

U.S. troops out of Panama!

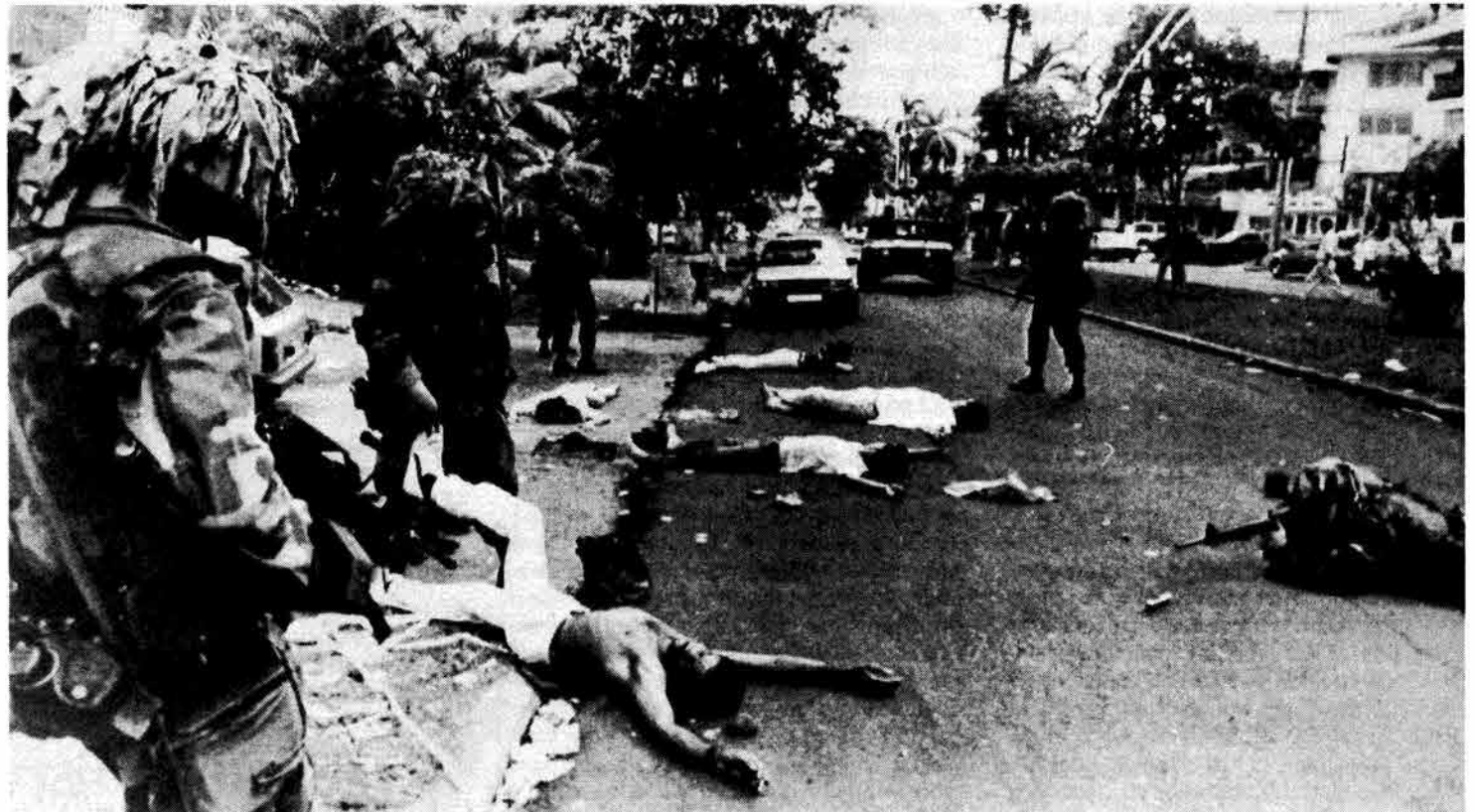
Worldwide protests are needed

Working people and other supporters of national sovereignty and democratic rights the world over must broaden and intensify protests against Washington's invasion and military occupation of Panama.

Massive bombing and shelling have already taken the lives of thousands of Panamanians, primarily civilians in the poorest working-class neighborhoods of Panama City.

Washington's pretexts for the invasion, anointed by top leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties, are a fraud.

An action allegedly aimed at "saving the lives of U.S. citizens" has already, according to government figures, led to the deaths of 25



AP/Wide World Photos

Following murderous bombardment and shelling of working-class neighborhoods, U.S. occupation forces have carried out sweeps of Panama City aimed at crushing resistance to the invasion and terrorizing the population. Nearly 5,000 Panamanians were in detention as of December 28.

EDITORIAL

U.S. soldiers and civilians and the wounding of hundreds of others.

In the name of democracy an occupation army has toppled a sovereign government and imposed a puppet regime at ceremonies held in hiding on a U.S. base. So flagrant was Washington's contempt for the most elementary norms of relations between sovereign governments that it has been able to line up only three of its allies so far to recognize this new regime — Britain, Luxembourg, and Dominica.

Outrage at Washington's arrogance and brutality was so widespread among the people of Latin America, that only the U.S. delegate opposed a resolution against the invasion at a December 22 meeting of the Organization of American States.

In the United Nations Security Council only the undemocratic setup whereby vetoes

Continued on Page 14

Thousands of civilians killed, wounded

BY CINDY JAQUITH

One week into the U.S. invasion of Panama, thousands of Panamanians are dead, wounded, or homeless in the biggest U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War.

A few minutes before 1 a.m. on Dec. 20, 1989, U.S. officials declared Guillermo Endara Panama's new president. The "swearing-in" took place at a secret ceremony at Fort Clayton, one of the 13 U.S. military bases in Panama's canal zone.

Massive U.S. bombing of Panama City began moments later. An invading force that eventually reached 26,000 U.S. troops as-

saulted Panamanian army bases and working-class neighborhoods.

Panama, a country of 2.3 million, has an army of only 7,000, called the Defense Forces.

Washington reported that 23 U.S. soldiers and 2 U.S. civilians had been killed as of December 27.

The Pentagon admitted to 297 Panamanian soldiers killed but refrained from estimating the number of civilian casualties. ABC-TV news reported December 28 that at least 1,000 civilians were dead.

Panamanian health officials said the num-

ber was more likely 2,000, explaining that many of the victims are either in mass graves or still buried beneath the rubble of the two working-class districts in Panama City flattened by U.S. bombers.

Ambulances bombed

Doctors and health officials in Panama charged that the prime victims of the invasion were civilians and that U.S. troops prevented them from receiving emergency care.

The New York Spanish-language daily *El Diario* was told December 21 by Jaime Aranifo, Panama City health director, that hospitals "are attending to hundreds of wounded. They're all civilians."

Aranifo expressed outrage that U.S. forces had bombed two Red Cross vehicles that tried to pick up victims and had blocked other emergency vehicles from rescuing the wounded. "No one, not even the journalists, could get to the area" where the wounded were, he said.

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Invasion of Panama stirs protests, debate

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Washington's December 20 invasion of Panama provoked protests in many cities across the United States and has sparked a serious discussion among working people over its goals and consequences.

Several Panamanian students and local Panamanian community leader Esmeralda Brown carried the flag of their country as they led a demonstration of almost 400 people in New York. The action, called on nine

hours' notice, took place in midtown Manhattan December 20.

"The Panamanian people will fight to defend their land and their canal," Brown said. She urged everyone "to unite all of our forces to create one voice to say 'No' to U.S. policy in Panama, Central America, and the Caribbean." A handful of onlookers joined the demonstration, while a few others heckled. When demonstrators rallied at Rockefeller Center amidst holiday crowds including

many tourists and elegantly attired shoppers, heated debates over the invasion broke out.

"Today is the beginning of days, months,

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Popular uprising in Rumania brings down hated tyrant

BY FRED FELDMAN

The Stalinist totalitarian regime in Rumania that was headed for 24 years by Nicolae Ceausescu has been shattered by a popular revolutionary upsurge that developed in recent weeks with lightning speed. Rumania is a country of 23 million people located in Eastern Europe. It borders Hungary, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Bulgaria.

The fate of the Ceausescu regime was sealed when spreading antigovernment protests won support in the armed forces, and impelled sections of the army's high command to back the toppling of Ceausescu. In several days of bloody fighting, the army and armed civilians appear to have defeated the Securitate, the hated political police. In some cases civilian units, which sprang up in many parts of the country, armed themselves with weapons captured from the dictatorship's security forces.

Ceausescu and his wife Elena, who served as deputy prime minister, fled the capital city, Bucharest, on December 22 and their capture was announced December 23. They were executed two days later after a trial before a military tribunal that convicted the pair of responsibility for the killings of some 60,000 people and other crimes.

The trial and execution took place as police units backing Ceausescu were still carrying out attacks on the national television station and gunning down many civilians in Bucharest, Timisoara, and elsewhere. Their tactics included attacks on blood banks and on ambulances coming to the aid of wounded anti-Ceausescu demonstrators. Since the protests began December 15, thousands of people have died at the hands of the Securitate and other government forces.

On December 23, Soviet President Mik-

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Help distribute the 'Militant'

This special issue of the *Militant* has been published to help mobilize the broadest possible opposition to U.S. imperialism's savage aggression against Panama. Our purpose is to provide unionists, farmers, youth, political activists, and others with the truth about the Panamanian people's struggle for sovereignty.

Although the *Militant* was on a two-week vacation shutdown when the December 20 invasion occurred, we have returned a week early for this reason.

We urge all readers of the *Militant* to help us circulate this issue as widely as possible — on the picket lines and at plant gates and union meetings, at protest rallies

and demonstrations, on campuses, and in working-class communities.

If you would like to help, contact *Militant* supporters in your area listed on page 12, or the *Militant* Business Office listed on page 2.

This special issue will continue to be useful in coming weeks, along with our subsequent coverage of the Panamanian people's fight against U.S. aggression. Bundles can be ordered from the *Militant* Business Office.

Because this is a special issue many of our regular features, such as "Learning About Socialism" and "Great Society," are missing. They will return starting next week.

Cuban magazine features story on Curtis frame-up

The following article about Mark Curtis appeared in the November 3, 1989, issue of *Bohemia*, the most widely read news and literary magazine in Cuba. The article was titled "History repeats itself: The U.S. system of justice shows its true face once again." The translation is by the *Militant*.

Curtis is a young unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving a 25-year term at the state penitentiary in Anamosa on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. Today he is fighting for his right and the right of other prisoners to be politically active and in contact with the world. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international campaign to win justice for Curtis. Since his conviction, more than 6,000 organizations and individuals from around the world have endorsed his defense effort. For more information, write to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695.

BY MARTA G. SOJO

The United States of 1920, in broad terms, reveals a portrait of an expanding and intensifying strike movement for wage increases, reduction of the workday, and the right to form unions. This was the era marked by the famous case of the workers Sacco and Vanzetti. Sacco was active in the labor movement, while Vanzetti was a mass agitator who dedicated himself to propaganda considered illegal and subversive.

Both were tried and sentenced to capital punishment for a crime committed against a paymaster and his guards in a shoe factory. This was despite the fact that both Sacco and Vanzetti could prove they did not participate in the crime.

These murders — supposedly legal — were merely a means to intimidate workers and the labor movement of that time.

Time has passed, but some historical episodes are replayed, helping us to understand that the repressive methods and policies of old remain in use. At the end of the 1980s, an episode has been repeated in the traditional manner of the 1920s. This is the case of Mark Curtis.

Curtis, a packinghouse worker at the Swift processing plant in Des Moines, Iowa, was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment on charges of rape and burglary. Hidden behind these charges, progressive forces in the United States insist, is a flagrant coercive maneuver aimed at silencing the social and economic struggles supported by this young man.

Like in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, one aspect of the continuity of the U.S. ruling class' repressive policy could be clearly seen at Mark Curtis' trial. This was the policy of falsely accusing fighters for social change of committing common crimes. The aim of such a procedure is to cover up the use of repression. In this way they attempt to silence social and political struggles, thus masking the repressive character of the system.

Intertwined with the Mark Curtis case are other, deeper conflicts that are worth thinking about.

The violation of human rights in the United States is evident in the discrimination against the so-called national minorities, in the deceitful propaganda about the policy of "open arms" toward immigrants, and in the Curtis case itself.

In this respect, we cannot overlook some background events in the Curtis case, which occurred just days prior to his arrest.

In March 1988 the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service arrested 17 workers from the plant where he worked. These included 16 Mexicans and one Salvadoran. All were prosecuted as criminals, under the pretext that they had falsified their documents to obtain employment. This action contradicts the supposed basis of the U.S. immigration law's amnesty program for undocumented immigrants, under which immigrants were not supposed to fear being prosecuted for entering the country and obtaining work without the necessary documents.

The raid was a challenge to the amnesty program nationally and it provoked demonstrations in support of those being held. Curtis was an active participant in these demonstrations in support of the rights of these workers.

A few days later, Curtis was arrested, beaten, and called a "Mexican-lover" and a "lover of Blacks." At the trial held at the end of last year, no evidence was presented that Curtis had committed any rape. The medical examiner who examined the alleged victim stated that "in my view, in terms of rape, the evidence does not link these two persons to each other."

In fact, Curtis' crime was that of being a militant unionist and a defender of workers born in other countries. His crime was to march against racism and to oppose U.S. intervention in Central America. For these actions he was framed up on charges of rape.

The U.S. government has been denouncing human rights violations in other countries. In reality, the case against Mark Curtis proves that flagrant violations of human rights continue in the United States. It dem-



Photos of Mark Curtis and the Des Moines, Iowa, protest against the Immigration and Naturalization Service arrest of the Swift 17, a group of immigrant workers from Curtis' plant, were featured with the November 3 *Bohemia* article on his fight.

onstrates the hypocrisy of the U.S. government in condemning what is happening in other countries around the world, while turning its back on what is going on in its own house.

What is behind this whole case? We see a deceitful country that shouts about riches, freedom, equality, and humanitarian sentiments, in order to present the image of what they call a "perfect society." But in their own

territory they fail to put into effect all these doctrines and virtues they claim to be defending. This is something the ruling classes in the United States refuse to admit. The representatives of the U.S. government do not want to acknowledge that the case we have recounted above presents only a tiny picture of the intense exploitation and repression that the capitalist system in the United States has instituted against the workers.

Dismissal of disruption suit denied

BY SANDRA NELSON

DES MOINES, Iowa — On December 20 Iowa District Court Judge Arthur Gamble denied a motion to dismiss a disruption lawsuit filed against Mark Curtis in November. A hearing on the dismissal motion was held two days earlier.

The suit, filed by Keith and Denise Morris, claims punitive damages for the "pain and suffering" allegedly inflicted on their daughter by Curtis and asks the court to assign to them "any monies" received by Curtis "as the result of the commercialization of his acts."

In a combined motion, Curtis' attorneys William Kutmus and George Eichhorn asked the court to strike the commercialization claim and dismiss the suit. The suit should come to trial within 18 months, but the process can sometimes take longer, Eichhorn explained.

Curtis, a longtime political activist and unionist, is serving a 25-year sentence on a frame-up rape and burglary conviction. He is incarcerated at the Iowa State Men's Re-

formatory in Anamosa. His frame-up by the Des Moines police stemmed from his defense of immigrant coworkers arrested in an Immigration and Naturalization Service raid at the Swift meat-packing plant.

"This lawsuit is a serious challenge to Curtis' defense campaign," said John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. "Significant resources will have to be diverted to fight this case. That is its central goal: to attack the defense effort."

"The lawsuit will be used to conduct a smear campaign and disruption effort against Curtis and his defense committee," Studer explained. "It is consistent with the disruptive activities practiced by the Workers League, an antilabor group which has aggressively advanced the Des Moines police and prosecutor's frame-up of Curtis and has attempted to undermine support for his fight." Studer said that funds to confront this challenge are urgently needed and should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

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The *Militant* covers the struggles of working people around the world. It features:

- Firsthand reports on worldwide protests against the U.S. invasion of Panama.
- On-the-scene news of labor battles, from the strike at Eastern Airlines to the fightback in the coalfields.
- Regular coverage of advances being made by Cuban working people, and speeches by Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders.
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Panama invasion stirs protest, debate

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even years of resistance" to Washington's invasion of Panama, said Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade at a December 23 rally of 50 people in downtown Miami. "The United States is making the same mistake in Panama it made in Vietnam," Gerard Jean-Juste, director of the Haitian Refugee Center, told protesters. A representative of LaCasa, a Latin American and Caribbean solidarity group, announced a meeting to plan further actions.

'Vietnam yesterday, Panama today'

A contingent of Panamanians opposed to the invasion joined a December 20 protest against U.S. aid to El Salvador at the Los Angeles federal building. More than 500 people participated and almost 150 were arrested in civil disobedience actions blocking entrances to the building. Two days later 200 protesters marched outside a theater showing "Born on the Fourth of July," a film about antiwar Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic. "Vietnam yesterday, Panama today," they chanted.

Some 500 people marched through the Union Square shopping district of San Francisco on December 20. The action was called by El Salvador and Nicaragua solidarity groups. Participants reported many observers were friendly and several drivers honked their horns in support. A few hecklers argued with demonstrators and one man tried to ram the crowd with his car, jumped out with a

knife, and was dragged away by police and arrested.

The U.S. government has created a "climate of terror" in Central America, said Mac Charles Jones, a minister and national chair of the Social Justice Commission of the National Baptist Convention of America. Jones joined a news conference of civil rights leaders and Central America solidarity activists December 20 in Kansas City, Missouri.

"We stand in solidarity and unity with our brothers and sisters in Latin America and Panama. Unless they are free to determine their destiny, we are not free to determine ours," said Nelson Thompson, president of the Kansas City Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

On December 20 representatives from a range of political, religious, and solidarity groups formed a coalition in Chicago and called for protests the following day and on December 23. Marching up and down State Street, the commercial center of the city, the protesters distributed statements opposing the invasion to holiday shoppers. The coalition is planning more activities.

Some 20 people opposed to the U.S. invasion of Panama picketed the Federal Building in Atlanta, December 21. About a dozen people who supported Washington's action held a counterpicket. Several Atlanta unionists reported that while many coworkers in-



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December 24 protest in Miami

icated initial support for the invasion, others opposed it. One Machinists' union member at Northwest Airlines' maintenance hangar said that the invasion had caused a heated

debate at his job. Two aircraft cleaners who are Black argued strongly for Panama's sovereignty, he reported.

'Another broken treaty'

"Another broken treaty, U.S. troops out of Panama," read an American Indian Movement placard at a protest of 125 people in Washington, D.C., December 20. The action was initiated by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. "No troops, no war — from Panama to Salvador!" the demonstrators chanted.

Fifty people picketed the offices of U.S. Sen. Dennis DeConcini in Tucson, Arizona, on December 21. They demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Panama. That same day two workers at Sunland Beef, a packinghouse in Phoenix, circulated a statement among coworkers condemning the invasion. Fifty-two workers signed the statement and sent it to the local media. Pedro Montes, an initiator of the protest, was then invited by a Spanish-language radio station to explain his opposition.

