rulings. Fighting this continuation of the disruption effort will mean more funds need to be raised and more of the party's time and resources will be devoted to this defense effort.

Freedom of association challenged

Gelfand's suit "still poses a threat to the right of privacy and freedom of association," Forrester stressed. "It is important to remember that the suit asks the courts to reach in and change membership decisions and the elected leadership of a voluntary organization," he said.

If upheld in court, such a precedent "would be a blow to all unions, Black rights organizations, women's rights groups, and political associations of all kinds," he noted.

Attacking freedom of association along the lines advocated in the Gelfand suit "would be a direct assault on the elbow room we need to carry out union and working-class political activities free from government harassment." It was for this reason, Forrester said "that so many individuals in the labor movement and other organizations signed up as supporters of our fight and welcomed the victory we won."

Workers League evolution

What kind of organization would take a working-class party into court and ask the

government to intervene in the group's internal life, overturn membership decisions, and replace the leadership? Forrester asked.

"The Workers League appears to be different than they really are. They claim to be socialist," he said. For this reason they can often get a hearing at first from workers and other fighters who would otherwise reject openly antilabor organizations.

The Workers League's central campaign now is "their operation to push the frame-up of Mark Curtis. They have proven to be a useful tool to the Des Moines cops in peddling the lie that Mark is guilty," Forrester noted.

Curtis, a packinghouse worker and political activist was convicted on phony charges of rape and burglary. The prosecutor quoted extensively from the Workers League newspaper, the *Bulletin*, during her final arguments at Curtis' trial Forrester noted.

Since then, the Mark Curtis Defense Committee has won thousands of supporters for Curtis' fight for justice. The Workers League has systematically targeted these supporters — especially those from the labor movement — to try to get them to stop backing the fight, Forrester explained.

In addition, "you will find representatives of this organization hanging around strikes and other working-class activities — harassing activists and peddling their newspaper," Forrester said. "You will see more of them when morale is low in a strike, preying on workers who have become demoralized. They will have influence in such situations, and they will recruit."

Paperworker's experience

Ed Long, a leader of United Paperworkers International Union Local 1787, in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, sent a message to the meeting congratulating the SWP on the victory over the Workers League.

"Against this type of people the best you can hope for is a temporary lull in the battle," Long wrote, referring to the Workers League.

He described the way the group came around during their 1987-88 strike against International Paper and disrupted a union that was in a combat situation.

Long pointed out that because the local did not know the character of the Workers League, they were at first welcomed as other groups were who supported the strike. "The group was able to get statements from a few union members as well as pictures" that were later used "to create a distorted picture of their supposed involvement with us. This involvement did not then or ever exist."

"The Workers League also tried to infiltrate several of our union meetings," he said. They "placed several articles in the local newspaper that implied they were sanctioned by our union."

After attending an event in support of Mark Curtis before his imprisonment, Long "went to the picket locations at the paper mill in Lock Haven and found three people from the Workers League conducting a personal character assassination on me, because of my support of Mark. Fortunately my union brothers did not buy any of it."

Long contrasted the Workers League involvement with the paperworkers to the union members' experience with the SWP. It has been "much the opposite, where you have been instrumental in getting us on many, many agendas at rallies, meetings, conferences, etc."

Forrester pointed to similar examples of Workers League disruption activities in the air traffic controllers' and copper miners' strikes in the early 1980s.

They also mounted an operation against the meat-packers of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local P-9 in Minnesota, who waged a militant strike in 1984-85. "They've come around the Eastern strike and they are definitely in the coalfields," noted Forrester.

Ray Rogers, head of Corporate Campaign, Inc., and the Freedom Socialist Party also sent greetings to the event.

Agent-baiting

Forrester read from a recent issue of the *Bulletin* that said, "Coal miners must take warning: members of the SWP are working as part of an intelligence-gathering operation



Frank Forrester

Militant/Margrethe Siem

on behalf of the government and the coal bosses, and their activities should be treated accordingly."

Baiting of union activists who are socialists as agents of the government and the bosses has always been used to divide and disrupt the labor movement, Forrester said. That's the purpose of the Workers League charges that the SWP is run by FBI agents.

These kinds of charges against vanguard workers also carry with them threats of and justification for physical violence against the supposed agents.

Forrester explained that the current rise in labor struggles — compared with the early 1980s — means a more favorable political situation for pushing back the Workers League even further.

"But," he stressed, "the Workers League has not been defeated. The battle with them is not a debate between two workers' organizations over ideas and perspectives. It is a sharp clash by a growing layer of vanguard workers with conscious enemies of the working class."

The need to fight against such antilabor outfits will continue to be part of struggles by working people as the capitalist rulers attempt to restrict the ability to organize struggles and engage in working-class politics, the SWP leader said.

Forrester concluded by encouraging the activists at the forum to "learn more about the victories in the Gelfand case, to use them, and to publicize them."

During the lively discussion period that followed, one person asked whether the Workers League also baited union officials and workers who are leaders of strikes as agents of the company.

Forrester pointed to the recent experiences of Eastern strikers in New York. The Workers League was able to get a hearing recently when they began by attacking officials of the union, blaming them for not doing enough in the strike. But when they started in along similar lines about a rank-and-file leader of the walkout, the strikers rejected this attempt to split their ranks.

Another participant told about her experiences with the disruption activities of the Workers League among coal miners on strike against the Pittston Coal Group.

A young immigrant worker asked Forrester to explain more about the difference between the Workers League and the Socialist Workers Party.

Forrester pointed out that the Workers League, like many similar organizations throughout the history of the workers' movement, claims to be a "socialist" organization in order to gain a hearing among workers. The only way to identify them as a menace to working people's struggles is by what they do, he said. The Workers League's actions — from promoting the frame-up of Mark Curtis to backing Gelfand's suit to their consistent disruption of every strike they come around — makes the character of the group clear.

Some \$60 was raised at the meeting to help cover the ongoing costs of fighting Gelfand's disruption suit.

An appeal to defenders of democratic rights

Thousands of dollars are urgently needed to cover the costs of defending the victory of the Socialist Workers Party over the 10-year harassment lawsuit by Alan Gelfand and the Workers League. An appeal by Gelfand and the Workers League is expected.

Supporters of this fight can join in defending this victory by sending a contribution to help cover the costs of fighting the Workers League appeal.

Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc., a nonprofit foundation, at P.O. Box 761, Church Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10007.

Copies of the court ruling can be obtained for \$5 from the Political Rights Defense Fund at the same address.

San Francisco benefit raises \$14,000 for strike

Some 8,500 International Association of Machinists members struck Eastern Airlines March 4 in an effort to block the company's drive to break the union and impose massive concessions on workers.

Backed by flight attendants and pilots, the walkout crippled East-

SUPPORT EASTERN STRIKERS!

ern, grounding a big majority of its 1,040 prestrike daily flights.

Since July Eastern has been trying to restart operations. By November 1 it was scheduling 775 daily flights. On November 22 the Air Line Pilots Association ended its support for the strike. The Transport Workers Union, which represented striking Eastern flight attendants, followed suit the next day.

The Eastern workers' fight has won broad support from working people in the United States and

Canada. Readers — especially Eastern strikers — are encouraged to send news of strike solidarity activities to this column.

"We need to step things up," said striker Mike Fitzpatrick at a recent holiday benefit for Eastern strikers held at IAM Local 1781's hall in Burlingame, near San Francisco International Airport. "With Christmas coming up, there will be even more people travelling. We have to let them know that the IAM is still out." Local 1781 organizes airline workers at the airport and United Airlines' big maintenance base there.

Two hundred Bay Area unionists attended the event, including 30 strikers and their families. The dinner raised \$14,000 for the strikers.

Local 1781 President Jerry Nelson announced plans for an expanded picket line at the airport December 22.

IAM International President George Kourpias also addressed the dinner and pledged continued support for the strike.

After the event, three Local 1781 members told Kourpias that they were disturbed to hear that IAM-or-

ganized subcontracting companies, such as Hudson General and Ogden Allied, were doing work for Eastern in several East Coast cities.

"We've done all we can do," the IAM official replied.

"A situation like this is a knife in the back of any strike," responded one of the local members.

On December 7 a dozen strike supporters arrived at noon to picket an Eastern hiring session for mechanics held at the Marriott Hotel in downtown San Francisco. Pickets far outnumbered the three applicants, who were given literature about the strike and applications for other airlines. Passersby and hotel guests also took literature, and many promised they wouldn't fly Eastern.

Earlier, strike supporters in San Francisco also organized a Thanksgiving eve picket line that drew 55 strikers and other unionists. Overall passenger traffic set airport records that day.

Spirits on the picket line were good despite news that the Air Line Pilots Association leadership had ended the pilots' sympathy strike at Eastern that day. "This doesn't really change anything we do," said Local 1781's recording secretary,

John Kensinger. "They still can't hire people to fix the planes."

In Syracuse, New York, there are 24 Machinists' union members on strike at Eastern, reports chief steward Rick McAfee. They are in Local 1018, along with strikers at New York's La Guardia Airport.

"Eastern had two gates at the Syracuse airport before the strike," McAfee explained. "When the strike started last March, flights to Syracuse were stopped. One gate was idled. At the other, noncontract workers handled work for Northwest Airlines."

"In September it was announced that Syracuse was eliminated from Eastern's 'reorganization' plan," McAfee continued. Despite efforts of Eastern employees to convince the company not to sell its operations there, Eastern is sticking to its decision to sell the two gates.

"We're picketing Continental flights," explained McAfee, who said the Syracuse strikers remain committed to the fight at Eastern despite the sale of the gates. "We've also picketed Eastern's hiring sessions and participated in the Labor Day march in New York City."

McAfee was a ramp worker with 12 years at Eastern before the strike started. Connie McAfee, his wife, is also a strike activist. "Our house became the union hall," he said. All but one of the strikers now have other jobs, he added.

One night at the end of November, two scab workers from Eastern's maintenance base at Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta drove over to Northwest Airlines' maintenance facility and went into the hangar to borrow some equipment. When workers in the hangar spotted them, a big hue and cry went up and the scabs were shouted out of the building. They left without the equipment they came for.

Support for the Eastern strike is high among workers at Northwest, many of whom used to work at Eastern.

Kathleen Denny from San Francisco and Maceo Dixon and Adjua Adams from Atlanta contributed to this column.

Eastern strikers 'Stand up to Lorenzo' on Dec. 8

Continued from front page

Lorenzo heads up Texas Air Corp., Eastern's parent company.

Members of a dozen unions turned out for the rally, including 10 members of United Electrical Workers Local 299 who have been on strike against Circuit-Wise in North Haven, Connecticut, since September. "The Eastern strikers have a lot of guts," said one Circuit-Wise worker. "I think if they continue to stick together, they can win their fight."

Five members of the United Mine Workers of America were there, along with workers from United and Trans World airlines.

Concert and rally

Solidarity among the Eastern workers, miners, and phone workers was the theme of the benefit concert and rally that evening.

"All of these fights are for all of us," said Julie Kushner of United Auto Workers District 65, who chaired the event. Unionists on strike around the country "share a willingness to fight with all our might against injustice," she said.

United Mine Workers of America President Richard Trumka was one of the featured speakers. He was accompanied on the stage by a dozen miners dressed in camouflage, the symbol of the Pittston miners' strike.

"We stand with you," Trumka said, speaking to the Eastern Machinists. "We pledge to stand with you one day longer than Lorenzo," he added, echoing what has become the theme of determination among Eastern strik-

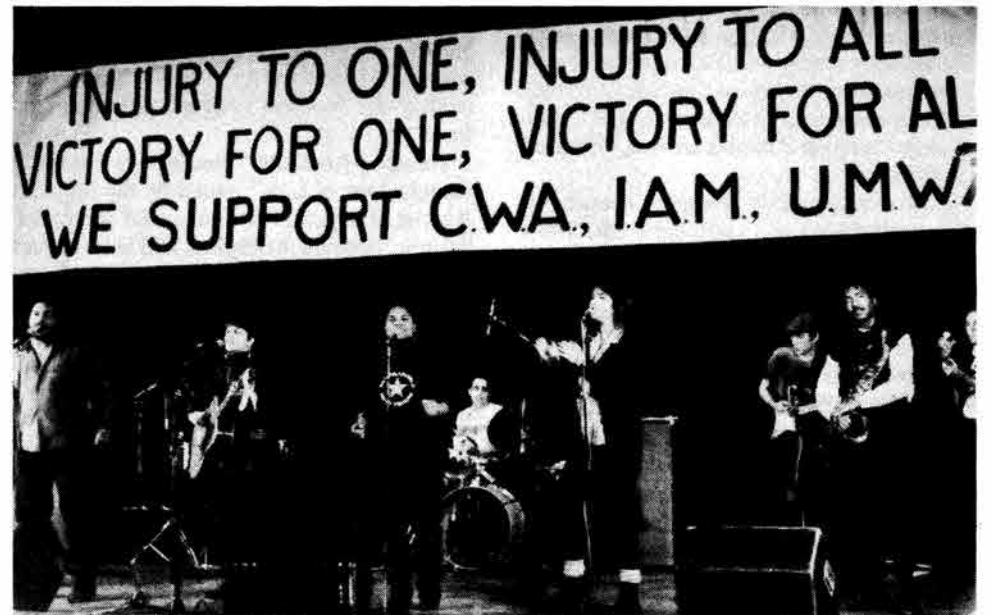
ers. IAM District 100 President Charles Bryan also spoke, as well as Communications Workers of America Vice-president Jan Pierce.

Under a banner that read "An injury to one, an injury to all; a victory for one, a victory for all," folksinger Pete Seeger, country singer Hazel Dickens, and the group Human Condition performed songs in solidarity with the striking workers and with people in struggle from South Africa to El Salvador. The New York City Opera Brass Ensemble also performed. They and other members of musicians' union Local 802 recently ended a 10-week strike against the opera company.

Kushner announced that more than 100 unions and union locals were represented at the benefit. Among them were the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, Local 1199 of the New York health and hospital workers' union, Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and Transport Workers Union, which represents flight attendants who had been on strike at Eastern.

A carload of students from Sarah Lawrence College attended both the World Trade Center rally and benefit. In January they plan to visit the coal miners' Camp Solidarity in Virginia, explained Megan, one of the students. She was helping to sell "Stop Lorenzo" buttons at the concert.

More than \$20,000 was raised at the ben-



Militant/Selva Nebbia

December 8 benefit rally and concert in New York drew 700 strikers and supporters

efit. The Communications Workers announced that since they had ended their strike at NYNEX, they would donate their share of the proceeds to the IAM and UMW.

In Miami, 100 strikers and supporters held an expanded picket line December 8. The picketers roved through Eastern's concourse at Miami International Airport carrying "Stop Lorenzo" balloons and distributing leaflets informing air travelers of Eastern's bad safety

record.

At the Los Angeles International Airport, 100 strikers and other unionists picketed Eastern.

Some 25 strike supporters picketed at the city ticket office in Washington, D.C. Three members of the new National Air Traffic Control Association, NATCA, joined the 25 picketers who braved heavy snow. In Boston, Eastern Machinists also leafleted the downtown ticket office.

'Christmas for strikers'

The AFL-CIO is organizing a "Christmas for strikers" program to aid workers on strike at Eastern and Pittston, and their families, during the holidays. The labor federation is urging donations of toys, holiday food, and financial contributions. In some cities, strikers are also planning Christmas parties.

"The next few weeks is an important time to step up the strike's visibility at airports around the country, when so many people will be traveling," said strike leader Ernie Mailhot from IAM Local 1018 at New York's La Guardia Airport. "We should urge everyone to wear 'Stop Lorenzo' buttons — airport and airline workers, union members who are flying, anyone who backs our strike. We should invite people, especially other union members, to stop and join us for a few hours on the picket lines. In some cities, strikers have tables inside of terminals and can reach people that way. This is a good opportunity to let people know what we're fighting for and to mobilize our supporters during this peak flying season."

Holiday contributions can be sent to Fairness at Eastern Fund, 815 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006 and Christmas for Pittston, P.O. Box 28, Castlewood, Va. 24224.

Montréal garment workers resist takebacks

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO AND SUSAN BERMAN

MONTREAL — Members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union have voted by a 71 percent majority to accept a new, three-year contract December 7.

The contract covers 5,000 garment workers in more than 100 shops in the Montréal area. The ACTWU members won a 4.5 percent wage increase for each year of the contract, with a possible lump-sum cost-of-living adjustment, and an improved pension plan. Most importantly the union pushed back the bosses' demands for concessions. These included prolonging probation to 90 working days, introducing temporary workers for up to six months, increasing the workweek from 39 to 40 hours, and reducing the summer vacation.

For several weeks before the old contract expired, garment workers discussed the prospects for making gains in the new agreement. In mid-November copies of *L'Aiguille*, ACTWU'S Montréal newsletter, were distributed in the shops listing the bosses' and

union's demands. Many workers speculated that a strike would once again be necessary to win a decent agreement.

In 1986-87 ACTWU members in Montréal waged a determined strike in which the employers' takeback demands were beaten back. The fight, which shut down production 100 percent in the shops involved, strengthened the confidence of ACTWU members and helped forge unity among the strikers, cutting across language, nationality, and other divisions promoted by the employers.

These experiences set the stage for this year's negotiations. Talk of a strike was widespread at Goldenbrand Clothing, a shop where many of the workers who helped lead the last walkout are employed. The bosses responded to these discussions by intimidating and harassing union members. Workers were warned that all talk of a strike would be met with on-the-spot firings and many were summoned into the office. Union member Simone Berg was given a "permanent layoff" the day before

the contract expired. She has filed a grievance to get her job back.

Despite this harassment, workers remained confident that they were in a strong position to fight. They knew that if the bosses didn't offer a decent contract, the union could strike again — and the bosses knew it too.

The new contract does include some concessions. The probationary period for union workers who change shops was extended and overtime premiums will be paid only after eight hours, instead of any time outside the accepted normal workday. In addition, the gap between higher- and lower-paid members of the union widened, because the wage increases in the new contract are on a percentage basis, instead of across-the-board.

The contract won was acceptable to most workers, however, who feel confident that they are in a position to fight for a better contract next time around.

Beverly Bernardo works at Goldenbrand Clothing and Susan Berman works at Progress Brand. Both are members of ACTWU Local 242.

How phone workers bucked concessions and beat back NYNEX

BY RUSSELL DAVIS

BOSTON — "We won! After a year of mobilization and nearly four months on strike, after endless hours of picket lines and following trucks, after distributing hundreds of thousands of flyers and demonstrating in the streets, we bucked all the anti-labor trends that have driven down workers over the last 10 years."

That's how the CWA-NYNEX Strike Bulletin announced that a tentative agreement in the phone workers' walkout in New York and New England had been reached November 21.

On December 4 some 40,000 telephone strikers in New York State returned to work at NYNEX. The workers, members of the Communications Workers of America, had begun their walkout August 6 along with the New England strikers — 18,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and another 2,000 CWA members.

