

Nicaragua: autonomy plan is blow to 'contra' war

BY BILL GRETTTER

BLUEFIELDS, Nicaragua — A special legal holiday and public festival here November 30 celebrated the beginning of a new stage in the autonomy project which is drawing Nicaragua's long-isolated Atlantic Coast into the life of this revolutionary nation.

The event marked the end of a three-month period of consultation, in which the people of this region were asked to express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions about autonomy. The information will be used to draft a law to be incorporated into the country's new constitution, creating special regional governments in the northern and southern parts of the Atlantic Coast.

The region that used to be Zelaya Province — fully one-half of the country's area — is now divided into two special zones. In Northern Zelaya the consultation process ended Dec. 15, 1985; in the south it had finished two weeks earlier.

The Atlantic Coast has been a major target of the U.S.-organized *contra* war against Nicaragua. The counterrevolutionaries hoped that this area might provide the base inside Nicaragua that they had failed to gain elsewhere. Growing support for autonomy and for the revolution in the region frustrated their plans.

Contra attacks in this area, directed by the CIA, are aimed at disrupting the autonomy process and torpedoing the de facto cease-fire that has been established between the Sandinista army and most of the groups of Miskito Indians who participated for a time in the contra war.

Six racial groups on Atlantic Coast

Six different racial groups inhabit the region. Miskito and Sumo Indians live principally in Northern Zelaya. Rama Indians, Garifonas — a mixture of Caribe Indians and descendants of African slaves — and Creoles (Blacks) live primarily in Southern Zelaya.

All of these groups were victims of special forms of racial oppression in the past, and their languages and cultures were suppressed. The autonomy project seeks to integrate these groups fully into Nicaraguan society — to create a unified nation for the first time — by respecting and enhancing the racial diversity that exists, not repressing it.

In both zones, the majority of the population are Spanish-speaking mestizos, as in the rest of Nicaragua. Although not victimized by racial oppression in the same way, mestizos too were discriminated against as *costeños* (residents of the Atlantic Coast). They, like the others, were held down by the British and U.S. companies that maintained colonial domination of the Atlantic Coast even after the area was officially united with Nicaragua.

Legacy of discrimination

Initial results of the consultation process show four main areas in which *costeños* are confronting the legacy of discrimination:

- The area's natural resources, including lumber, gold, and fish, have traditionally been exploited by foreign interests. Tired of being ripped off, *costeños* believe they should get more of the benefits from these resources.

- The structure of the new regional governments is still being discussed. Even the exact geographical area of each has not yet been determined. The autonomous regional governments will face the task of aggressively promoting the demands of all the racial groups in each zone, without subordinating the smaller ones to the larger

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U.S. government steps up war moves against Libya

BY FRED FELDMAN

The U.S. government has launched new war moves against Libya. The pretexts of "national security" and "fighting terrorism" are being used to prepare further military escalation, not only in the Middle East, but in Central America, where Washington's terrorist bands are waging a full-scale war against Nicaragua.

In a January 7 news conference, President Reagan imposed a tighter economic embargo on Libya, ordered all U.S. citizens to leave that country immediately or face possible prosecution, and promised further efforts to pressure West European governments to join an economic blockade of Libya. The following day, he ordered a freeze on Libyan assets in the United States.

Military pressure on the North African country and its 4 million people has been sharply stepped up.

A U.S. aircraft carrier moved into the Mediterranean within striking distance of Libya. Another U.S. aircraft carrier and a battleship were alerted for possible action. U.S. warplanes were sent to a base in Italy. The Pentagon publicly stated it was making a list of targets in Libya.

"Further steps will be taken," Reagan threatened.

The governments of many countries in Asia and Africa protested the U.S. war moves, which are a threat to the independence and rights of all oppressed countries.

On January 4 the 22-nation Arab League denounced "threats and troop movements" against Libya. It declared itself "firmly at the side of any Arab state threatened with aggression."

On January 7 the 45-nation Islamic Conference Organization condemned "aggressive escalation on the part of international imperialism" against Libya. It declared "firm solidarity" with Libya in face of Washington's acts of war against it.

The Soviet government also voiced solidarity with Libya. The government of Italy, an imperialist ally of Washington, declared its opposition to U.S. military action in the Mediterranean. It warned that such action could "trigger an uncontrollable spiral."

Nor has any other government joined Washington's economic embargo against Libya.

As is always the case when Washington undertakes acts of war against other countries, new restrictions are being imposed on



U.S. aircraft carrier *Coral Sea* menaces Libya. Governments around the world protested Washington's threats against North African country.

democratic rights in the United States.

The threat to prosecute U.S. citizens who do not leave Libya immediately is a major extension of the undemocratic ban on travel to Libya. Bans and restrictions on travel to Libya and other countries are used to keep U.S. citizens from finding out for themselves the truth about these countries.

Washington seeks to shut off sources of information other than the U.S. rulers' propaganda machine.

The statement by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that it is stepping up surveillance of Libyans in this country is another ominous threat. It means more harassment

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Bishop Tutu, on U.S. visit, demands S. Africa sanctions

BY ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa called on the U.S. government to impose sanctions against South Africa's apartheid regime at a news conference in New York on January 6. Tutu is an opponent of apartheid and a winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize.

In Washington, D.C., he was presented with an anti-apartheid "Freedom Letter" signed by over 1 million people in the United States.

Tutu is on a two-week tour here to build solidarity with the struggle in South Africa.

In response to those who argue that sanctions will only hurt Blacks in South Africa, Tutu told the press, "Let people not use us as an alibi. We are suffering now. . . . If additional suffering is going to put a terminus to our suffering, then we will accept it."

Referring to U.S. companies with hold-

ings in South Africa, Tutu said, "Over a long period of time, those who have invested have benefited from cheap labor supplied by Blacks."