Several packinghouse workers in Omaha, Nebraska, reported a range of reactions to the invasion at two United Food and Commercial Workers—organized plants in that city. At one slaughterhouse many Mexican workers were angry that a country as large as the United States would invade a small country the size of Panama. At another meat-packing plant where workers are older and many are Anglo, the sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of Washington's intervention.

Political activists in Birmingham, Alabama, organized a December 22 news conference calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Panama. The event was covered by two local TV stations, two radio stations, and a local newspaper.

Alabama miners debate invasion

Miners at the No. 5 mine in Brookwood, Alabama, reported the invasion was a hot topic of discussion among the United Mine Workers of America members there. Many workers followed the events closely as they unfolded in the media and tended to accept Washington's explanation that the invasion was to get a "drug dealer." A few argued against this, comparing the U.S. government's actions with Pittston Coal Group's treatment of striking miners in Virginia and West Virginia. Some compared the media's history of violence-baiting against miners with the media's unfavorable coverage of Gen. Manuel Noriega's government in Panama.

Protest actions ranging from 20 to 100 people also occurred in Greensboro, North Carolina; Salt Lake City, Utah; Northfield, Minnesota; Baltimore; Seattle; Portland, Oregon; Philadelphia; Louisville, Kentucky; and Cleveland.

Farm leader denounces intervention

"The attitude the U.S. government has taken by invading Panama is the same attitude the lynchers in the South used against Black people," Merle Hansen, president of the North American Farm Alliance, told the Militant.

"The National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights does not support the invasion," said Zoilo Torres, cochair of the New York chapter. "It is a violation of sovereignty."

"Like the criminal U.S. invasion of Grenada in October 1983 and the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, this is an attack against the people of the entire Caribbean and Latin American region," said Don Rojas in a statement released in New York December 20. Rojas was the press secretary to Maurice Bishop, the late prime minister of Grenada, and was himself a victim of the U.S. intervention in Grenada.

"Far from a 'surgical strike,' Washington's invasion will lead to large-scale slaughter and destruction in Panama," a December 20 statement from the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party said. "We urge all opponents of U.S. intervention, Black rights activists, trade unionists, and others to immediately let their voices be heard through picket lines, demonstrations, and speakouts demanding 'U.S. troops out of Panama now!'"

The Young Socialist Alliance, the War Resisters League, the Communist Party USA, and the Socialist Party USA also released statements condemning Washington's attack on Panama.

Int'l actions hit U.S. aggression

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Within hours of the U.S. government's December 20 invasion of Panama, the Canadian Labour Congress issued a statement condemning Washington's action and the Canadian government's support for it. "We endorse the principle of citizens of a sovereign nation working out their own problems," said CLC President Shirley Carr. "The United States is not the town sheriff for the Americas and the Americas are not Dodge City."

Carr called the invasion "vigilante justice." She said she feared Canada would become a rubber stamp for U.S. foreign policy with the Canadian government's recent decision to join the Organization of American States. The CLC is the national union federation in Canada, with more than 2 million members. Protests in other countries also greeted the news of the U.S. assault.

Central America and the Caribbean

"The terrorist invasion constitutes a mortal blow to the peace process in Central America," said a statement issued by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador. "We call on the North American people to stop the military intervention of the Bush administration, which is forcing a new Vietnam on you not far from your borders, where North American youth have already begun to die," it concluded.

Almost 3,000 unionists, students, and representatives from peasant and women's organizations marched to the U.S. embassy in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, on December 21. "The Dominican people know firsthand the aggressive and disrespectful attitude of the United States, having experienced three military interventions in this century," said Fafa Taveras, general secretary of the Bloque Socialista, in a statement condemning the U.S. action against Panama. Taveras said further protests are planned.

The invasion of Panama "is reminiscent of the criminal U.S. invasion of Grenada six years ago," said Terry Marryshow in a statement by the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement of Grenada. "We call on all governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, trade unions, workers, and all freedom-minded people all over the world to condemn in the strongest possible manner the violation of the Panama Canal treaties."

In Puerto Rico pro-independence groups demonstrated outside the Federal Building in Hato Rey, San Juan, on the day of the invasion. The protest was called to "make certain that the Puerto Rican National Guard not be used to massacre innocent Panamanian civilians and to see to it that Puerto Rican soil is not used as a jumping-off point as it was in the invasion of Grenada," said Doris

Pizarro of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

Iran

Thousands of people, many of them students, protested in Tehran December 26. They called for the U.S. military to get out of Panama and protested the British and French governments' support for the invasion.

Western Europe

Some 100 people protested outside the U.S. embassy in London on December 22. Ron Todd, general secretary of the 1.2-million-member Transport and General Workers Union, condemned the U.S. military assault, calling it "a significant escalation of tension in the region."

In Frankfurt, West Germany, Central America solidarity groups and the Frankfurt University student government mobilized 100 people in a rally outside the U.S. consulate. "When has this year been peaceful?" asked Christa Weber, a representative of the El Salvador Solidarity Committee. "On the warships off Malta maybe." Weber scored the U.S. war in El Salvador and against Nicaragua, and condemned the invasion of

Panama.

More than 500 demonstrated in West Berlin and actions also took place in Heidelberg and Cologne. Protests were also reported in Switzerland and Austria.

Canada, Australia

In addition to the Canadian Labour Congress statement issued December 20 some 50 people gathered outside the U.S. consulate in Montréal that day. "Yankees out of Panama," "Bush murderer — Mulroney accomplice," and "Québec, Panama — solidarity!" they chanted. Organizers condemned the Canadian government's support for the U.S. invasion.

The Ontario Central America Solidarity Committee organized an action of more than 50 people at the U.S. consulate in Toronto, also on December 20. Another protest is planned for December 30 at the headquarters of the ruling Conservative Party.

On December 21 and 23 Vancouver activists took to the streets outside the U.S. consulate.

More than 70 people picketed the U.S. consulate in Sydney, Australia. An action was also held in Melbourne.

Havana youth support Panama

BY MIGUEL PENDÁS

HAVANA — When I turned on the radio on the morning of December 20, the station was broadcasting in urgent tones the news of the U.S. invasion of Panama.

Programs were interrupted frequently to carry live reports from the scenes of battle in Panama City. Workers in the hotel where I was staying had radios turned up to listen while they worked.

At the corner newsstand, I was lucky to get a copy of Cuba's main daily, *Granma*. Its banner headline read "Yankee Troops Invade Panama." They were sold out by late morning.

Before noon I saw my first demonstration protesting the invasion. A group of about 200 young people from the nearby University of Havana campus marched past with makeshift banners and Cuban flags, shouting slogans denouncing the U.S. aggression. A few blocks away another group of 300 adults was marching down La Rampa, one of the widest, busiest streets in Havana. Turning the corner, a group of 40 schoolchildren in uniform marched down the sidewalk, apparently headed in the same direction.

A couple of Cuban friends told me that the crowd was marching on the U.S. Interests Section, housed in the former U.S. embassy. I grabbed my camera and we headed for where the action was. Along the way we

noticed how many people were hanging Cuban flags from their balconies. A few thousand people, mostly students, had gathered in the plaza-like area in front of the old embassy, a tall building right on the Malecón, the boulevard that runs along Havana's seawall. Police shut down the Malecón to accommodate the growing number of protesters.

The crowd was emotional, angry and joyful at the same time. Representatives of each student contingent came up to a makeshift podium to declare their support for Panama and to condemn U.S. President George Bush. A popular chant was, "Fidel, for sure, hit the Yankees hard." One student delivered her message in English so that those inside the Interests Section could understand it. The Cuban students — many of whom study English — showed by their applause that they understand just as well.

Directly across from the former embassy a huge Cuban flag was draped over a balcony, a sign that the immediate and spontaneous reaction of many Cubans was that the attack on Panama was an attack on Cuba. This brought out their national pride and internationalism at the same time.

Students wore paper signs with slogans like, "For Panama and the Americas, we would shed our blood the same as we would for Cuba."

Thousands of Panamanians killed, wounded by U.S. invasion force

Continued from front page

"This criminal attack by the U.S. forces on our country has gotten to the point where there's not the most minimal concern for human life," Aranifo charged. "In our morgue we have around 80 bodies that haven't been buried and we can't get out to bury them. This poses another danger for the population that is still alive."

Directors of the Santo Tomás hospital in Panama City told *El Diario* there was desperate need for the most basic medical supplies: antibiotics, gauze, and plaster for making casts. "The number of people wounded by explosives and bullets is incredible," said one hospital worker.

U.S. troops in full combat gear had occupied Santo Tomás hospital, *El Diario* was told. A few days later, the doctors who had informed the paper of the carnage were fired and a new staff installed in the hospital.

Thousands under arrest

As of December 28, U.S. forces admitted to holding 4,810 Panamanians prisoner.

Although the Endara government has announced the formation of a new army, the Panama Public Force, U.S. troops are carrying out all the arrests of supporters of the toppled government. Former Foreign Minister Leonardo Kam was arrested December 27.

U.S. intelligence agents are also in charge

of recruitment to the Panamanian Public Force.

Panamanian radio, television, and newspapers were shut down by the U.S. troops for a week. The only television station broadcasting in the country was the U.S. military's Southern Command Network. Seized Panamanian television networks displayed a "Department of Defense" shield for the first hours of the invasion.

'Restoring democracy'

On December 20 White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater announced that the invasion's goals were "to protect American lives, restore the democratic process, preserve the integrity of the Panama Canal treaties, and apprehend Manuel Noriega."

Noriega, head of the Defense Forces and the Panamanian government, had been indicted by Washington in 1988 on drug-trafficking charges. The indictments came after he refused to let the Defense Forces be used in the U.S.-sponsored contra war against Nicaragua. Noriega also demanded that Washington live up to the canal treaties, which require all U.S. military bases to be off Panamanian soil by the year 2000. Panama is to gain control of the canal that same year.

President George Bush claimed he was compelled to order the invasion after Panamanian troops shot and killed a U.S. officer, Robert Paz, outside Defense Forces head-

quarters December 17.

U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, on the other hand, told reporters that the invasion plan "had been in existence for some time. It was one of the first items I was briefed on when I became Secretary of Defense last spring."

Bush administration officials subsequently told the *New York Times* that specific invasion preparations had been in the works ever since a coup attempt against Noriega failed last October 3. Tanks and helicopters were gradually moved to U.S. bases in Panama in violation of the canal treaties.

Dress rehearsals for the operation were conducted right in Panama, under the guise of "maneuvers." The maneuvers were also carried out in violation of the treaties and had become almost daily occurrences by the time of the actual invasion.

Provocations by U.S. forces had also increased in recent months. Panamanians charged the incident that resulted in Paz's death was one such example. Paz and three other GIs had driven up to the Defense Forces headquarters and begun firing, wounding a child. Panamanian troops responded in self-defense.

Razing of Chorrillo

At a briefing about eight hours into the invasion, Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the media that

the invading force consisted of infantry, marines, paratroopers, navy, air force, and military police. They simultaneously attacked targets in Panama City, the city of Colón on the country's Atlantic Coast, the international airport, and several military facilities.

The first target in Panama City was the headquarters of the Defense Forces, located in the working-class district of Chorrillo. U.S. officials say they thought they would capture Noriega there.

Pounded for hours by U.S. artillery, the headquarters was destroyed and many of the wooden frame tenements around it burned down. U.S. troops prevented ambulances from entering the area. Noriega was not captured.

'Mopping up'

Powell told reporters six hours later that the troops who assaulted the Defense Forces headquarters "have accomplished their mission." He added "there will still be a need for mopping up and stability operations in support of the new government."

Massive bombardment of another working-class neighborhood, San Miguelito, began. Only after the heavy bombing did U.S. troops enter the neighborhood.

San Miguelito had been a stronghold of supporters of Panama's right to the canal. Many civilian residents were mobilized in the popular militias called "Dignity Battalions," set up two years ago to prepare for a U.S. invasion.

The Stealth bomber was used to drop two 2,000-pound bombs on the Río Hato military school.

Late in the afternoon of December 20, U.S. forces destroyed Radio Nacional, the government station. In one of its last broadcasts, it transmitted a message from Noriega to his supporters:

"We're going to maintain the resistance. Congratulations to the Dignity Battalions. Congratulations to my comrades in arms and the Defense Forces and to all the Panamanian people. We must resist and advance. Our slogan is win or die."

Cuban radio jammed

When Radio Nacional was silenced, that eliminated the last of the Panamanian airwaves loyal to the Defense Forces. U.S. troops began distributing leaflets urging Panamanians to stop fighting, falsely reporting that the resistance had ended.

But Cuban radio stations that reach Panama by shortwave continued broadcasting reports of the ongoing resistance. The U.S.

Nicaraguans denounce U.S. assault on Panama

BY SUSAN APSTEIN

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Some 20,000 people turned out for a December 23 rally in Chinandega to protest the U.S. invasion of Panama. Originally scheduled as a campaign stop for Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, the event was transformed into an action in solidarity with Panama.

"We cannot accept on our continent, or anywhere in the world, a power that acts as the United States does, invading countries whenever it feels like it," Ortega said.

Within hours after the first U.S. soldiers landed in Panama, the Nicaraguan government ordered a mobilization of troops and declared a state of military alert. Before dawn on December 20 tank units were deployed and anti-aircraft batteries put in place to defend against a possible U.S. attack.

At the same time, Nicaragua immediately called for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council to demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The people of the United States, Ortega told the Chinandega rally, "Do not support this kind of criminal action and are paying for it with the lives of their youth, who are returning home in body bags."

The U.S. invasion, the president said, is proof that Nicaragua must remain prepared to defend itself militarily, and that it has the right to do so.

Unions, farmers respond

As soon as news of the invasion came over the radio, unions, farmers' organizations, and professional groups began issuing statements denouncing the attack.

The National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) demanded that the U.S. government "cease its aggression against the people of Panama." The Association of Rural Workers (ATC) announced that its members "are prepared to join the Dignity Battalions and go to Panama if necessary."

Three thousand people, mostly factory workers, marched on the U.S. embassy here the day the invasion began, demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Gathering after work at the regional headquarters of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), they raised the banner "Aquí, allá, el yanqui morirá." (Here, there, the Yankees will die.)

At a rally outside the embassy, CST leader Dámaso Vargas called on workers and all Nicaraguans to be prepared to defend the country. Ajax Delgado from the Sandinista youth organization JS-19 declared that the country's youth are prepared to "take up arms

against any move U.S. imperialism makes against Nicaragua."

Roberto Martínez marched in the demonstration along with most of his fellow workers at an auto repair business. "The invasion shows U.S. imperialism won't leave any people in peace that resists its domination," Martínez said. "They will use any pretext to annul the Torrijos-Carter treaties and defend the military bases that are the launching pad for attacks on other Latin Americans."

Forums of solidarity

Many year-end factory assemblies throughout the country became forums of solidarity with Panama. At the Pepsi-Cola bottling plant in Managua, 500 workers heard Sandinista National Liberation Front leader Mónica Baltodano. "Imagine 30,000 Yankee soldiers in the streets of Managua, and bombs falling on the city," she said. "Many people were skeptical that as we approach the year 1990 the U.S. would use its traditional methods. But it is interested in an atmosphere of domination, not of peace."

One isolated voice in Nicaragua spoke up in favor of the invasion, that of the U.S.-backed National Opposition Union (UNO), which is running against the Sandinista Front in the February elections. "I regret that the U.S. military action has violated the principle of nonintervention," declared UNO presidential candidate Violeta Chamorro, "but I take comfort from the result of the episode — the coming to power of the representative and

freely elected government of President Guillermo Endara."

When U.S. troops and tanks surrounded the Nicaraguan embassy in Panama City the morning of December 21, Ortega told the ambassador to prepare to defend the building with arms as Nicaraguans would protect any piece of their country's territory.

Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto announced at a news conference here that Nicaragua will respond to any move against its embassy in Panama by taking identical action against the U.S. embassy in Managua. Fifteen tanks and other armored vehicles soon encircled the U.S. compound.

That evening the tanks were removed in response to the lifting of the U.S. military encirclement of Nicaragua's embassy in Panama. Later, when one U.S. tank reappeared in front of the embassy in Panama, a similar vehicle was deployed in Managua.

D'Escoto also stressed the importance of the response of Latin American governments to the invasion. "If we are united, we can undoubtedly defend our rights. Unfortunately, a number of supposedly great democratic statesmen issue statements 'lamenting' the situation. This isn't a time for wailing, but for clearly and categorically condemning the U.S. invasion, and not for bringing up totally irrelevant arguments — about what Noriega did or didn't do, for example."

In Washington, the Nicaraguan representative to the Organization of American States

Continued on Page 13



December 20 march against U.S. invasion of Panama in Managua, Nicaragua, drew 3,000, mainly workers. The banner reads, "Here, there, the yankees will die!"

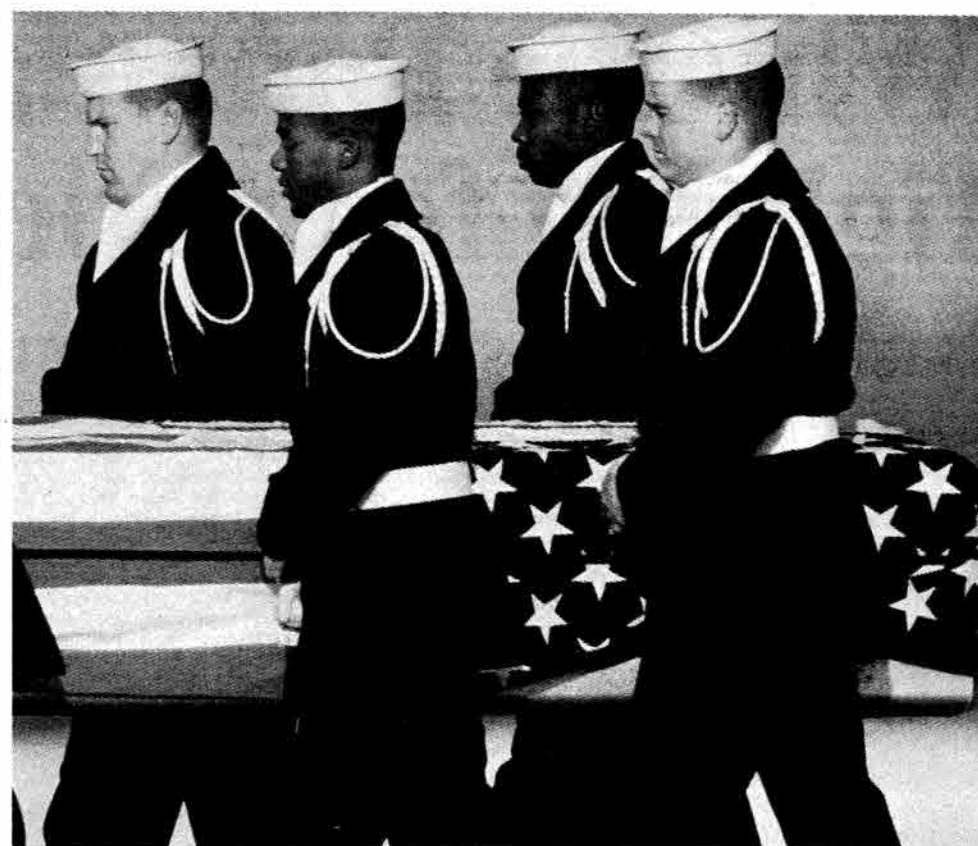
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U.S. invasion force in Panama — a country of 2.3 million people — reached 26,000 troops in the largest U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War. In addition to thousands of Panamanian casualties, Washington reports that 25 U.S. soldiers and civilians had been killed as of December 27.

forces sought to jam the Cuban broadcasts to prevent Panamanians from finding out what was happening.