The central issue in the strike was the company's demand that workers begin to pay part of the costs for their medical insurance, a concession dubbed "cost shifting." Other demands included givebacks in wages, pensions, and use of subcontracting.

The walkout was part of a wave of strikes last summer by 200,000 workers against four of the country's seven regional phone companies. All the strikes — with the exception of the one at NYNEX — ended after the companies backed off on their cost-shifting demands.

During their fight, the phone workers linked up with striking Machinists at Eastern Airlines and United Mine Workers of America members on strike at Pittston Coal Group. One of the issues in the miners' strike is Pittston's attempt to withdraw from the union-regulated health and pension plan and institute an inferior company-run plan.

IBEW and CWA members gave a big boost to the Eastern strike here in Boston. They were present at many joint rallies, and their own picket lines were highly visible. Many phone strikers saw their fight as one for the whole labor movement.

The final settlement was a victory for the CWA and IBEW on their main demands. Workers will continue to receive free health coverage and also gained a 6 percent wage increase over three years with a cost-of-living adjustment and improved pensions.

Walkout's effect on NYNEX

The nearly four-month walkout by telephone operators, technicians, installers, clerical workers, and repairmen severely affected NYNEX's operations.

Leading up to the August walkout the IBEW and CWA organized a series of joint rallies. Union officials urged the membership to prepare for a long strike — "till Christmas if necessary." The CWA built up a \$20 million strike fund, which was completely depleted by the end of the strike. The IBEW had no fund, and strikers did not receive any benefits during the 104 days they were out.

By the end of the strike, the company was reported to have a backlog of 250,000 requests for line installation in New York alone. Because of its automated systems and use of management personnel, the company was able to keep much of its operation going, but repair work and operator-assisted calls were extremely limited. Phone installation nearly ground to a halt.

For the first time the IBEW and CWA also agreed to coordinate their bargaining — which takes place separately — with the company. IBEW Local 2222 in Boston, the largest of the union's locals involved in the strike, worked especially closely with the CWA.

NYNEX resists, battle lines drawn

When NYNEX insisted it would force the unions to accept the medical cuts, battle lines were quickly drawn.

Both unions began to stage mass picketing soon after the strike started. Arrests were made as cops sought to protect scab crews going out on phone trucks. Dozens were arrested in Massachusetts where 12,000 strikers set up picket lines at hundreds of locations across the state.

On August 14 a CWA picket captain, Ed-

ward Horgan, was killed by a scab driving a car across a picket line in Westchester County, New York.

As the company recruited more scab crews, including nonunion contractors, the strikers responded by tracking down scab repair trucks with mobile picket squads. In some towns this led to three or four cops guarding one scab, even if no pickets were in the area.

Rallies and picket lines that drew up to 10,000 strikers and supporters were held. Strikers set up food banks around Boston. Many activities were organized by strikers stepping forward and taking on responsibility. Through these mobilizations strikers gained self-confidence and maintained pressure on the company.

Strikers counter company tactics

These common actions and mobilizations helped keep the strikers united and strengthened their ability to ward off the pressures of a long strike.

The company constantly tried to split the unions, offering different negotiating teams different deals. Some IBEW locals came under pressure to do struck work. A local in western Massachusetts crossed the picket line, and hundreds of strikers mobilized to shut the company back down. Pickets faced 200 state police with dogs during the action.

Strikers then occupied the office of IBEW regional Vice-president John Flynn until he agreed that the local should honor the picket line.

Toward the end of the strike, Flynn himself tried to step in and accept a pact with the company for the IBEW that included cost shifting. On one day's notice, 1,500 members protested by laying siege to the Park Plaza Hotel where negotiations were taking place. Boston-area locals 2222 and 2321 also threatened to disaffiliate with the IBEW and join the CWA. These actions forced the IBEW to order Flynn to stay out of the talks.

'Less hours — more jobs': workers in Britain march to back strike for 35-hour workweek

BY CLIFF WILLIAMS

MANCHESTER, England — "Less hours, more jobs — 35 hours now!" echoed through the streets of Preston in England's northwest as more than 1,000 engineering workers marched in support of strikers at the local British Aerospace (BAe) plant.

The plant has been struck since October 30. It is one of five major factories involving 9,000 workers selected for strike action by leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU or "Confed"). The strikers are demanding reduction of the workweek to 35 hours.

Members of Confed unions at eight other factories are due to vote whether to take strike action after Christmas. Union members at engineering factories not covered by the strikes are supporting the action through a weekly levy. Their contribution totals £800,000 (US\$1.26 million) per week and is used to supplement strike benefits for those taking action.

The Preston demonstration was "one of the finest engineering union demonstrations that has taken place in the last decade," said Confed Secretary Alex Ferry. Delegations brought union banners representing many major plants and union members from around the country participated. The march ended with a rally addressed by strike leaders.

Bert Long, union convenor at BAe Kingston, one of the plants to have recently joined the strike, told marchers that although workers there came out later than others, they have had to pay for it. "Within 24 hours," Long said, "10 of our lads were sitting in the police station, arrested as a result of police and company provocation."

Willie Kidd, union convenor at Rolls Royce, Hillingdon, another struck plant, stressed the importance of collecting the levy and called for a double payment to cover Christmas shutdowns.



Militant/Don Gurewitz

Striking NYNEX workers join rally to support Eastern Airlines strikers at Boston's Logan International Airport in October. During their fight, phone workers linked up with striking Machinists at Eastern and miners at Pittston Coal.

As the strike held solid and the automated system began to break down, NYNEX gave in. On November 12 NYNEX met with CWA President Morton Bahr and reached an agreement preserving the medical coverage and winning gains in wages and pensions over the company's original proposals.

The CWA negotiating committee, however, along with some members of the IBEW, objected to the agreement. This was mainly because it did not include an amnesty for dozens of strikers fired or suspended on

charges of picket line misconduct.

The IBEW bargaining council voted, over the objections of the Boston locals, to bring the pact to the membership for a vote. While voted down by a majority in Boston, the agreement was adopted and IBEW members returned to work November 20.

The CWA stayed out until December 4. Their settlement includes an agreement by the company to review the cases of 142 dismissed or suspended CWA members on a case-by-case basis.

General Secretary of the European Metalworkers Federation, Bert Thierron, also spoke. The fight for the 35-hour week in Britain was being closely followed by all EMF unions — who are themselves pursuing similar demands, he said. The 37-hour week has already been won by metalworkers in Finland and West Germany, Thierron reported, while some workers in France, Austria, and Spain have achieved a 35-hour week. Shift workers at some companies in Norway, France, and the Netherlands have gained a 33.3-hour week.

Reduce unemployment

"Everywhere that weekly working time has been reduced," Thierron stressed, "it has had beneficial effects on employment." He said that the fight for a shorter working week was necessary to ensure that unemployment did not remain at the high levels that all economic forecasters were predicting for the 1990s. "It is our own responsibility and this is our contribution to the fight for employment," he said. "That is why the metalworker unions affiliated to the EMF have decided that their main demand must be the introduction of the 35-hour week." Thierron explained that this would involve unions in Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, the Netherlands, West Germany, France, Portugal, and Greece.

The final speech at the rally was delivered by Confed President Bill Jordan. Jordan is also president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the major Confed union. He said the campaign "will last until every engineering worker in this country is on a 35-hour week." In the week before the demonstration a firm in Scotland had conceded the 35-hour week, he said.

The march took place in the context of recent negotiations between the unions and various individual firms. The talks follow a

deal at NEI-Parsons, a subsidiary of Rolls Royce. The company conceded the 37-hour week by Jan. 1, 1991, phased in two stages, to avoid a strike at their Newcastle plant in the northeast of England. The deal has been described as a breakthrough by union leaders but it involves productivity strings which offset the job-creating character of the shorter working week. As a result, some 45 percent of the Parsons work force voted against the agreement.

Following the NEI-Parsons deal, shop stewards' committees representing strikers at BAe plants have written to union leaders demanding that the union's goal remain at 35 hours. A number of those on strike already had a 37-hour week, the stewards pointed out.

Mike Nesbitt, convenor of the BAe Chester plant, also in the northwest, told the Preston rally that BAe management was attempting to stir up divisions among the work force by playing off one plant against another. They have laid off without pay 150 workers at the BAe Filton plant in Bristol, in the west of the country, and a further 100 at the Chadderton plant in Manchester. Workers at Wharton and Salmesbury sites near Preston were instructed, under threat of instant dismissal, to board buses and cross picket lines at Preston.

Unions representing office and other non-production workers have decided to escalate their involvement in the dispute. Union leaders are currently consulting members at Rolls Royce plants with a view to their taking strike action.

Engineering workers in Britain are production workers in manufacturing industries such as aerospace, automotive, and machine parts.

Cliff Williams is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union in Manchester.

Declaration urges demobilization of FMLN

FMLN leaders denounce agreement of Central America presidents

Five Central American presidents, meeting in San José, Costa Rica, signed an agreement December 12 calling on the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador to "immediately and effectively cease its hostilities" and "publicly renounce all types of violent actions" that may affect the civilian population. It also urged that immediate steps be taken "toward the demobilization" of the FMLN.

The declaration was adopted after two days of discussion by presidents José Azcona of Honduras, Alfredo Cristiani of El Salvador, Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala, and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua.

A statement issued the same day by the five commanders of the FMLN's General Command sharply condemned the Central American presidents' agreement and called upon people internationally "to immediately mobilize in defense of the Salvadoran people."

The FMLN, a bloc of five organizations founded in 1980, has been leading the fight for national and social liberation in El Salvador. In the past decade more than 70,000 Salvadorans have died in the U.S.-backed war. More than 1 million have been driven into refugee camps or exile, and countless others have been tortured, maimed, "disappeared," or jailed.

Support to Salvadoran gov't

Excerpts from the agreement of the five presidents were translated and published by the *New York Times* in its December 13 issue. According to this text, "The presidents of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua expressed their decisive support of Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani and his Government, as a faithful demonstration of their unvarying policy of supporting governments that are the product of democratic, pluralistic, and participatory processes."

The presidents of the five countries, the text continued, "support the Government of El Salvador in its repeated proposal to find a solution to the Salvadoran conflict through peaceful and democratic means, and in that sense, repeat their vehement appeal that the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front immediately and effectively cease its hostilities in that fraternal country and that it join the process of dialogue which has already begun. They energetically demand in addition that the F.M.L.N. publicly renounce all types of actions that may directly or indirectly affect the civilian population. The five presidents decided . . . to ask the Secretary General of the United Nations . . . to take the necessary actions to renew a dialogue between the Government of El Salvador and the F.M.L.N. and thus contribute to its successful development."

The agreement also called on the International Commission of Support and Verification "immediately to begin its actions toward the demobilization of the Farabundo Martí

Liberation Front in agreement with the procedures established in that plan."

'Voluntary' demobilization of contras

The presidents gave their "support to the Nicaraguan Government of President Daniel Ortega in order that, from the date of the signing of this agreement, funds approved for the Nicaraguan Resistance be given to the International Commission for the purpose of carrying out the process of voluntary demobilization, repatriation, or relocation in Nicaragua or third countries of members of the Nicaraguan Resistance and their families."

Despite a cease-fire declared by the Nicaraguan government, U.S.-backed contra mercenaries have continued to wreak destruction in the country. Up to November 1 — more than 19 months after the cease-fire order — the number of Nicaraguan casualties came to 3,370. The contras destroyed 14 factories and 47 towns and kidnapped nearly 1,300 civilians during that period.

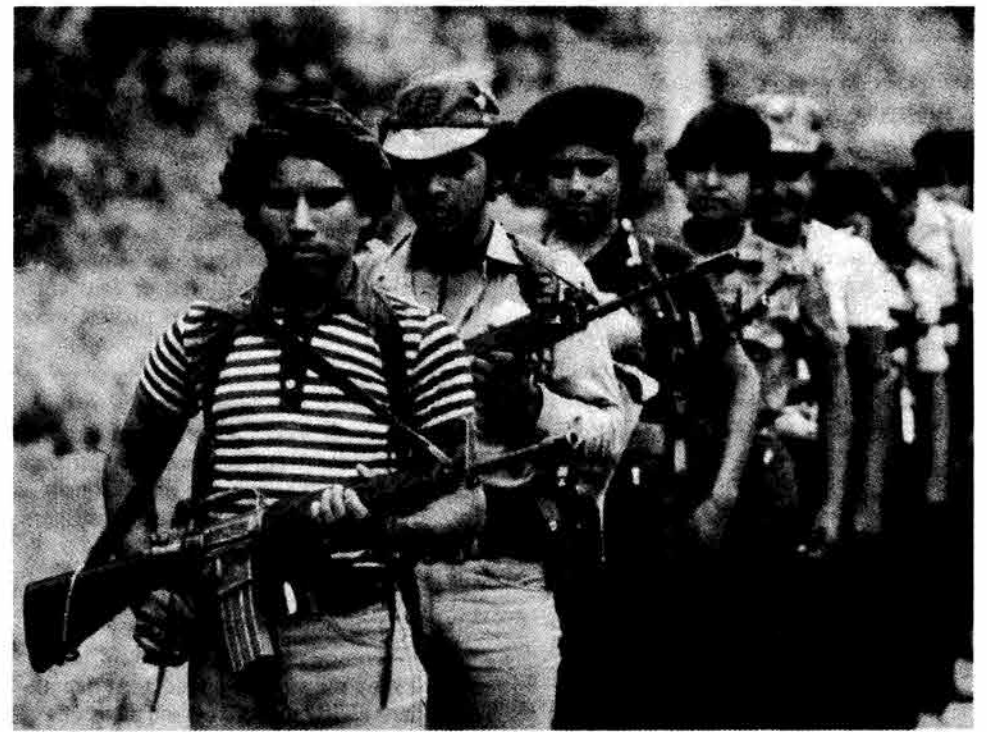
According to the excerpts of the San José agreement, "The presidents called upon the Nicaraguan Resistance to cease all types of action against the electoral process in the civilian population so that that process may develop in a normal climate. . . .

"The Government of Nicaragua reiterates its offer to the Nicaraguan Resistance . . . to make appropriate gestures so that those who repatriate before Feb. 5, 1990, may register to vote in the general elections to be carried out February 25 of the same year."

The presidents also "agreed to request that the Secretary General of the United Nations establish the necessary contacts to involve more directly in the peace efforts those states with interests in the region."

FMLN statement

In responding to the declaration of the five presidents, the FMLN commanders stated, "The results of the Presidents' meeting allow us to measure the depth of the crisis that now exists in El Salvador and the impact of the military offensive that the FMLN is carrying out. All of the efforts of the summit were directed at saving the Salvadoran government from an extreme military and political crisis and international isolation, in exchange



Salvadoran guerrilla fighters. Declaration from Costa Rica conference urges rebels to cease fighting.

for a new promise for the immediate demobilization of the Nicaraguan contras.

"We reject the declaration of the Central American Presidents with indignation," the commanders continued, "because it runs contrary to the trend of the international community and to the outcries of all the democratic and social forces and churches of El Salvador."

"This declaration unconditionally supports the principal violator of human rights of the region: a government which has assassinated and persecuted the religious community and bombed its civilian population."

"This support only encourages those who have unleashed this irrational violence, and permits the slaughter that is now taking place in El Salvador to worsen."

The accord, the FMLN statement continued, "does not contribute to the possibilities for a negotiated settlement in El Salvador. The FMLN cannot be demobilized by virtue of agreements among governments because

the FMLN constitutes a legitimate force, rooted in the population all over the country, which could not be contained during the last 10 years by the enormous United States-supported war machine."

The FMLN commanders expressed "agreement with the proposal for the mediation of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuellar, as privately stated before, in order to initiate serious negotiations with the participation of all of the political and social forces of the country."

The communiqué closed by calling "upon the international community in solidarity with the people of El Salvador to immediately mobilize in defense of the Salvadoran people. They now run the risk of suffering greater extermination since the support extended to the Cristiani government in the declaration of the Central American Presidents has strengthened its fascist policies."

Protests condemn attack on Pathfinder Mural

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Protests against a November 19 *New York Post* editorial called "Off the wall — and that's where it belongs" have prompted a rejoinder from the *New York* daily called "The art wars: Hypocrisy on the left."

The original editorial decried the recently completed Pathfinder Mural as "a bizarre celebration of totalitarianism" and ended with a provocative declaration, "The mural should be removed." In response, many defenders of artistic and political expression signed a petition condemning the *Post* editorial as a "thinly veiled call to vigilante violence" against the artistic landmark.

The mural, two years in the making, involved artists from more than 20 countries. It was painted on the side of the Pathfinder Building in Manhattan and features portraits of prominent revolutionaries, working-class militants, and communist leaders, including Nelson Mandela, Ernesto Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Fidel Castro, Karl Marx, and V.I. Lenin.

On December 8 the *Post* disclaimed any call to deface or destroy the mural. "Our tolerance for violent protest is non-existent. We oppose vigilantism of any sort," the editors wrote. "Only people themselves disposed to behave in this fashion would be capable of reading such a call into the editorial in question. This, of course, is known in psychiatric circles as 'projection.'"

The editorial continued with a polemic against the "cultural left," which, it charged, are the real proponents of censorship and violence. "Needless to say," the editors concluded, "we mean to conduct this debate in the context of democratic politics and the free exchange of ideas. Those who signed the petition in question, professing concern over 'vigilante violence' against works of art, might do well to search their own ranks for the perpetrators of such deeds."

Letters

Since the original editorial appeared, the *Post* has printed one protest message and several letters seconding its attack on the mural. The *New York Daily News*, which parroted the *Post*'s attack with an editorial of its own November 24, has since printed only one letter opposing its attack on the artwork.

On December 11 Pathfinder representatives reported that they received a phoned bomb threat. Coordinators of the Pathfinder Mural Project have called on supporters of freedom of expression and speech to demand that city authorities insure the mural and the

Pathfinder Building are not defaced or vandalized. Protest messages should be sent to Mayor Edward Koch, City Hall, New York, N.Y. 10007.

A protest sent to the *Post*'s editors was signed by actors Ed Asner and John Randolph; David Kunzle, chairperson of the Art History Department at the University of California at Los Angeles and a longtime supporter of the mural; and Rob Okun, director of an art exhibition about the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and their era.

More than 80 participants in the Latin American Studies Association December 4-6 congress, held in Miami, also signed protest petitions. Signers included scholars, academics, and researchers from Britain, Canada, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, South Africa, the United States, and Venezuela. Several of the 15-member delegation from Cuba also signed, including Pablo Armando Hernández, one of Cuba's most well-known poets.

BY MELISSA HEINZ

PHOENIX — "We are 100 percent behind the Pathfinder Mural," Arizona State Rep. Earl Wilcox said at a December 2 press conference here. "I'm very alarmed at what I hear coming from New York. As a Hispanic I feel very strongly that wherever there is repression we must be vigilant." Wilcox was speaking out against the recent *New York Post* and *Daily News* editorials attacking the mural.