A cheering, chanting crowd of more than 1,000 greeted Tutu in Washington, D.C., January 8 when he visited the picket line at the South African embassy there.

Randall Robinson, director of Trans-Africa and cochair of the Free South Africa Movement, presented Tutu with the Freedom Letter.

The letter is a response to an attack on Tutu and the fight against apartheid by right-wing spokesman Jerry Falwell.

Last summer, Falwell announced a campaign to increase ties with the South African regime.

The Freedom Letter states in part: "Jerry Falwell does not speak for me — or for America."

"The American people know that apartheid is a crime. It is a moral outrage."

"By signing this Freedom Letter we say no to Mr. Falwell, no to apartheid, and no to the government of South Africa."

Among those who participated in the presentation of the Freedom Letter were Richard Trumka, president of the United Mine Workers of America, and Owen Bieber, president of the United Auto Workers. The UMW, UAW, and other unions helped collect signatures on the Freedom Letter along with other anti-apartheid activists.

Tutu called the Freedom Letter a "tremendous gesture of solidarity and support." The Freedom Letter, he continued, tells South African Blacks "that the world cares, that they have friends."

The anti-apartheid movement in the United States, Tutu said, was a "wonderful boost" to the "victims of apartheid."

Later that night, Tutu spoke to an overflow crowd at a Black church in Washington, D.C.

As part of his visit here Tutu will be participating in a celebration in Atlanta of the first national holiday to commemorate the birthday of slain U.S. civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gov't agricultural package: bad news for working farmers

BY DOUG JENNESS

Working farmers, reeling from their worst crisis in 50 years, have just been hit with several severe body blows by the government.

A new farm bill adopted by Congress and signed by President Reagan on December 23 will substantially lower the price the government pays farmers for their commodities over the next five years. On the same day, the president put his signature to a bill that will help the Farm Credit System tighten its squeeze on debt-burdened farmers and drive thousands more of them off the land.

And, as if these two holiday packages were not enough, on New Year's Eve the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) announced that it was notifying thousands of farmers who owe the government lending agency nearly \$6 billion to pay up or face foreclosure.

The Food Security Act of 1985, as the new farm bill is officially called, was adopted with firm support from both Republicans and Democrats after 11 months of debate. This prodigious labor, however, did not produce even one sentence in the more-than-1,000-page document that offers crisis-ridden farmers any relief.

According to its supporters, this legislation is supposed to take steps toward cheapening farm commodities produced in the United States in order to make them more competitive on the world market. Between 1981 and 1984, U.S. food exports dropped 21 percent. Record domestic food production during the same period generated enormous accumulations of farm product inventories.

The main features of the bill aim to lower market prices at the expense of

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'Militant' well-received by Miami airline workers

BY RICH GAETA

MIAMI — Socialists in Miami have been selling the *Militant* to workers at Eastern Airlines for two years. Originally, we could only sell near the hangars across

the right to sell at the airport terminal and employee parking lot. Since this victory, we have been selling two to four papers at each sale.

Escalating attacks by the com-

three unions representing workers at the airlines — the International Association of Machinists, the Transport Workers Union, and the Air Line Pilots Association — all renegotiate their contracts.

Eastern workers have good reason to worry. The last time the company forced the union to renegotiate, the workers lost 18 to 22 percent of their pay and benefits.

Salespeople have found that the *Militant's* coverage of the fight against apartheid in South Africa is a strong selling point. We also put special emphasis on a recent *Militant* article on the necessity for

the unions to champion the interests of the entire working class as the way to effectively counter the attacks by the employers and the government.

One team sold eight copies of the paper on the coldest night of the winter here. Most of the workers were friendly. Three people reached into their pockets to pay for the paper when a salesperson explained that "this paper is socialist. Its coverage is not like the *Miami Herald's*," which is a big-business-owned daily.

Two flight attendants approached the sales team to buy the paper. One said, "If Borman takes \$2 an hour from us, we won't be

able to buy this paper. Tell your members to write a protest letter demanding an end to the Borman takebacks." Frank Borman is the chairman of Eastern.

Militant supporters who work for Eastern have also been selling the paper on the job. So sales teams meet people who already have the paper. Two cleaners, for example, told one team that they had each bought a subscription from a coworker.

Socialists here plan to increase sales at Eastern Airlines in the coming weeks so that we can continue to discuss the ruling class attacks and what it will take to organize a movement against them.

SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

the street from the International Association of Machinists' union hall.

Last year, *Militant* salespeople waged a successful battle to win

pany on the union contract have led to an increased interest among workers here in discussing politics and buying the *Militant*.

Eastern is demanding that the

Miami socialists win support for disclosure fight

BY JACK MANNING

MIAMI — A group of partisans of democratic rights is urging support to the Socialist Workers Party here in its fight against forced disclosure of the names of SWP campaign contributors. Miami and Florida officials seek to compel the party to turn over the names of those who gave money to the 1985 campaign here of Harvey McArthur for mayor.

Despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling to the contrary, a federal judge here has upheld officials in denying the SWP exemption from local disclosure statutes. This is a serious attack not only on the rights of the SWP, but on all independent candidates.

Documenting the harassment and victimization of area political activists, supporters of the fight against disclosure declared that for McArthur to comply "would give the FBI, local police, and the right wing a ready-made enemies list for future reprisals." A victory in the fight, they explain, "will strengthen the democratic rights of all activists."

Signers of the appeal include: Lynn Berk, chair, English Department, Florida International University; O.R. Daythorne, chair, Caribbean Studies, University of Miami; Jack Lieberman, co-coordinator of LACASA, a Latin American and Caribbean solidarity coalition; Brenda Meyerson, South Florida Peace Coalition; Christopher Warren, professor of political science, Florida International University; Toby Berk, professor of computer science, Florida International University; Patricia Ireland, national board member, National Organization for Women; and Jim Panaro, Irish Northern Aid Committee.