In Panama City, U.S. troops surrounded both the Cuban and Nicaraguan embassies December 21, on the pretext that Noriega might attempt to enter their facilities seeking asylum.

'Pretty well wrapped up'

Bush declared December 21 that the military operation in Panama was "pretty well wrapped up."

The next morning, however, he announced that another 2,000 troops were being rushed to Panama as reports mounted of guerrilla actions against the U.S. occupation. Bush told Congress he could not predict "the precise scope and duration of the military operations or how long the temporary increase of U.S. forces in Panama will be required."

In a series of attacks, snipers fired on U.S. airplanes landing at Howard Air Force Base. Mortars and machine-gun fire hit a building

"This criminal attack by U.S. forces on our country is to the point where there's not the minimal concern for human life."

near the Southern Command headquarters where Panamanians were being recruited for duty in the new U.S.-run police force. Ricardo Arias Calderón, Washington's newly installed second vice-president, was shot at when he left the downtown National Assembly building.

Dignity Battalions continued resistance against the occupation army in San Miguelito, especially by night.

Thousands of working people poured into shopping malls to seize food, clothes, medicines, and other goods.

Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly, at a briefing in Washington, denounced the Dignity Battalions. "They're looting, sniping," he said. "They are lawless."

At the same time, Kelly conceded the Panamanians "fought a little bit harder than we thought they would." He said that U.S. troops had taken control of the main government buildings in downtown Panama City three days after the invasion began.

Endara came out of hiding and, under heavy U.S. guard, addressed a group of legislators. He was then whisked back to his hideout.

Noriega seeks asylum

After eluding U.S. troops for five days, Noriega took refuge at the Vatican embassy December 24. He asked for asylum in a foreign country. Bush demanded Vatican officials hand the general over to U.S. troops who quickly surrounded the embassy, but the Vatican refused.

The same day, four top officers of the Defense Forces surrendered to the U.S. military. One of them, Col. Luis del Cid, was quickly flown to the United States, where he had been indicted along with Noriega on drug-trafficking charges. Del Cid was reported to have sworn allegiance to the Endara government following his surrender.

In San Miguelito, the Defense Forces commander, Capt. Germán González Pitti, also reportedly swore loyalty to the new government and was placed back in command of the post.

Military threats to Cuban embassy

U.S. troops encircled the Cuban ambassador's home December 24. Armored vehicles and troops in combat gear surrounded both the Cuban embassy and the ambassador's house and dismantled the television that monitors the street from the residence. The U.S. soldiers told embassy personnel anyone leaving would be arrested.

Inside the facilities were diplomatic personnel and families, including children. People in neighboring buildings were evacuated by the troops.

Interviewed by *El Diario* December 26, Cuban ambassador Lázaro Mora said the children "can't even go out in the backyard because soldiers who have occupied the adjoining houses have guns pointed at them."

UN debate

At the United Nations a debate on the invasion began in the Security Council De-

cember 21 at the initiative of the Nicaraguan government, which called for immediate withdrawal of the U.S. troops.

Cuban UN Ambassador Oscar Oramas Oliva told the Security Council, "What's really being decided in Panama is not the situation of U.S. citizens, not their property, nor their interest in restoring democracy, but the intent of the United States to not carry out the canal treaties and not give authority over this facility to a government that is the legitimate continuator of the aspirations of General Omar Torrijos."

The Organization of American States, which had strongly approved the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic, met and adopted a resolution December 22 to "deeply regret the military intervention in Panama," "call for the withdrawal of the foreign troops," and support "full respect for the right of the Panamanian people to self-determination without outside interference and faithful adherence to the letter and spirit of the Torrijos-Carter treaties."

The vote was 20 to 1. The United States delegate cast the one opposing vote. The governments of six countries — El Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela, Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, and Guatemala — abstained.

'Ambush of Black country'

Within the United States, reaction against the invasion came quickly, especially among

Black people.

The *Amsterdam News*, New York's main Black newspaper, recalled the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada and charged that "President George Bush has repeated what Ronald Reagan did . . . ambush another Black country." The *News* called for "the withdrawal of the troops from the sovereign soil of Panama."

The December 24 "Like It Is" television show hosted by Gil Noble interviewed New York Assemblyman Roger Green, who represents a district in Brooklyn made up of many Panamanian immigrants and other Blacks. Green had returned from a fact-finding trip to Panama shortly before the invasion.

"We saw a nation that's very proud of its history, that strongly believes in self-determination and national sovereignty," said Green.

Green explained that the conflict was rooted in U.S. violations of the canal treaties and in the severe economic sanctions Washington has imposed on Panama, which are "hitting hardest the poor, the working poor, throughout the country."

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) also spoke on the program, denouncing the invasion as illegal and disputing the claim that the purpose was to fight drugs. "I really think the canal is the basis of the whole thing," Rangel said. "Certainly there's no one saying there will be one ounce less of cocaine on the streets of New York."

Statement from Cuban embassy in Panama

The following statement was released to the international media by the Cuban embassy in Panama City December 28 in response to the seige of the embassy by U.S. military forces.

In the midst of the disaster created by the U.S. invasion of Panama, U.S. troops have not only occupied the country but also conducted an attack against the security and territorial integrity of Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Papal Nunciature.

Both the Cuban embassy and the Cuban ambassador's residence in Panama have been encircled by more than 200 soldiers and dozens of armored vehicles. Their weapons are pointed in a threatening manner toward the installations and diplomatic personnel, including family members totaling 19 children and 22 women.

It was infuriating to witness how, on December 24, after plunging the Panamanian people into grief and sadness, U.S. troops burst into the neighborhood where the embassy is located. Through loudspeakers they told the neighbors to leave the area because there was going to be heavy fighting with the Cubans within a few hours. Terror and panic spread through the neighborhood. Well aware of the violence the U.S. troops were capable of, residents left their homes to seek safer places, if such were to be found in an occupied country.

For Cubans accustomed as we are to more than 30 years of U.S. barbarities and atrocities, the gringo invasion of the neighborhood only increased our fury and anger. At the same time, however, we maintained our serenity and equanimity, which were now needed much more than ever. We knew that the entire people of Cuba stood behind the few dozen embassy staff members and our families.

We did not remain silent in face of this brutal interference in the functioning of the embassy and complete violation of international norms and diplomatic accords. We denounced it before the entire world.

With reason and justice on our side, we stand on full alert. Under no circumstances will we acquiesce before such gross, flagrant, and illegal interference by U.S. troops.

Those "defenders of human rights," with their illegal encirclement, at first refused to allow deliveries to the ambassador's residence. They cut off supplies of medicine, food, and other necessities required by the personnel housed there, including women and children. But this didn't frighten anyone. Many friends mobilized despite the violence and solidarity managed to carry the day.

Nonetheless the situation at the embassy and the ambassador's residence remains critical and highly charged. Troops and ar-

mored vehicles still surround the buildings and the danger remains.

The ambassador's residence houses 15 people seeking asylum, people who came to our embassy seeking protection from the invading army. None of them are high government officials. They are individuals persecuted in their country by an army opposed to their interests. Cuba will never turn its back on them. If any high officials had presented themselves, Cuba wouldn't have hesitated a moment to offer them protection as well.

It is infuriating to witness the U.S. army's brutal aggression, its attack with all its military might against the people of Panama. More than 30,000 soldiers have been sent here to massacre without a second thought the poorest sectors of the population. Their massive bombing has drenched the country with blood and sorrow.

It would be good if this arrogant army would explain to its people how much blood has been shed in Panama, and what its own losses will be if it continues on the course of seeking to impose a U.S.-style "democracy" here. Panamanian witnesses say that U.S. deaths surpass 200, and that more than 500 U.S. soldiers have been wounded. Operation "Cold Beer" wasn't over in the matter of minutes predicted by Gen. [Marc] Cisneros. It has lasted more than a week and it is still not over.

Why the Panamanian people are fighting for national dignity

Background to struggle for control of the Panama Canal

BY CINDY JAQUITH

"General Thurman, with the way things are going, don't you think it's optimistic to say U.S. troops will be out of Panama in one month?"

*Ted Koppel
ABC Nightline*

"Well, you'll recall when we went into Detroit. We said it would be for 10 days and then it took us a while..."

*Gen. Maxwell Thurman
Head of U.S. Southern Command
Panama, December 22, 1989*

Three days into the U.S. invasion of Panama — Washington's biggest military operation since the Vietnam war — Gen. Maxwell Thurman could only think of Detroit, where 4,700 U.S. paratroopers and 8,000 National Guardsmen invaded in 1967 to crush a rebellion by Blacks against police brutality.

The U.S. Army's occupation of Detroit left 43 Blacks dead, 2,000 wounded, 5,000 arrested, and 5,000 homeless.

The invasion of Panama by 26,000 U.S. troops has so far taken thousands of Panamanian lives and left thousands more homeless and wounded. The first body bags of U.S. GIs are arriving in the United States, along with hundreds of wounded U.S. troops.

Washington says it has occupied this country of only 2.3 million people to "restore democracy." But the bombing of working-class neighborhoods in Panama City, the refusal to permit Red Cross workers to evacuate the wounded, and the rounding up of thousands of Panamanian youth reveal the real target of this operation.

'Heroes of Our America'

The invading troops have met resistance from the Dignity Battalions. These are armed civilian units of Panamanian workers and peasants, many of them Black. The battalions have been branded "terrorists," "thugs," and "looters" by the likes of General Thurman. Cuban President Fidel Castro has praised them as "heroes of Our America, who are fighting for the dignity, honor, and sovereignty of our peoples."

Who are the men and women of the Dignity Battalions and why are they standing up to the most powerful military force on earth?

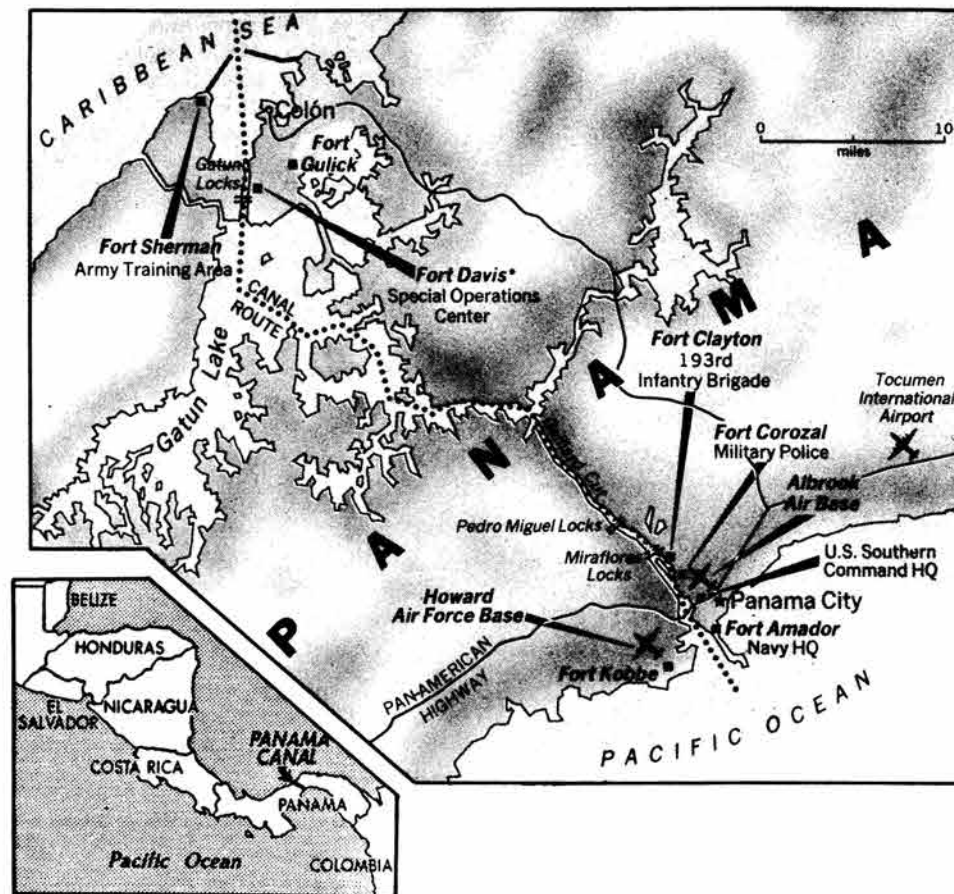
The battle of the Panamanian people for freedom from U.S. tyranny stretches back to the beginning of this century. In 1903 the United States bought rights to build the Panama Canal. A treaty was drawn up giving the U.S. government rights to the canal "in perpetuity," including the right to administer the 650-square-mile Canal Zone, to run the Panama Canal Company, and to use U.S. soldiers to maintain "order" in other parts of Panama. Washington didn't even bother to ask the Panamanian government, which it had just installed, to sign the document.

Tens of thousands of workers from the Caribbean, most of them Black and English-speaking, migrated to Panama to work on the canal. Thousands died from the slavlike working conditions or from disease. Of those who survived, many stayed in the Canal Zone working for the U.S. Army or private U.S. companies once the canal was completed.

'Gold' and 'silver' Jim Crow

The decades following completion of the canal were marked by repeated struggles of Panamanians against U.S. domination of their economy and government and for an end to the occupation of the Canal Zone. Intertwined with the fight for Panamanian sovereignty was the struggle against the racist policies of the U.S. government. In the Canal Zone, Washington had set up the same kind of Jim Crow system that existed at that time in the U.S. South.

Whites shopped at "gold" commissaries and lived in "gold" neighborhoods, while Blacks went to "silver" commissaries, drank out of "silver" water fountains, and could only find housing in "silver" neighborhoods. One Black neighborhood was even called "Silver City." U.S. police were quick to stop



any Panamanian who was Black from entering the Zone's white neighborhoods.

The struggle against this discriminatory system was waged partly through the trade unions that grew up among canal workers. Many of the labor leaders who fought to end segregation were expelled from the country.

The "gold-silver" system, while not in force in Panama proper, nevertheless set the tone for racist policies throughout the country. Blacks, whether they spoke Spanish or English, suffered discrimination in jobs, schools, and housing.

The legal segregationist system in the Zone began to fall apart, however, in the 1950s. With the first victories in the U.S. civil rights movement against "separate but equal" facilities, certain U.S. policies in the Canal Zone were no longer constitutional.

Cuban revolution

In 1959 the people of Cuba overthrew the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, ending decades of U.S. domination. Working people throughout Latin America were inspired by the new Cuban government's resolute action to distribute land to poor peasants, nationalize U.S.-owned companies, drive out the gambling and prostitution houses, and defend the revolution arms in hand.

Labor and youth struggles in Panama, as in many other Latin American countries, began to intensify following the Cuban vic-

tory. Sugar and banana workers in Panama spearheaded a battle for a minimum wage in the early 1960s. There were urban protests against high rents. Panamanian students organized demonstrations against the U.S. occupation of the Zone.

Shot for flying flag

In 1964 a group of students tried to raise the Panamanian flag next to the U.S. flag at Balboa High School in the Zone. U.S. troops intervened, setting off rebellions in the Zone, Panama City, and Colón.

More than 20 Panamanians were shot dead and over 450 wounded. The bulk of the protesters were slain in Chorrillo, one of the poorest working-class neighborhoods in Panama City.

Twenty-five years later, when the U.S. military invaded on Dec. 20, 1989, Chorrillo was the first neighborhood to be destroyed as U.S. bombers pounded the Defense Forces' headquarters located in the heart of Chorrillo.

While most strongly rooted in the working class, the demand for the United States to get out of Panama had also won support among middle-class layers and from a section of Panamanian capitalists who resented the special privileges granted to U.S. businesses in the Canal Zone.

In 1967 Washington offered the Panamanian government a new canal treaty aimed at

maintaining the U.S. presence with some cosmetic changes. Opposition to the treaty was so great that Panama's National Assembly was unable to ratify it.

The political crisis deepened with the 1968 presidential elections. Arnulfo Arias declared himself the winner, but 11 days after taking office, he was overthrown by a group of young officers in the country's National Guard led by Omar Torrijos, then a colonel.

The National Guard, made up overwhelmingly of peasant and working-class youth, many of them Black, had been affected by the anti-imperialist upsurge sweeping Latin America, as had some of its officers. The young troops had no desire to continue allowing their country to be a base for U.S. military operations in the region.

Torrijos came increasingly into conflict with Washington, particularly as he pressed for control of the canal and an end to Panama's colonial status.

"We will never be an associated state, a colony, or a protectorate," Torrijos told the United Nations Security Council in 1973. "Nor will we add another star to the flag of the United States."

In 1974 Torrijos recognized the government of Cuba, breaking with Washington's long-standing policy barring relations with the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro. "Every minute of isolation suffered by the brother people of Cuba constitutes 60 minutes of hemispheric shame," Torrijos said.

Changes in countryside

Big changes came to Panama's countryside under the Torrijos regime, to the distress of the landowning families who had exploited the rural work force for decades without government interference.

The new government launched agro-industrial projects aimed at overcoming Panama's dependence on U.S. consumer goods. Torrijos also set up peasant cooperatives to increase production.

About 5 percent of the nation's cultivable land was distributed to poor peasants. Torrijos opposed extensive nationalization of capitalist farms, however, arguing that a mixture of private, state-owned, and cooperative enterprises was the road to Panama's development.

The government instituted social projects that benefited above all the impoverished rural population. From 1968 to 1986, for example, the number of public schools increased from 1,851 to 3,187. The infant mortality rate dropped from 40 per 1,000 live births to 19.4, a lower rate than that today in Harlem. Roads were built and electricity brought to remote parts of the countryside. Social Security was extended to more than a million Panamanians who had never received it before.



Gen. Omar Torrijos visiting with Kuna Indians on Panama's San Blas islands. Under the Torrijos government, Indian communities entered politics for the first time with demands for protection of their culture, languages, and territory.



U.S. soldiers with rifles and bayonets threaten youth trying to place Panamanian flag in the Canal Zone during 1959 popular upsurge demanding national sovereignty.

Panama's labor movement began demanding a new labor code that would permit greater organization of the working class. Under the 1947 code, bosses had 30 different ways to legally fire a worker. The employers used this to crush organizing drives. Between 1947 and 1972 only 29 new labor contracts were signed.

In 1972 the labor movement won a new code that permitted workers to join the union after just two weeks on the job. Unions were organized at many more work sites and nearly 200 contracts were signed the first year. Among those organized for the first time were the many public employees in the country.

The advances won by working people during these years opened the door to greater participation in society and the government by Panamanians who were Black. For the first time Panama's Indian communities entered politics, bringing to national attention their demands for protection of their culture, languages, and territory.