The state representative was joined by city councilwoman and vice-mayor of Phoenix, Mary Rose Wilcox; Phoenix Art Museum Library Director Clayton Kirking; and Mark Severs, Pathfinder Mural spokesperson.

Later that day the Wilcoxes hosted a fundraising auction for the mural at their home. The auction featured the donated works of more than a dozen local and national artists. More than 60 workers, artists, gallery owners, and political activists attended.

Salvador artist arrested by regime

BY MERYL LYNN FARBER

Prominent Salvadoran painter Isafas Mata was arrested November 19 by El Salvador's security forces and held by the Treasury Police until December 5. After being charged with having subversive associations and distribution of subversive propaganda, he was transferred to Mariona Prison.

Mata's colleague Imelda Iraheta was also arrested and two other artists, David Hernández and José Domingo Ramírez, have disappeared.

Mata, a professor at the University of El Salvador School of Art, traveled to the United States earlier this year to raise material aid for the art school and to help promote the work of Salvadoran artists.

While in New York, Mata added the portraits of Farabundo Martí and Archbishop Oscar Romero to the Pathfinder Mural.

In San Francisco a broad-based group of artists have formed the Artists Committee to Free Isafas Mata. Linda Lucero, an organizer of the group, reported that the committee, while focusing on Mata, is equally concerned about all the artists being victimized in El Salvador.

Sam Manuel, former director of the Pathfinder Mural Project, telexed a message to Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani on behalf of the supporters of the project.

"We were among the hundreds of people who had an opportunity to meet and work with Isafas while he was on a visit to the United States," the message read. "We urgently demand that your government drop all charges against him, guarantee his physical integrity, release him from custody, and return him safely to family and friends."

The Artists Committee to Free Isafas Mata is urging that similar telexes and telegrams be sent to President Cristiani and to the U.S. embassy in El Salvador.

Large numbers of protest messages, Lucero explained, can help secure freedom for Mata.

Telexes or telegrams should be addressed to President Alfredo Cristiani, telex 20522 Pressal, and to Ambassador William Walker, U.S. Embassy in El Salvador, telex 20648. Letters and messages can also be faxed to the U.S. embassy at 011 503 259-984.

"These three years prove it is possible to trust in man"

Interview with Cuban deputy foreign minister Ricardo Alarcón

The following interview with Cuba's first deputy foreign minister, Ricardo Alarcón, was given to *Militant* reporters Mary-Alice Waters and Jon Hillson in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on November 4. Alarcón was the ranking government and Cuban Communist Party leader among the 40 Cubans who participated in a conference entitled "30 Years of the Cuban Revolution: An Assessment." He was the keynote speaker at the opening session of the conference and participated in a number of panels.

The conference, sponsored by the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, was organized at the initiative of a number of faculty members at several universities in the Halifax area. More than 600 participants, the majority of them associated with universities and research institutes in the United States and Canada, took part in four days of panel discussions, informal debates, cultural events, and other activities. Workshop topics ranged from all aspects of Cuba's economic policies, foreign relations, social issues, and cultural affairs, to the Cuban community in the United States.

The Nov. 17, 1989, issue of the *Militant* carried an evaluation of the conference.

The interview was conducted in Spanish. Translation is by the *Militant*.

* * *

Militant. What is your assessment of the conference that has just ended, its political importance?

Alarcón. This conference was important because of the large participation and the fact that we discussed a wide range of topics.

The authorities in this country contributed to a very satisfactory extent. There were no problems. Facilities were provided; visas given to everybody who asked to participate. The fact that it was held here in Canada made it easier for many people from the United States, from elsewhere in the Americas, for Cubans, to come and take part. That's why this was the largest, by far the largest, conference on Cuba to take place outside of Cuba since the revolution.

Of course, there was a limitation, a contradiction, built into the conference. It was good to have such a wide variety of topics discussed. At the same time, however, it has to be recognized that you cannot really study the international relations of Cuba with Latin America, to take one example, in an hour and a half. Or public health. Or education. You would need a year-long conference, not a three-day one, to cover all the topics that were raised in different panels.

Generally speaking, though, the balance sheet is positive. The organizers managed the best possible solution to this contradiction, and we had a fairly serious discussion of a large number of issues in a short period of time.

Militant. This conference takes place at the moment the U.S. government is preparing to launch TV Martí, a violation of international law and a new act of aggression against Cuba. Isn't the size of this conference, the mere fact it took place here in Halifax on the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution, a repudiation of the hostile policies of the U.S. government?

Alarcón. It is not only TV Martí. This conference takes place as the U.S. government is indicating that it is going to try to promote a tougher policy against Cuba, against Nicaragua, against Panama, and generally speaking, against the countries in the region. The U.S. government pretends to seek improved relations among the developed countries, whether socialist or capitalist, but at the same time it is continuing the same old policy of aggression and intervention against the Third World.

The Bush administration has given very clear indications that it intends to continue the same policy that was implemented by Reagan, and even to create new obstacles to

normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States.

TV Martí was originally an initiative that came from some members of Congress in the United States. But now this administration has done something that goes beyond the acts of its predecessor. In speeches given by the president, the administration has gone on record in favor of TV Martí. During hearings in the House of Representatives in September, State Department officials did the same. In both cases they explained that the launching of this TV station is U.S. policy. It is promoted by the administration. That is something new that even Reagan did not do.

Preconditions added

They have also added new conditions for normalizing relations between Cuba and the United States. They make so-called democratic reforms, so-called liberalization, the introduction of market mechanisms in our economy, and so on, a precondition to normalizing relations with Cuba. This is something completely new in the world.

I want to add one very interesting point: The only important element, shall we say, that was not present here to discuss the topic of 30 years of the Cuban revolution was the United States government. They were invited. As I understand it, word was received at the last moment that several invited guests from the State Department would not be coming. But even some of their clients from Miami came.

I suppose the U.S. government representatives didn't come for a simple reason: What could they have said here? How would they have handled such debates?

Militant. During the conference a number of panels discussed the place of Cuba in the world political context today. One participant expressed the opinion that the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, along with other changes in world politics, means that Cuba will play a less important international role in the future. I think he said that Cuba was in danger of simply becoming "boring."

Alarcón. Well, a sense of history seems to be missing, I'd say.

First of all, we are not withdrawing from Angola as a defeated army, or one that is forced to leave because it committed an act of aggression or some other misdeed. Yesterday I attended a panel where someone mentioned various cases of withdrawing armies that suffered from serious problems.

In the case of the Cuban troops in Angola, they are returning to Cuba after having successfully fulfilled — and more than fulfilled — their objective. Our mission there was to help Angola confront military aggression by South Africa. In August 1988 the last South African soldier was withdrawn from Angola following their defeats at Cuito Cuanavale and Calueque.¹ They had no other option.

But there is something even more. After this, in December of last year, they had to sign an agreement at the United Nations, in the presence of the United Nations secretary general, committing themselves to respect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity not only of Angola, but also of Namibia.

In other words, they had to recognize the sovereignty of the countries of southwestern Africa. And in addition to

Continued on next page



Militant/Sam Manuel

1. For a number of months in late 1987 and early 1988, South African troops repeatedly attempted to capture the town of Cuito Cuanavale in southeastern Angola, seriously threatening Angola's security. The successful defense of the town by Angolan troops, Cuban volunteers, and forces from the South West Africa People's Organisation was the decisive battle leading to South Africa's defeat in the war. Calueque was the site of a devastating Cuban air strike against South African forces on June 27, 1988.

Continued from previous page

this, they committed themselves to helping to put into effect the plan for Namibia's independence, for which elections to a constituent assembly will be held next week.

In other words, as our troops in Angola return to Cuba — a process that will be completed in 1991 — they will be returning not only having helped put an end to South African aggression. They will also have compelled South Africa to sign a treaty, an international agreement, formally committing itself to respect Angola in the future. And they will have helped achieve Namibia's independence, thereby bringing about the departure of all South African forces from Namibia — which South Africa had used as a base of aggression against Angola.

So, it seems obvious to me that our troops have more than fulfilled the objective for which they were sent there.

Few have done what Cuba achieved

Why would Cuban troops remain in Angola? What would be the reason? We are not in the business of exporting troops. Our objective was not to send troops to Africa for the fun of it. The objective was to defend a country that was the victim of aggression, and this objective was attained. And in addition, it helped achieve the independence of another country.

I believe very few countries in the world can say they have done anything similar. The United Nations can't say it. The great powers can't say it. For many years they tried to persuade South Africa, to pressure it. And throughout all that time, Namibia remained a South African colony.

It was not until Cuito Cuanavale that the implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia's independence became possible. It was after Cuito Cuanavale that the South Africans were forced to reconsider, to modify their stance, and to accept this solution.

So these troops are returning to Cuba as victors. From the moment they arrive at the port or the airport, and as they return to their homes throughout the entire country, they receive the homage of our people. And they come to join with the rest of the youth in Cuba who are building socialism. In other words, for us their return is completely beneficial from every point of view.

And to think that this would reduce Cuba's international role, or that Cuba would become a boring country! Well, Cuba is not going to become a boring country because now we're going to have more compañeros to help confront our many problems, compañeros who will work, sacrifice, and struggle inside Cuba.

Secondly, the fact that through their actions our troops helped resolve an additional problem — that of Namibia — will have an impact. Far from diminishing our international role, I would say that this will increase it. It is not accidental that a few days ago Cuba was elected to the United Nations Security Council for the first time since the revolution, and by a very wide margin.

Impact inside South Africa

One must also consider how obtaining guarantees for Angola's independence plus achieving the independence of Namibia will have an impact on the situation inside South Africa. I believe it is not coincidental that these developments are occurring at the same time as South Africa's rulers — leaders of the National Party and the president of South Africa himself — are talking about a new era of attempting to modify this system of apartheid in the manner they would like. This is the first time the apartheid regime has considered it necessary to at least raise the question of reforms and changes, and it is the first time the South African regime has recognized the end of apartheid as a political goal.

This is something that has not been achieved either by the United Nations or by the world's great powers in the course of 40 years. This doesn't seem boring to me. This seems super-interesting!

Militant. Numerous participants in the debates here echoed the theme being propagandized throughout the capitalist world that today we are witnessing the demise of socialism, that communism has now been relegated to the dustbin of history. In your remarks to the plenary session yesterday morning you said that those who want to sign the death certificate are a little premature.

Alarcón. Let us even assume the hypothesis put forward by certain Western thinkers or commentators, that some socialist countries will return to capitalism. I would like to repeat what I said yesterday: Even if this were true, what would then happen? What would happen is that these countries would return to a system that would inevitably give rise to socialism.

In other words, capitalism begets socialism — not the other way around. If somewhere socialism were to lead to capitalism, that would be a historical aberration due to errors or other factors. But what would inevitably occur would be that out of capitalism would come socialism.

True, this might occur over a more or less protracted



Namibian youth celebrate in Windhoek after November elections for constituent assembly. Cuban troops "have helped achieve Namibia's independence," explained Alarcón.

SOCIAL INDICATORS IN LATIN AMERICA, MID-1980s

	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Infant mortality	Illiteracy rate (percent)	Urban unemployment (percent)
Argentina	70	35	6.1	6.1
Brazil	63	71	25.5	5.3
Chile	71	24	8.9	17.2
Costa Rica	73	20	6.4	6.6
Dominican Rep.	63	63	27.0	20.3
El Salvador	64	70	38.0	30.0
Haiti	54	107	77.0	40.0
Jamaica	70	28	12.0	25.9
Mexico	59	82	17.4	11.8
Nicaragua	58	84	12.9	16.3
Peru	59	82	17.4	11.8
Uruguay	70	38	6.1 ¹	13.1
Venezuela	69	39	15.3	14.3
Cuba	74	13	3.9	3.4 ²

¹1975 figure. ²Urban and rural unemployment.

Infant mortality is the number dead before one year of age out of each 1,000 born. The illiteracy rate is for those above 15 years of age. Source: Multinational Monitor, April 1989.

period of time, and in the short run one might not feel very optimistic. But let us even take this case, the most extreme one, in which capitalism is restored. As Fidel said on July 26, it might even be better for some people in Hungary and Poland to see what capitalism really is, to live it, to experience it.² If this were to happen, what would then occur would be that out of the working class of these countries, a genuinely socialist movement would be reborn.

We believe in socialism. We have not the slightest doubt about it. To imagine that a crisis within socialism would lead to the end of this aspiration of humanity is absurd.

That's one side of the question. The other side is that some people talk about these problems in Eastern Europe as if there were no problems in the rest of the world. As if

2. Fidel Castro is president of Cuba's Council of State and Council of Ministers, commander in chief of its armed forces, and first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba. His speech of July 26, 1989, was printed in the Sept. 1, 1989, issue of the *Militant*.

they could once again organize a Berlin conference and calmly divide up the world.³ That is not the way things are.

No détente for Third World

In terms of East-West relations, there are certain indications of improvement and reconciliation. But North-South relations are a completely different story! The contradictions between the underdeveloped countries and the imperialist countries are sharpening.

In addition, within the imperialist countries a danger has arisen, which can be clearly seen in a certain euphoria inside the U.S. administration. The danger is that they may be attracted to the idea of improving their relations with the socialist countries while increasing their exploitation of and aggressiveness toward the underdeveloped countries. This will inevitably lead to a sharpening of both the contradictions and the peoples' struggle. There will be more revolutions and more rebellions in the underdeveloped countries. In fact, there is no way these can be avoided.

Yet this danger is absent from all the analyses being made.

There is another question I posed at the plenary session. Let us suppose that further steps are made toward détente, disarmament, and demilitarization in East-West relations. What would be the political and economic consequences of this for United States capitalism? What would happen in the United States?

The United States has a militarized economy in which the cold war, or the policy of aggression, has played a fundamental role. This has been used to justify multi-billion-dollar defense budgets, drawn from resources that should have gone to the people, for social services and other basic needs. All this because of a supposed confrontation with the Soviet Union, with the socialist world. If this confrontation were to disappear, if agreements were to be reached leading to détente, and so on, what would happen to the U.S. economy? What would happen to U.S. society? How would this be reflected?

Capitalism in crisis

It is absurd for the U.S. rulers to see only their adversary in crisis. That is not accurate.

Capitalism is in crisis. It is a bankrupt system that is bound to disappear, even though some socialist countries have their own crises. That is another problem that was not foreseen. But this does not change the reality that capitalism is condemned — both present-day capitalism and any capitalism that might arise in other parts of the world. It is condemned to disappear.

There is one thing I would like to stress. Let us assume that the worst were to come to pass, and some socialist countries were to wind up at this extreme point. In that case there will be people who will remember the advantages they had under the previous system, with all its defects. They will continue to think that public health should not exist to make a doctor or a hospital company rich, that education should be free of cost, and so on.

Simply put, one must have a bit of patience. We are not distressed, because we are convinced that the manner in which we are building socialism is the correct one, and is therefore certain. So despite the tremendous complexity and the tremendous difficulties confronting today's world — and that we ourselves confront — we are not worried. We are convinced that we can obtain the results we desire, that we can emerge victorious.

Militant. For the last decade or more, and especially, since the 1981-82 recession, working people in the capitalist world have experienced a growing economic and social crisis. In several imperialist countries there are important signs of political resistance, of new working-class struggles. Meanwhile, conditions throughout Latin America and Africa are already catastrophic. Isn't this part of the world picture you are describing?

Alarcón. Well, let's look at this. Is capitalism free of problems? What would happen if the United States were to genuinely apply perestroika or glasnost? Can it truthfully be said that the people of the United States have access to the big mass media? Can you circulate and distribute publications in the same way as the big newspaper chains? Do you have as much control over the media as they do?

Real democracy in the U.S.?

Are you able to participate in elections on equal footing with the single party that exists in the United States, the Democratic-Republican party? You know the answer! You have to be a millionaire to afford what it costs for a single television advertisement, to afford everything involved in this big capitalist operation known as a U.S. election. Are those who sing the praises of glasnost and perestroika really about to genuinely apply the concepts of democracy and openness in the United States?

3. In 1878, a meeting of European powers was held in Berlin to reassign among themselves the control of different parts of Europe. Six years later at the Conference of Berlin the colonial powers divided up Africa among themselves.

Are they going to encourage small individual ownership or small cooperative undertakings? Is that the tendency of modern capitalism? Or is the opposite true? Go ask a farmer in Iowa or any other state in the Midwest!

What about the question of minorities? This is a problem the Soviets are facing right now; they are a country with many nationalities. And what about the United States? What about the Indians, the Blacks, the Puerto Ricans, the Latinos — and even the very Cubans who have come to this conference? They feel this discrimination, even in the question of language. You can see something at this conference. All the Cubans here who could speak Spanish did so proudly; 30 years have not changed this.

with countries more or less similar to our own; compare it with our region as a whole. Every year the Economic Commission on Latin America publishes reports.⁴ Their studies show that per capita production throughout the region — excluding Cuba — is lower today than it was at the beginning of the decade. In many countries the decline has been drastic. But Cuba's per capita production has grown substantially in that same time period, even if the rate has been very modest in the last two years.

Cuba's rectification process

There is another factor that must be taken into account and analyzed, although some of those who spoke today

return to the conceptions held and explained by Che in the 1960s.⁵

Convincing people of this is a big political challenge. It is a challenge to develop — and deepen — a political commitment toward hard work. This is a challenge that seems impossible to many people.

But we have had concrete results that show that the people can be mobilized through mechanisms other than capitalist ones.

There is one example that Fidel likes to point to. In the famous five-year plan projected for the second half of the 1980s, it was proposed to build two day-care centers during the entire five-year period. In Havana alone we built 54 of them in one year, in 1988, through voluntary work brigades. And we built 111 in two years. This cannot be the product of any individual's imagination; this cannot be the product of a totalitarian regime. This can only be achieved by the masses!⁶

Construction contingents

Then there are the contingents.

On my flight up here there was a Canadian engineer on the plane with me. This individual was the one who designed and directed the construction of the international airport at Varadero, the best airport we have built in Cuba, constructed with Canada's collaboration. To me the airport seemed very nice for a small city in the interior, built more or less up to the standards of an international airport. However, we did not know how it was built, whether it was completed in the appropriate amount of time, and so forth. So we asked the engineer.

He told us that in his opinion the quality of the work was very good. Moreover, in terms of the amount of time it took, it was a world record! And this was from a man who was not a socialist; he was a Canadian professional who works with capitalist companies to build airports. He told me that it wasn't just good, or very good, but that it was one of the best. He said he could guarantee it was a world record. No other airport has been built as rapidly and with these

Continued on next page



Militant

Volunteer work brigade in Havana, where these brigades built 54 day-care centers in 1988 alone. "This can only be achieved by the masses!" said Alarcón.

Capitalist societies are far from being able to sit back comfortably on the couch and watch socialism die.