On December 20 Federal Judge James King denied a motion to reopen a suit to exempt the SWP. It was filed by McArthur and American Civil Liberties Union attorney Stephen Maher.

They had asked for a rehearing to win reversal of Judge King's earlier ruling upholding Miami and Florida officials who

are demanding that the names of SWP campaign contributors be disclosed.

Sought injunction

In that suit, the SWP wanted an order exempting McArthur from disclosure and a permanent injunction exempting future SWP nominees from disclosure.

The suit also sought to protect party records from government scrutiny.

McArthur is now discussing with his lawyers the steps necessary to appeal Judge King's decision.

Meanwhile, Miami authorities were compelled to drop one attempted victimization of McArthur.

During his campaign, he was arrested while distributing campaign material in downtown Miami. The charge was obstructing the sidewalk — a criminal offense for which he faced a possible 60 days in jail. But on December 20 the Dade County attorney's office announced the charge was being dropped.

"Apparently," McArthur commented, "they didn't want to defend the claim that one person could block a 22-foot-wide sidewalk."

However, officials have indicated no readiness to back off in their unjustified demand for names of contributors to the socialist campaign.

High court ruling

In 1982 the Supreme Court upheld an Ohio ruling exempting the SWP from campaign disclosure.

The high court held there was "substantial evidence of both governmental and private harassment of SWP members and supporters.... The First Amendment prohibits a state from compelling disclosures by a minor party that will subject the person identified to the reasonable probability of threat, harassment and reprisals."

In addition, the Federal Elections Commission has ruled that their 1979 exemption from campaign disclosure of all SWP

candidates in federal elections be extended through 1988.

However, Miami and state officials have refused to recognize these decisions and demanded disclosure of the names of contributors.

Judge King agreed with this, claiming in his ruling that the Supreme Court decision did not apply because the Miami mayoral election in which McArthur was a candidate was "nonpartisan" and "the State has done nothing that would require campaign reporting in relation to party affiliation."

He further argued that "the identification with the S.W.P. has been purely through Mr. McArthur's own initiative...."

"McArthur himself is the party who is identifying himself as a socialist, it is his speeches and literature that raises conflict," he asserted.

'Nonpartisan' fraud

While Democratic and Republican candidates may choose to cloak themselves behind the fake "nonpartisan" label, McArthur is simply stating the reality — he is the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party. And despite hypocritical official disclaimers, contributors to his campaign would be treated as exactly that, supporters of the socialist nominee.

And to assert that McArthur and his literature "raises conflict" is turning reality on its head. The "conflict" stems from the cops, the FBI, the right-wing groups, and the major party machines, which try to suppress dissent and free speech by those who disagree with them.

The government, in fact, has forced "identification with the SWP" by demanding a list of its campaign contributors.

The moves to victimize the SWP did not begin with the McArthur campaign.

In the 1983 mayoral campaign, officials also demanded that SWP nominee Jackie Floyd disclose the names of her campaign contributors. She too declined to comply, and this past April the Florida Elections

Commission imposed a \$400 fine. This is being appealed.

The SWP insistence that the Supreme Court disclosure decision be respected relates to a very real problem of victimization of political activists here.

Documentation confirming dozens of cases of death threats, bombings, disruption of meetings, physical attacks, and secret surveillance has been provided in McArthur's behalf by supporters of his fight.

One example is the case of Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. He received death threats and was stoned as he left a radio station last April after participating in a radio debate on Cuba. The brigade is a group of young Cuban-Americans who oppose Washington's anti-Cuba drive.

In November, bomb threats forced two Catholic schools to cancel meetings for two religious activists who had visited Nicaragua with Witnesses for Peace.

Brushing aside such evidence, Judge King's ruling made light of the threat of reprisal to contributors to the socialist campaign.

"McArthur has made no showing," the judge asserted, "that any reprisals would be made by the state or its agencies and the threat of reprisals from the community seems slight at best."

This in the face of McArthur's affidavit citing the 1983 firebombing of the Miami SWP offices, written and verbal death threats against party members, seven cases of police disruption of SWP activities, and cases of SWP members being fired from their jobs for their political views.

The supporters of McArthur's exemption fight have called for letters to be sent to Gov. Robert Graham demanding that Florida officials comply with the Supreme Court decision and exempt SWP candidates from campaign disclosure requirements. Letters should be sent to the governor at the State Capitol, Tallahassee, Fla. 32301, with copies to McArthur at Box 370486, Miami, Fla. 33137.

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S. Africa: 20,000 striking miners fired

BY FRED FELDMAN

Twenty thousand Black platinum miners were fired January 6 by Gencor, South Africa's second-largest mining corporation. Their "crime" was asserting their right to strike and demanding improved wages and safety conditions. The remaining 10,000 workers at the Impala mine in the BophuthaTswana Bantustan were also threatened with firing.

Impala produces about 40 percent of the platinum mined in South Africa, the world's leading producer. Sales of platinum to the United States are a major source of profits for Gencor.

The miners, who reportedly went on strike January 1, do not have a recognized union.

The January 7 *Washington Post* reported that Gencor officials "did not hide the company's intention of preventing the unionization of the platinum miners and dealing a major blow to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), whose BophuthaTswana affiliate claims to represent most of the 30,000 miners involved."

The NUM says it is preparing a fight to get the Impala miners rehired.

Company officials said that high unemployment in the Bantustan would make it possible to hire other miners. They said they would seek to prevent the fired miners from getting jobs at other mines.

Gary Maude, Impala's acting chief executive officer, said the company fired the workers because their demands for pay increases were "far too high," and their calls for stricter safety standards were "expensive and unreasonable in current circumstances."

The pay of Black miners is one-fifth that of white miners. Top pay for Black miners at Impala is \$120 per month. Mining accidents have taken the lives of thousands of South African Blacks. (From 1936 to 1966, for example, the mining industry death rate was three per shift.)