1977 canal treaties

In 1977 U.S. President James Carter was forced to sign historic treaties relinquishing Washington's control of the Panama Canal to Panama by the year 2000. The Torrijos-Carter treaties stipulated that total control of the canal and the administration of the zone would revert to Panama. The U.S. military bases — which numbered 14 at the time — would be dismantled. Between 1977 and 2000, control would be turned over step-by-step to the Panamanian government.

On Oct. 1, 1979, a quarter of a million Panamanians demonstrated to celebrate the formal turning over of the Canal Zone to Panama. U.S. Vice-president Walter Mondale, who addressed the ceremony, was greeted by banners demanding "Yankees out of Panama" and "Sovereignty or death."

The victory for Panamanian self-determination was the product not only of decades of battle by the Panamanian people, but big struggles taking place around the world that had weakened Washington's grip on the lives and destinies of working people.

In 1979 alone, the Iranian masses had overthrown the shah's monarchy; the people of the Caribbean island of Grenada had established a popular revolutionary government; and in Nicaragua, the workers and peasants had toppled the Anastasio Somoza dictatorship, one of Washington's strongest allies in the region. The Torrijos government had given considerable material aid to the Sandinista guerrilla forces who led the revolution to bring down Somoza and place the toilers in power.

In 1981 Torrijos died in a mysterious airplane crash. Gen. Manuel Noriega assumed control of the National Guard in 1983, changing its name to the Defense Forces.

By this time Washington's contra war against Nicaragua was under way. The U.S. Southern Command, based in the canal zone, directed the mercenaries. To Washington's irritation, the Panamanian government called for a political settlement to the war and opposed the deepening U.S. military intervention.

By 1985 the Sandinista army had begun to drive the contras back. The mercenaries were finished unless Washington could breathe new life into the war.

Then national security adviser John Poindexter paid a visit to Noriega in 1985. He demanded that Panama's Defense Forces directly aid the contras in Nicaragua. Noriega refused.

Suddenly a campaign began in Congress denouncing Noriega as a double agent — said to be working for the CIA and the Cuban government at the same time. Charges of drug trafficking were leveled at Noriega a few months later.

Inside Panama, Washington turned to the very forces overthrown by Torrijos in 1968, popularly known as the *rabiblanco*s (white asses) because of their light skins, wealth, and ties to the U.S. government. These businessmen and landowners established a "Civic Crusade" in 1987 to demand that Noriega

leave power. They sought to organize demonstrations and strikes to rally working people to their side.

The Panamanian labor movement had little sympathy for the *rabiblanco*s, despite sharp clashes that had occurred a year earlier between the Panamanian government and the unions.

In 1985 and 1986, President Nicolás Ardito Barletta sought to impose austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund. Barletta introduced new restrictions in the labor code, closed some of the state-owned enterprises set up by Torrijos, and tried to lay off 30,000 public employees. A series of general strikes protested the measures and Defense Forces troops were called out to break the strikes. The public employees union, however, was successful in blocking the layoffs of its members.

Whatever opinions workers had of the government and Defense Forces in 1987, virtually the entire labor movement opposed the Civic Crusade, and what some jokingly called the "Mercedes Benz revolution," because the well-to-do Civic Crusaders arrived at demonstrations in the latest model sedans.

Working people did respond, however, to a call by the Panamanian government in 1988 to set up civilian defense units, which became

known as the Dignity Battalions. These militias were trained by the Defense Forces to prepare for a possible U.S. invasion.

Devastating economic sanctions

Washington stepped up the pressure with stiff economic sanctions against Panama, aimed above all at making life miserable for its working people.

The U.S. government froze \$56 million in Panamanian funds in U.S. banks. Panama's quota for sugar exports to the United States was eliminated. All U.S. aid to the country was ended, including funds for medical programs such as anti-malaria programs. U.S. companies were prohibited from paying taxes to Panama and also stopped paying Social Security for their Panamanian employees.

The sanctions had a devastating effect. By 1989 unemployment had nearly doubled, to 17.5 percent officially. Some 50,000 workers were laid off. Among the hardest hit were construction workers. Their union, which had 20,000 people working in 1987, had only 1,200 on the job by 1989.

The percentage of the population living under the official poverty line had jumped to 44 percent by late 1989, up from 33 percent in 1987.

May 1989 elections

It was in this context that presidential elections took place in May 1989. Washington openly gave \$10 million to the Democratic Alliance for Civil Opposition ticket (the old Civic Crusade), headed by presidential candidate Guillermo Endara.

Opposing Endara was the Coalition for National Liberation ticket, which united parties that favored implementation of the canal treaties and rejected Washington's arrogant demand that Noriega resign.

The race itself was close, but before all the votes could be counted the results were annulled by the Panamanian government because of the provocative U.S. interference. U.S. President George Bush responded by sending 2,000 more U.S. troops to Panama.

In the fall of 1989 Washington made its last attempt to use Panamanians to overturn the legitimate government of Panama. On October 3 U.S. troops provided backup for a coup attempt against Noriega by a group of officers in the Defense Forces. The coup was smashed within hours.

Two and a half months later, the biggest U.S. invading force since Vietnam is attempting to occupy a country whose working people have fought long and hard for national dignity and self-determination.

U.S. violations of Panama Canal treaties

The treaties signed in 1977 between Gen. Omar Torrijos and then U.S. President James Carter call for the complete withdrawal of the U.S. presence from Panama by Dec. 31, 1999. This would mean turning over the canal to Panama and dismantling the 13 military bases it has on the 650 square miles that make up the canal zone.

The 1977 treaties registered significant advances won by the Panamanian people in their struggle for sovereignty — advances that Washington is trying to reverse through its military occupation and establishment of a puppet regime in Panama.

Under the 1977 treaties:

- a timetable for the termination of U.S. control over the canal was set;
- the laws of Panama became applicable within the canal zone for the first time;
- Panama regained control over some territory within the canal enclave;
- the principle of no U.S. intervention in Panama's internal affairs was reaffirmed;
- provisions were agreed to for the joint participation by Panama and the United States in the defense and adminis-

tration of the canal during the period leading up to the year 2000;

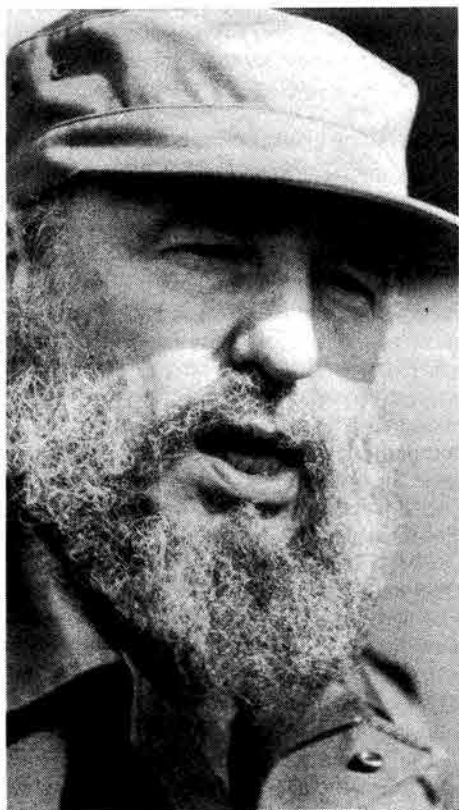
- direct payment to the Panamanian government of revenues from the canal was begun;
 - Panamanians got the right to conduct commercial activities in the area served by the canal;
 - special privileges for U.S. citizens and canal workers were ended;
 - Washington agreed to turn over to Panama educational and sporting facilities, housing, the railroad, and other real estate in the canal zone.
- During the last two years, U.S. violations of the treaties — which began after the agreements were signed — have escalated sharply. Since 1977 U.S. violations have included:
- placing decision-making power over canal affairs in the hands of the U.S. president, State Department, and ambassador to Panama;
 - discriminating against Panamanians in job opportunities, wages, training, and working conditions on the canal;
 - excluding the Panamanian government from the audit of canal income that

determines the surplus to which Panama is entitled;

- transfers of canal assets to other U.S. agencies, thus decapitalizing the waterway;
- maintenance by the United States of a special police force in the enclave, whose presence is designed to provoke violence;
- denying Panamanian workers in the zone the right to celebrate their national holidays;
- nonpayment to Panama of millions of dollars in revenues owed from the use of the canal;
- the Dec. 6, 1989, unilateral appointment by Washington of a new administrator of the canal, following the U.S. rejection of Panama's appointee;
- leading up to the invasion, an increase in the provocative staging of "maneuvers" by U.S. troops in Panamanian villages and on major highways near the canal zone without permission of Panamanian authorities. U.S. units held such maneuvers directly in front of at least one Panama Defense Force base and staged exercises in the streets leading up to Panamanian government buildings.

'The resistance of Panama's people is of truly historic significance'

Cuban President Fidel Castro denounces U.S. invasion of Panama



Fidel Castro

Militant/Selva Nebbia

The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was delivered December 21, the day after the U.S. invasion of Panama. It was given at a ceremony called to present awards to the most outstanding Cuban athletes of the year held at the Sports City complex in Havana. The text of the speech was published in the December 22, 1989, issue of *Granma*. The translation, subheadings, and notes are by the *Militant*.

A few days ago, we projected holding this ceremony here today. In the past few hours, we thought about whether or not to suspend it, owing to the developments you know about. We had also planned a reception with the athletes, which had been promised some time ago. Obviously, however, that has been suspended until a more suitable time.

In any case, we wanted to go ahead with the ceremony, although I believe that our hearts are not exactly into talking about sports. Sports are deserving of every honor and glory. Victories in sports are one of the most legitimate products of the revolution.

This has been a year of great successes, of great satisfaction for our people, and of glory for Cuban sports. And these are a precursor of even greater glories in the future. But our intention is not to speak about sports.

Fighting for sovereignty

It is more fitting to devote a few words to the heroes of Our America who at this moment are fighting in Panama for the dignity, honor, and sovereignty of our peoples. It is more fitting to recall those who are dying at this moment. We should recall those who at this very moment are being massacred by bombs and imperialism's most sophisticated weapons of war.

We must think about the fact that they are fighting at this very moment. Thus, our event is occurring at one of the most painful, dramatic, and difficult times in the contemporary history of what Martí called Our America.¹

To a greater or lesser extent, we have witnessed and received information about everything that began occurring yesterday, December 20, during the early morning hours.

It's not that these developments took us by surprise. It's not that we considered imperialism incapable of such a crime. It was possible to anticipate these acts.

Our country had denounced these acts in our press three or four months ago, and in particularly strong terms. We're now in December and these denunciations were made

around August or September. We also energetically denounced them at the Nonaligned summit meeting.² We know the enemy and we know the enemy's moral character. Therefore, what they did could not surprise us.

But even though we anticipated these actions and denounced them, we could not but feel deeply indignant to the bottom of our hearts, deeply angry, deeply bitter. Because it is not possible to react to such a crime in any other manner.

Pretexts for savage action

Once again, we have been witness to how imperialism acts. We have seen or heard — in one way or another, through television footage or radio broadcasts — the pretexts and justifications used to carry out this savage and uncivilized action. We have listened to the spokespersons of imperialism, from the president of the United States to the secretary of state, as well as the secretary of defense and the Pentagon chiefs. We find loathsome and disgusting the way they try to justify the deeds, the lies, and the ridiculous pretexts used for it.

They say that the Panamanians murdered an unarmed soldier. Everybody knows how they go around there, how they go around in Panama drunk. Who doesn't know what U.S. soldiers do when they're drunk? Once they even climbed atop the statue of the hero of our national independence, José Martí, in Central Park.³ There are photographs of it.

These soldiers, armed and in a state of intoxication, fired on a military installation and wounded some Panamanians. One of these soldiers died as a result of the provocation. What could the Panamanian soldiers there do, being attacked while at their post? What the imperialists are saying is that an "innocent" and "unarmed" U.S. soldier was murdered.

It seems that in the party they were having they brought along a North American woman. So what do the U.S. spokespersons say? That not only did the Panamanians murder a soldier, but there was also an attempt to sexually abuse a North American woman. These things have been said and repeated hundreds of times. The goal is to present as the most natural and justified thing in the world the act of committing genocide against the people of Panama.

These are the methods of imperialism and this is how it acts. We know it well, and not only through our own long experience. We also know the number of lies used in this whole sad episode of aggression against Panama. We have seen the videos, we have seen these things on television. And we know the dozens and hundreds of times that U.S. troops have violated Panamanian sovereignty, humiliating and trampling on the people of Panama. This was occurring virtually every day, and now we have the scenes, we have the televised shots of these events, which our people can observe.

No respect for Panama

They showed no respect for Panama's streets or avenues. From their military bases in the canal zone they came with their helicopters, their tanks, their armored personnel carriers, and their mercenary troops. With the look of murderers that characterizes them, they would go into any part of the Panamanian capital or any other town, violating all international laws. And now they are saying that those who provoked it were the Panamanians. They are saying that the United States had to invade a small country in our hemisphere to defend the security of the United States.

I repeat once more: This is loathsome and disgusting. And these pretexts and lies have

been spread throughout the world by way of their powerful mass media.

The fact is that they invaded Panama. How did they do it? They did it in the manner that the peoples were familiar with not so long ago, in 1939. They did it in the manner of the Nazis and the fascists, looking for similar pretexts to initiate their aggressions. They did it in the manner of the Nazis and the fascists, attacking by surprise, without any kind of warning.

This time they did it in the early morning hours, at 1:00 a.m., when it was assumed that the population was asleep, that the workers were asleep, and even that the soldiers were asleep. And this was not an attack against one position. It was a simultaneous attack on all the military units and important strategic points in Panama.

In this way they have brought death and destruction to this sister country of Latin

“We know the hundreds of times that U.S. troops have violated Panamanian sovereignty, humiliating and trampling on the people.”

America. In a few hours they have shed the blood of thousands of Panamanians, the majority of them civilians.

But they didn't attack fearlessly, that is, fearless of the death of imperialism's own mercenary soldiers. Quite the contrary. They killed as many persons as necessary to avoid their own losses. Wherever there was resistance they didn't send soldiers. They used planes and helicopters to drop bombs, and they "flattened" areas with artillery. Then they attacked. Whenever they encountered resistance, they would retreat again and "flatten" the area, using air power and artillery. This is the type of war they have waged in the capital of Panama, in the most densely populated communities. That is what has created thousands of civilian victims.

Streets covered in blood

Imperialism's mercenary soldiers who are wounded receive immediate attention. They are picked up in modern ambulances, taken to hospital planes, and flown to the best hospitals in the United States. Meanwhile, they don't even permit ambulances to pick up wounded Panamanian combatants. And they don't even permit them to pick up the wounded civilian population. Thus people are dying, and the streets of the capital of Panama are covered in blood.

There were some wounded Panamanians who the people themselves, in one way or another, were able to bring to the hospital. Owing to the number of victims, however, there was not adequate medical attention, despite the extraordinary efforts by Panamanian doctors. There wasn't enough plasma, medical supplies, hospital beds, equipment, or surgical instruments. And thus we have seen photographs and television footage of dozens of civilians — men, women, children, and old people — whose dead bodies filled the hospital corridors.

Cuba addressed itself to all the most authoritative international bodies. It called on the United Nations. It called on the Movement of Nonaligned Countries and all organizations that could participate in the struggle, in the effort to halt U.S. imperialism's act of barbarism. Cuba spoke with many friends throughout the world.

But in addition, it also addressed itself to the International Red Cross, to the highest authorities of that institution, explaining to them what was occurring in Panama with the victims of the invasion. We explained the need for an urgent mobilization to attend to the wounded Panamanians, who the empire's mercenary soldiers were preventing from even receiving assistance.

We have expressed our willingness to cooperate. We have expressed our willingness to send our plasma, our doctors, our equipment, our surgeons. We have done this many times over the years of the revolution, helping countries that suffered natural catastrophes such as hurricanes or earthquakes. We have done this even in cases where the governments were enemies of ours, as in Nicaragua under Somoza, or as in Honduras. We also did this with governments that we had no relations with, as happened on one occasion following a major earthquake in Peru. Now we are facing the reality that it is not possible to assist Panama's wounded, because U.S. troops are there and do not want Panama's wounded to receive assistance.

How much barbarity and abuse have we come to in this world? How much cruelty have we come to in this world? Thus, while the empire's wounded soldiers travel immediately to the best hospitals over there, Panamanians lie bleeding in the streets.

That's why I say that the events are sufficiently sad and sufficiently harsh as to make anyone angry and bitter. I'm no longer thinking just of the brutality, the illegality, and the unjustifiable action of the United States.

Resistance of the people

Alongside this, there is something else that has occurred that is truly historic, that is truly significant. This is the resistance of the people of Panama, the resistance of the units of the Defense Forces and the civilians organized in the Dignity Battalions and other units.

The empire believed the resistance would last minutes, perhaps hours. They thought that when they dropped paratroopers at night or attacked with planes and helicopters, not a single soldier or a single civilian combatant would remain at his post. That is the conception they have of Latin Americans. They still have not learned enough. Their conception is of a people no longer able to put up resistance. In this they also aim to deceive the world.

Yesterday we witnessed how in the morning, six hours after the attack had begun, they were already telling the world that all resistance had ended.

For more than 15 hours yesterday, the Panamanian national radio network — which was being relayed to other transmitters — broadcast news of what was occurring, summoning the people to the struggle. It did this until the invaders were able to silence it through direct attacks by helicopter gunships.

But Panamanians have also been listening to international radio. They have been listening to Cuban radio, to Radio Havana Cuba, Radio Rebelde, and other stations. These stations were in regular communication with Panama yesterday, informing the people of Cuba and the world of what was happening. Today these stations continue reporting, although the U.S. was attempting to intercept their broadcasts in Panama. They were trying to jam the broadcasts because they did not even want the Panamanian people to know what was going on through listening to Cuban radio.

Dignity Battalions

What is it that they fear like the devil himself? What is the fear that all the spokespersons of the empire now express? The fear is that the resistance will continue. The fear is that the Defense Forces and the Dignity Battalions and all Panamanian patriots will continue the war in the country's interior. Because they know that it is possible, over a greater or lesser period of time, to control the capital with this overwhelming accumulation of force. But they are panic-stricken that the patriots will get organized in the country's interior, in the wooded and mountainous terrain, and continue the war of resistance. All the steps they are now taking are inspired by this panic.

Their hope is to prevent this from happening and to present the aggression to the world as being over. For this reason they are using all possible means today to confuse the Panamanians, telling them that all resistance has ended.

They are afraid of getting bogged down

1. José Martí is considered Cuba's national hero. He initiated Cuba's final war for independence from Spain in 1895 and was killed in battle that same year.

2. The Movement of Nonaligned Countries held its Ninth Summit Conference in September 1989. At that meeting Cuba's First Vice-president Raúl Castro made a vigorous call for worldwide solidarity with Panama.