Militant. Throughout the conference there has been a great deal of discussion about the rectification process that was initiated in Cuba more than three years ago. Most analysts from the United States and Canada were highly critical of Cuba for rejecting market-oriented policies similar to perestroika. One participant even blamed Cuba's economic problems today on what he considered to be the errors of the rectification process. Did the discussion at the conference clarify any of the misconceptions about rectification?

Alarcón. I hope so. But these discussions are not conducted in a purely theoretical framework; they take place in the context of reality. It would not be fair to measure the efficiency of an economic project simply by the methods and mechanisms applied. Because such a project is undertaken in the context of an existing reality, a concrete starting point, which unfortunately cannot be entirely modified.

What Cuba faces

For example, the price of sugar, the price of a country's export products, the price of imports. These last three years in Cuba coincide with the worst conditions we have ever faced in terms of hard currency earnings from exports and the cost of imports. There has been a greater aggressiveness by the United States; a serious effort has been made to tighten the screws on every aspect of the blockade. Cuba has had to reduce by half the imports we pay for in hard currency. Despite many fewer resources, however, we can show by concrete facts that in certain fields of the economy there have been very satisfactory results.

Most importantly, there has been in general a more revolutionary spirit on the part of the masses, and first of all the workers. For us this is confirmation that, despite external conditions that are less favorable than ever before, it is possible to obtain much greater results through the use of our methods.

At the same time, production in certain sectors of the Cuban economy has declined. This is inevitable. If you reduce imports of necessary items, if you have to rationalize and prioritize how you're going to use resources, then inevitably some projects will have to be postponed, delayed, or suspended.

I want to emphasize one point. The Cuban economy is the only one in Latin America that has grown continuously over the course of 30 years. In recent years the growth has been very modest, but it continues to grow nonetheless. Even over this last year the economy continued to grow modestly.

That is not the case with other Latin American countries. Don't compare Cuba with the Federal Republic of Germany or with Japan. That would not be fair. Compare it

hold a different position. In the past, during the 1970s, we in Cuba committed many errors, precisely as a result of applying market mechanisms, applying conceptions that were bringing us closer to capitalism. To a significant extent, we were abandoning our conception of socialism.

Rectifying these errors, in many cases, adversely affects the material interests of some people. It eliminates certain privileges and various things that were irrational and improper and should not have existed. For a number of years people had grown accustomed to individual material incentives, fostering individual selfishness, individual competition, competition among enterprises — all the things that characterize capitalism.

We must now explain that this was not the correct road, that we must return to a perspective of building socialism,

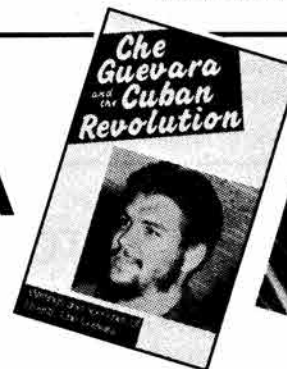
4. The Economic Commission for Latin America is an agency of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

5. Ernesto Che Guevara, an Argentine by birth, was a central leader of the Cuban revolution in its early years. He held a number of important government positions, including head of the National Bank and minister of industry. In 1965 he resigned his government posts and left Cuba. He went first to the Congo and later Bolivia to help lead the national liberation forces. He was captured and murdered by the Bolivian army in 1967.

6. Since 1986 two types of voluntary work brigades have been organized in Cuba, minibrigades and contingents. These two forms of voluntary work have been at the center of the rectification process. The minibrigades are comprised of workers who volunteer to be relieved of their normal job responsibilities for a period of time to build housing, schools, day-care centers, and other social projects. There are also neighborhood minibrigades comprised of volunteers from the area. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans join the work of the minibrigades when they get home from their regular jobs or school and on weekends.

The contingents are a more complex form of voluntary work brigades. They are larger in size and involve the long-term transformation and reorganization of the work force in parts of basic industry. More than 60 contingents have already been organized, until recently all in the field of construction. On November 7 the first industrial contingent was inaugurated. It was in a construction materials factory.

by and about CHE GUEVARA from Pathfinder



CHE GUEVARA AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Key to understanding today's rectification process in Cuba. The most complete English-language selection of Guevara's works, including articles and speeches on the Cuban revolutionary war, Cuba's efforts to overcome economic backwardness in the face of U.S. attacks, the task of developing a new social consciousness in a society on the road to socialism, and Cuba's commitment to freedom struggles throughout the world. 413 pp., \$13.95.

CHE GUEVARA: ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM by Carlos Tablada

A comprehensive look at the theoretical contributions to building socialism by Che Guevara from 1959 to 1966, when he shouldered wide-ranging duties in the Cuban revolutionary government, with extensive citations from his writings and speeches. Among the questions discussed are: Is "profit" a useful yardstick? What is the role of the market? Of economic planning? Of material incentives and voluntary work? English, \$11.95. Spanish, \$7.95.



SOCIALISM AND MAN IN CUBA by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro

Includes Guevara's 1965 article and Fidel Castro's 1987 speech marking the 20th anniversary of Che's death and the centrality of his ideas to Cuba's current rectification process. English or Spanish, \$1.95. French, \$2.50. Also available in Swedish and Farsi. Castro speech also available in Icelandic.

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standards of quality.

And who built it? A contingent of Cuban workers. Not because they were paid more money or because they were offered more products on a supposed free market. They did it because they were mobilized on the basis of their consciousness, by the idea of building socialism. That was the only way it was possible.

At the same time, houses are being built, highways are being built, new industrial installations are being built. There's a whole pork production complex, one of the biggest such installations anywhere in the world, which was inaugurated in Camagüey a short time ago.

One can see here a revitalization of efficiency, of quality, of the spirit of the workers. This spirit is not forced on the workers by anybody; it is not invented by anybody. The workers are motivated by their understanding and their consciousness. And they have a party that tells them the truth.

Socialism and human solidarity

In this regard, we fell into an error. We copied mechanisms that were not suitable.

Socialism can exist only as a society based upon solidarity. That is the essence of socialism. The essence of capitalism is competition, the struggle of man against man. Socialism is solidarity among human beings, among communities, among peoples, and among nations. To abandon this is to abandon the ideal of socialism.

Either one believes in humanity or one does not. If one believes that a human being is simply an animal who acts only out of fear, or in competition with others for personal gain, then you're not a socialist. That is precisely how capitalism works. If you believe in mankind, then you will show it by appealing to humanity's sense of solidarity, its consciousness, and its ideas. Then we will see whether it's possible to advance in this way or not.

In our case, we do not attempt to dictate to anyone the road they should follow. As for ourselves, however, we have not the slightest doubt that this is the way forward.

Militant. In your opening remarks to the conference here you said that the verb "to copy" cannot be conjugated in connection with building socialism. That is a striking way of underlining one of the basic strengths of the Cuban revolution. In what sense is Cuba breaking new ground in the construction of socialism today?

Alarcón. If the Cuban revolution has had an essential characteristic from the beginning, it has been its authenticity. We copied certain things, of course, but there are others that we did not copy from anyone.

The first thing we did not copy was the struggle against Batista.⁷ The methods and tactics we used were taken completely from our own reality and history. What Fidel did was to retake not only the spirit but also the experiences and the techniques used by Céspedes and Martí during their times.⁸ Following their example, he organized a political party with a political-military vanguard, and conducted a war that began with the vanguard and extended into a war

of the people against the enemy — in this case Batista and imperialism.

Then there was the agrarian reform that began in 1959. We applied a model that was suited to our reality, not copied from the experiences of others.

We gave private ownership to the peasant who worked the land in a semifeudal way as a squatter. Before the revolution, this peasant worked land that did not belong to him, and he had to pay the owner in kind or in money for the right to cultivate it. This man aspired to become owner of the land he worked, in line with the classic principle of land to those who till it.

But we did something different with the big sugar plantations and the large cattle ranches, which operated either as capitalist or semifeudal enterprises. From the beginning, these were turned into state farms or cooperatives. In other words, from the beginning we promoted the idea of cooperation.

The Cuban countryside had a considerable amount of agro-industrial development. Our principal economic resource was and continues to be sugar produced from sugarcane. We do not export sugarcane, we export sugar — and now sugar derivatives as well. And the industries were in the countryside. What this meant was that the masses of those who worked in this agro-industry were not really peasants. They were wage workers, including some who lived in the city and would come to cut cane during the sugar harvests.

We did not copy the experiences of countries that divided up these landholdings and gave a piece of it to each person who worked on it. We organized these holdings collectively into collective farms, state farms, even before Cuba declared itself a socialist country.

Take the sphere of culture as another example. In Cuba the state has never dictated policy to artists and intellectuals. In Cuba there was never socialist realism or any other invention of this type.⁹ Cuban painting continues to be basically nonfigurative. From the beginning we have not copied anyone in this field. Therefore, we are not now confronting the problems others face.

Even during the period when undue emphasis on economic levers and material incentives was bringing us closer to capitalism, ours was not a model traced from other realities. Because while this was happening other things were moving us in the completely opposite direction.

Internationalist volunteers

During this same period 300,000 Cubans went to Angola to fight imperialism. They did not do so because they received overtime pay or bonuses. They did it out of revolutionary consciousness.

In addition, tens of thousands of volunteers went to other countries to work as doctors, teachers, and construction workers. There was a contradiction in Cuba between the existing social and political reality and the introduction of alien ideas and concepts in the field of economic management.

What is now occurring in the process of rectification is that the social and political reality is asserting itself and

9. Socialist realism was the official cultural policy imposed on all artistic expression in the Soviet Union by the bureaucratic caste that consolidated its power under Joseph Stalin. Nonrepresentational art was stigmatized as decadent and bourgeois, and artists who did not adhere to official policy were victimized in one way or another by state-controlled cultural organizations. This was true even of those "socialist realist" artists whose work could be construed as in some way critical of or mocking toward the Stalinist overlords.

emerging victorious over these errors in the field of economic management. These errors stemmed from technocratic and bureaucratic concepts, from importing and imitating ideas, and sometimes from applying things badly and copying things badly.

I think it is now fair to say that the most important factor in all this has been the personal effort of Compañero Fidel. I say this without exaggeration and without falling into a personality cult. Fidel has devoted an enormous amount of time to organizing the contingents, to revitalizing the minibrigade movement, to voluntary work, and so forth. He has helped instill a new spirit in all this and has generated a great mass movement in the country.

There is one aspect of this process that is worth pointing to: At the same time as we are stressing moral factors over material ones, we are also insisting on what we call paying attention to man.

The other system, the methods we were applying, was also bringing us closer to capitalism in another way. Letting the economy function on its own, without leadership, and thinking that the development of the economy alone would solve problems, reflected a conception that appears in some old Marxist textbooks: namely, that the development of the material and productive forces would create things, solve things, automatically. That is absolutely false!

Consciousness and collective effort

We think the reverse is true, that what is important is the development of consciousness — without of course ignoring the material realities and problems people face. But rather than trying to solve these problems individually — and in the process inducing individual selfishness — what we are trying to do now is solve them through the contingents.

The contingent is a group of workers who work on the basis of communist concepts of work, motivated by their political consciousness. The contingents take on tasks that are genuinely necessary and not cooked up by some bureaucrat, not corresponding to some abstract plan. The tasks are real and necessary ones — such as hospitals and roads and airports — and they need to be completed rapidly.

At the same time, the contingents are provided everything necessary so that they have proper working and living conditions, so that each worker receives proper attention. For example, in terms of medical care, doctors assigned to the contingent examine every member and check on their state of health, to see whether there are any health problems. This type of thing does not happen in capitalist-owned factories, nor in factories where management is based on market mechanisms.

Adequate living conditions for the contingents are created, since the jobs they do are generally outside the cities and they have to live there at the site. The same is true of food. Farms and agricultural production units have been created to supply the contingents with food for an adequate diet.

In other words, the goal is to collectively create an environment that encourages and matches the physical effort the workers are exerting as a collective unit. In this sense, the concept of giving attention to man is reflected in the organization of the contingents.

This concept is reflected in a more general sense too, when despite the country's difficult economic situation we build more child-care centers, hospitals, schools, and homes than are projected in the plan. In this way we are also fighting to improve the living conditions of working men and working women, and giving attention to their children. In short, we are addressing all the concerns that are part of the real life of the people.

Voluntary work

It seems obvious that this is one of the important aspects of the revitalization of voluntary work as Che conceived of it. No one can be compelled or forced to do voluntary work, that would be a contradiction in terms. Voluntary work is voluntary. You go if you want to; if not, you don't. There are no goals, quotas, or obligations that must be fulfilled. But throughout the country thousands and thousands and thousands do go. Because no one else is going to build these projects. They are not being built in Cuba through a divine miracle. They are being built by ourselves, working voluntarily.

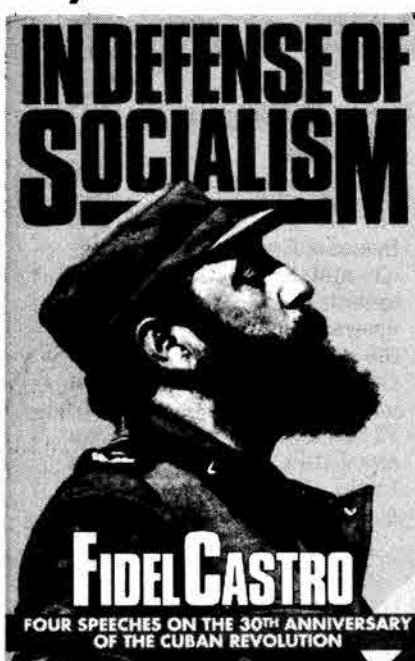
There are other things that the Cuban revolution has not copied from anywhere, but I won't venture to select more. Perhaps the most important thing is that the masses in Cuba have been capable of carrying out the rectification process. This is not a rectification that comes from up above, decided on by the central leadership. It has been carried out with the masses and by the masses!

This is occurring at the least propitious time from the standpoint of the objective reality abroad. In addition, we have all the propaganda, all the attempts to sell us on the supposed benefits that would come from a different conception of socialism.

Despite all this, the masses in Cuba have brought about change. This process of rectification is genuinely a process of the great mass of the people.

It has been only three years, but in our opinion these three years prove the validity of the idea that it is possible to trust in man.

by FIDEL CASTRO from Pathfinder



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Cuban delegation to Miami conference has big impact

BY JON HILLSON

MIAMI — The participation of 15 Cuban scholars and researchers in the 15th congress of the Latin American Studies Association, held here December 4-6, further challenged the image of Miami as a city united in hostility to normalized relations between Washington and Havana and struck an important new blow to U.S. efforts to maintain a quarantine of the Cuban revolution.

For the first time since the U.S. trade, economic, and travel blockade was erected around the island in 1961, a sizable delegation of professors and researchers came to Miami from Cuba. Through the substantial media coverage their participation received, the Cuban delegates to the LASA conference addressed the people of the greater Miami area — including the 40 percent who are of Cuban origin.

The LASA conference attracted more than 1,500 academics, researchers, and authors specializing in Latin American studies. They came from the United States and Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Originally scheduled for September in Puerto Rico, the conference was postponed until December and moved to Miami because of Hurricane Hugo.

The LASA congress followed on the heels of the conference on "30 Years of the Cuban Revolution," held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, November 1-4. That gathering — which drew 600 participants, including a delegation of 40 from Cuba — also received significant media coverage in Miami.

Ultraright Cuban émigrés held picket lines on the first morning of the LASA meeting. "LASA — if you don't condemn Castro, you favor drugs," read a placard carried by one of about 40 demonstrators, most of whom were middle-aged or older.

Inside the conference, several Cuban and Nicaraguan exile figures, led by Ricardo Bofill, held a lengthy news conference to denounce the Cuban revolution before an audience composed largely of representatives

of the Spanish-language media from the Miami area.

Some of these reporters are also right-wing political activists, employed by the U.S. government-sponsored Radio Martí, which broadcasts into Cuba; Miami's Radio Mambí; WQBA La Cubanísima, an ultra-rightist radio outlet; and various reactionary exile publications.

After listening to the harangues for more than half an hour, two members of the Cuban delegation attending the news conference got up to leave. They were followed closely by a bevy of reporters, who cornered the pair in a hotel hallway and shouted questions at them.

The Cubans — Carlos Alzugaray, vice-president of the Cuban Institute of Foreign Relations, and Julio Carranza, vice-president of the Center for the Study of the Americas (CEA) — fielded the heated questions. "Carranza! Carranza!" one reporter shouted. "Can you guarantee I can go to Cuba and talk with anybody I like, say what I want, and come back here without going through the Castro brothers?"

'For more dialogue'

"You have to ask the United States government if you can come to Cuba," Carranza replied quietly. "But we are for more discussion, more dialogue, more communication."

This scene was repeated almost continually over the next two days. Many excerpts of these often volatile exchanges were broadcast on Miami television and radio.

"Word spread throughout the [Cuban] community that the Cuban scholars were accessible and willing to answer questions," reported the *Miami Herald*, the city's major daily. This attracted some working people, including members of the ATC (Alliance of Workers of the Community), and area college students to the conference.

In one encounter, Cuban researcher Gerardo Timossi was rebuked by Ofelia Tabares Fernández, a right-wing opponent of the Cuban revolution, who catalogued supposed abuses by the communist government. "I'm 28 years old," Timossi replied, noting much of what Fernández charged "happened before I was born. The way you talk about Cuba is like a horror movie, like something on another planet. Let's put aside taboos and images. I talk to you of the future and you talk to me about the past." CEA researcher Gerardo González Núñez also took part in the debates.

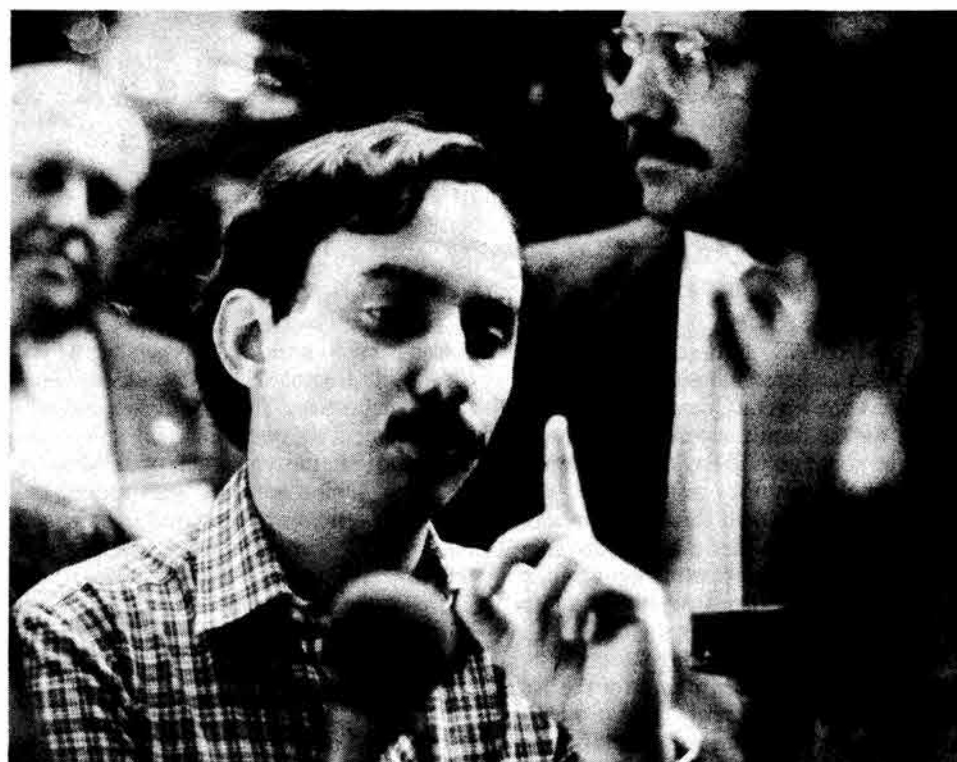
An effort to get LASA to adopt a denunciation of Cuba's supposed "human rights violations" put forward by the rightists failed. The émigrés' proposal, noted *El Nuevo Herald*, the city's major Spanish-language daily newspaper, "achieved only the applause of themselves and no reaction from the LASA session."