Bantustans

The apartheid regime pretends that BophuthaTswana is an independent country ruled by Blacks. But the racist, antilabor

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Black miners in South Africa (left). Top pay is \$120 a month. At right, funeral of white apartheid foe drew large Black crowd.



Fishermen's strike shuts Mass. port

BY RON RICHARDS
AND SARAH ULLMAN

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. — A strike by 800 fishermen has shut down this important fishing port. Picket lines by members of the Seafarers' International Union have closed down the Fish Auction House and unloading facilities used by the 253-boat New Bedford fleet.

"We got everything sealed off," said Ronald Correia, a striker who has worked as a deck hand for 14 years. "They did not think that the union was strong enough," he continued.

When the strike began, the union only had about half the fishing boats in New Bedford organized. In the course of the strike, the union has won 140 new members. The picket lines have been honored by nonunion fishermen, family-owned boats where members of the family do most of the labor, and dock workers.

The workers were forced out on strike when the bosses — owners who do not go out to sea with their boats — rejected the union's demands for a wage increase, demanding wage concessions instead. In addition, the bosses, called "shore captains" by the strikers, are trying to cut crew sizes from six to four. The bosses have also re-

jected the demand for a union hiring hall.

Workers on fishing boats are paid a form of piece rate. The wages are a percentage of the catch, minus the operating expenses of the boat. Under the old contract, the workers received 58 percent of the catch after expenses. This contract expired in March 1985 but was extended until September of last year when the strike began.

The bosses are now demanding a 50-50 split. The union wants the percentage of the catch to rise over a three-year period to 65 percent after expenses.

Typically, these boats sail for 10 days, with a six-member crew. Crew members work 16 hours a day. If crew reduction is forced through, unionists say it will increase the workday to 18 hours.

Once the catch is sold and operating expenses are paid, there is no guarantee that these workers will even make minimum wage for their labor.

In an attempt to portray these strikers as greedy and money-hungry, the *Boston Globe* ran a recent article claiming that fishermen can make \$30,000 a year. Strikers said that this was possible, but very unlikely. One striker, Ronald Correia, told the *Militant* that he made only \$9,000 last year.

The workers need an increase in the percentage of the catch just to maintain their current income.

The increased number of boats has led to overfishing and declining catches. Joe Pereira, an engineer aboard the *Salvaterri*, said that a typical catch has gone from 90,000 to 10,000 pounds.

According to Joseph Piva, port agent for the Seafarers, the union supports port rules that would encourage conservation. These rules would require that each boat stay in port a number of days each year. To work, such rules would have to apply to both union and nonunion boats.

These fishermen suffered an earlier attack on their standard of living when the government decided to classify them as self-employed. This has meant that the bosses no longer have to contribute to either the social security or unemployment funds. One striker told the *Militant* that "they say we are self-employed, but that's nuts."

Although the fishermen changed their

union affiliation from the Teamsters to the Seafarers in July of last year, rank-and-file Teamsters with dockside jobs have been extremely supportive of the strike.

As the strike continues, all fishing activities in New Bedford have come to a halt. Two boats have docked here, but they have been unable to unload the fish in their hold.

Although the strikers receive no strike benefits, they are determined to continue. "There is no way 50-50 can survive," said one striker.

Oil workers' contract extended

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 8 — The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union (OCAW) has reached an agreement with most major oil companies to continue working under the terms of their contract that expired today.

The major exception is CONOCO, where workers remain on the job without a contract. Meanwhile, negotiations continue.

Oil companies "were exceptionally slow in coming up with an initial offer," Gerald Archuleta, OCAW publicity director, told the *Militant* in a telephone interview from union headquarters in Denver, Colorado.

Only AMOCO, Phillips, and ARCO had made offers by January 6.

"In lieu of a wage increase they offered a \$500 lump-sum payment for the first year and \$300 the second. That does not add one cent to the wage rate. It's only for those years. There's nothing for overtime or holiday pay, or for pensions," Archuleta said. The offers were rejected by the union.

According to OCAW members at Chevron's Richmond, California, refinery, the company there is demanding a sharp cut in wages of new employees — from \$12.70 to \$8.88 an hour.

"The union Policy Committee will travel to Denver January 10 to review revised offers from AMOCO and Phillips and to look at offers that have come in from other companies," Archuleta said.

Most of OCAW's 285 oil contracts ran out today. Some 46,500 workers are covered, including refinery, petrochemical, and pipeline workers.

Union members authorized a strike call when they approved the "1986-87 Oil Bargaining Program" on September 1.

Calling for "no two-tier contracts," the bargaining statement said that such agreements "make a travesty of our long-held principle of equal pay for equal work by paying two different wage rates... for the same job at the same location."

The union is also demanding "a substantial wage increase"; that the company pay more of the cost for medical insurance; and "no regression" in previous contract terms on health and safety, layoffs, and plant closings.

While the oil giants seem poised to join other companies in trying to take back as much as they can get, they are in a poor position to plead poverty. With a "\$50 billion-a-year cash flow, the oil companies have plenty of funds to get by with — more than they know what to do with, in fact," the bargaining statement noted.

Hormel strikers hang tough as company makes new threats

BY PEGGY WINTER

MINNEAPOLIS — By a 59 percent majority, striking members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota, rejected a federal mediator's settlement proposal. International union officials had pressed P-9 to accept it.

The results were announced January 3 after a mail-in vote conducted by the UFCW International headquarters.

Local P-9 went on strike Aug. 17, 1985, when the Hormel Co. refused to negotiate a contract restoring wage rates that the company had unilaterally slashed 23 percent back in September 1984. Hormel was also seeking to destroy rights won by the union through past struggles.

At a December 21 mass meeting of 1,000 strikers and their families in Austin, P-9's executive board had urged rejection of the mediator's proposal. P-9's leadership pointed out that it would impose a two-tier wage scale, gut the seniority system and safety rights, and eliminate virtually every other union protection.