3. In 1949 some drunken U.S. sailors climbed on top of Martí's statue in Havana and urinated on it. This act of desecration provoked a wide public outcry and protest demonstrations among Cuban patriots.

there. It is one thing to control a city, given the means at their disposal. It is quite another to try to eliminate resistance throughout the country if the Panamanians make use of the rich experience of irregular warfare.

This is something we have studied extensively. It is something we have educated our combatants in from one end of Cuba to the other, through what we call the concept of war of the entire people. We have studied the experience the revolutionary movement has accumulated in recent years, as well as our own experience. Because when all is said and done, we did not begin our struggle for liberation in the capital of the republic. We began in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, until our guerrilla struggle extended itself across the entire country.

Learn what we are capable of

That's what the powerful imperialist gentlemen are afraid of now, and that's what they are trying to avoid at all costs. They are afraid, and well they should be! Little by little they will be forced to learn what we are capable of, we whom they have scorned, we the peoples of Latin America!

They have had to be taught a number of lessons. They were taught something at the Bay of Pigs, a number of years ago.⁴ They were taught something in Nicaragua, by the Sandinista fighters. And just recently they were taught something in a spectacular fashion by the heroic actions of the Salvadoran revolutionaries and patriots.

This was something truly extraordinary. For ten years the United States has constantly provided financial resources, training, and arms to the genocidal government of El Salvador. For ten years they have provided technical means, helicopters, planes, the most modern infantry weapons, communications equipment, everything. For ten years!

And yet the number of Salvadoran fighters has grown. They have proved they can penetrate the streets of the capital and remain there for weeks at a time, holding in check an army that is armed to the teeth, financed, and trained by the United States.

This was just five or six weeks ago. And now we have seen what has happened to them in Panama. They know that if the Panamanian patriots are able to take into account the experience of Nicaragua, of the FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front] in El Salvador, then they are going to get bogged down — for who knows how long — in this small country.

Insufficient response

The Yankee imperialists have in one way or another been rebuked by world public opinion. But in our opinion they have not yet received a sufficient response.

There is still a great deal of hypocrisy in the world. Europe, which boasts of its civilized character, has seen some governments applauding the aggression against Panama. Others have expressed their "understanding" for U.S. actions.

Of course, there are also governments in Europe that have forcefully condemned these acts. In terms of the European socialist countries — as far as we know right now — the Soviet Union has condemned the U.S. action and called for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Panama. But in some European socialist countries we haven't heard so much as a word spoken concerning the aggression against Panama.

In Latin America the immense majority of countries and political leaders have in one way or another condemned these acts — some energetically, others more tepidly.

International institutions — above all the Movement of Nonaligned Countries — have forcefully condemned these acts. The United Nations Security Council has not said its final word on the matter; they are still discussing

4. In April 1961, in an action organized and directed by the U.S. government, some 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. The invaders were defeated within 72 hours.



Thousands of Panamanians are being held prisoner by the U.S. military. "In a few hours," said Castro December 21, U.S. military forces "have shed the blood of thousands of Panamanians, the majority of them civilians."

it. But as you know, the United States enjoys the sacrosanct right of veto, which it has utilized on countless occasions.

The United Nations secretary-general has said he regrets the acts of violence. But in all sincerity I believe that this is a time not for regretting acts but rather for condemning them. In the past I have expressed the hope that peace can be attained. But this is not the time for expressing the hope that peace can be attained. Rather, it is the time to demand the withdrawal of the invading U.S. troops.

U.S. right to veto

Of course it is not easy to carry out important functions in the United Nations, because those elected to posts there depend on the backing of the Security Council. And it is

sufficient for a single member, among those who enjoy the irritating and antidemocratic privilege of the right to veto, to overturn the election of any leader of the United Nations.

The Organization of American States, although not the same rotten mess it was 30 years ago, is still far from being a model institution. This time the United States was not able to secure the complicity of the OAS.

This time the United States was not able to accomplish what it did in the case of Cuba, where it gained OAS support for its aggressive measures.

This time it was not able to accomplish what it did in the case of the Dominican Republic in 1965, where, after staging a cunning military strike, it managed to get the

OAS to approve a resolution to also send in troops.

This time, despite many maneuvers in the OAS to get it to support U.S. plans for political aggression against Panama, it did not succeed. And when it came to sending in troops, the United States won no support in the OAS for its action, let alone agreement by OAS members to send in troops of their own.

Aggressor and victim

What happened this time is that the OAS condemned both the aggressor and the victim. It condemned the aggression by the United States and it condemned the government under attack. This is a novel approach. But it is one that, despite everything, represents a step forward. In fact, we might say it is a considerable step forward.

Many governments around the world have condemned this crime, including a number of capitalist governments, a number of Western governments. They know it is an act of savagery, an act of barbarism, which strikes a blow against peace in Central America, against stability in Central America, where there are so many serious unresolved problems.

They know this action strikes a blow against stability in Latin America, where there are so many serious unresolved problems. They know it is a blow against stability in world politics, and that it is a humiliating slap in the face to the Soviet peace policy.

We have been sounding the alert for more than a year, since the meeting with the militia members of Havana held in the Plaza of the Revolution, and on numerous occasions since then. Just a few days ago, at the ceremony for the burial of the comrades who lost their lives in internationalist missions, we said what we thought about the imperialists' in-

Continued on next page

Castro calls on UN to condemn U.S. aggression

Havana, Cuba
December 20, 1989

Enrique Peñalosa
President
United Nations Security Council

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

Mr. President;
Mr. Secretary-General:

I have the unavoidable duty of addressing your excellencies regarding the brutal and treacherous aggression the government and armed forces of the United States of America are conducting against the people and government of Panama.

This is not the first time that a small nation in Our America has had to face the interventionist claws of the U.S. government. The Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Nicaragua are recent wounds in a continent that, since the end of the past century, has been trampled on repeatedly by the naval and ground forces of imperialism.

Today imperialism has not hesitated to invade the sister republic of Panama, with the declared aim of overthrowing its government and imposing a puppet regime. The real and unspoken motive behind the aggression is to install a regime that is prepared to accept continued occupation of the Panama Canal beyond the terms agreed to in the Torrijos-Carter treaties.

The president of the United States has sought to justify this gross violation of international law and the United Nations Charter by invoking nothing less than Article 51 of that same charter, which recognizes each state's "right to legitimate defense." Such an insult to the intelligence of the member states matches the shame-

lessness of those who, themselves guilty of aggression, try to pass themselves off as victims.

Today the blood of hundreds of Panamanian patriots waters the generous land that the Liberator, Simón Bolívar, chose as the site of the Anfictónico Congress more than 100 years ago.* It is timely and fitting to recall Bolívar's historical dictum at a time when the United States once again "plagues with miseries" an American nation "in the name of democracy and freedom." Because of the firm resistance they have mounted, the sons and daughters of this people are and always will be viewed as worthy successors of the Liberator's spirit.

The people of Cuba have endured imperialist pressure, harassment, and aggression for more than 30 years. We wholeheartedly stand by the side of the Panamanian people in their fight for independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We know that the only peace and security our peoples can hope for is that which we ourselves are capable of conquering with our heroism.

For that reason, the only path to victory lies in the resistance to the invaders that is today rising in Panama.

The Security Council is meeting to consider the aggression by the United States — which is one of its permanent members and therefore bears special responsibility for the maintenance of peace and international security — against a country with barely 2.5 million inhabitants.

A permanent member of the council,

* In 1826 Simón Bolívar, the leading historical figure in Latin America's liberation from Spanish rule, organized the Anfictónico Congress in Panama. Representatives of the newly independent republics of Latin America discussed plans for regional cooperation and federation.

the main leader of the Atlantic alliance [NATO], has trampled on the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of another nation. It has done so under the transparent pretext of defending democracy and defending itself from a fabricated and nonexistent aggression. If it can take these steps with impunity, without this body doing anything to prevent it, without this body demanding a halt to the aggression and unconditional withdrawal of the invaders, then statements by this body's members concerning their adherence to the principles of international law and to the ideals of the founders of the United Nations would be meaningless.

Cuba is prepared to share the responsibilities of this high body beginning next year in its capacity as a nonpermanent member. However, it cannot fail to state at the outset that for our people and government the United Nations Charter is not and cannot be simply a scrap of paper. It cannot become a rhetorical reference that the great powers violate as they see fit, trampling over peoples' rights and staining their dignity, sovereignty, and independence.

We expect the Security Council, its president, and the secretary-general of the United Nations to take the resolute action demanded by the peoples of the United Nations in support of the besieged Panamanian people who are firmly defending their right to freely decide their own destiny.

I would like to take this opportunity to renew to your excellencies the assurances of my deepest consideration.

Fidel Castro
President of the
Council of State
and of the
government of the
Republic of Cuba

Panamanian people's historic resistance

Continued from previous page
terpretation of peace and what we thought about the dangers of the present situation.⁵

We said what we thought about the evolution from a bipolar to a unipolar world, under U.S. hegemony. And we said what we thought about the stepped-up role by the United States as a policeman that does not stop at any hemisphere, that intervenes in Asia and Africa as well as in Latin America, and that takes upon itself the right to decide what government a country can and cannot have.

We said that the only guarantee and security that our people can have is that which we are capable of conquering with our heroism.

It is difficult to place much confidence in international law when we see such things. It is difficult to place much confidence in

“
Their fear is that the Defense Forces and the Dignity Battalions and all Panamanian patriots will continue the war in the country's interior.
”

international institutions when we see these events and the other things we have seen. It is difficult to place much confidence in the United Nations when we see such things.

It is difficult to place much confidence in the Security Council, which ended up not even issuing a resolution, even a mediocre one, expressing a judgment on the events. Instead it discussed who represents Panama — the representative of the puppet placed in power there or the representative of the government under attack, which is recognized by dozens of countries around the world. This is what they have been discussing!

Even the OAS proved capable of declaring that the representative it would accept is the representative of the government of Panama, of the Torrijist government of Panama, of the anti-imperialist government of Panama. And this is something that has not yet been decided by the “brilliant” Security Council of the United Nations!

From this we have to draw lessons that even wise men should continually reflect upon. I am not a pessimist, because I believe in the peoples. And I believe particularly in the peoples of Latin America — peoples who have been so humiliated, plundered, exploited, and attacked. I believe in this mixture of Indians, Blacks, Spaniards, Europeans, and even Asians who make up our peoples! Or who make up the Cuban people in particular, and to a greater or lesser degree those of Latin America.

Latin Americans prepared to fight

I believe in these peoples not as an article of faith but because I have seen them fight,

5. This speech appears below.

I have seen them in battle. I admire the way in which Latin Americans today are prepared to fight. I am referring to the peoples, because there are governments that are still not sufficiently courageous to challenge the actions of the imperialist power. But any country, no matter how small, can fight.

The Grenadians fought. The Nicaraguans fought the genocidal army of Somoza, created by the United States. They fought the mercenary invasions, the war imposed by the United States, just as in the past Sandino fought the Yankees. The Salvadorans have fought with unequalled heroism. The Panamanian patriots have fought with equally extraordinary heroism. Without a single exception, the peoples are losing their fear of the imperialist soldiers!

I have not spoken of Cuba; there is no need to. We know very well what will happen if one day they dare to invade our homeland! I think they know this too — and if they don't, they should — because we have not wasted time. We have confronted this empire for 30 years, and the more aggressive it becomes the more we prepare ourselves to confront it with our own forces, which are sufficient to defend our homeland.

Defense of Cuba

Our homeland will be defended not only with unequalled heroism but also with the best technical means that our science can provide, with the best military and political conceptions, with the best strategy, with the best tactics. And we didn't just start to work on this today, we didn't just start 30 years ago with this revolution. We began more than 120 years ago during our first war of independence.

One single municipality, even the smallest in our country, could wage a long war against the same number of troops the imperialists have employed in Panama. So we are prepared and we are trained. We have hundreds of thousands of trained military personnel; we have an experienced and seasoned party; and we have an exceptionally courageous and patriotic people.

Our people have always been patriotic, but never like today. They have always been revolutionary, but never like today. This stems from years of real-life experience in the revolution and in the international field. It stems from the constant observation of phenomena and of the evolution of the world.

Let the imperialists do what they will! They will never force Cuba to surrender and they cannot keep Latin America in submission indefinitely. Each time they will have to confront a people who are increasingly conscious, increasingly tired of suffering abuses, injustices, and plunder. Imperialism will increasingly fail to force the Third World into submission, no matter what political maneuvers or conspiracies it employs, and despite its successes against certain countries in the socialist camp.

Let them do what they will! I am convinced that these aspirations to be the policeman of the world, to be owners of the world, to be masters of the world, will be unsuccessful no matter what weapons they employ, including nuclear ones. We have already learned that this is nothing to be afraid of. We know this because they once threatened us with those

changes have been made in the English translation done by Cuba's Council of State.

Comrade President José Eduardo dos Santos and other guests;
Relatives of our fallen comrades;
Members of our armed forces;
Fellow countrymen:

December 7, the date on which Antonio Maceo, the most illustrious of all our soldiers, and his young aide-de-camp were killed, has always been very meaningful for all Cubans.¹

1. Antonio Maceo was a leader of Cuba's battles for independence from Spain in the late 19th century.



In 1965, the U.S. government ordered the invasion of the Dominican Republic in order to quash a popular revolutionary upsurge. The action had the backing of the Organization of American States. “The United States won no support in the OAS” for its 1989 invasion of Panama, Castro noted December 21.

weapons, and I don't think a single person in this country lost any sleep over it.⁶

It doesn't matter what they have! It doesn't matter how sophisticated their weapons may be, because what a man carries inside himself, in his breast, in his consciousness, in his mind, is worth far more than any advantages offered by their sophisticated weapons.

We know this from our own history and from more than one experience. In fact we began our war of liberation virtually without weapons. And with the enemies' weapons — which had been provided by the United States — we carried out and won the war. The situation today is different. Today, we have millions of weapons — millions! — and we even produce our own. But in addition we can also count on the weapons of the invaders, because we know how they can be taken and used against them. [Applause]

I think that the best guarantee is a correct understanding of the power of our peoples, of the courage of our men and women, of the courage of our nations.

Hackneyed phrases of law

More than in hackneyed phrases of international law, more than in discredited international institutions, we believe in the peoples and in their courage. We believe in the ability of man to continue marching on the path of progress, on the path of independence, on the path of genuine freedom and dignity!

I am speaking here to athletes, but we know that our athletes are also soldiers of our homeland. For they are ready, as has been said many times, to defend their country not only in the field of sports but also in the field of battle.

We know the patriotism with which our athletes fight. We know the moral values and honor with which our athletes fight. We know the love with which they defend our beautiful flag in any corner of the world. We know the honesty and integrity of their conduct. There

6. This refers to the October 1962 Cuban missile crisis. At that time, Washington threatened a nuclear attack and invasion against Cuba after it had acquired missiles from the Soviet Union to defend itself from threatened U.S. aggression.

is no campaign of lies that can force them to deviate from this. Not even all the gold in the world would be enough to buy them off. I speak to these athletes today and I express these sentiments, these thoughts, because this is not the time to speak of anything else.

You athletes know that the better trained you are, the better prepared you are, the more certain you are of victory. Inner courage, intelligence, and thought are important and decisive, but so too is training. That is why in recent years our party and our revolutionary government have devoted so much energy, so much time, and so many resources to preparing the people for a war of the entire people. Because if the difficult hour arrives, it's good to know how to shoot for the heart, how to shoot for the head, how to shoot with whatever weapon you have. And if the invaders come wearing bulletproof vests, we can make mines that will blow them 100 yards into the air. That's the only way they'll break the records set by Sotomayor!⁷

We have arms of all calibers and penetrating power. And we will have the marksmanship to shoot where we have to shoot, even if they come equipped with armor heavier than that worn by the Spanish knights during their conquest of this hemisphere or in their wars of the medieval era.

Let us make use of this additional experience to deepen our understanding that we must be ever more prepared and ever more organized; so that the barbarians, the savages, the monstrous imperialists never again dare to commit a similar act of aggression against our homeland. They will have to pay a very high price if they dare try it!

I salute you, our athletes, for the honors and trophies you have won.

Let me finish today the way Sotomayor, the glory of our sporting world, did in his remarks today:

Socialism or death!
Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death]
Venceremos! [We will win]
[Ovation]

7. Cuban athlete Javier Sotomayor is holder of the world high jump record.

‘Our heroism alone can achieve peace’

Castro pays tribute to Cuba's fallen internationalist fighters

When the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued its initial statement December 20 condemning the criminal U.S. invasion of Panama that day, it opened by citing a speech given two weeks earlier by Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Below is Castro's speech, presented at ceremonies at the El Cacahual Mausoleum in Havana Province honoring the 2,289 Cubans killed while carrying out internationalist missions — both civilian and military — in Angola, Ethiopia, and elsewhere in the world. Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos was present for the ceremony.

Footnotes and subheadings have been added by the *Militant*. Some editorial

Their remains lie here in this sacred corner of our homeland.

By choosing this day for laying to rest the remains of our heroic internationalist fighters who have died in different parts of the world — mainly in Africa, the land of birth of Maceo's ancestors and many of our forebears — we make it a day for honoring all Cubans who gave their lives while defending their country and all humanity. Thus, patriotism and internationalism — two of man's most treasured values — will be joined forever in Cuba's history.

Perhaps, someday, a monument will be erected not far from this site to honor them.

The remains of all internationalists who died while carrying out their missions are

being laid to rest in their hometowns all over Cuba right now.

The imperialists thought we would conceal the number of our men killed in Angola during that complex, 14-year-long mission — as if it were a dishonor or a discredit for the revolution. For a long time they dreamed that the lives that were lost had been to no purpose, as if those who died for a just cause had died in vain. Even if victory were the only way to measure the value of men's sacrifices in their legitimate struggle, they also returned victorious.

The Spartans used to tell their fighters to return with their shields or on them. Our troops are returning with their shields.

Still, it is not my intention, on this solemn



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Namibians celebrate SWAPO's victory in the November elections. Cuba's internationalist volunteers "had the honor of fighting alongside the courageous sons and daughters of Namibia" in the battle to win that country's independence from South Africa, Castro explained in December 7 speech.

occasion, to boast of our achievements or to humiliate anyone — not even those who were our adversaries. Our country sought neither glory nor military prestige. We always applied the principle of achieving our goals with the lowest possible number of casualties. To do this, we had to be strong, cool-headed, and always willing to do our utmost.

All of our soldiers knew that the whole country supported them and that all of us were concerned about their health and safety.

When it became possible to use political and diplomatic efforts to attain the final goals, we did not hesitate an instant to use political and diplomatic channels. And while we always employed the necessary firmness, at no time during the negotiation process were we arrogant or boastful. We were flexible whenever flexibility was advisable and fair.

The final stage of the war in Angola was the most difficult. It demanded all of our country's determination, tenacity, and fighting spirit in support of our Angolan brothers.

In fulfilling this duty of solidarity, not only to Angola but also to our own troops fighting under difficult conditions there, the revolution did not hesitate in risking everything. At a time when the imperialist threats against our own country were very serious, we did not hesitate in sending a large part of our most modern and sophisticated military equipment to the Southern Front of the People's Republic of Angola. Over 50,000 Cuban troops were in that sister nation — a truly impressive figure, in view of the distance and our country's size and resources. It was a veritable feat by our Revolutionary Armed Forces and our people. Such chapters of selflessness and international solidarity have seldom been equaled.