Instead, University of Alberta, Canada, professor Fred Judson won a round of applause when he welcomed the Cuban delegation and expressed "our pleasure that their visas were not blocked, and that we can finally see a Cuban delegation in the United States."

The presence of the Cuban delegation and its impact proves that "fruit is being born" after years of "slanders and bombings," said María Cristina Herrera, executive director of the Institute for Cuban Studies at Miami-Dade College. "I knew this was possible, and this proves there is hope for dialogue, communication and healing."

The Miami Cuban community, is "very heterogeneous," the CEA's Carranza noted. "The majority wants good relations with Cuba. The minority is much more inflexible and reactionary. There is space here to carry out work." It will, he stressed, be important to convey this in Cuba, where many people believe that the Miami Cuban community is a "monolith" of backwardness.

The display of literature from Pathfinder Press, which featured many titles on the Cuban revolution, attracted considerable attention at the LASA conference, including its display promoting subscriptions to *Granma Weekly Review*, Cuba's international news-paper.



Militant/Jon Hillson

Gerardo González, researcher from the Center for the Study of the Americas, and other Cuban delegates fielded questions from opponents of Cuban revolution who came to conference.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

GREG McCARTAN

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Pathfinder bookstores are located in 44 cities in seven countries. The addresses of the bookstores are listed on page 16.

The Fabián Rodríguez Bookstore in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, has 20 Pathfinder books and pamphlets on display. "We've already sold out of four of the pamphlets in Spanish and *Habla Nelson Mandela*, [Nelson Mandela speaks]," said bookstore manager Greta Morales.

Militant reporter Susan Apstein spoke with Morales recently about sales at the store, which is part of a chain of 13 operated by Imelsa, the national book importer and distributor in Nicaragua.

Six outlets in Managua and stores in León, Estelí, Granada, Masaya, and other major towns began carrying Pathfinder titles in June. Some Imelsa bookstores also carry the *Militant's* Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The four Spanish-language pamphlets sold out at the Matagalpa store were: *The Grenada Revolution* by Maurice Bishop, *Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution* by Tomás Borge, *Report from Vietnam and Kampuchea*, and *Abortion Is a Woman's Right*. In addition, Morales said, all but one copy of *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* were sold. From June through August the Matagalpa store sold a total of 72 Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

"Two books published only in English that people always ask for in Spanish are *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, and *Thomas Sankara Speaks*," Morales explained.

"*Cuba for Beginners*, too. 'Haven't you got these in Spanish?' they ask us." Those who buy the Pathfinder titles are mostly young Nicaraguans and visitors from other countries.

Pathfinder's best-sellers from June through August at the 13 Imelsa stores were two English-language titles, *Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution*, and *Cuba for Beginners*. Those were followed closely by *Habla Nelson Mandela* and Ernesto Che Guevara's *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, in Spanish.

A new brochure that promotes the Farsi-language book *Socialism and Man in Cuba* is now available. In addition to the Marxist classic by that name by Guevara, the 80-page book also includes a speech by Cuban President Fidel Cas-

tro given in 1987 to mark the 20th anniversary of Guevara's death. Farsi is the official language of Iran.

The front cover of the new brochure features descriptions in English of the six issues of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory.

The brochure also highlights other Pathfinder titles on the history of the communist movement, working-class struggles in the United States, the fight for women's liberation, and speeches by communist and other working-class leaders.

The section of the brochure in Farsi describes the contents of the book and advertises the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Lutte ouvrière*. The addresses of Pathfinder distributors around the world are also listed.

Pathfinder supporters will find the brochure helpful in reaching Farsi speakers with information about the range of titles the publisher carries.

Bob Schwarz from the Pathfinder editorial staff reports initial success in distributing the Farsi-language book. Three stores in Southern California — including one that specializes in Farsi-language literature — ordered 15. Two university bookstores also placed orders.

On November 18 a standing-room-only crowd of 50 people attended the grand opening of the new Pathfinder bookstore in Vancouver, which is on Canada's west coast.

Students, unionists, and activists in solidarity with struggles in Central America and Ireland turned out to celebrate the expansion of Pathfinder's outlets in Canada. Several striking Boeing workers came from the United States.

A number of immigrants from El Salvador also came to the meeting and "really welcomed the store to the city," reported Colleen Levis, who helped organize the event.

A recently produced video about the Pathfinder Mural was shown and Elizabeth Stone, editor of *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, spoke.

The meeting marked the opening of the third Pathfinder bookstore in Canada, Michel Prairie pointed out. Prairie is the editor of the new French-language Pathfinder pamphlet *Le socialisme et l'homme à Cuba* (Socialism and man in Cuba).

The following week a similar meeting was held in Montréal to celebrate the opening of the Pathfinder bookstore there at its new location. A third Pathfinder bookstore is located in Toronto.

Participants in the Vancouver grand opening pledged \$1,400 toward an \$8,500 bookstore expansion fund. An additional \$3,000 was contributed or pledged at the Montréal event.

ABC network sues for right to televise games from Cuba

Capital Cities/ABC Inc. filed suit December 4 charging the U.S. government with violating its First Amendment rights by not allowing its television network to broadcast the 1991 Pan American Games from Havana, Cuba.

ABC had agreed in April to pay the Pan American Sports Organization \$8.7 million for the live broadcast rights, about \$6.5 million of which would go to Cuba, the country hosting the midsummer event.

The U.S. Treasury Department denied permission to televise the games under 1963 embargo laws prohibiting most business transactions with Cuba.

The Treasury Department said the only way the ABC request could be approved is if the money to be paid to Cuba were put in a "blocked account." The money would be available to Cuba only if its diplomatic relations with Washington improved. This recommendation, the network argued, "amounted in effect to a flat refusal."

Violation of the embargo law is a felony punishable by imprisonment of up to 10 years and a fine of up to \$50,000.

According to press reports, CTV, Canada's biggest commercial television network, may sign a deal with the Cuban government to televise the games and then sell coverage to ABC, bypassing the embargo.

The games, described in the lawsuit as "second in prestige and importance only to the Olympics," are an athletic competition among sports teams from 37 countries from the Americas. In 1987, they were held in Indianapolis.

More than 500 athletes, coaches, trainers, and officials from the United States are likely to participate in the games.

Nicaraguan farm workers resist cotton growers' attacks on union

BY LARRY SEIGLE

LAS MARÍAS, Nicaragua — Fifteen workers had gathered in a shed at the cotton plantation known as La Queserita. They were waiting for the farm's superintendent to arrive, as he does every 15 days, with their pay.

In normal times they would have been anticipating getting their cash wage, meager as it is. But on this day the workers were looking forward to confronting the administrator with their demands for higher wages and an end to arbitrary firings.

In fact, they were planning to refuse the wages, as they had been doing for the last month and a half, as part of a protest campaign aimed at pressuring the farm's owners to agree to negotiate with the union. La Queserita is owned by members of the Gurdían family, one of Nicaragua's wealthiest.

As the workers waited for the superintendent to show up, they rehearsed what they were going to tell him and talked with a

that in March and April 1989, just after the cotton harvest, some 300 workers were fired illegally in Region II, which includes Nicaragua's cotton belt. The ATC denounced capitalist farmers who were violating union contracts and ignoring regulations of the Ministry of Labor. Union activists were sacked because the employers preferred to run their businesses "without the presence of the unions," ATC leaders said.

Down the road from La Queserita is another cotton plantation called El Olocotón. María Luisa Silva, the organizational secretary of the ATC in this zone — known as Las Marías — works there.

Silva and other ATC activists at her farm had decided to organize protests against the firing of union militants at La Queserita. "We made placards and painted slogans repudiating the firings," she recalled. Some of the slogans were still visible on the water tank and farm buildings at El Olocotón.

The superintendent came out and told them

In many cases, the workers can't afford to wait around, so they move on to look for other jobs, often leaving the area. The union sometimes provides some financial support for workers whose cases it is fighting.

Years of falling production

The workers at La Queserita and other cotton plantations have been among the hardest hit sections of the ATC in recent years. The offensive against the union has come on the heels of years of falling cotton production.

During the 1950s and '60s, the area around Las Marías was part of a massive cotton boom that transformed the face of the flatlands along Nicaragua's Pacific Coast.

New technology and growing world demand quickly made cotton one of Nicaragua's most valuable export crops. From 40,000 acres in 1950, cotton planting had grown to 450,000 by 1973. The cotton millionaires soon rivaled in wealth the capitalist producers of coffee.



Militant/Larry Seigle

"Felix Gurdían: Pay the seniority bonus or we'll confiscate you." Slogan written by farm workers last year on tank at a cotton plantation owned by a member of the Gurdían family, one of Nicaragua's wealthiest.

reporter about their struggle.

"The meals they give us are barely fit for dogs," said Julio César Aráuz, a tall, large-framed man with sparse white hair. "And they are refusing to pay us what we deserve." The prevailing wage on nearby farms, the workers said, is higher.

Wave of firings

"The other question," Aráuz went on, "is the firings. A bunch of compañeros here were given the axe." The firings began just after the harvest was in. At one point, nearly all the two dozen year-round workers had been dismissed. Since then, however, some have won their jobs back.

Why the firings? "They want to get rid of all the older workers," explained Aráuz, who at 69 is one of the oldest. Management doesn't want to pay the higher wages due to workers with many years at the farm. "There are compañeros with 35 years, 27 years, 12 years here," Aráuz added, indicating with a nod each of those who had accumulated long years tending the Gurdíans' cotton fields.

The employer is also supposed to provide certain benefits, including housing, to older workers who get their retirement papers from the government social security ministry. Some of the workers at La Queserita, including Aráuz, have recently become eligible for retirement.

"We are waiting for the retirement papers to come from the ministry in Managua, and the boss thinks he can kick us out onto the highway. We are demanding the right to stay here," Aráuz said.

The boss wanted to bring in an entire new group of permanent workers, Aráuz added. In doing so, he could not only cut costs, but get rid of the union at the same time. "The workers were fired because they were making demands," explained Manuel Jiménez, who works on the farm and is the local union president.

The firings at La Queserita were part of a more general offensive by employers. The Association of Rural Workers (ATC) charged

they had no right to protest what was taking place on some other farm. "He said it wasn't any of our concern," Silva said. There was an argument. "Then he fired us."

"The main thing is that the boss didn't want any union leaders in the workplace," she explained.

Silva and two of the others were rehired several months later, after the ATC fought their case through the appeal procedures established by the Ministry of Labor. By the time the appeals were won, however, three others who were fired had moved on, looking for work somewhere else.

'Decapitating union structures'

"There was a real campaign to decapitate the union structures," according to Salvador Ramírez, president of the ATC in Region II. "The main union leaders were fired throughout the Las Marías sector."

In response, the union leadership organized "a political and organizational offensive" to win the jobs back. This included efforts to get publicity in the progovernment news media. The union also set up a "social fund," financed primarily by locals at state farms in the area, to provide a subsistence income for dismissed workers while their cases were being appealed.

Most of the time, according to Ramírez, the union ultimately wins such cases, and the Ministry of Labor orders the workers rehired. But the process often takes a long time. "Certain procedures have to be followed by the Ministry of Labor. First, information has to be gathered at the workplace. Then the parties have to meet to see whether or not it can be settled."

"From there it goes to regional officials of the Ministry of Labor, who normally rule in our favor. Nevertheless, the employer has the right to appeal, and the appeal goes to Managua, where there are further proceedings."

Ramírez cited one case that had been dragging on for almost three months, "and still the central office of the Ministry of Labor hasn't issued a ruling."

But if the cotton boom turned some entrepreneurs into tycoons overnight, it did so at the cost of massive social dislocation and impoverishment of peasant producers, as well as the poisoning of the land and the toilers who worked it.

Peasants who for generations had grown corn and beans in the fertile plains in this region were driven off their land to make way for the expanding cotton fields. Many were left with no choice but to seek work as farmhands on the new plantations. Some secured full-time jobs, but most found work only during the harvest, living as best they could during the "dead season."

Key to making cotton profitable in Nicaragua was the use of DDT to kill pests. As the insects developed immunities, growers responded with ever-increasing amounts of the insecticide.

In some areas as much as 40 pounds of the poison were sprayed on each acre planted in cotton. Yet the farm workers toiled in the fields without protective gear of any kind.

Cotton production is heavily dependent on technology, and therefore on imports. In the early 1970s cotton absorbed 85 percent of Nicaragua's imported agricultural inputs.

Sending capital abroad

After the 1979 victory of the revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), cotton production began to fall as the capitalists held back on investment, preferring instead to transfer capital out of the country.

About 17 percent of the cotton-producing land was taken over by the new government. Most of the rest remained in capitalist hands. The government offered subsidies in various forms to the growers in an effort to maintain production, but they continued to send their capital abroad.

The area cultivated in cotton fell from 520,000 acres in 1978 to 240,000 in 1981. Recently, faced with the need for sharp budget cuts, the government has decided to reduce subsidies to cotton growers, prioritizing

instead cattle and coffee export production. Given the relatively low world market price of cotton and the heavy investment in imported goods it requires, the government has decided to let production fall.

Government policy is to encourage cotton growers to plant "nontraditional" export crops, such as sesame. There is no policy to protect the workers whose jobs are disappearing.

In the 1989-90 season, according to the ATC's Ramírez, only about 85,000 acres of cotton will be harvested. The permanent work force, which totaled nearly 12,000 in 1981, is now about 6,000.

'Acres and acres of idle land'

At La Queserita, the workers waiting to present their arguments to the superintendent expressed their concern about the declining production. "There are acres and acres of idle land on this farm," said Julio César Aráuz. He estimated some 500 acres were lying fallow. Only 210 acres would be planted in cotton this year, the workers had been told.

The local union president, Manuel Jiménez, interrupted to add, "I have met with the administration and they told me they aren't going to plant any cotton at all next year. I protested, but they said they are only going to plant some grain crops on a few acres."

The result, the workers all agreed, will be still fewer jobs. Even when substitute crops are planted, they require less labor than cotton. "If he doesn't plant cotton, we won't have jobs," said one.

Noon was approaching, and the superintendent, Iván Vallecillo, still hadn't appeared. Some began saying he probably wouldn't come at all. Vallecillo had consistently boycotted meetings set up by the union with a representative of the Ministry of Labor, who was prepared to act as an arbitrator.

On one occasion when Vallecillo did show up at the farm, the workers let him know what they thought. The encounter apparently got somewhat heated.

Unionists accused of assault

Vallecillo was so outraged at what he considered the lack of respect shown that he publicly accused Aráuz of grabbing him around the throat and trying to strangle him. Vallecillo allegedly had to be rescued by his assistant. The accusation merited a banner headline in the right-wing daily *La Prensa*: "Peasant Mobs Attack."

The farm workers consider the accusation to be a slander. "They are always trying to provoke us," said one.

As more people drifted over to join the conversation with the reporter, the discussion turned to what the government ought to do about the situation. Suddenly a loud voice from a corner said: "They ought to confiscate the place!"

For a moment no one said anything. Then, someone expressed agreement, and heads began nodding. "Yes, confiscate it," said one. "That's right," said several more.

"Let the government take over this hacienda and we will make it produce — more than it is producing now," said another.

Others, including Julio César Aráuz, expressed their agreement. But, Aráuz stressed, what the workers are demanding right now is that the owner agree to negotiate with the union.

'Strikes are prohibited'

Why not strike, instead of refusing to accept the wages? "We haven't organized a strike yet because strikes are prohibited," replied Aráuz. "What we are doing is pressuring the management."

Back at the ATC regional headquarters in León, Salvador Ramírez nodded with a slight smile when told the workers on the farm said strikes were prohibited. Under the law, strikes are legal. "We haven't renounced the right to strike," he answered. "But the workers of this country understand that stopping production, even if they work in the private sector, would hurt the country."

The goal of the working class, Ramírez said, is "to reactivate the economy." The form of protest used at La Queserita is effective because "we are showing that we want to

work, and that it is the employer who doesn't want to contribute to the economy, who doesn't want to fulfill his obligations. This gives us authority."

Ramírez also stressed that the ATC is not calling for the confiscation of La Queserita. "As far as we know, what is involved at La Queserita is a labor conflict," the ATC leader explained. "It has to do with wages, it has to do with firings, and it has to do with conditions on the farm."

If the owner were refusing to put the land to work at all, Ramírez went on, the union would be in favor of confiscating it. But, he added, that is not the case in this instance.

Offering 'space' to capitalists

The union official looks at the situation from the standpoint of the FSLN policy of *concertación*, as the policy of seeking a social pact with the capitalists is called here. "What is happening is that the revolution is offering space to the producers, offering them confidence that they won't be expropriated." (Ramírez, like many government and union officials, uses the term "producers" to refer to capitalist farmers.)

"And we agree with this," he went on. "Why? Because we have to speak about reactivating the economy." Only with the assurance that their property won't be seized, Ramírez said, will the capitalists invest their profits in increasing production, thereby creating more jobs.

"Nevertheless," he added, "there are some producers who want to take advantage of the elements of *concertación* to enter the new crop year without a union. Especially when the union members are militant."

"And that is where we clash. When they lay a hand on the union organization, that isn't part of *concertación*. That is just an attempt to disarm the workers in their struggle for just demands."