The strikers cast their ballots December 26 and 27 at the union headquarters in Austin. They voted two-to-one against the settlement.

UFCW Regional Director Joseph Hansen had sent out a six-page letter to the strikers urging them to accept the proposal. When they voted it down, the International refused to accept the results and went ahead with its own mail-in ballot.

The ballots were counted January 3 under tight security by a private accountant's firm. One hundred strikers and their families made the 100-mile trip from Austin to the suburban Twin Cities Motel where the count took place.

At the end of a tense six-hour wait, the

strikers greeted with cheers the announcement that the proposal had been rejected by a vote of 775 to 540.

Jim Guyette, Local P-9's president, told the media, "I think it's time we concentrated on who the real enemy is and put behind us this charade of a vote."

Guyette said the union would shortly send pickets to other Hormel plants.

After the vote, a Hormel official stated that despite the vote the company would reopen the Austin plant January 13.

Guyette said that the local is "certainly going to discourage people from going into the plant as replacement workers. But we are not going to advocate violence of any sort."

W. Va. inmates rebelled for rights

BY JOHN HARRIS

MORGANTOWN, W. Va. — The prisoner rebellion which erupted on New Year's Day at the West Virginia penitentiary in Moundsville was the latest in a series of protests against inhuman conditions there.

The inmates took 14 guards hostage and won a meeting with newly elected Gov. Arch Moore.

Representatives of the prisoners presented grievances relating to some 50 problems at the jail.

High on their list were demands for reestablishment of an inmates' council abolished in 1979, improvement of curtailed visiting opportunities, and better vocational training.

The prisoners pressed for better living conditions and better food — including at least one hot meal a day — and insisted that

rules be applied equally, fairly, and uniformly.

"All we are asking is to be treated like human beings," said inmate spokesman Alvin Gregory.

"We want to be treated like we're somebody, not just trash and animals," one protester had shouted from a prison window during the rebellion.

Since the meeting with the governor, the prisoners remain confined to their cells, and no plans have been announced for improvement in their conditions.

The penitentiary was built in 1866, and little has changed in the 120 years since.

In 1983 a circuit court judge pronounced the situation there a violation of the Constitution. He pointed to such outrages as open sewers and maggot-infested food.

Scores of improvements were ordered, but few have been implemented.



Paul Sobocinski (left) speaking at a press conference on the steps of the county courthouse in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, last August. Sobocinski had just been hit with criminal charges for his activity in a farm foreclosure protest.

Minn. farm activist appeals conviction

BY MAGGIE McCRAW

FERGUS FALLS, Minn. — Paul Sobocinski, state foreclosure chair of the farm activist group Groundswell, was convicted here on December 17 of "obstructing a legal process." Sobocinski was fined \$700 and sentenced to 90 days. He began serving his sentence immediately. Two days later, however, he was released pending appeal.

About 50 to 100 supporters, including members of the Wabasso High School Future Farmers of America, attended all or part of the six-day trial.

The charges against Sobocinski, who farms near Wabasso in southwest Minnesota, stem from a July 18, 1985, farm foreclosure protest here in Fergus Falls.

At that protest, 75 farmers and their supporters were attacked by the police when they tried to prevent the sale of Ross and Cathy Smith's dairy farm. Undercover cops were on hand. As the farmers began chanting "No sale," the deputies and plainclothes cops charged the crowd.

The sheriff conducted the sale with a public address system from a second-floor balcony. Meanwhile Sobocinski was arrested and jailed.

In the course of the trial, two very different pictures of this protest were presented.

The government and the big-business media tried to paint Sobocinski and Groundswell as violent lawbreakers.

The December 10 Fergus Falls *Daily Journal* reported that Sobocinski was arrested for "holding the door of the courthouse shut, knocking Deputy Dale Ackerman to his knees, and for grabbing legal papers and a megaphone from [Sheriff] Melby's hands."

Prosecution witness Deputy Mark Morris told the court that "it was scary. I was frightened because I thought we would be hurt. There were large groups of people chanting, and they were getting physical." He claimed it was the farmers who started the pushing. Deputy Mike Boen testified, "It was a very violent group confrontation."

But Alan Conner, a Park Rapids farm activist, and others testified that it was the deputies who provoked the shoving. Conner said that a plainclothes cop grabbed him while he was in the courthouse, yanked him out the door, and pushed him down the steps of the courthouse.

Sobocinski explained in a statement the opening day that Groundswell always promotes peaceful protests. "When farmers are in trouble, we stand together as neighbors. No Groundswell member that I know of has ever thrown a punch or tried to start a fight. We think peaceful protests and standing together is a better alternative than something like what happened in Iowa yesterday."

This was a reference to the December 9 tragedy in Hills, Iowa, where Dale Burr, a 63-year-old farmer, killed his wife, a neighboring farmer, a bank president, and

himself. Burr left a one-line note saying that he couldn't stand his financial problems any longer.

The same day, a Pipestone, Minnesota, farmer, Ludwig Muller, committed suicide. The previous Thursday a notice of the foreclosure sale of his farm had appeared in two local newspapers. Groundswell activists told the *Militant* that similar suicides in Minnesota had gone unreported in the press until the Iowa banker was killed.

In the course of the trial, defense attorneys and witnesses painted a picture of the deep crisis in rural areas, including the human toll shown by the recent suicides and killings in Iowa and Minnesota. They explained Groundswell's efforts to take this issue to the public and defended farmers' right to organize and protest.

The defense noted that Sobocinski had in fact met with the sheriff before the protest to ensure that it would be peaceful. The defense explained that Sobocinski was singled out because he is a leader of Groundswell. Attorney Kenneth Tilsen said farmers should have "the right to speak and not be shot like in South Africa or Central America."

The prosecutor, Michael Kirk, argued that the authorities must take whatever steps are needed to carry out foreclosure sales, especially when there are protests. In his summation Kirk said that the deputies "were just doing their job to ensure the safety of all involved."