We greatly appreciate the fact that José Eduardo dos Santos is attending this ceremony. It was an entirely spontaneous gesture. "I want to be with you on this occasion," he said. Also spontaneously, as soon as they learned of this ceremony, only a few days ago, the leaders of Ethiopia, SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia], and other countries and revolutionary organizations stated that they wanted to send representatives to be here with us today when we laid to rest our internationalists who died in Africa and in other lands.

There are historic events that nothing and no one can obliterate. There are revolutionary examples that the best men and women of future generations, both within and outside our country, will always remember. This is one of them, yet we should not be the ones to judge it; history will do so.

We will never forget that the soldiers of the Angolan armed forces were our comrades in arms. Tens of thousands of the best sons and daughters of that nation lost their lives in the struggle. Our unity and close cooperation made victory possible.

Solidarity with Africa's freedom fight

We also had the honor of fighting alongside the courageous sons and daughters of Namibia, the patriots of Guinea-Bissau, and the unmatched Ethiopian soldiers. Years earlier, in the difficult period immediately following Algeria's independence, our internationalist fighters were at her side — as later they helped defend Syria, another sister Arab nation that was a victim of foreign aggression

and requested our cooperation.²

Every just African cause received our people's support. Che Guevara and a large group of Cuban revolutionaries fought against white mercenaries in the eastern part of what is now Zaire, and doctors and teachers are working in the Sahraoui Republic now, helping its people, who are fighting for their freedom.³

All of these countries were then or are now independent, and those that have not yet won their independence will do so, sooner or later.

In just a few years, our fighters wrote an outstanding chapter of solidarity our people can be proud of. Men from other countries also fought at our side in our own struggles for independence. Máximo Gómez,⁴ who was born in the Dominican Republic, was the most outstanding of all and due to his extraordinary merits, became the chief of our Army of Liberation. In the years prior to our revolution, a thousand Cubans organized by the first Communist Party fought in Spain to defend the republic. They wrote memorable chapters of heroism that Pablo de la Torriente Brau recorded for history until death put an early end to the life of that brilliant revolutionary journalist.

That was how our internationalist spirit was forged. It reached its zenith with the socialist revolution.

Wherever Cuban internationalists have gone, they have set examples of respect for the dignity and sovereignty of those countries. The trust that those peoples have placed in them is the result of their irreproachable behavior. Their exemplary selflessness and altruism is remembered everywhere.

A prominent African statesman once said in a meeting of leaders of the region, "Cuban fighters are ready to give their lives for the liberation of our countries. The only thing they will take back with them, in exchange for that assistance to our freedom and our peoples' progress, are the bodies of those who died fighting for freedom." That continent, which has experienced centuries of exploitation and plunder, recognizes the full extent of the unselfish nature of our internationalist contribution.

Now our battle-seasoned troops are returning victoriously. The joyful, happy, proud faces of mothers, wives, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters — of all our people — welcome them with affection and love. Peace

2. Cuban troops fought alongside Namibian combatants in Angola to drive out invading South African armed forces; alongside freedom fighters in Guinea-Bissau in the 1960s and early 1970s to overturn Portuguese colonial rule; in Ethiopia to help defend that country's revolution against a 1977-78 invasion by the Somali army; in Algeria to help defeat an invading force from Morocco in 1963; in Syria to help defeat the invasion by Israeli troops in 1973.

3. Che Guevara led a contingent of Cuban volunteers who fought in 1965 alongside supporters of the murdered Patrice Lumumba in the Congo (now Zaire). The Saharan Arab Democratic Republic of Western Sahara declared its independence in 1976 to counter invasions by Morocco and Mauritania. Since that time, the government of Morocco has sought to maintain its domination over the Sahraoui people, whose struggle has been led by the Polisario Front.

4. Máximo Gómez was a leader of Cuba's 1868-78 and 1895-98 wars of independence from Spain.

has been achieved with honor, and their sacrifices and efforts have been amply rewarded. Our sleep is no longer disturbed by constant concern over the fate of our troops fighting thousands of kilometers from their home.

Plenty of work to be done

The enemy thought that our troops' return would cause social problems, that it would be impossible to provide jobs for them all. Most of those men — aside from those who have made the military a career — had jobs here in Cuba and will go back to their old jobs or be given better ones. None of them have been forgotten. Many of them already knew where they would be working even before returning home.

Of all the young men in military service who shortly after being graduated from high school volunteered for the honor of going to Angola on an internationalist mission, not a single one has had to wait before going back to school or joining the ranks of our working people.

Our country is working hard, implementing ambitious programs of social and economic development. The irrational laws of capitalism do not guide our actions, and every man and woman in our country has a place in education, production, or the service sector.

No close relatives of those who died while fulfilling their mission or who suffered serious injuries have been forgotten. They have received, are receiving, and will continue to receive all the care and consideration due them for the sacrifices made by their loved ones and for their own devoted, selfless, generous, even heroic behavior.

The hundreds of thousands of Cubans who carried out military or civilian internationalist missions have earned the respect of present and future generations. They have honorably upheld our people's glorious fighting internationalist traditions.

Tremendous struggle for development

On their return, they have found their country engaged in a tremendous struggle for development as it continues to confront the criminal imperialist blockade with exemplary dignity. This is in addition to the current crisis in the socialist camp, from which we can expect only negative economic consequences for our country.

People in most of those countries aren't talking about the anti-imperialist struggle or the principles of internationalism. Those words aren't even mentioned in their press. Such concepts have been virtually removed from political dictionaries there. Meanwhile, capitalist values are gaining unheard-of strength in those societies.

Capitalism means unequal terms of trade with the peoples of the Third World, the exacerbation of individual selfishness and national chauvinism, the reign of irrationality and chaos in investment and production, the ruthless sacrifice of the peoples on behalf of blind economic laws, the survival of the fittest, the exploitation of man by man, a

situation of everybody for himself.

In the social sphere, capitalism implies many more things: prostitution; drugs; gambling; begging; unemployment; abysmal inequalities among citizens; the depletion of natural resources; the poisoning of the air, seas, rivers, and forests; and especially the plundering of the underdeveloped nations by the industrialized capitalist countries. In the past, it meant colonialism; now, it means neocolonizing billions of human beings, using the most sophisticated — and the cheapest, most effective, and most ruthless — economic and political methods.

Capitalism is no solution

Capitalism, its market economy, its values, its categories, and its methods can never pull socialism out of its present difficulties or rectify whatever mistakes have been made. Most of those difficulties are the result not just of errors, but also of the tight blockade and isolation imposed on the socialist countries by imperialism and the major capitalist powers. These powers have monopolized most of the world's wealth and the most advanced technologies by plundering the colonies, exploiting the working class, and promoting a large-scale brain drain from underdeveloped countries.

Devastating wars were unleashed against the first socialist state, taking a toll of millions of lives and destroying most of the means of production. Like a phoenix, the first socialist state had to rise more than once from its ashes. It has performed great services to mankind by defeating fascism and decisively supporting the liberation movements in countries still under colonial rule. Now all this is being forgotten.

It's disgusting to see how many people, even in the USSR itself, are engaged in denying and destroying the history-making feats and extraordinary merits of that heroic people. That is not the way to rectify and overcome the undeniable errors made by a revolution that emerged from tsarist authoritarianism in an enormous, backward, poor country. We shouldn't blame Lenin now for having chosen tsarist Russia as the place for the biggest revolution in history.

Thus we didn't hesitate to stop the circulation of certain Soviet publications that are full of poison against the USSR itself and socialism. You can see that imperialism, reactionary forces, and the counterrevolution are responsible for that tone. Some of those publications have already started calling for an end to the fair and equitable trade relations that were established between the USSR and Cuba during the Cuban revolutionary process. They want the USSR to begin practicing unequal trade with Cuba by selling its products to us at ever-higher prices and buying our agricultural produce and raw materials at ever-lower prices, just as the United States does with other Third World countries — in short, they want the USSR to join the U.S. blockade against Cuba.

Imperialism's actions to undermine and

Continued on next page

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Castro honors internationalists

Continued from previous page

systematically destroy the values of socialism, combined with the mistakes that have been made, have accelerated the destabilizing process in the Eastern European socialist countries. The United States designed and implemented a long-term policy of treating each country differently and undermining socialism from within.

Imperialism and the capitalist powers cannot hide their glee over the way things are turning out. They are convinced — not without reason — that, at this point, the socialist bloc has virtually ceased to exist. Groups of U.S. citizens, including U.S. presidential advisers, are helping plan capitalist development in some of those Eastern European countries right now. A recent news dispatch reported that they were fascinated by that "exciting experience." One of them, a U.S. government official, favored the application in Poland of a program similar to the New Deal, with which Roosevelt tried to alleviate capitalism's Great Depression. This would be to help the 600,000 Polish workers who will lose their jobs in 1990 and half of the country's 17.8 million workers who will have to be retrained and change jobs as a result of the implementation of a market economy.

Imperialism and the NATO capitalist powers are persuaded — not without reason — that, at this point, the Warsaw Pact exists in name only and that societies that are corroded and undermined from within will not be able to resist.

It has been stated that socialism must be improved. No one can deny this principle, which is inherent and permanently applicable to every human endeavor. But can socialism be improved by forsaking Marxism-Leninism's most basic principles? Why must the so-called reforms be along capitalist lines? If those ideas are truly revolutionary, as some claim, why do they receive the imperialist leaders' unanimous, enthusiastic support?

In an amazing statement, the president of the United States described himself as the number one advocate of the doctrines currently being applied in many countries in the socialist camp.

History's most greedy empire

History has never recorded an instance of a truly revolutionary idea's receiving the enthusiastic support of the leader of the most powerful, aggressive, and greedy empire known to mankind.

During Comrade Gorbachev's visit to Cuba in April this year — a visit during which we had a frank, in-depth exchange of views — I publicly expressed my opinion to the National Assembly that, if any socialist country wants to build capitalism, its right to do so should be respected, just as we demand complete respect for any capitalist country's right to build socialism.

I believe that revolution cannot be imported or exported; a socialist state cannot be founded through artificial insemination or by means of an embryo transplant. A revolution requires certain conditions within society, and the people in each individual nation are the only ones who can create it. These ideas don't run counter to the solidarity that all revolutionaries can and should extend to one another. Moreover, a revolution is a process that may advance or regress, a process that may even be frustrated. But above all, communists must be courageous and revolutionary. Communists are duty-bound to struggle under all circumstances, no matter how adverse they may be. The Paris communards struggled and died in the defense of their ideas.⁵ The banners of the revolution and of socialism are not surrendered without a fight. Only cowards and the demoralized surrender — never communists and other revolutionaries.

Now, imperialism is urging the European socialist countries to become recipients of its surplus capital, to develop capitalism, and to join in plundering the Third World countries.

It is a well-known fact that a large part of the developed capitalist world's wealth comes from the unequal terms of trade it maintains with the Third World countries. For centuries, those nations were plundered as colonies. Millions of their sons and daughters

were enslaved; their gold, silver, and other mineral resources were exhausted; they were pitilessly exploited; and underdevelopment was imposed on them. Underdevelopment was the most direct and clearest consequence of colonialism.

Now those nations are being squeezed dry by means of interest payments on an endless, unpayable debt. And while ridiculously low prices are paid for their commodities, they are forced to pay ever-higher prices for the industrial goods they import. Financial and human resources are constantly being drawn away from those nations through the flight of capital and the brain drain. Their trade is blocked by dumping, high tariffs, import quotas, synthetic substitutes produced through advanced technological processes, and subsidies for the developed capitalist countries' products when they aren't competitive.

Today, imperialism is inviting the European socialist countries to join it in this colossal plunder — an invitation that seems not to displease the theoreticians of capitalist reforms. Thus, in many of those countries no one speaks about the tragedy of the Third World, and their discontented multitudes are

They speak of peace, while imperialism reserves the right to overtly intervene in and attack Third World countries.

guided toward capitalism and anticommunism — and, in one country, toward Pan-Germanism. Such developments may even lead to fascist trends. The prize promised by imperialism is a share of the plunder wrested from our peoples, the only way of building capitalist consumer societies.

Right now, the United States and the other capitalist powers are much more interested in investing in Eastern Europe than in any other part of the world. What resources can the Third World — in which billions of people live in subhuman conditions — expect from such developments?

What kind of peace?

They speak to us of peace, but what kind of peace? Of peace between the major powers, while imperialism reserves the right to overtly intervene in and attack Third World countries. There are many examples of this.

The imperialist government of the United States demands that no one help the Salvadoran revolutionaries. They are trying to blackmail the USSR into ending its economic and military assistance to Nicaragua and Cuba because we express solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries, even though we abide strictly by our commitments concerning the weapons supplied by the USSR, in accord with the agreements signed between our sovereign nations. Meanwhile, the same imperialist government that is demanding an end to solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries is helping the genocidal Salvadoran government and sending special combat units to El Salvador; supporting the counterrevolution in Nicaragua; organizing coups in Panama; sending military aid to UNITA in Angola⁶ — in spite of the successful peace agreements in southwestern Africa — and continuing to supply the rebel forces in Afghanistan with large amounts of weapons, ignoring the Geneva Accords and the fact that the Soviet troops have withdrawn.

Only a few days ago U.S. Air Force planes insolently intervened in the internal conflict in the Philippines. Regardless of whether or not the rebel forces had good cause for their action — which it is not our place to judge — the U.S. intervention in that country is a very serious matter. It is an accurate reflection of the current world situation, showing that the United States has taken upon itself the role of gendarme, not only in Latin America — a region it has always considered its private preserve — but also in any other Third World country.

Consecration of the principle of universal intervention by a major power spells an end to independence and sovereignty in the

world. What kind of peace and security can our peoples have other than that which we ourselves achieve through our own heroism?

The elimination of nuclear weapons is an excellent idea. If it were more than simply utopian and could be achieved someday, it would be of unquestionable benefit and would increase world security — but only for a part of humanity. It would not bring peace, security, or hope to the Third World countries.

Imperialism doesn't need nuclear weapons to attack our peoples. Its powerful fleets, which are stationed all over the world; its military bases everywhere; and its ever more sophisticated and lethal conventional weapons are enough to ensure its role as the world's master and gendarme.

Moreover, 40,000 children who could be saved die every day in our world because of underdevelopment and poverty. As I've said before — and this is worth repeating — it's as if a bomb similar to the ones dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were dropped every three days on the poor children in the world.

If these developments continue on their present course and the United States isn't forced to renounce these concepts, what new way of thinking can we speak of? Following this course, the bipolar world that emerged in the postwar period will inexorably become a unipolar world under U.S. domination.

Cuba's rectification process

In Cuba, we are engaged in a process of rectification. No revolution or truly socialist rectification is possible without a strong, disciplined, respected party. Such a process cannot be advanced by slandering socialism, destroying its values, casting slurs on the party, demoralizing its vanguard, abandoning the party's guiding role, eliminating social discipline, and sowing chaos and anarchy everywhere. This may foster a counterrevolution, but not revolutionary changes.

The U.S. imperialists think that Cuba won't be able to hold out and that the new situation in the socialist community will inexorably help them bring our revolution to its knees.

Cuba is not a country in which socialism came in the wake of the victorious divisions of the Red Army. In Cuba, our people created our socialist society in the course of a legitimate, heroic struggle. The 30 years in which we have stood firm against the most powerful empire on earth, which sought to destroy our revolution, bear witness to our political and moral strength.

Those of us in our country's leadership aren't a bunch of bumbling upstarts, new to our positions of responsibility. We come from the ranks of the old anti-imperialist fighters who followed Mella and Guiterras;⁷ who attacked the Moncada⁸ and came on the *Granma*; who fought in the Sierra Maestra;⁹ in the underground struggle and at the Bay of Pigs;¹⁰ who were unshaken by the October crisis;¹¹ who have stood firm against imperialist aggression for 30 years; who have performed great feats of labor; and who have carried out glorious internationalist missions. Men and women from three generations of Cubans are members and hold posts of responsibility in our battle-seasoned party, our marvelous vanguard young people's organization, our powerful mass organizations, our Revolutionary Armed Forces, and our Ministry of the Interior.

In Cuba, the revolution, socialism, and independence are indissolubly linked.

We owe everything we are today to the revolution and socialism. If Cuba was ever to return to capitalism, our independence and

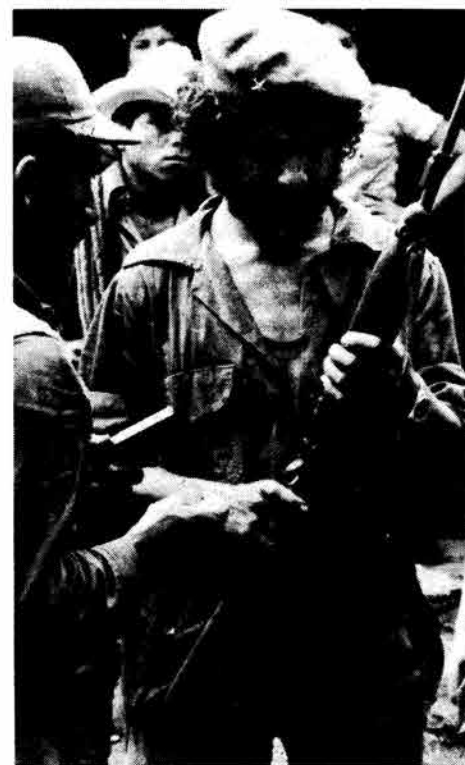
7. Julio Antonio Mella, a founding leader of the first Cuban Communist Party, was assassinated in 1929 by agents of Cuba's Machado dictatorship. Antonio Guiterras, minister of the interior in the government brought to power by a revolutionary upsurge in 1933, was ousted by the Cuban armed forces and later assassinated.

8. The Moncada army garrison was attacked by Fidel Castro and more than 100 fighters on July 26, 1953, signaling the opening of the struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. The attack was defeated and many of the fighters were captured and executed. Castro himself was imprisoned.

9. The Sierra Maestra mountains along Cuba's southeastern coast was where the Rebel Army under Castro's leadership was based during the 1956-58 revolutionary war against the Batista dictatorship.

10. The Bay of Pigs was the location of the U.S.-backed invasion of Cuba in 1961.

11. This refers to the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.



Guerrilla fighters in El Salvador. Cuba refuses to bow to Washington's demand "that no one help the Salvadoran revolutionaries," Castro said.

sovereignty would be lost forever. We would be an extension of Miami, a mere appendage of U.S. imperialism. The prediction that a U.S. president made in the 19th century when that country was considering the annexation of Cuba — that our island would fall into its hands like a ripe fruit — would be proved true. Our people are and will always be willing to give their lives to prevent this. Here, at Maceo's tomb, we recall his immortal phrase: "Whoever tries to seize Cuba will win only its blood-soaked soil, if he doesn't perish in the struggle first."

'Socialism or death!'

We Cuban communists and the millions of our people's revolutionary soldiers will carry out the role assigned to us in history, not only as the first socialist state in the Western Hemisphere, but also as staunch front-line defenders of the noble cause of the destitute and exploited of the world.