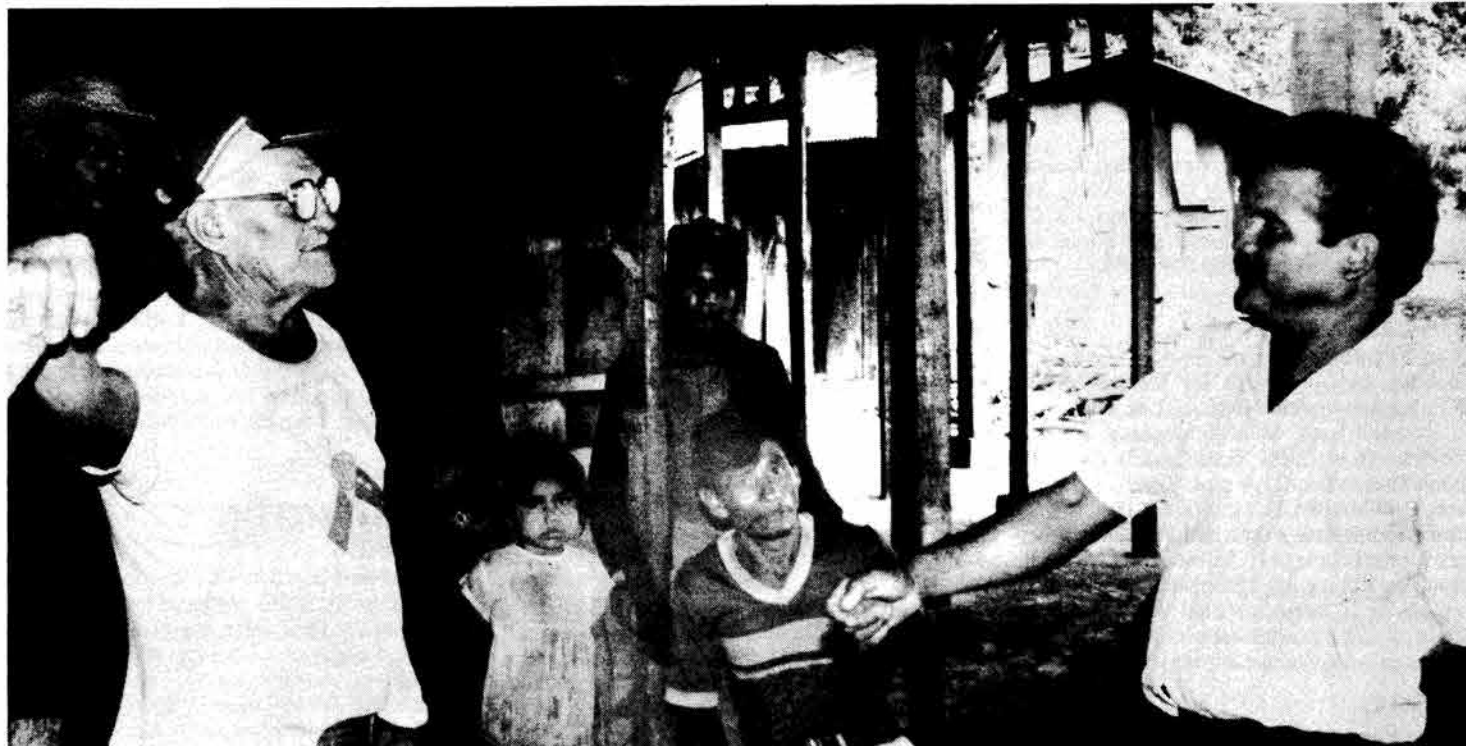
What the union demands of the "producers," Ramírez added, is that they invest their profits in developing the country's productive capacity as well as improving the conditions of the workers they employ.

Cotton grower on FSLN slate

Ramírez is hopeful that the upcoming elections will solidify the confidence of the cotton growers in the government and its *concertación* policy. The decision of the FSLN to include Roger Gurdán as one of its city council candidates in the upcoming local elections in León is a positive step, he said.

Roger Gurdán, like many in his family, is a capitalist cotton grower. Until recently he was the head of the León Cotton Growers' Association, an affiliate of COSEP, the anti-government businessmen's association. When he accepted nomination on the FSLN municipal slate, however, Gurdán was removed from his post.

The inclusion of a member of the Gurdán family as an FSLN candidate in León is one of a series of such steps taken by the Sandinista Front in putting together its lists of candidates around the country. In León, supporters of the FSLN often refer to the



Militant/Larry Seigle

Julio César Aráuz (left) and Claudio Mendoza, member of the executive board of Association of Rural Workers in Nicaragua's Region II, at La Queserita cotton plantation.

municipal slate as a "national unity" ticket.

"With this ticket, the FSLN is giving expression to its commitment to *concertación* and the reconstruction of the economy," Ramírez said. "The FSLN represents a series of sectors, including the producers, and that is necessary in the current stage of the revolution, which is one of national liberation."

Within this framework, he added, "the

unions exist to defend the rights of the workers, through collective bargaining agreements, the struggle to implement a new labor code, and other measures at our disposal."

At La Queserita, the superintendent never did show up that day. Nonetheless, a few weeks later the union succeeded in getting negotiations going. Ministry of Labor officials also participated in the talks, which

ended in a settlement of the dispute.

Wages were raised, though not to the level the union was demanding. Management agreed to continue discussing the issue of the workers who had become eligible for retirement. And the participants also agreed that the Ministry of Labor would review the procedures followed in firing the workers to see if any violations of law had occurred.

U.S. gov't steps up attacks on Panama

BY CINDY JAQUITH

PANAMA CITY, Panama — Although a coup attempt against Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega failed here two months ago, the U.S. government is continuing military provocations and flagrantly violating the Panama Canal treaties in an ongoing effort to overthrow the Panamanian government.

On December 6 Panamanian President Francisco Rodríguez denounced Washington's decision to unilaterally appoint a new administrator of the canal, Fernando Manfredo. The canal treaties, signed in 1977 by then-U.S. President James Carter and Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos, stipulate that the Panamanian government is to select the canal administrator in 1989, subject to U.S. approval. But Washington has rejected out of hand Panama's nominee, Tomás Altamirano Duque.

The U.S. move is the latest in a series of violations of the treaties, which call for turning control of the canal over to Panama by the year 2000 and removing the existing 13 U.S. military bases from Panamanian soil.

Provocative U.S. maneuvers

Since the aborted coup, U.S. troops stationed in the former Canal Zone have been staging "maneuvers" in nearby Panamanian villages and on major highways on a nearly daily basis without permission of Panamanian authorities.

At the Rufina Alfaro Women's Instruction Base of Panama's Defense Forces in the town of Gamboa, officers described months of harassment by U.S. forces, including overflights by U.S. aircraft. Frequently U.S. units hold maneuvers directly in front of the base, rattling the gates of the military installation in hopes of provoking an incident. They have failed thus far.

U.S. military exercises are also carried out in the streets leading to major Panamanian government buildings, such as the plant that produces potable water and the national anti-malaria agency. By blocking the streets with tanks and personnel carriers, the troops prevent government employees from getting to work, disrupt vital services, and increase tensions between Panamanians and U.S. forces.

Dignity Battalions mobilize

Angry crowds of Panamanians have confronted the U.S. troops, often waving the Panamanian flag. The protesters are mobilized through the Dignity Battalions.

These battalions are made up of civilians, mostly workers and peasants, who have received military training to be prepared in the event of a U.S. attack. They have stepped up vigilance activities in Panama City.

Contingents of Dignity Battalion members from several cities and villages marched in

the town of Chorrera November 28 in a traditional celebration of Panama's independence from Spain. The bulk of the battalion fighters were workers and youth, many of them Black. Women combatants were sprinkled throughout the contingents. The crowd of onlookers gave the most enthusiastic applause to a battalion of peasants that passed by armed with machetes and homemade weapons.

An "International Conference Against Intervention in Central America: The Panama Issue" was held here November 27-29. It was hosted by the Center for International Political Studies in Panama.

The U.S. Sponsoring Committee for the conference included Carlos Russell, former Panamanian ambassador to the Organization of American States; Job Mascheriki, executive director of Black Veterans for Social Justice; Michael Myerson, executive director of the U.S. Peace Council; Panamanian-American groups against U.S. intervention; and figures in the Caribbean and Black communities of Brooklyn and New York.

More than 100 people from the United States participated, the majority from Panamanian-American, anti-intervention, Black rights, and church groups, as well as a few trade unionists.

About a dozen of the U.S. delegates came from the ultraright Lyndon LaRouche group. This fascist outfit has a long record in the United States of disrupting trade unions and farmer organizations, waging anti-Black and anti-Semitic campaigns, and using violence.

Unemployment, poverty rising

Among those addressing the conference was Panamanian Finance Minister Orville Goodin, who described the devastating effects of nearly two years of U.S. economic sanctions against his country. "Because there are no bombs in the air, the U.S. gets away with saying they are not at war with us," he noted.

Unemployment, Goodin reported, has risen from an official rate of 10 percent in 1987 to 17.5 percent in 1989. Forty-four percent of the population — "nearly half our people" — are now living below the official poverty line, up from 33 percent in 1987.

Beginning in January 1990 Washington has announced plans to bar merchant ships flying the Panamanian flag from entering U.S. ports, Goodin said.

Conference organizer Cecilio Simón, who teaches at the University of Panama, traced the history of Panama's fight for self-determination, including the role played by Panamanians who are Black. Many Blacks here are descendants of Caribbean workers who migrated to Panama to help build the canal at the beginning of this century.

In the Canal Zone, "Black laborers were segregated, crowded into barracks, and made to do forced labor," said Simón. "Labor leaders were silenced and exiled for protesting this discriminatory treatment."

The U.S. government maintained much of this anti-Black policy until 1968, when Omar Torrijos overthrew the pro-U.S. government in Panama and instituted far-reaching reforms. For the first time, many workers who were Black were able to get an education, receive decent health care, and obtain jobs from which they were previously barred.

Advances for Kuna Indians

Atencio López, a leader of the Kuna Youth Movement, spoke of the conditions for the 1,700 Kuna Indians who work as cooks, dishwashers, and at other low-paid jobs on U.S. bases. With the signing of the Panama Canal treaties, he said, Kuna workers won the right to social security and other benefits on the bases. Under Torrijos, clinics and schools also came to many Kuna villages for the first time.

Carlos Wesley, who writes for *Executive Intelligence Review*, a LaRoucheite publication in Washington, D.C., was a speaker on the panel on Washington's drug trafficking charges against Panama.

Wesley did not mention the fight for Panamanian sovereignty and for completion of the canal treaty or the social gains of the Torrijos movement, but rather sought to shift the axis of discussion to how best to "wage war" on drugs.

"The U.S. is trying to rid the hemisphere of its best antidrug fighter, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega," he said.

Asserting that he was against International Monetary Fund programs that impose austerity measures on debtor Third World countries like Panama, Wesley predicted that the resulting poverty would drive masses of working people to become drug addicts and pushers. This then would lead to a "narcoterrorist" threat to the Panama Canal, he said.

Both President Francisco Rodríguez and General Noriega addressed the conference. Noriega said that the U.S. drive to oust Panama's government began after he rejected the 1985 demand of former U.S. national security adviser John Poindexter for elite Panamanian troops to be used in Washington's contra war against Nicaragua.

Noriega explained that the more than 10,000 U.S. troops currently stationed in Panama are not there primarily to defend the canal or even for use against the Panamanian people. "Panama has been set up as a base to be used for aggression against other countries in the region," he said. "This is not what Latin America wants and it is not what the Republic of Panama wants."



Militant/Larry Seigle

María Luisa Silva, organizational secretary of Association of Rural Workers in Las Marías area.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

The Crisis in Eastern Europe Today. Speaker: Elizabeth Lariscy, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 16, 7 p.m. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (602) 279-5850.

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Holiday Dance Benefit for Centro Cultural Nicaragüense and NICCA. Los Peregrinos, Nicaraguan band; Manuel Monestel of Canto América from Costa Rica; Cesar's Latin All-stars. Thurs., Dec. 21, 7 p.m. Cesar's Latin Palace, 3140 Mission St. Tickets: \$5-10.
2nd Annual Red, Black and White Ball. Benefit for the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua featuring Kotoja, Afro-beat band. Sun., Dec. 31, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Longshore Hall, 400 North Point. Tickets: \$15-25. Sponsors: CISPE, NICCA. For more information call (415) 648-8222.

IOWA

Des Moines

The Protests in Eastern Europe and the Fight for Socialism. Speaker: Ted Leonard, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-8249.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in Cri-

sis: A Socialist View. Sat., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Celebrate the Completion of the Pathfinder Mural. Hosted by Michigan Gallery. Sun., Dec. 17, 5 p.m. 2661 Michigan Ave. Sponsor: Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (313) 961-7867 or 831-1177.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Southeast Asians Fight Racism: The Changing Mood in the Twin Cities. Speakers: Rev. Sunthi Paul Chookiatirichai, pastor-developer, Southeast Asian Ministry, Minneapolis Area Synod; Hmong striker from Quality Tool; Ken Kawakubo, Socialist Workers Party and member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sat., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.
Class Series: In Defense of Socialism. Based on Pathfinder book *In Defense of Socialism* by Fidel Castro. Thursdays, Dec. 21, Jan. 4, 11, 18; 6:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Sponsors: Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

U.S. Hands Off El Salvador! Sat., Dec. 16,

7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

The Fight Against Antilabor Disruption. Speaker: Greg Rosenberg, Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis. Seattle premier showing of the video produced by Nick Castle, Jr. Speakers: Fred Dube, member African National Congress of South Africa; Tomás Villanueva, president United Farm Workers of Washington State; Ricardo Hidalgo, Committee in Defense of Immigrant Rights; welcome by Shirley McCullough, president Seattle American Postal Workers Union. Sat., Dec. 16, 7 p.m., reception to follow. APWU hall, 2450 6th Ave S. Sponsor: Supporters of Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee

Defend the Pathfinder Mural and Artistic

Defend Freedom of Speech and Artistic Expression

A panel discussion in defense of democratic rights. Speakers include:

Rudolf Baranik artist
John Connolly member, National Board, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
William Kunstler vice-president, Center for Constitutional Rights
Sandy Boyer Irish Arts Center
Carole Byard artist, painted Malcolm X on Pathfinder Mural

Westbeth Gallery
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(3 blocks north of Pathfinder Mural on West St.)
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Freedom. Video showing and discussion. Sat., Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

Protest wave shatters E. Europe Communist parties

Continued from front page

One CP official speculated that as many as 100,000 party members have resigned and turned in their party cards since the protests began, a *New York Times* report said. The CP boasted a membership of 1.7 million.

In East Germany hundreds of thousands continued protests venting their anger at revelations of corruption and abuse of power by Socialist Unity Party officials. The SUP is

East Germany's Stalinist Communist Party. Former party boss Erich Honecker, who resigned in mid-October, has been ordered arrested by the state prosecutor.

In the cities of Dresden, Cottbus, Suhl, Rostock, and elsewhere, thousands occupied the buildings of the hated secret police, known as the "Stasi," to prevent the destruction of files containing evidence of crimes committed by CP officials and Stasi agents.

Thousands of Dresden residents toured through the city's Stasi headquarters once the doors were flung open. Crowds demanded the names of Stasi agents and called for them to be brought to justice. In a compromise with government authorities, as many as 70 volunteers organized by opposition groups now take shifts at the compound to monitor the 100 secret police personnel around the clock.

The occupations came just days prior to a December 8-9 emergency SUP conference called to stave off the party's complete collapse. More than 300,000 party members have resigned in the last several weeks, *Neues Deutschland*, the official party paper, reported.

New goal: 'democratic socialism'

The 2,700 SUP delegates that gathered to debate the party's future rejected dissolving the party and described the party's goal as "democratic socialism." Gregor Gysi, a 41-year-old attorney, was elected the new party chief. The next session of the party conference is scheduled for December 16 and delegates are expected to provide the party a new name and program.

Gysi was a figure in government-sponsored round table talks with opposition groups on December 7. The talks produced agreements to hold elections in May 1990 and to rewrite the country's constitution.

For the first time in 17 years, the four conquering powers that occupied Berlin at the end of World War II — the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union — met in West Berlin on December 11. The meeting, called on short notice by Moscow,

issued a statement stressing "the importance of stability."

In Leipzig, rival groups of thousands of marchers participated in the opposition's weekly protest on December 11. They shouted counterposed slogans on the unification of East and West Germany.

The demonstration numbered more than 200,000. Proponents of unification chanted "Germany, united fatherland!" Opponents answered, "Nazis out!" East and West German flags were unfurled by the competing demonstrators.

In Bulgaria, more than 50,000 people took to the streets of the capital city, Sofia, on December 10, the eve of a Communist Party Central Committee meeting. The protesters came from towns across the country and demanded open elections, freedom of the press, and abolition of the CP's apparatus in workplaces, the police, and the military.

Conceding some of their demands, CP chief Petar Mladenov called for elections in 1990 and proposed dropping the constitution's article legalizing the CP's domination.

In the Soviet city of Kiev several hundred people demonstrated for ending the Soviet CP's monopoly on power. The protest was called during a meeting there between Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and French President François Mitterrand on December 6.

Opposition deputies in the Soviet parliament raised the issue on December 12, but the challenge was quashed when, in a vote of 1,138 to 839, a majority heeded Gorbachev's call to end the discussion.

Pittston miners open strike center

Continued from back page

"Oh yes, they do," Moss told him, "and we've got skin in their game too."

UMWA Vice-president Cecil Roberts addressed the union miners in the crowd. "You are not warriors, you're coal miners — that's what you're good at — but they found out you can become warriors if you have to."

Dana Caldwell, president of UMWA Local 8454 in Logan County, invited everyone to return to the new camp "and tell all of your friends to come here too."

Two days before the rally, five miners were arrested by federal agents and marshals on picket lines in Logan County for violating a court order to stop blocking coal trucks, bringing the number arrested in this area to 20 since October. In his speech at the rally, UMWA official Hudson said that the media portrays the strikers as violent but the strikers are not the ones who hired armed thugs from Vance Security to intimidate the community.

Hudson said 4,000 strike-related arrests have been made in Virginia since April.

Meanwhile negotiations between Pittston Coal Group and the UMWA, with federal mediator William Utery, continue. Talks were held for eight consecutive days with sessions lasting from 10 to 17 hours before negotiations recessed November 20.

Another round of contract talks opened December 11 in Arlington, Virginia. UMWA spokesperson Gene Carroll said miners were "hoping for the best and preparing for the worst."

Christmastime donations and funds for striking miners and their families continue to pour into Camp Solidarity in Virginia. This comes after a donation by members of United Auto Workers Local 594 from Pontiac, Michigan, of 2,000 Thanksgiving turkeys.

The next event at Logan County Camp Solidarity is a December 16 Christmas party.

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Would they lie to you? — An accident with the plutonium powered, Jupiter-bound Galileo spacecraft could mean massive radioactive contamination. Answering protests, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration insisted there was no other way to fuel the ship. But after it took off, the feds lifted the lid on a secret report



Harry Ring

that the craft could have been powered by solar cells.

Mass base — *Info*, a nuclear industry trade publication, recently boasted that the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Legion have endorsed nuclear power.

Racism? In Israel? — "I represent the majority of residents here and they came to me and said they didn't want Arabs here because they are afraid of mixed marriages. After all, I've already seen how Jews married Christians and Blacks in the United States." — Jack Sabbag, mayor of Nahariya. He's on a drive to keep Palestinian Israelis from living there.