Judge Harlan Nelson denied Sobocinski's request for a new trial. He did, however, release Sobocinski pending appeal.

Nevertheless, Nelson placed severe conditions on the release. Sobocinski cannot attend any farm foreclosure sale conducted by a sheriff in the state, or any rally in connection with such a sale, or any sale where those receiving the proceeds request that he not attend.

The defense attorney is filing a motion to strike these conditions, on the grounds that they are unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, Bobbi Polzine, cochair of Groundswell, and her husband, Alfred, were denied an operating loan from the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) December 26. The next day some of their equipment was repossessed.

While the farm crisis deepens, with farmers here getting \$2 a bushel for corn that costs \$3.40 to produce, the Democrats and Republicans are debating what kind of "relief package" they will pass in the 1986 state legislature. Gov. Rudy Perpich refuses to call for a full moratorium on farm foreclosures or for a special legislative session to ratify such a moratorium, a demand supported by Groundswell and other farm groups.

Instead, on Thanksgiving Day, he endorsed a phony, 90-day, "voluntary" moratorium.

Indian leader arrested on drug-dealing charges

BY MAGGIE McCRAW

MINNEAPOLIS — Clyde Bellecourt, a founder and national executive director of the American Indian Movement (AIM), was arrested here on December 23. Bellecourt and four others are charged with operating an LSD distribution ring which allegedly sold \$125,000 worth of drugs to undercover agents or conspired to arrange such sales.

The Minneapolis *Star and Tribune* reported that the arrests resulted from a "tip from South Dakota authorities" who claim Bellecourt was selling drugs on the Rosebud Sioux reservation. This led to a year-long investigation involving state, federal, and city agencies; undercover cops; and telephone wiretaps.

The *Star and Tribune* also reported that a federal grand jury may bring charges against six more defendants.

Bellecourt and the four other men were jailed without bond until a December 27 preliminary hearing. Approximately 40 supporters of the defendants were in the courtroom. In an attempt to make the defendants seem like dangerous criminals, and to intimidate their supporters, 20 federal marshals ringed the hearing room and searched some people when they entered.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Lee questioned Minneapolis police Sgt. John Boulger at length about the alleged drug deals, especially singling out Bellecourt and Joseph Lawrence Bressette. Bressette is also active in the Native American community. He is on the board of the Heart of the Earth Survival School, an Indian-run school where young Native Americans learn about their history, language, culture, and religion.

Under cross-examination by the defense attorneys, Boulger admitted that no drugs or government "purchase money" had ever been observed or found on Bellecourt, Bressette, or two of the other defendants. Boulger's only "evidence" was videotapes of alleged discussions and meetings between defendants at restaurants and grocery store parking lots.

The government called for detaining the five without bail by introducing Bellecourt's so-called "criminal history." Defense attorney Doug Hall's objection that Bellecourt's parole report contained mostly traffic misdemeanors was sustained by the judge.

Government attorney Lee then argued for Bellecourt's detention by saying, "He has been a traveler abroad, he has no permanent residence, he has been difficult to locate at the office where he supposedly works."

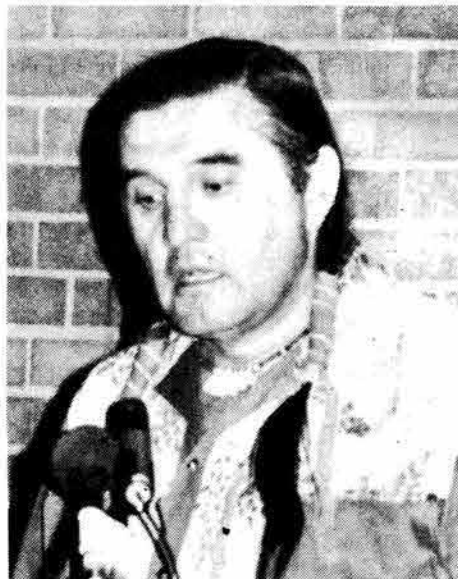
Bressette was described as someone who "is single and unemployed, has traveled out of this country, has dual citizenship, has no ties to the community, has been a fugitive from justice, and has multiple past wounds."

Defense attorneys were able to counter many of the government's charges and secured the release of all five on \$5-10,000 bond each.

One activist at the hearing told the *Militant*, "This is a frame-up. They're going after our programs."

Vernon Bellecourt, a leader of AIM and Anishinabe Akeeng, an Indian activist group on the White Earth Reservation, called his brother's arrest part of a continuing pattern of harassment by the government. The arrest occurs at the same time that the Bellecourts, Anishinabe Akeeng, and others are protesting the forced sale of Indian lands in northern Minnesota.

"I don't think it is a coincidence that he was arrested at the same time that the Senate tried to pass legislation on the White Earth Reservation," Vernon Bellecourt explained.



Militant/Elizabeth Kilanowski
American Indian Movement leader Vernon Bellecourt denounced Clyde Bellecourt's arrest as attack on Indian movement.

Jack Lemmon attends film festival in Cuba

BY FRED FELDMAN

Several well-known U.S. filmmakers and performers were among almost 1,000 participants in the Seventh Festival of New Latin American Cinema held December 2-15 in Havana, Cuba.

Some 400 films were shown at the festival, and prizes were awarded for filmmaking accomplishments. The keynote address to the festival was delivered by Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Actor Jack Lemmon was given a special award by Nobel Prize-winning novelist Gabriel García Márquez. The award expressed the respect of Latin American filmmakers for Lemmon's "long, fruitful, and exemplary artistic life, his humaneness and sense of solidarity, which have won the hearts of our peoples."

Actor and singer Harry Belafonte announced the award for best music, which went to Argentine composer Astor Piazzola. In an interview published in the December 22 issue of the Cuban *Granma Weekly Review*, Belafonte discussed his

hopes of making a film about anti-apartheid fighters Nelson and Winnie Mandela.