We have never aspired to taking custody of the banners and principles that the revolutionary movement has defended throughout its heroic and inspiring history. However, if fate were to decree that one day we would be among the last defenders of socialism in a world in which U.S. imperialism has realized Hitler's dreams of world domination, we would defend this bulwark to the last drop of our blood.

These men and women whom we are laying to rest today in the land of their birth gave their lives for the most treasured values of our history and our revolution.

They died fighting against colonialism and neocolonialism.

They died fighting against racism and apartheid.

They died fighting against the plunder and exploitation to which the Third World peoples are subjected.

They died fighting for the independence and sovereignty of those peoples.

They died fighting for the right of all peoples in the world to well-being and development.

They died fighting so there would be no hunger or begging; so that all sick people would have doctors, all children would have schools; and all human beings would have jobs, shelter, and food.

They died so there would be no oppressors or oppressed, no exploiters or exploited.

They died fighting for the dignity and freedom of all men and women.

They died fighting for true peace and security for all nations.

They died defending the ideals of Céspedes and Máximo Gómez.

They died defending the ideals of Martí and Maceo.

They died defending the ideals of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

They died defending the ideals of the October revolution and the example it set throughout the world.

They died for socialism.

They died for internationalism.

They died for the proud, revolutionary homeland that is today's Cuba.

We can follow their example.

Eternal glory to them.

Socialism or death!

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death]

Venceremos! [We will win]

5. The Paris Commune was a government established in March 1871 by the armed working people of that city. Crushed militarily in May 1871 by the French bourgeois government, more than 30,000 of its supporters were executed.

'We remember well the U.S. invasion of Grenada'

BY DON ROJAS

For those of us who survived the horrors of the Grenada invasion six years ago, observing the Panama invasion evoked a chilling déjà vu.

Over the past days we have relived the terrifying, familiar sights and sounds of war as one unforgettable image after another was broadcast by the television networks: the thud of heavy artillery, the staccato of machine guns, the deadly helicopter gunships belching rockets from their underbellies.

As in Grenada, here again we saw young, heavily armed U.S. soldiers — white, Black, and Latino — the sons of coal miners, steelworkers, auto workers, farmers. Their eyes were barely visible under the makeup of military camouflage, eyes of fear and confusion, some bewildered about



CARIB NOTES Don Rojas

their orders to kill the sons and daughters of Panama's working people with whom they have no quarrel, many fearing they would be killed or wounded needlessly in a country that posed absolutely no threat to the security of the United States.

Images of carnage in the name of capitalist democracy in Central America flashed across the screen: wanton destruction of American and Panamanian lives, ordered by a U.S. president who put a \$1 million bounty on the head of Gen. Manuel Noriega, who a few years ago refused to go along with Washington's plans to overthrow the Nicaraguan revolution and who upheld the right of Panamanians to control their canal. Images of the U.S. ruling class closing ranks behind their president in a bipartisan consensus supporting the illegal invasion.

And how heartrending it was for us to relive those scenes of state-sponsored terror, to see once again as we did in Grenada, the pain and misery, the expressions of grief and despair etched on the faces of mothers and wives who lost their sons, husbands, brothers, and fathers, as well as their homes and all their modest possessions in the latest of U.S. imperialism's dirty wars around the Third World.

Looking at the violent treatment of the captured Panamanian patriots at the hands of the U.S. military throws our recollections back to when we were forced out of our homes at gunpoint by U.S. soldiers on Oct. 28, 1983. We were taken against our will to makeshift concentration camps at the site of Grenada's incomplete international airport and interrogated for hours with M-16 rifles trained at our heads. Like our Panamanian brothers and sisters, Grenadian patriots too were bound and blindfolded, some of us put into cages like animals for several days, our democratic rights trampled beneath the boots of an invading imperialist army.

We remember well what it means to be the victims of an invasion. As in Panama, no distinction was made between military and civilian targets by the U.S. invaders in Grenada. Hospitals were bombed and destroyed, private homes rocketed and machine-gunned including those of the assassinated prime minister Maurice Bishop and his family.

For the U.S. rulers the lives of U.S. citizens in Panama and Grenada are said to be priceless and must be protected at all costs. The lives of innocent Panamanian and Grenadian civilians, however, are expendable, less important, less valuable. Such is the double standard of imperialist morality.

The parallels between Panama and Grenada abound. The similarities in military, political, and diplomatic terms between the two invasions are striking and instructive.

First, both were enormous human tragedies wrought by the U.S. imperialist rulers on small, powerless peoples whose only "crime" was to stand up for their national independence, sovereignty, social gains, and their inalienable right to self-determination.

As with Grenada in 1983, what we have witnessed in Panama in 1989 is the racist rape of a nation of color, the unforgivable assault on a defenseless people who had the nerve to march along an anti-imperialist road and to express solidarity with their struggling brethren throughout the Americas.

Like the criminal invasion of Grenada and the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, this was an attack against the peoples of the entire Caribbean and Latin American region. It was also a special threat to the freedom-loving peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Cuba.

The massive military onslaught by Washington — six times the size of the Grenada operation — was a gross violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Panama. The invasion was an abuse of international law as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and a blatant contravention of the 1977 Panama Canal treaties. Both the Grenada and Panama invasions were planned and rehearsed well in advance, contrary to allegations that Washington acted quickly and decisively in response to "threats and provocations," and both were eventually carried out on the basis of flimsy pretexts and outright lies. Both were immoral acts in the odious tradition of Washington's "big stick" diplomacy. Both invasions have been condemned by forces inside the United States as violating the U.S. Constitution itself.

Like his predecessor Ronald Reagan said about Grenada, U.S. President George Bush claims the invasion is justified in order to defend democracy in Panama and protect U.S. citizens' lives. False.

The real objectives are to impose by military force a U.S. client regime on the people of Panama; to restore the political rule of the racist Panamanian oligarchy; to eradicate the nationalist movement identified with Omar Torrijos; and to maintain control of the canal and the U.S. military bases on Panamanian soil.

The whole world, save a handful of Washington's European allies, recognizes this to be the case. As they did in the Grenada debates of 1983, the globe's major international bodies such as the United Nations, the Movement of Non-aligned Countries, and the Organization of American States have condemned the invasion of Panama.

The peoples and the majority of governments in the Americas have creditably reiterated that neither Panama nor any other country in our region is in the so-called U.S. backyard or in any "sphere of influence" as defined by Washington. This unbridled imperialist arrogance which ascribes to Washington the "right" to interfere in the internal affairs of Latin America and the Caribbean and the "right" to hunt down foreign nationals as "fugitives" from U.S. justice is a colonialist and racist affront to the peoples of

the world who stand as equals in their insistence on dignity.

It is a lawless act of aggression that flies in the face of even the internationally accepted legal norms and principles that Washington claims to abide by. In truth nothing more is involved than the defense of Washington's self-defined "vital interests" around the world.

In a speech on July 26, 1989, Cuban President Fidel Castro noted that in response to recent developments in Eastern Europe, the imperialist powers, and in particular the United States, are riding a wave of "euphoria and triumphalism" that poses a deadly danger to Cuba, Nicaragua, and other countries whose governments have taken progressive stands or whose peoples are fighting for their liberation.

"Never has any administration, not even the Reagan administration, taken such a triumphalist stance. . . . That is why we now see the empire more insolent than ever, more criminal than ever, more threatening than ever," Castro warned.

So far thousands of brave Panamanians have resisted such imperialist insolence arms in hand, defending their country and their dignity. The militia forces whom the U.S. media has contemptuously described as "thugs," "ruffians," "criminals," and "rabble-rousers" are in fact patriotic, nationalistic workers, peasants, and youth who were part of or deeply affected by the growing movement for self-determination in Panama.

Resistance to this latest aggression against Panama's sovereignty did not come from the local capitalist class and its allies, represented by the U.S. puppet President Guillermo Endara. On the contrary, they welcomed the invading forces just as their counterparts did in Grenada. The resistance is coming from working people who remember well what life was like under the string of U.S. puppet governments that dominated Panama from 1903 to 1968, when Torrijos came to power.

During this long period most workers were denied unions. Peasants lacked schools, electricity, running water, and basic medical care. Blacks were segregated into the worst jobs and poorest housing. Panamanians as a whole were denied national dignity and control of their natural resources — the canal above all — and their destiny.

I know that resistance in one form or another will continue in Panama in the weeks and months ahead just like it has continued in Grenada over the past six years. The Panamanian masses will discover, like the Grenadian people have already, that the legacy of the U.S. invasion will not be a legacy of liberation and prosperity but rather a legacy of political instability, denial of democratic rights, social injustice, and deepening economic inequality.

And it is precisely on these similar bitter legacies of imperialist aggression that a new mass movement for national liberation will be constructed by both the Panamanian and Grenadian peoples.

In time Panamanian and Grenadian patriots alike will have internalized the most fundamental common lesson from both invasions: that with all its awesome military might, imperialism is not invincible, that it can never be stronger than the spirit of a united, determined, revolutionary people, and that neither domination by imperialism nor coexistence or "pragmatic" compromise with it can guarantee peace, justice, and social progress.

Meeting scores media attacks on Pathfinder Mural

Continued from back page

Truth on the mural, responded to the *Daily News* editorial, which said that Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., had been "labeled" and "don't belong" in the mural. These men were leaders, Byard said, "in the fight for human rights and Black empowerment," but the *News* editors had "no understanding

Vandals deface mural

Continued from back page

damage. The New York *Daily News* featured a large photo with a caption showing the damage to the portrait of Castro. New York's Spanish-language daily *El Diario* ran a prominent article and photo. The *Miami Herald* picked up a wire-service report.

After repeated calls from the media pressing New York police department officials for their response to the vandalism, Pathfinder representatives received a call from the police reporting that the area surrounding the Pathfinder Building would be more closely patrolled.

Mural supporters are urging all those who support freedom of speech and artistic expression to join in calling on New York authorities to fully investigate this crime, apprehend those responsible, and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law. Messages should be sent to Mayor Edward Koch, City Hall, New York, N.Y. 10007. Copies of messages, as well as urgently needed donations, should be sent to the Pathfinder Bookstore, 191 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

or support for either man — during their lives, or their assassinations."

Rudolf Baranik, a prominent artist and leader of a newly formed artists' group opposed to censorship, Censorship Emergency, slammed the editorials' attack on the mural for "totalitarianism."

"The issue is the fight to defend a work of public art. Artistic freedom is the question," Baranik explained.

Some artists, including himself, would have done aspects of the mural differently, Baranik said. But most importantly, "artists choosing their own styles painted what is dear to them, and dear to us. We welcome it. Don't let anyone erase it!"

Messages were also received from Susan Wyatt, executive director of Artists Space gallery, which was recently victimized by pro-censorship forces in the government; Kathy Andrade, education director of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 23-25; artist Dumile Feni; mural designer Mike Alewitz; and Maureen Holder, vice-president of Machinists' union Local 2656 at British Airways. Activists from the Center for Cuban Studies, the Movement in Solidarity with the Salvadoran People, and the Mark Curtis Defense Committee had tables at the event.

The meeting voted to telex a message protesting the November 19 arrest and detention in San Salvador's Mariona prison of Salvadoran painter Isaias Mata. He painted the portraits of Farabundo Martí and Arch-

bishop Oscar Romero in the mural. Mata is being held on charges of "political sedition."

Laura Kaplan of the Venceremos Brigade, which organizes people to visit and learn about Cuba and whose goal is to end the U.S. blockade of that country, said that "the mural serves as an inspiration to us." She explained that "the same undemocratic forces that attack Cuba are trying to suppress freedom of artistic expression and the free flow of ideas."

John Connolly, an actor and member of the National Board of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, addressed the meeting, as did William Kunstler, the well-known attorney and vice-president of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

More than \$600 was raised at the door and through a fund appeal by Ellie Bernstein, an artist and member of Ventana, a cosponsor of the meeting.

Speaking on behalf of the Pathfinder Mural, Andrea Morell explained that defense of the mural has become part of the "national fight against censorship of the arts."

"Censorship of the arts is part and parcel of the attacks on democratic rights and civil liberties that have typified the last ten years. It is part of the growing capitalist crisis," she said. "But what is new today is the deepening resistance to these attacks."

"It is inevitable that art will become a target, especially political art — art on the side of working people — and art that is antiauthoritarian."

Morell urged participants to get involved in defending the mural. "Write letters to the

newspapers. Take petitions with you. Draw in the broadest forces to make clear that this mural will stay, and put the responsibility on the city government to protect it."

Nicaraguans protest

Continued from Page 5

successfully demanded a recorded vote on the resolution condemning the invasion.

The invasion of Panama, the foreign minister said, makes it clear that "U.S. imperialism is as perverse as ever. Even though the U.S. government praises the openings in the Eastern European countries, here they insist on imposing their own solutions. The big problem for the stability and development not only of our economies but of democracy and independence continues to be the U.S. government."

"Some say the hour of Yankee-stroika has arrived, but all the evidence shows that the Monroe Doctrine is what guides imperialist conduct."

At the rally in Chinandega, Ortega said people are taking goods from stores in Panama City because "they are hungry and because they go without." Washington, he said, is responsible for bringing chaos and instability not only to Panama but to all Central America.

"I invite the governments and peoples of Latin America to be true to our words," Ortega said, "and to demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Panama."

Int'l protests of invasion needed

Continued from front page

can be cast by any of the five "permanent members" blocked adoption of a condemnation of the invasion; the U.S., British, and French representatives vetoed the motion, and the Canadian delegate voted with them.

What of Washington's claim that the aggression was necessary to defend the Panama Canal? That is a flat lie. The Panamanian government had made no threats and taken no action whatsoever to endanger operation of the canal.

But the question of the canal does begin to get at the real reason for the U.S. assault. Despite the treaties signed with Panama in 1977, Washington has no intention of granting control of the canal to the Panamanian people in December 1999.

To ensure its continued domination, Washington needs a government in Panama that is compliant with U.S. interests. When Uncle Sam shouts an order, it expects its subordinates to salute.

Until some 20 years ago, Washington had a government in Panama that saluted.

That regime was based on a thin layer of wealthy, capitalist families in Panama. In the early and mid-1960s, however, Panamanian working people and youth began to intensify their struggles against U.S. domination. They were inspired by the rise of anti-imperialist movements throughout Latin America and the Caribbean in the wake of the victorious Cuban revolution of 1959.

Influenced by these developments, a group of officers in Panama's National Guard overturned the U.S.-backed regime in 1968. The new government, headed by Omar Torrijos, sought to respond to some of the demands of Panamanian workers and farmers. Doors previously shut tight to Panamanians who were Black or Indian began to be opened. Union rights were expanded. The government carried out social projects benefiting working people.

Most galling of all to Washington, Torrijos pressed to fulfill the long-held national aspiration to win control of the canal and the Canal Zone. In 1977 the U.S. government was forced to sign treaties relinquishing control to Panama, in several steps, by the year 2000.

When Torrijos was killed in a plane crash in 1981, he was soon succeeded as chief of the National Guard (later renamed the Panama Defense Forces) by Manuel Noriega. Washington's initial efforts to curry favor with the new PDF leadership were sharply reversed in 1985, when General Noriega refused a U.S. demand to join in direct support for the contra war against Nicaragua.

From that point forward Washington and the super-rich U.S. ruling families it represents have been determined to smash the PDF, get rid of Noriega, and reimpose a subservient regime. To accomplish this bipartisan goal the U.S. rulers have sought to brand the Panamanian government as an international outlaw against which any action is justified.

Washington issued drug-trafficking indictments against Noriega and other Panamanian figures. U.S. officials launched a worldwide smear campaign to ease the way for future aggression.

Over the past few years Washington has sought every possible means to bring down the Panamanian government: military threats, economic sanctions, orchestrating a domestic opposition movement, and support to coup attempts and assassination plots. All these attempts failed.

Dignity Battalions

In the face of Washington's escalating hostile acts, Panamanian working people began in 1988 to step up efforts to defend their country against U.S. aggression. They formed militia units, called "Dignity Battalions," organized and trained by the Panama Defense Forces.

Since the U.S. invasion Washington and the big business media have portrayed these civilian defense forces as "roving gangs of thugs," terrorizing the Panamanian people. These smears are a classic case of what Malcolm X called turning the victim into the criminal. In truth, the Dignity Battalions have organized the Panamanian people to resist the terror from the U.S. armed forces.

Aiming to block this popular resistance, the U.S. forces unleashed massive bombing and shelling on working-class neighborhoods such as Chorrillo and San Miguelito.

Thousands of civilians were killed. The U.S. military has sought to cover up the truth about this slaughter. Red Cross volunteers and ambulances were prevented by U.S. forces from treating the injured and transporting them to hospitals.

The aerial bombing and shelling have been followed by sweeps of working-class neighborhoods aimed at crushing resistance and terrorizing the population. Thousands of patriotic Panamanians have been rounded up at gunpoint.

This U.S. show of force is aimed not at the Panamanian people alone.

Nicaragua today faces a greater danger of U.S. aggression than at any time since its military victory over the contras in late 1987 and early 1988.

Washington is reaffirming its support to government-by-death-squads in El Salvador, where the regime of President Alfredo Cristiani depends on U.S. arms and financial aid for its very survival.

More generally, Washington's message is to hundreds of millions of Latin American workers and peasants who have seen already wretched social conditions deteriorate further

in the 1980s: Don't rebel as your resources and the fruits of your labor go to pay off the staggering debt to imperialist banks.

The U.S. invading forces are also carrying out a direct military threat against Cuba through their siege of the Cuban embassy in Panama City. U.S. troops and armored vehicles have ringed the embassy and home of the Cuban ambassador. Similar actions have been taken against the Nicaraguan embassy in Panama City, as well as the Vatican's embassy, where Noriega has sought asylum.

But the Cuban government's only "crime" is to have been the most consistent voice opposing Washington's campaign against Panama. Since the U.S. invasion Cuba has taken the lead in getting out the truth about this criminal action and in seeking to mobilize the broadest possible international opposition to it.

The "heroes of Our America... at this moment are fighting in Panama for the dignity, honor, and sovereignty of [the Latin American] peoples," Cuban President Fidel Castro said in his December 21 speech reprinted elsewhere in this issue.

It is only such resistance and struggle, Castro said, that can stay the hand of U.S. imperialism from its "stepped-up role... as a policeman that does not stop at any hemisphere, that intervenes in Asia and Africa as well as in Latin America, and that takes upon itself the right to decide what government a country can and cannot have."

Washington speaks of peace, Castro said in another speech given a few weeks earlier (also reprinted in this issue). "But what kind of peace? Of peace between the major powers, while imperialism reserves the right to overtly intervene in and attack Third World countries."

Castro's point is a particularly important one, since it would be wrong to assume that Washington's decision to invade Panama was inevitable once its other efforts to topple Noriega had failed.

In fact two world and regional events in recent months lowered the political price anticipated by the U.S. rulers for such aggression, emboldening them.