Any volunteers? — Legend has it that carmaker Shoichiro Honda threw a business bash at which a drunken guest, in a state of upheaval, flushed his dentures down the tube. Honda assertedly climbed into the septic tank and retrieved them. The moral, he said, is that a boss should be ready to do anything he asks a subordinate to do.

Silver lining — The Rand Corp., a think tank favorable to free enterprise, frets that the sedentary lives led by many is socially costly, what with poor health, absenteeism, medical bills, etc. But, it notes, the inactive also die sooner, reducing their pensions and Social Security benefits.

Shopping tip — A Spanish company offers a bronze desk in a limited edition for \$100,000. Meanwhile, a New York shop is selling a knockoff in cast iron. Only \$3,115, and your guests won't know the diff.

Cutting the risk — After the feds sped up poultry inspection, a study at five plants showed that going into processing, 58 percent of the poultry was contaminated with salmonella. Coming out, 100 percent was contaminated. An official noted that, as a result, the average level of salmonella in each bird was reduced.

A treat for the teeth — A Toronto boutique offers a toothbrush with boar's hair bristles — \$19.50.

What does she smoke? — The "Great Fear," a peasant rebellion that helped spark the French revolution of 1789, is generally seen by historians as provoked by heavy taxes and feudal tithes. But Prof. Mary Matossian theorizes that the peasants had eaten rye bread infected with the hallucinogenic fungus from which LSD is derived.

Check it out — A 25-day around-the-world holiday in a supersonic Concorde jet. The \$43,800 price assures a fine time and "some very distinguished travelling companions." Which probably makes it a tax-deductible business trip.

Historic anti-apartheid meeting held in S. Africa

Continued from front page address to the conference.

Sisulu, one of seven ANC leaders recently released from apartheid's prisons, stressed that the gigantic task of the conference was "to confirm the crucial importance of unity and to plan a programme of mass action that builds on this unity — a programme that will challenge the apartheid state." Sisulu said that such a broad forum had not come together since the Congress of the People held in Kliptown in 1955. There thousands of delegates adopted the Freedom Charter as a guiding principle around which opponents of apartheid would work toward the liberation of their country.

The Mass Democratic Movement, an alliance of major anti-apartheid organizations with the millions-strong Congress of South African Trade Unions and United Democratic Front (UDF) at its core, was central to the organization and building of the Johannesburg meeting.

Conference adopts Harare Declaration

A significant development at the conference was the adoption of the Harare Declaration, a document that embodies the ANC's perspectives on negotiations involving the minority apartheid regime and the liberation movement. The declaration has been endorsed by the Frontline States, the Countries of the Nonaligned Movement, and the Organization of African Unity at its August summit in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The Harare Declaration outlines principles for a new democratic South Africa and guidelines for negotiations and sets preconditions that the apartheid government must meet to create a climate for such negotiations. These include releasing all political prisoners, ending the state of emergency, and lifting the ban on all restricted persons and organizations. The declaration also calls for continued and intensified action against the apartheid regime, including comprehensive and mandatory sanctions.

The conference participants also agreed that a constituent assembly, elected on the basis of one person, one vote, would be the only legitimate forum representative of all South Africans. The conference rejected President F.W. de Klerk's reform initiatives as having no substance.

Conference banned last year

A similar conference was originally planned for last year but was blocked by Pretoria.

Meanwhile, support for the meeting continued to build — including internationally, said UDF spokesperson Murphy Morobe — and the government was forced to let it proceed.

The conference was organized around seven points of unity on which the attending organizations agreed. These included support for one person, one vote in a united South Africa; lifting the state of emergency; freedom of association and press; and a living wage for all.

Special efforts were made to insure that trade unions, rural areas, and religious organizations were represented. Representatives

of governments in the homelands created by Pretoria attended, including from the Transkei, where several organizations were recently unbanned including the United Democratic Front. Some 50,000 ANC supporters rallied there last month. Observer status was granted to the white liberal Democratic Party.

Groups within the Black Consciousness Movement including the Pan-Africanist Congress, a tendency that does not support the Freedom Charter or believe that anyone but Blacks should be involved in the struggle against apartheid, attended the conference on a scattered basis. They did not agree with the adoption of the Harare document.

Urgent task of meeting

In his address to the event ANC leader Sisulu reviewed the history of efforts made by the fighting people of South Africa toward unity, including milestones such as the Klip-town congress.

"The long struggle for unity has taught us that the technique of divide and rule is the modus operandi of the apartheid state," he said. "Our response is to remain steadfast in

the search for broader unity. Indeed, we cannot be satisfied with even the broadness of this conference."

Sisulu said the aim was an even greater one of uniting the whole of South African society.

A formidable task faced today, he said, is to "plan the way forward for a democratic future." History has shown that unity without action is temporary and fragile, the ANC leader added.

"Today we will decide on a programme of action. In the course of the actions decided on, we will build a real and permanent comradeship with one another," said Sisulu.

"We will become a broad people's movement. Our actions will help us to mobilise people and win allies even outside of this conference."

Sisulu met with imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela on December 12, two days after the conference, and discussed among other things the continued fight for Mandela and other political prisoners to be released.

On December 13, Mandela met for the first time with President F.W. de Klerk at the president's office.

S. African freedom fighters at UN hearings

Continued from front page

only increase the poverty of Blacks.

Raul Roa-Kouri, representing Cuba, said that the independence struggle in Namibia would have not been possible without the military defeat of South African forces at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1988. Similarly, sustained resistance to apartheid inside the country has pressured Pretoria to make recent changes.

Many called for adopting a document modeled after the Harare Declaration endorsed by the OAU in Harare, Zimbabwe, at an August 1989 summit. The declaration proposes constitutional guidelines for a democratic South Africa, calls on the apartheid regime to create the climate for negotiations by releasing political prisoners, lifting the state of emergency, and other measures; and states that until such steps are taken by Pretoria, international pressure — including economic sanctions — should be intensified.

An ad hoc committee of the special session was convened to consider a draft declaration to be adopted by the UN General Assembly. The committee held hearings where leaders of anti-apartheid organizations from various countries and others spoke. These included Max Coleman of the Human Rights Commission of South Africa; M. William Howard, president of the American Committee on Africa; Allan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and copresident of the United Democratic Front of South Africa; and New York Mayor-elect David Dinkins.

COSATU Secretary General Jay Naidoo addressed the hearings on behalf of the Mass Democratic Movement in South Africa. He pointed to the recent Conference for a Democratic Future, which adopted the Harare Declaration two days before the UN hearings opened, as testimony of the ever-widening opposition to apartheid inside the country.

Naidoo called on the UN to "act swiftly and decisively" right now. A consensus declaration adopted along the lines of the Harare Declaration would be a powerful tool, so long

as principles were not sacrificed that are cherished by the people, Naidoo said. Whatever the outcome of this important session, he continued, the people of South Africa will continue their struggle against apartheid. "We have sacrificed too much, too long, to hand over our liberation struggle at this stage," concluded the COSATU leader.

ANC leader Nzo, in his address to the session, noted that among many in the world there is hope of fundamental change soon in South Africa, especially with recent moves

by President F.W. de Klerk. But these are a result of a shift in the relationship of forces, he reminded, which has forced de Klerk to make concessions.

"We never waged this struggle to win concessions from the Pretoria regime," he said. "The struggle as a whole has one purpose and one purpose only. That purpose is the abolition of the apartheid system in its entirety and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic, and nonracial country."

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Dec. 21, 1979

TEHRAN, Iran — "The den of spies." This is the name Iranian students have given to the U.S. embassy they have occupied here. And to prove their charge, they have begun releasing secret U.S. government files discovered in the embassy.

The first series of documents reproduced proves that the U.S. government was planning for months to bring the shah to the United States and that his admission to the country on October 22 had nothing to do with medical reasons.

The documents also show that President James Carter knew full well the serious repercussions that would follow if the shah set foot in the United States and yet went ahead.

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interests of the Working People

Dec. 21, 1964

NEW YORK, Dec. 15 — For the past week the United Nations has echoed with the most numerous and harshest denunciations

of U.S. policy since the founding of that international body nearly 20 years ago.

Delegate after delegate from the newly independent nations of Africa, Asia and from the Soviet-bloc countries appeared before the Security Council to blast the U.S.-Belgian paratroop attack on the Congo and demand an end to imperialist intervention there.

At the same time, the UN General Assembly was giving thunderous applause to Cuban Minister of Industry Che Guevara for a devastating exposure of Washington's policy in the Congo, Vietnam, and Latin America.

Calling Moise Tshombe an agent of U.S. and Belgian business interests, African spokesmen showed that the November 24 paratroop invasion was a prearranged plan to aid Tshombe's white mercenaries in capturing Stanleyville, the capital and stronghold of the Congolese National Liberation Front.

In reference to the U.S. imperialists, Guevara asked: "How can those people who kill children in their own country and discriminate daily against them because of the color of their skin, presume to guide? Those who let the murderers of colored people go free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the colored population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men?"

Correction

The caption for the photo accompanying an article in the December 15 *Militant* on the arrest and conviction of three Haitian trade union and political leaders incorrectly identified a photograph of Joseph Manicy Pierre as being of Jean-Auguste Mesyeux (pictured below), executive secretary of the Independent Federation of Haitian Workers (CATH) and one of the jailed union leaders. Pierre, who is CATH's secretary of information, is not among those framed and convicted.



Haiti Progrès

Defend Cuba from U.S. attacks

In recent weeks the U.S. rulers have sharply stepped up their campaign to slander, isolate, and pressure revolutionary Cuba. The imperialists aim to drive a wedge between Cuba and governments and parties with important economic and political relations with the Cuban government.

Part of the campaign is a barrage of articles, columns, and editorials in the big business press sounding the anti-Cuba theme especially leading up to and since the summit meeting in Malta between U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The anti-Cuba drive went into high gear after the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front in El Salvador launched a nationwide military offensive November 11. The FMLN demanded that the U.S.-backed government there begin negotiating an end to the 10-year civil war.

Cuban President Fidel Castro hailed the Salvadoran rebels. "Just look how these people can fight," he said. Castro called the struggle "impressive . . . a kind of lesson to imperialism, which is currently all euphoric and thinks it has the world at its feet."

Secretary of State James Baker responded by demanding the Soviet Union pressure Cuba and Nicaragua which, he said, "continue to support violence, destruction, and war."

At the end of November, Bush announced he would be "urging Mr. Gorbachev to do what they should have done some time ago — cease support for those who are fueling revolution, exporting it in this hemisphere" — namely Cuba and Nicaragua.

Since the summit, the pressure on Cuba has not let up.

"The Soviet Union has told us that they are leaning on Nicaragua and Cuba not to send weapons" to the FMLN, Baker said. "But that has not worked," he complained. "So we are encouraging them to lean even harder."

At the Malta summit, Bush went even further. "Until we see a free Cuba, self-determination and the people deciding what they want, Cuba will stick out . . . as a tiny country, but swimming against Mr. Gorbachev's own tide. And I made that point to him," Bush said.

By "free Cuba" Bush means a Cuba subordinate to Washington's dictates.

A few days after the summit, on December 7, the Cuban armed forces reported two shots were fired at Cuban sentry posts from the U.S. navy's base at Guantánamo.

The theme of the big business press' editorials and columns has been to encourage Bush to press Moscow even harder to "restrain a rogue regime" — Cuba — as a *New*

York Times editorial put it December 11.

The *Times* piece calls Castro a "fossil Marxist" and a "museum piece — staging show trials, jailing dissenters, resisting any dilution of dogma."

What is behind these attacks and provocations? Why is Washington stepping up this campaign?

First of all because Cuba tells the truth about capitalism. The Cuban leadership takes every possible opportunity to explain the effects and depth of the world capitalist economic crisis. It exposes the results of imperialist exploitation of the Third World. Cuba calls for cancellation of the massive debt imposed on the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Secondly, Cuba presents communism as the only road forward for the liberation of humanity. And continues to deepen the building of socialism in Cuba. Far from being a "fossil," the revolution is a genuine, living, evolving process in which the masses of Cuban working people are deeply involved — from internationalist missions to the rectification process to the defense of the country.

Cuba's refusal to abandon its unconditional support to revolutionary struggles around the world is the third reason for the imperialists' campaign.

The Cubans are internationalists. They have no interests other than supporting the Salvadoran people's struggle to rid themselves of the repressive U.S.-backed regime, aiding the fight against apartheid in southern Africa, and standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other fighters in the world.

Lastly, Washington cannot abide Cuba's vow that it will remain a free country — free from the domination of imperialism. For three decades the Cuban working people have fought their way to the level of many advanced industrialized countries in terms of education, infant mortality, life expectancy, and other aspects of social well-being. They have no intention of turning back.

Revolutionary Cuba is an example to people throughout the world of what can be accomplished when workers and farmers decide to take their future into their own hands, stand up to imperialism, and begin the process of building socialism.

Those who defend the Cuban revolution, look to it as an example, and believe that the Cuban people — and not Washington — have the right to decide their future should respond to the escalating anti-Cuba campaign by getting out the truth about Cuba.

A saga of airline mechanics in Iceland

BY DOUG JENNESS

REYKJAVÍK, Iceland — The plane trip from New York to Iceland's capital city normally takes about five hours. But this time the trip took twice as long, because I had to go to London and then catch an Icelandair flight back to Reykjavík. I had no choice because the airline's normal once-a-day flight from New York, on which I had a reservation, was canceled the day I wanted to go. My plans required that I get here sometime the following day, because I was scheduled to attend the founding conference of the Communist League and speak at a public meeting on the events in Eastern Europe.

Icelandair picked up the difference in the extra fare to London on Pan Am, but couldn't compensate for the lost

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

sleep. When my travel agent asked why the flight was suspended, the airline, at first evasive, finally confessed that the plane had been taken out of service for inspection.

In a sense it was reassuring to know that Icelandair would not let a plane fly if there were questions about its airworthiness, even if it was inconvenient to passengers.

When I arrived here, however, I discovered a totally different story about what had happened to the plane.

On December 4, three nights before I left New York, two Icelandic airline mechanics were apprehended by seven U.S. military cops at the Keflavík airport. They were forced to the floor at gunpoint and ordered to lie face down for more than 20 minutes while their pockets were emptied and IDs checked. They were confined in this manner until Icelandic police arrived. One of the mechanics suffered an injured shoulder when he was pushed to the floor and later needed medical care. The two mechanics were accused of stepping into a restricted area.

Iceland's international airport at Keflavík, about 40 miles from Reykjavík, shares runways and other facilities with a large North Atlantic Treaty Organization base maintained by U.S. military personnel.

In the hangar where the incident with the airline mechanics occurred, Icelandair regularly rents one of six sections, and occasionally a second one. The mechanics were doing maintenance on a DC-8 in the second section. DC-8's are the principal plane Icelandair uses on flights between North America and Europe, with stopovers in Iceland.

In order to plug into an outlet to get electrical power, the mechanics had to walk into the military area of the hangar. They later told the press that they had asked a military guard for permission before entering the area where they were seized.

At one end of the hangar there was an AWACS radar plane, one of many at the base used for military surveillance in the North Atlantic. The military cops said they didn't want the Icelandic workers getting too near this piece of expensive hardware.

News of how the Icelandic mechanics were treated spread like wildfire among airline employees and was widely publicized in Iceland's daily press. In protest, airline workers ceased servicing planes between the United States and Iceland, which explained the cancellation of the flight I was ticketed for, as well as other flights. The workers demanded that Icelandic police be stationed at the work site. The two mechanics, both unionists, have filed charges against the U.S. military cops.

After learning the truth about what had happened, my concern about the inconvenience I had experienced was transformed into solidarity with the workers who had been brutalized and humiliated by foreign troops on their soil.

The U.S. government has many military bases throughout the world located on the soil of other countries. Five of its 18 standing military divisions and 277 of its military bases or installations are located in European countries. These foreign military forces are the source of daily indignities committed against working people. These violations not only include trampling on the right of peoples to sovereignty but the injustices to individual workers like the airline mechanics in Iceland.

To get a feel for what the situation at Keflavík is like, imagine a French military base located at Kennedy International Airport in New York. Then visualize the French military police having the authority to kick ramp workers, cleaners, and mechanics at Eastern, United, Pan Am, and every other airline out of restricted areas, collaring them when they are considered to be trespassing on French areas, and subjecting them to interrogation, arrest, or just general brutalization.

Iceland's working people, like those in other countries, don't need U.S. troops to defend them. Nor do they need AWACS planes scouting the North Atlantic. From whom do they need protection? If anything, they need safeguards against the actions of U.S. troops.

The demand to remove all U.S. military forces and bases around the world, including those that are officially classified as NATO bases, is a just one and deserves support from all workers.

A holiday appeal for solidarity

As the holidays approach and the year draws to a close, capitalist newspapers, organizations, and corporations make charity appeals to put themselves forward as the champions of the downtrodden and most hard-pressed. The aim is to polish their images and soothe the troubled consciences of the wealthy who contribute, not to fundamentally improve the status of the "poor."

The *Militant's* holiday message and appeal is different. We ask readers to step up their solidarity with the working people and political activists who have been victimized by the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. This system — which breeds poverty, injustice, and war — imposes frame-ups and victimizes fighters because of who they are and for trying to bring about real change.

Prison walls are meant to separate these sisters and brothers from us, to isolate them, and break their spirit. The walls are meant to make us forget them.

This year we celebrate important victories that should inspire us to redouble our efforts on imprisoned fighters' behalf: the release of seven African National Congress of South Africa leaders in October; the release of the Guildford 4, four Irish men and women jailed in Britain as part of a crackdown against the Irish community; the reversal of Johnny Imani Harris' murder conviction in the 1974 killing of a prison guard for which he spent 14 years on death row — although Harris remains in an Alabama jail serving five life sentences on frame-up rape and robbery charges; the December 13 Texas court ruling setting aside the rape and murder conviction of Clarence Bradley, who has twice come within days of being executed; and the acquittal of Puerto Rican independence activist Filiberto Ojeda Ríos.

Below is a partial list of those whose demands for freedom deserve renewed backing in the new year. They need wider publicity for their cases and increased financial contributions, in many cases to help their families as well.

- Nelson Mandela, a central leader of the African National Congress of South Africa, imprisoned since 1964 for fighting to rid his country of apartheid and to establish a democratic, nonracial South Africa.

- Hundreds of imprisoned, tortured, and disappeared Salvadoran unionists and political activists fighting for a free El Salvador and an end to U.S. intervention in their country.

- Former Black Panther supporter Mumia Abu Jamal,

framed up and convicted for killing a policeman in Philadelphia in 1982. In May, Jamal's sentence was upheld by a state supreme court, and Pennsylvania's governor, who is an outspoken supporter of the death penalty, may sign an execution order soon.