Other participants from the United States included Academy Award-winner Robert DeNiro, Treat Williams, Felicia Farr, Christopher Walken, and director and cinematographer Haskell Wexler.

Wexler's film *Latino*, which is about the U.S.-organized *contra* (counterrevolutionary) war against Nicaragua, was shown at the festival.

An interview with Jack Lemmon also appeared in the December 22 *Granma*.

According to *Granma*, Lemmon "explained that he had accepted the invitation to the festival for two reasons. First, because it meant an opportunity to meet people involved in filmmaking in other countries, specifically Latin America. Second, because he considers it a positive element in promoting cultural and artistic exchanges between the United States and Cuba, which would help people understand each other better."

The two-time Academy Award winner said he was sure that *Missing* is the most important film he's made, from both a personal and a professional standpoint.

Missing describes the disappearance and murder of Charles Horman a few days after the military coup in Chile in 1973 and the efforts of his wife and father to find out the truth about the disappearance. Horman's parents came with Lemmon to the festival.

Lemmon was impressed with what he saw in Cuba, the article stated. "The day before the interview, he and his wife had commented that they had the feeling the revolution had come to power just the year before because of the people's extraordinary vitality. 'That's something I love,' he said. 'It's very moving and gives you a lift.'"

Lemmon expressed hopes that the U.S. participants in the conference "will be able to go on television and talk to the press about their trip to Cuba and what they saw."

Anticoncession unionists meet in Chicago

BY TOM LEONARD

CHICAGO — A new organization calling itself the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions (NRFAC) held its founding conference here December 6-8. The conference was called by some 60 unionists. The decision to hold the conference came out of a previous anticoncessions conference held in Gary, Indiana, last August.

Among the better-known unionists endorsing the call were: Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Austin, Minnesota; James Coakley, president of Local 1200, United Auto Workers (UAW) in Detroit; Pete Kelly, president of UAW Local 160 in Detroit; Jim Balanoff, former District 31 director, United Steelworkers (USWA) in Chicago; Ronald Weisen, president of USWA Local 1397 in Pittsburgh; and Alice Peuralla, president of USWA Local 65 in Chicago. Also endorsing the call was Dick Blin, editor of the *Duluth Labor World*.

Statement of purpose

The conference call was based on a statement of purpose that delegates later adopted as the policy of NRFAC. It read as follows:

- "The National Rank-and-File Against Concessions has as its sole purpose aiding the struggle of local and international unions to stop the process of Concessions' Bargaining rampant today in the American labor movement.

- "It is not our intention to organize a new union movement, nor to single out particular leaders or international unions. Nor is it our purpose to set bargaining strategy for individual unions. That has been and remains the responsibility of each local and its international.

- "It is our purpose to provide direct, immediate aid to those unions who have chosen to fight concessions through any appropriate means. To this end, we are working to establish a national network of local unions committed to taking action."

Some 470 delegates registered for the conference. Most were members of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions. A high percentage were from the auto workers' and steelworkers' unions.

But there were also a number from unions that are not part of the AFL-CIO, including the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, United Electrical Workers (UE), and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Teamsters who spoke at the conference identified themselves as supporters of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). Also attending were supporters of the newsletter *Labor Notes*, which helped promote the conference.

A large number of the delegates were officials from their locals, including local presidents, vice-presidents, financial secretaries, negotiating committee members, grievance committee members, and shop stewards. Some 20 union locals nationwide

had endorsed NRFAC by the time of the conference.

Discussion limited

Conference rules adopted at the opening session restricted discussion and debate to "subjects directly bearing on the Statement of Purpose."

This ruling basically limited discussion to unions involved in contractual disputes and strikes against concessions. It left out the broader discussion, debates, and actions that are developing in the union movement against the antilabor offensive. These include growing union support for the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and the debate about solidarity with trade unionists in Nicaragua and El Salvador, whose countries are being ravaged by U.S.-backed wars. It also left out support for Black and Latino workers, women, and unorganized workers, who are hardest hit by the attacks on labor.

400 years of two-tier wages

Some delegates spoke to these issues in the brief, one-hour floor discussion at the opening session.

A delegate from New York City, representing the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights (NCPRR), said he hoped the conference would take a strong position defending workers who are members of oppressed nationalities. He explained that Latinos and Blacks had been victims of two-tier wages and working conditions for 400 years. After attending the AFL-CIO national convention last October, he said he had to report back to NCPRR members that no serious discussion on defending minority rights had occurred there. He was hopeful that he would not have to take back the same kind of report from the NRFAC conference.

A woman worker from Steelworkers Local 758 in Chicago talked about the important solidarity that was organized throughout her union for last year's strike at Wheeling-Pittsburgh.

She explained how her local and others in USWA District 31 had raised financial aid and sent busloads of supporters to strike-support rallies in Ohio and Pennsyl-



Militant/Peggy Winter

United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 President Jim Guyette, at right, speaking at Hormel strike support rally in Austin, Minnesota. Guyette participated in anticoncessions conference.

vania. She also explained how the growth of this unionwide solidarity experience would help the USWA in the basic steel negotiations in 1986. Alongside this important strike solidarity development, she added, was the growing support in District 31 for the anti-apartheid fighters in South Africa.

Other delegates also tried to introduce social and political issues and explain their link to the fight against concessions. This discussion, however, never materialized — either on the conference floor or in the workshops.

This failure of the conference to discuss these important issues places NRFAC in the position of being in opposition to the conservative policies of the top labor officialdom without offering an alternative strategy that could effectively counter the offensive by the employers and the government. Basically, the only alternative offered was that NRFAC promised to be more militant in aiding struggles against

the bosses' demands for contractual concessions.

The one ongoing anticoncessions struggle the NRFAC conference took action on was Local P-9's strike against the Hormel Co. in Austin, Minnesota.