Fruits of Malta summit

One was the summit meeting between U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in early December off Malta. As a condition for progress on arms agreements and economic and trade concessions sought by the Soviet government, Bush demanded — publicly, as well as behind closed doors — that Gorbachev acknowledge the Americas as an exclusive arena of U.S. interests.

The fruits of Malta became clear when U.S. forces invaded Panama. The Soviet government issued a statement condemning the U.S. action. But a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesperson stressed that "the time has come to get accustomed to the idea that any event in any area of the world should not necessarily be regarded from the position of East-West confrontation, as was characteristic during the Cold War."

In other words, the U.S. invasion of Panama would not stand in the way of what Washington hopes to achieve in its dealings with the Soviet government, or vice versa.

The U.S. invasion of Panama, Castro said in his speech on December 20, was not only "a blow against peace in Central America," but also "a humiliating slap in the face to the Soviet peace policy."

The second event emboldening Washington was the agreement signed December 12 in Costa Rica by five Central American presidents expressing "decisive support of Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani and his Government." The statement was signed by the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Condemning this declaration the same day, El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front pointed out that the declaration's support to the Cristiani regime, far from advancing prospects for peace, "permits the slaughter that is now taking place in El Salvador to worsen." Two weeks later, it is obvious that the declaration also gave a green light to Washington to extend that slaughter from San Salvador to Panama City.

The Panamanian people who are fighting and dying to defend the sovereignty of their country deserve stepped-up worldwide solidarity from trade unionists, Black rights fighters, students, and all opponents of U.S. military aggression. Protest picket lines, demonstrations, and speakouts have already begun to take place throughout the United States and elsewhere in the world. More are urgently needed.

We should demand emergency medical aid for the thousands of Panamanians wounded by the U.S. assault. Stop the cover-up of the slaughter!

We should demand that all Panamanian patriots held in detention be immediately released.

Washington must drop its trumped-up charges, and its kidnapping and assassination threats, against Manuel Noriega and other Panamanian government officials. It must grant them the right to travel and live wherever they choose.

Washington must immediately halt its provocative military threats against Cuban and Nicaraguan diplomatic personnel in Panama.

U.S. troops out of Panama now!

U.S., Cuban youth demand 'U.S. out of Panama now!'

The Young Socialist Alliance, a revolutionary youth organization in the United States, and the Union of Communist Youth in Cuba both issued emergency statements condemning the U.S. invasion of Panama December 20.

The Young Socialist Alliance demands that the U.S. government immediately halt its criminal invasion of Panama. We call on all young people to oppose this brutal war on a sovereign nation.

This war tramples on all international laws and guidelines upholding self-determination and independence, and is in violation of all treaties concerning the United States and Panama.

The U.S. government claims that the invasion will install a democratic government, protect U.S. citizens, apprehend an international drug trafficker, and uphold the Panama Canal treaties.

Democracy can never be "installed."

We see the lives of U.S. troops and Panamanians, especially youth, being lost in horrifying numbers.

Despite its claims, Washington invaded for one reason and one reason only: to prevent the Panamanian people from regaining control of all of Panama, especially the canal and the canal zone.

The U.S. "drug war" plays no role in resolving the problem of drugs. It only victimizes and harasses workers and farmers in the United States and internationally.

Young people have no interest in supporting Washington's assault on the Panamanian people. The YSA calls on all young people to organize emergency actions demanding that the U.S. troops leave Panama. It is young people who bear the brunt of the death and suffering from this unjust war. We must be in the forefront of all activities condemning the invasion and demanding, "Stop the U.S. war on Panama now!"

National Executive Committee

Young Socialist Alliance

New York



Militant/Miguel Pendás
Cuban youth demonstrate in Havana December 20 to protest U.S. invasion of Panama. "For Panama and the Americas, we would shed our blood the same as we would for Cuba," read paper signs worn by many students.

U.S. imperialism has launched a criminal military attack against Panama. It is conducting an operation of savage murder against this sister nation, which is resisting courageously.

Once more the United States has violated all norms of international law and ignored principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and self-determination of the peoples — thereby demonstrating that its basic nature remains unchanged.

In the name of the young people of Cuba, the Union of Communist Youth calls for urgent actions expressing solidarity with the Panamanian people, energetically condemning this brutal and unjustifiable aggression, and demanding both an immediate halt to the intervention and the withdrawal of the invading forces.

The young people of the world cannot permit such events or stand silent before them, for they endanger world peace as well as the independence and freedom of all peoples. The aggression imperialism has launched against Panama today can be directed tomorrow against any other country in the Third World.

Union of Communist Youth

Havana, Cuba

U.S. Troops Out of Panama Now!

Listed below are some of the activities being held to protest the U.S. invasion of Panama. Unless otherwise indicated, meetings are sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum, New International Forums, or Forum Lutte Ouvrière in each city. Locations of the events and telephone numbers for more information are listed in the directory at the bottom of the page.

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Panel of activists. Fri., Dec. 29, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.50.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Speakers: Francisca Cavazos, participant Panama City International Conference Against Intervention in Central America — The Panama Issue; Harvey McArthur, Socialist Workers Party; representative, Central America Solidarity Committee. Sat., Dec. 30, 7 p.m. Donation: \$3.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Speaker: Leonardo Sidnez, Ninth of January Panamanian Committee. Video showing. Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

Oakland

Speakers to be announced. Fri., Dec. 29, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

San Francisco

Speakers to be announced. Fri., Dec. 29, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Speakers: Beatriz Morales, Georgia State University professor; Miguel Zárate, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers Local 882. Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.50.

IOWA

Des Moines

Speakers: Nan Bailey, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431; Lavonne Cooper, chairperson Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Speakers: Peter Melberg, Central America Solidarity Coalition; Enrique Codas, chairperson Task Force on Latin America of Justice and Peace Commission of Archdiocese of Baltimore; George Lach, member executive board American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2203; Rashaad Ali, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.

MISSOURI

Kansas City

Speakers: Rev. Mac Charles Jones, St. Stephen Baptist Church; Rev. Sam Mann, chairman Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Katie Neely, representative Central America Solidarity Coalition; Don McClain, Interfaith Peace Alliance; Arlene Rubinstein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 29, 7 p.m. Donation: \$2.

St. Louis

Speakers: Walle Amusa, organizer National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression; Pete Brandli, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 67; Peggy Moore, coordinator Pledge of Resistance; Eldora Spiegelberg, president Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Speaker: Don Rojas, former press secretary to slain Grenadian prime minister Maurice Bishop. Sat., Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, *Militant* correspondent on Panama. Sun., Jan. 7, 6 p.m. Donation: \$3.

Manhattan

March from Times Square to 59th and 6th Ave. Sat., Jan. 6. Assemble 12 noon. Sponsors: Ad hoc coalition of antiwar, Central American, Caribbean, and Panamanian organizations.

Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, *Militant* correspondent on Panama; David Ortiz, Bloque Socialista; Esmeralda Brown, coordinator Women's Workshop in the Americas. Sat., Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Speakers to be announced. Sun., Jan. 14, 7 p.m. Donation: \$3.

OHIO

Cleveland

Speakers to be announced. Sat., Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.50.

OREGON

Portland

Speaker: John Linder, brother of Ben Linder who was slain by Nicaraguan contras. Sat., Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$2.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Speaker: Robbie Scherr, 1989 Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate. Sat., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

BRITAIN

London

Speakers: Victor Amaya, representative Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front/Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador; Celia Pugh, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m. Donation: £1.

CANADA

Montréal

Panel discussion. Sat., Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3.

Toronto

Demonstration at Conservative Party headquarters, 121 Richmond St. W. Sat., Dec. 30, 11 a.m. Sponsor: University Students Committee Against U.S. Intervention in the Americas.

Popular revolt in Rumania topples hated tyranny

Continued from front page

hail Gorbachev said that he would confer with Warsaw Pact countries about providing "some help" to the new regime, while Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov ruled out military intervention.

The following day, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said that the U.S. government would not oppose a Soviet military intervention in Rumania by Warsaw Pact forces to mop up pro-Ceausescu forces and stabilize the situation.

Council of National Salvation

After the former dictator fled the capital, a Council of National Salvation was formed to govern the country. While it included other figures opposed to Ceausescu, it was led primarily by former prominent Communist Party officials who had either openly opposed or quietly fallen out with the dictator in the later years of his rule.

The new governing council promised to hold free elections in April and to eliminate totalitarian legal provisions such as those guaranteeing rule by the CP.

On December 26 Ion Iliescu — a former high official under Ceausescu who was ousted in the 1970s — was named interim president.

Some denounced the new government as continuing the rule of the CP, which is widely discredited. A popular sign of the revolt has been the country's flag, with the symbol of the CP ripped out of the center.

In an interview aired December 27 on WCBS radio in New York City, a Rumanian worker who had participated in the fighting expressed fear that party officials were attempting to "hijack" the anti-Ceausescu struggle by placing themselves at the head of the government.

The widespread antagonism to continued rule by the CP is rooted in the repression, mismanagement, and corruption that have characterized the party during more than 40 years in power.

The CP has governed Rumania since the close of World War II. Soviet troops occupied the country shortly after the overthrow of a fascist dictatorship that had backed Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union.

In the first years after the war, the party organized tightly controlled mobilizations of workers and peasants that expropriated and nationalized capitalist industry and abolished landlordism.

While these progressive changes had significant popular support, they were accompanied by the imposition of a regime that denied all democratic rights in order to protect the vast privileges of a bureaucratic caste.

All independent political activity was barred and a political police network spread fear and intimidation throughout society.

Brutality peaked with Ceausescu

Totalitarian brutality and economic mismanagement reached a peak during the reign of Ceausescu, who became general secretary of the party in 1965 and president of the country in 1974.

During the 1980s the living standards of Rumania's working people plummeted as the regime went all out to repay its debts to banking institutions in capitalist Europe and the United States.

More than \$21 billion was turned over to the imperialist bankers, in part by severely rationing fuel and electricity and increasing exports of agricultural produce at the expense of food consumption at home. Today Rumanian homes, apartments, and other buildings lack sufficient gas for cooking, heat, and hot water. Food shortages are common.

Ceausescu had also announced plans to raze 8,000 rural villages and concentrate the peasant inhabitants in new urban developments. Among those threatened by this move were the estimated 2 million ethnic Hungarians, an oppressed minority concentrated mainly in rural areas of Transylvania, a region

near the Hungarian border.

These moves were coupled with an official cult of Ceausescu — proclaimed a "genius" in the program adopted by the CP in its last congress in November — and his family. In addition to Ceausescu and his wife, some 40 family members held high posts in the regime. While the country was in the grip of scarcity, they lived like royalty.

The revolt that toppled the dictator began December 15 in Timisoara, a city of some 350,000 people near Transylvania. Hundreds of Hungarians gathered to bar the eviction and deportation of a clergyman who was active in promoting ethnic rights. The demonstration grew to tens of thousands the next day as ethnic Rumanians joined the Hungarian protesters.

Although police and the armed forces killed many hundreds of protesters, with estimates running from 2,000 to 4,500 dead, the protests in Timisoara continued. Workers seized a petrochemical plant, threatening to blow it up if Ceausescu remained in power.

A crowd that had gathered in Bucharest on December 21 to hear Ceausescu shouted him down after a group of young protesters in the crowd were attacked by police. Police killed at least 13 youths, but massive demonstrations continued and culminated in the dictator's downfall.

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

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Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10. Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

Vandals deface Pathfinder Mural

Unionists, artists, and activists speak out against attack

BY PETER THIERJUNG

NEW YORK — Five soda bottles filled with white paint were smashed against the lower portion of the Pathfinder Mural here sometime during the night of December 20. The "paint bombs" splattered across large portions of the mural. Shards from the bottles were marked with swastikas and "SS" insignia.

Several portraits in the mural were damaged, including civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and antislavery activists Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. A scene of the Chinese revolution was marred; and one of the Haymarket martyrs, leaders of the 19th century fight in the United States for the eight-hour day, was completely obliterated.

The portrait of Cuban President Fidel Castro painted by Aldo Soler was also hit. Soler, a prominent Cuban artist, recently toured 12 U.S. cities speaking on contemporary Cuban art.

The mural, painted by an international team of artists from more than 20 countries, is located on the side of the six-story Pathfinder Building in lower Manhattan. The artistic landmark, which took two years to complete, has at its center a printing press churning out giant sheets of paper with portraits of communist and other working-class leaders whose speeches and writings are published by Pathfinder Press. Surrounding the press are portraits of other revolutionary, antiracist, and national liberation fighters from around the world.

Mural is anathema to rightists

"The signature of racists and fascist-minded thugs is literally written all over this attack," said Sam Manuel, former director of the mural project. "These are the same kinds



Press conference protesting mural vandalism. From left to right, Brazilian composer Thiago de Mello, Pathfinder Mural representative Meryl Lynn Farber, Ventana member Anson Seeno, artist Carole Byard, and Sam Manuel, former director Pathfinder Mural Project.

of forces who destroy synagogues and assault Blacks in Howard Beach or Bensonhurst. A mural like this — a wall of the world's freedom fighters, many of whom are women and men of color — is anathema to them." He announced that mural supporters have begun organizing volunteers to maintain a 24-hour-a-day watch over the mural.

Manuel was joined by artists, unionists, civil liberties supporters, and Central America and Caribbean solidarity activists at a December 22 news conference called by mural project coordinators to protest the vandalism.

"I consider this to be bias-related violence against an artistic representation," said William Henning, Jr., second vice-president of Communications Workers of America Local 1180. He called on New York police to investigate the vandalism and give it the prior-

ity racist attacks are said to be given by city police.

Miriam Thompson, editor of United Auto Workers Local 259's *Unity News*, deplored the "media-assisted defacement" of the mural. She was referring to the campaign conducted by the editors of the *New York Post* and *New York Daily News* against the mural. On November 19, the day the mural was dedicated, the *Post* carried an editorial headlined "Off the wall — that's where it belongs." It concluded with a provocative call which said, "The mural should be removed."

"The *New York Post* asked for this. They deliberately went out and encouraged this," William Kunstler said. Kunstler, an attorney and civil liberties defender, was an early supporter of the mural project.

A statement from New York's mayor-elect David Dinkins denouncing the vandalism

and pledging to join restoration efforts was read at the conference. The statement was released to the press by Dinkins' office.

Several artists who contributed to the mural, including some who had their efforts marred by the vandals, attended the news conference. They were Carole Byard, who painted Malcolm X and Harriet Tubman; Robert Coane, who contributed several portraits, including civil rights figures Rosa Parks and Medgar Evers; and Phyllis Yampolsky, creator of a scene about the Chinese revolution. Cliff Joseph, who painted Martin Luther King, Jr., and Steve Biko, sent a message.

Renowned Brazilian composer and musician Thiago de Mello attended the conference. De Mello, a member of Musicians' union Local 802, is a leader of Ventana, an organization of cultural workers in solidarity with Nicaragua. Ventana was a cosponsor of the mural project.

"In the midst of so many lies, fabrications, and misinformation, it is sad to see that the truth is a dangerous thing to be seen and read by anyone," de Mello told the *Militant* later. Anson Seeno and Mike Alewitz, representing Ventana, also participated in the news conference.

"We decry the horrible defacement of the mural and call for the perpetrators to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Laura Kaplan said. Kaplan is a member of the Venceremos Brigade, a group that organizes activities in solidarity with the Cuban revolution.

Pathfinder Mural representative Meryl Lynn Farber also reported that a bomb threat had been phoned to Pathfinder on December 11.

Good Day New York, a local TV news program, broadcast a segment of its program live from the mural site on the day of the news conference. WBAI radio, WABC-TV, and WPIX-TV covered the event.

The *New York Times* ran a major story in its metropolitan section December 23, with photos of the mural and a close-up of the

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New York officials speak out against mural vandalism

The act of vandalism against the Pathfinder Mural depicting prominent figures in the struggle for social justice merely demonstrates the unbalanced mentality, pointless venom, and cowardice of the anonymous perpetrators.

The mural, which is a result of the dedicated efforts of artists from more than twenty countries, was two years in the making. Its desecration points to a lack of respect for the diversity of opinion and creative expression that characterizes what it means to be American.

I urge law enforcement officials to do everything possible to apprehend the responsible person or persons and I call on New Yorkers of good will to join in rejecting acts of racial hostility, especially in this holiday season. I will try to assist in the restoration of this important work.

David Dinkins
Manhattan Borough President
Mayor-elect of New York

The recent acts of vandalism against the Pathfinder Mural are unconscionable. We understand and accept the right of citizens to protest, but to destroy a work of art is unacceptable. We are rapidly moving into an environment where visual images are being policed in a way that is anathema to democracy and free expression.

Mary Schmidt Campbell
Commissioner
Department of Cultural Affairs
City of New York

Meeting scores media attacks on mural

BY DOUG COOPER

NEW YORK — "They are acting out of fear. That's why they're treating us and our art the way they do," said New York artist Cliff Joseph. He was welcoming some 120 people to the Westbeth Gallery on December 16 to protest recent threats against the Pathfinder Mural. Behind him was a large banner that read "No to censorship! Defend artistic freedom!"

The meeting was organized to protest recent editorials in the *New York Post* and the *Daily News* that called for the defacement and removal of the just-completed mural, attacked the public funding it received, and slandered it as "totalitarian."

'Guardians of morality'

"Protest letters and petitions keep pouring in" to the *News*, the *Post*, and the mayor's office, explained Meryl Lynn Farber, coordinator of the defense effort here. Farber, who chaired the meeting, read a message from William Henning, Jr., second vice-president of Communications Workers of America Local 1180.

"I'm glad that working people have the opportunity to enjoy public art, like the Pathfinder Mural," Henning said. "Murals such as these can be an inspiration to working people, like the mural on the wall of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota, during their 1985-86 strike at Hormel. It was a desecration when that mural was removed."

"As citizens, we have the right to both like and dislike what we see. That's why I'm

outraged that self-appointed guardians of morality would try to deprive us of this hard-won democratic right."

Sandy Boyer, director of New York's Irish Arts Center, told the meeting that although opponents of the mural want to "create a climate to encourage vandals, we can create a climate that says 'Hands off our mural!'" He called on participants to take the fight "out of this room, to your unions, to community groups, every place you go."

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation also sent a statement. GLAAD "supports the Pathfinder Mural in its struggle against would-be censors. Public funding for the arts should not be limited to projects that reflect current, supposedly majoritarian social values, but, on the contrary, should be consciously provided on an equitable basis to artists who give voice to historically unheard, possibly unpopular, ideas," the message said.

'No respect for U.S. blockade'

Joel Schwartz, president of Civil Service Employees Association Local 4446 and co-chair of the union's statewide anti-apartheid committee, also sent a message. "As a unionist involved in the struggle against apartheid, I am proud to see an outstanding fighter like Nelson Mandela portrayed so prominently in New York City," he said.

"And as someone who has exercised another right under attack — the right to travel — and has visited Cuba, I am glad to see such an array of Cuban leaders, from José

Martí and Antonio Maceo to Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, on a wall that pays no respect to the antidemocratic U.S. trade and economic blockade that wrongly keeps our two peoples apart."

Carole Byard, who painted portraits of Malcolm X, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner

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Portrait of Harriet Tubman damaged in vandal attack.