- Donnie Thornsby, David Thornsby, Arnold Heightland, and James Darryl Smith, four union miners in Kentucky who were active in the 1984-5 strike at A.T. Massey. They were framed on murder charges and received long sentences.

- The "Birmingham Six," Irish republican activists serving life sentences in Birmingham, Britain, for planting a bomb in a pub. They remain in prison even though the case against them has been exposed as a fraud.

- Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement, falsely convicted in the killing of two FBI agents. He has been in prison since 1976. Government officials admit they have "no idea" who killed the agents.

- Mark Curtis, a young unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa. He is serving a 25-year sentence on a frame-up rape and burglary conviction.

- Jean-Auguste Mesyeux, Evans, Paul, and Marino Etienne, leaders of union and popular organizations in Haiti who were imprisoned November 1 in Port-au-Prince for their activities.

- Puerto Rican independence activists: Alejandrina Torres, serving 35 years in prison; Juan Segarra Palmer, sentenced to a maximum of 65 years; Antonio Camacho Negrón, serving a 15-year prison term; Roberto José Maldonado Rivera and Norman Ramírez Talavera, each sentenced to five years.

- Irish freedom fighter Joe Doherty, imprisoned in New York since 1983 after fleeing British occupation forces in the north of Ireland. Despite winning many appeals, Doherty remains in jail without any formal criminal charges filed against him.

- Geronimo Pratt, former Black Panther, framed in 1971 on murder charges in California.

- Alan Berkman, Tim Blunk, Marilyn Buck, Linda Evans, Susan Rosenberg, and Laura Whitehorn who have faced 14 separate political prosecutions for bombings in Washington, D.C. Five are serving sentences of up to 70 years. The government makes no claim to know who actually carried out the bombings.

Boycott of Arizona supermarkets weakens union

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

PHOENIX — When Smith's supermarkets opened its first two stores here November 1, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 99R set up picket lines urging shoppers to boycott the stores.

Smith's officials say they are building eight stores in the Phoenix area that will eventually employ 5,000 workers. Since they're all projected as nonunion operations, you might expect Local 99R to be launching an organizing drive

UNION TALK

to recruit these workers.

This isn't what's happening.

"This is not an organizing campaign," Local 99R President Dennis Davison told the *Arizona Republic*. "We're not soliciting organizing cards. This is a save-our-jobs campaign." The union has rented billboards around town that show a boxing glove labeled "UFCW," and the slogan "We're fighting for our jobs — don't shop at Smith's."

Union officials argue that the Smith's stores will take business away from existing supermarkets where UFCW members work. To protect the jobs of union members, Davison argued, "We have to stop Smith's in their tracks. We have to make their entry into the Phoenix market unsuccessful."

While some union members are participating in the boycott picket lines, other have raised questions about this strategy. Why aren't we trying to organize Smith's workers? Shouldn't we try to strengthen the union by winning more members to help us stand up to the employers' demands?

In fact, Local 99R has just won a union-recognition election among the meatcutters at Smith's stores in Tucson, Arizona. And 30 percent of Smith's employees in other states are organized. Why can't we do the same here?

The basic idea behind the Smith's boycott is that workers will benefit in job security and higher wages if the boss they

work for profits. However, this strategy points us in the wrong direction.

For one thing, workers can't control the outcome of competition between different companies. And looking to protect "our employer" only opens us up to making greater concessions in wages and working conditions, and even giving up jobs.

Worse yet, this approach pits one group of workers against another instead of uniting us in a common fight against the bosses. Local 99R boycott literature actually refers to the meatcutters, clerks, and cashiers employed by Smith's as if they were the enemy, not our brothers and sisters.

"We just wanted to let you know that outsiders are invading Phoenix," reads one flyer. "Utah Smith's stores will soon be opening in your neighborhood."

"Arizona jobs for Arizona workers" is another theme of the anti-Smith's ads. They play up the fact that the chain is based in Utah and has transferred some employees from out of state to Phoenix.

We need a perspective that points toward uniting all working people in a common fight against the layoffs, wage-cutting, and speedup that the employers will try to shove down our throats as their economic problems deepen.

On the key issue of jobs, the labor movement should demand a reduction of the workweek from the present 40 hours to 30 hours, with no reduction in weekly take-home pay. This would open the way to create more jobs regardless of the ups and downs of the economy.

The Smith's boycott campaign, and the negative, divisive image it projects of the UFCW, has fueled antiunion propaganda at the Sunland Beef packing house where I work. Workers here are also in Local 99R.

Some of us have been talking up the union, signing up new members, and organizing meetings where coworkers could come and talk with UFCW officials. Many workers, however, are not yet convinced that joining the union could do any good. And a few have circulated an antiunion flyer in the name of SCABS (Seasoned Cutters Against Being

Screwed). The flyer argues that the union just wants our dues money and won't do anything for Sunland workers.

One SCABS flyer seized upon the Smith's boycott to justify their arguments.

"Any new grocery chain will probably be a new customer for Sunland Beef," it said. "New customers mean new money, which in turn means greater job security and possibly more money for us. . . . Who do you think the union is really looking out for? You? I think not! Courtesy of SCABS. We don't want your money. We just want to keep the place where we all earn it!"

Like all of us at Sunland, those who support SCABS are also victims of the company's low wages, speedup, and abusive disciplinary procedures. Union supporters have the challenge of winning them — and the many more who are undecided — to stand together with us, instead of taking the company's side. Abandoning the Smith's boycott, appealing to Smith's workers to join us, and championing the demand for a shorter workweek would be steps in the right direction.

In fact, the resources the UFCW has committed to the Smith's boycott would be much better spent organizing solidarity actions in support of striking Machinists at Eastern Airlines and miners on strike at Pittston Coal Group.

Such actions could include UFCW-sponsored tours and mass meetings for strikers in every city and town where we have a local, advertising campaigns explaining the issues in these strikes and why all working people should support them, and union contingents to beef up the strikers' picket lines at the airports and in the coalfields.

This kind of solidarity would help win these important struggles and set an example for other unionists. It would also be the best way to convince more workers that they should join us in our unions and fight for a better future for all working people.

Harvey McArthur is a meatcutter at Sunland Beef and a member of UFCW Local 99R.

LETTERS

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

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

Many letters are from prisoners without funds who request subscriptions to the *Militant*, as well as a wide range of other literature. The *Militant's* special prisoners' fund enables us to send these subscriptions and, where possible, to fill requests for other literature.

To help in this important effort, send your contribution to the *Militant's* Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Unpaid labor

I feel the need to dedicate some money to a most worthy cause, yet I am without the funds to do so. These people insist on not paying us for the labor we perform. Prisons are big business!

Please renew my subscription and send, if possible, *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* and the book that tells about the changes in Upper Volta (Burkina Faso).

Lovelady, Texas

Freedom fighter

I am a prisoner who believes it is time for a change within the justice system. Thanks to another prisoner, I read your paper and love it. I've been a freedom fighter all my life.

Tucker, Arkansas

Presumed guilty

Why are politicians allowed to kill?

These persons hide behind the cloaks of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. They say their actions are within the Constitution. But their double standards have been shown time and time again.

I'm detained on death row at Indiana State Prison. I was arrested and accused of killing a police officer during a bank robbery. False evidence was used as a ruse against me, calculated to produce a wrong-

ful conviction and death sentence, and cloaked by the prosecutorial machinery and resources to give it the appearance of propriety.

When the evidence of a crime scene shows innocence, the officials in control will invent whatever is needed to gain a conviction.

Is it anybody's right to condemn any innocent being?

Michigan City, Indiana

Eastern Europe

There are many troubles in our world today such as the Mark Curtis frame-up, which I fully understand and whose fight the brothers here at Folsom support.

There is the ongoing struggle in Central America and Africa.

There is our still blossoming situation here at home that is going too slow.

But I am troubled because of the reversal of revolutionary advances in Eastern Europe and Asia, advances paid for in blood and great sacrifice over the last 70 years. We have forgotten the principles of ongoing, ever-evolving class struggle and we have abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat in those countries on the European continent where the means of production were socialized.

The imperialist policies of the so-called Moscow and Beijing elite are causing great dissent and encouraging nationalistic, capitalistic emotions to run rampant all through the liberated republics.

What can be done to correct this approaching calamity?

Represa, California

Malcolm X

I am writing so I may thank you for sending *By Any Means Necessary* by Malcolm X. As soon as I got back to my cell I started reading it and have not put it down yet.

Stormville, New York

Enjoyed in the 'box'

The *Militant* is read and enjoyed by many of my fellow prisoners at this "box" as it covers news of the Eastern strike, coal miners' strike, and the liberation struggle in Namibia and Azania ("South Africa").

I do not like to miss an issue

personally. It is important to a person in this type of isolated environment.

Continue to provide the truth.

Success on the Pathfinder Mural.

A luta continua!

Attica, New York

My homeland Africa

Many thanks indeed. I received the books from you yesterday and am very pleased that you find the time to send me the books of Thomas Sankara and Fidel Castro.

I am looking forward to thanking you personally some day before I return to my beautiful homeland Africa.

Trenton, New Jersey

Light in the darkness

By virtue of the *Militant*, and the literature supplied by Pathfinder, we prisoners here on the Darrington Unit are continuing to grow and shine with each passing day. We are the only light in this vast darkness.

The officials here have learned firsthand that proud and dignified people refuse to be oppressed. This pride and dignity we owe to the *Militant*.

Rosharon, Texas

Need communication

I'm writing to request a subscription. Since I've come to the U.S. penitentiary here I have been enlightened concerning our struggle for freedom and respect. I've come to realize the importance of communication and the need to stay abreast.

Leavenworth, Kansas

Discontinued?

I'm writing out of concern over the discontinuation of my subscription.

I have been placed in a cell-block unit for participation in a protest of inadequate medical attention. I've been here for two months without a single paper and am curious to discover if the capitalists are deliberately withholding my mail or if your paper is suffering from insufficient funds. I pray the latter is not the case because the *Militant* is an indispensable source of revolutionary information.

Angie, Louisiana



A work by Dumile Feni, South African artist jailed on various occasions by the apartheid regime. He painted a portrait of imprisoned African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela as part of the Pathfinder Mural in New York.

'Held for review'

Thanks for honoring my request for some progressive literature.

As you can see from the notice enclosed with this letter, the books *Che Guevara Speaks* and *The Struggle Is My Life* by Nelson Mandela are being "held for review by the Facility Media Review Committee."

Such is par for the course for any progressive literature that advances an alternate social, political, and economic system to that which has been nothing but a day and night-mare to a vast majority of the prisoners and "people of color" within this country and abroad.

I'm not even going to dignify the prison officials' action with a "written statement in support of the admission of the publication" as they request. This mind-control commit-

tee attempts to mask itself in euphemistic labels!

Attica, New York

Send 'Perspectiva'

I am writing this letter on behalf of a friend who wishes to be added to the mailing list of *Perspectiva Mundial*. He is in state prison and came across your paper, which he found to be informative and on time.

Beacon, New York

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.

7,000 workers strike Grenada gov't

BY GREG McCARTAN

In the largest strike and protest action since the U.S. invasion in 1983, some 7,000 workers shut down government operations in Grenada December 1-8.

The strike was in response to the November 30 announcement by Grenadian Prime Minister Herbert Blaize that the government did not have funds to pay workers nearly \$9 million in back pay owed them.

The government workers are members of the Public Workers Union (PWU), the Grenada Teachers Union, and the Technical and Allied Workers Union.

Following Blaize's announcement, PWU President Lauret Clarkson told the Caribbean news agency CANA that the unions "feel disgusted at the whole situation. I anticipate all sorts of actions."

PWU Executive Secretary Garth George, told the *Militant* in a telephone interview that "the three unions held a mass membership meeting the afternoon of December 1. It was attended by 3,000 to 4,000 people and only three workers voted against the strike action," he said. "We started the strike at 2:30 p.m. that same day."

The strikers marched from the union headquarters to Market Square in the capital city of St. George's. A rally was held to explain the unions' demands to the public, George explained.

Those involved in the strike include government office workers, post office employ-

ees, garbage workers, road maintenance workers, and teachers.

George said the government refused to negotiate with the unions from 1986 until June 1989. "We held a demonstration this past June which finally forced them to the negotiating table," he explained.

In October an agreement was reached in which workers were to receive back pay of between 15 and 30 percent of their wages for the 1986-89 period and an additional 5 to 10 percent pay raise.

While the wage increase was introduced November 30, the retroactive pay was not received.

Grenada is an island country of 100,000 in the Caribbean. In 1979 a popular revolution installed a workers' and farmers' government led by Maurice Bishop. In 1983 the government was overthrown by a reactionary coup. Bishop and other revolutionary leaders were assassinated.

Washington then invaded the country and set up the current government. Blaize was elected prime minister in 1984 as leader of the New National Party.

Strike widely supported

Terry Marryshow, leader of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM), called the December strike "the biggest and most militant in many years." The action was widely supported by other workers in the

country, he said, speaking by telephone from St. Georges.

"People saw this as a legitimate demand and other unions supported the action," he explained. The MBPM distributed a statement "in support of the strike. It encouraged workers to stand up for their rights."

On December 5 the unions held another march of several thousand. Strikers marched from the PWU headquarters to the residence of the prime minister. There they demanded the government come up with the funds to make the payments to the workers by December 18.

Blaize responded by "asking the workers to go back to work," said George. "He also threatened us. He said if we did not report to work by December 7 we would not get paid for the period" on strike.

"We were not deterred by his threats. We were determined to fight on," George explained.

Opposition members of Parliament led a delegation to meet with Blaize. They asked him to convene a session of Parliament to discuss how to raise the funds to pay the strikers.

Another delegation from the Grenada Council of Churches met with the prime minister and urged him to seek a solution to the strike.

Blaize refused to make any moves until "we told him we were determined to shut

down the country" December 12 if the demands were not met, said PWU leader George. "We had the support of other unions to accomplish this."

The unions demanded the government commit itself to fulfill its promise on the back pay by December 18, convene Parliament for a special one-day session in order to get authority to raise the funds needed, not victimize any strikers and pay them for the days missed during the walkout, and reimburse workers for a day's sick pay withheld in 1986.

The government backed down and agreed to all the demands but the one for sick pay. The union leadership asked all strikers to return to work December 11.

'Government paralyzed'

The lack of funds for the back pay and the extent of the strike action are indications of the crisis currently wracking the Blaize government.

"The government is paralyzed," Marryshow said. "For example, seven out of the eight garbage trucks in the country are not working. There are piles of garbage everywhere."

Since 1984 the New National Party has splintered. Blaize formed The National Party in September 1989 after being ousted as leader of the NNP.

He ended a parliamentary session last August shortly before facing a vote of confidence called by the opposition which he was expected to lose.

Before the strike no sessions of Parliament had been planned until after the elections due to be set for March 1990.

"We have fought the government's efforts to crush our unions since 1986," George explained. This included rebuffing an attempt to impose an "essential services act" which was to bar strikes in industries covered by the three unions. He said the eight-day strike had been a significant test of strength for the unions in the country.

The unions are discussing further actions to take in the event the government does not meet their demands by December 18.

Pittston miners open new strike center

BY GREG NELSON

LOGAN, W.Va. — A sea of some 700 camouflaged Pittston strikers and supporters filled a vacant, newly renovated, 44,000-square-foot department store here December 7 chanting "We won't go back!"

The event marked the grand opening of "Logan County Camp Solidarity" situated in this southern West Virginia town just up the road from Pittston Coal Group's Elkay and Buffalo mines.

Both coal mines have been shut down by striking members of the United Mine Workers of America since April 5. Some 1,900 miners are on strike against Pittston in West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky.

Following the success of Camp Solidarity in Carterton, Virginia, miners decided to build a similar strike support camp here when they heard Pittston might try to move coal in this area.

Not one lump of coal

"Pittston hasn't run one lump of coal through Logan County since this strike began," said Marty Hudson, UMW strike coordinator, at the opening-night rally. "And when you cut off the flow of coal, that's how you win a contract." Hudson introduced the presidents of the three Logan County UMW locals saying, "There's 300 reasons why Pittston hasn't run coal here — that's the 300 union members on strike."

Half the crowd was made up of striking miners from Virginia here to help open the facility. During the last few weeks miners and friends have built a kitchen and assembly hall and installed plumbing and partitions. The place holds 300 beds for out-of-town strike supporters.

Hudson welcomed supporters from the United Church of Christ who brought a check for \$1,000 for the strikers.

Steve Moss, a local president of the Communications Workers of America from Charleston, West Virginia, discussed the impact of UMW solidarity in the recent telephone workers' strikes.

Moss explained that when he was in Washington, D.C., the president of the phone company complained of UMW miners on CWA picket lines and asked him if he knew they were there. "I hope so," Moss told him. "We asked for them." The phone president argued, "The UMW's got no skin in this game."

Continued on Page 16



More than 700 Pittston strikers and supporters turned out December 7 for the opening of "Logan County Camp Solidarity" in West Virginia.

UMWA leads anti-Klan drive in Pennsylvania

BY MICHAEL PENNOCK

WASHINGTON, Pa. — "The Klan woke us up," said Paul Lemon, secretary-treasurer of United Mine Workers of America District 5, at a November 21 news conference here.

Lemon was referring to recent attempts by the Ku Klux Klan to organize in southwestern Pennsylvania. The KKK's efforts are running into active opposition, led by the UMWA, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and the two dozen other unions that make up the United Labor Committee, which Lemon heads.

At the news conference, which was chaired by UFCW spokesman Gary Best, the United Labor Committee joined chapter representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, churches, and community groups in announcing a rally "Against Racism and for Human Rights: Communities in Unity." The rally is set for December 16 at 1:00 p.m. on

the steps of the Washington County courthouse.

Events leading up to the rally began last April when supervisors in nearby Buffalo Township announced that former Pittsburgh Steeler football player Mel Blount planned to construct and operate a home for boys who had run into trouble with the law.

An outfit called Concerned Citizens was formed in response. The group claimed their property values were threatened by the proposed youth home. Three days later the "White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" distributed racist leaflets denouncing the home and attacking Blacks in general.

The proposal for the youth home was approved in September after some 400 area residents, mostly white, gathered for public hearings on the proposal. The majority supported the idea.

The Klan would not let the matter rest, however, and proceeded to burn a cross in Buffalo Township and asked for permission

to hold a rally in Carmichaels, Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, antiracist forces were discussing how best to respond. Some 500 people attended an interdenominational service against racism conducted by church leaders October 15. The United Labor Committee led public discussions on the need for a protest, resulting in the call for the December 16 rally.

Coal mining is a major industry in the area, and UMWA members have played a major role in mounting a fight against the Klan. Several coordinating centers for the rally are housed in UMWA offices as well as in offices of the UFCW and United Steelworkers of America.

At the November 21 news conference, mine union leader Lemon responded to the Klan's provocations by explaining, "We've drawn the line. If you cross it, we'll knock you back across it. We won't sit back, we'll go to the streets on this one."