President Jim Guyette gave a report explaining his hard-pressed local's need for financial aid. For this reason, he said, P-9 was asking union locals across the country to adopt a P-9 family. NRFAC voted to adopt one.

Guyette was one of 10 NRFAC regional directors who were elected by regional caucuses that met during the conference. Other officers elected by the entire conference were: chairperson: David Foster, grievance chairman, Local 7263, USWA, St. Paul, Minnesota; secretary: Fred Neufeld, executive secretary, Local 9, Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers, Los Angeles; and treasurer: Kevin O'Keefe, financial secretary, Graphic Communications International Union, St. Paul.

U.S. gov't funds union in Philippines

BY WILL REISSNER

At the national convention of the AFL-CIO, held in California in late October, a trade unionist from the Philippines was awarded the AFL-CIO's George Meany Human Rights Award and \$5,000.

In his speech accepting the award, Secretary General Ernesto Herrera of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines spent the bulk of his time attacking the left-wing KMU (May First Movement) trade union federation.

The award to Herrera was indicative of a much wider-ranging program, financed by the U.S. government and administered by

the AFL-CIO officialdom, to counter the growing strength of militant trade unions in the Philippines.

In 1984 and 1985 alone, \$3 million from the U.S. government-funded National Endowment for Democracy has been channeled through the AFL-CIO's Asian American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI) to counter the KMU and radical peasant associations.

Money from the AAFLI has been used to win union elections and finance radio stations and publications.

Bud Phillips, the AAFLI's administrator in the Philippines, stated that the U.S. government funds were crucial after the murder of Benigno Aquino, the anti-Marcos politician who was gunned down when returning to the Philippines from exile in the United States.

"If people hadn't had immediate assistance then," Phillips said, "the success of the political left in the trade unions would have been phenomenal."

The AAFLI administrator added that small amounts of money go a long way in the impoverished Philippines. "Imagine if you have \$100,000 to give out to families in \$500 chunks: Your stock goes way up, faster than the stock of any of the militant labor groups."

The Asian American Free Labor Institute has operated in the Philippines for 15 years, using U.S. government money from the AFL-CIO and directly from the United States Information Agency.

AAFLI works with high-level protection. When Joseph Lee, the labor attaché at the U.S. embassy in Manila, tried to get information on AAFLI's activities in the Philippines, State Department officials told him, "Lay off, it's none of your business."

According to a report in the July 30 *San Francisco Examiner*, AFL-CIO officials in Washington had complained to U.S. ambassador Steven Bosworth about Lee's prying and had threatened to get Lee fired.

— From Intercontinental Press

'Killer Carbide, quit India!'

BY ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

Chanting "Killer Carbide quit India," and "Stop using us as guinea pigs," more than 1,000 people demonstrated near the Indian parliament in New Delhi January 3. The protesters included more than 50 survivors of the 1984 chemical-plant disaster in Bhopal, India.

They demanded seizure of all Union Carbide property in India and additional help for the hundreds of thousands of victims of the gas leak from that company's plant.

More than 2,000 people died, and hundreds of thousands were injured, when deadly methyl isocyanate gas from the plant leaked into the air.

The gas leaked when pressure built up in a storage tank that had not been tapped in two months. Immediately after the deadly leak, trade union officials at the Bhopal plant charged that the disaster was the result of the "total apathy and negligence" on the part of the company and the Indian government.

The demonstrators presented India's In-

dustry Minister Narain Dutt Tiwari a list of demands with more than 100,000 signatures. The demands included seizure of all 13 Union Carbide plants in India, compensation from the U.S.-based company for Bhopal victims equivalent to its worldwide assets, a hospital in place of the Bhopal plant, and alternative employment for Bhopal factory workers.

As the protest was taking place in New Delhi, a hearing was being held on the disaster in a U.S. federal district court in Manhattan. The hearing was to decide if the trial to determine the financial awards for the victims of the disaster would be held in the United States or in India.

Union Carbide continues to deny any responsibility for the disaster. It is fighting to limit, if not totally avoid, any payment to the victims.

Union Carbide says it would only abide by an Indian court decision if the company deems there has been "due process." That's why company attorneys argued in federal court for the trial to take place in India.

No date has been set for the decision on the place of trial.



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Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Gloria Castillo, leader of Sandinista Defense Committee in Estelí.

Visit to Nicaragua's war zone in north

Reporter's notebook from Estelí

BY HÉCTOR CARRIÓN
AND CINDY JAQUITH

ESTELÍ, Nicaragua — The "rush hour" here on the mountain roads of northern Nicaragua starts at about 5 a.m. Farm workers, machete in hand, begin walking down the main highway to work while others pack into the back of big trucks. Peasants start heading for their fields. Women market vendors, balancing heavy baskets of produce on their heads, line up for the bus. Schoolchildren stand on the side of the road awaiting transportation.

Estelí and the surrounding region is an agricultural center. Coffee, tobacco, cattle, corn, beans, rice, and sorghum are raised here. But it is also another kind of region — a region of war. Last November, we visited Estelí to learn more about the effects of the aggression carried out by mercenaries paid, trained, and organized by the U.S. government.

"We're not being 'threatened' with war here," Mario Urtecho told us. "We are at war." A member of the regional government, Urtecho detailed the bloodshed and destruction Washington's terrorists have caused in the region.

Between 1982 and 1984, the mercenaries did \$5 million worth of damage to farm machinery and infrastructure alone, not counting damage to harvests. The main targets were state-owned farms and cooperatives; private farms suffered a small percentage of the losses. Seventy civilians were slain.

The mercenaries have a special hatred for schools. In the first six months of this year, Urtecho said, 95 schools were attacked and 15 were destroyed. Five teachers were killed and six kidnapped.

This past August, the CIA sent several hundred counterrevolutionaries (*contras*) to attack the nearby town of La Trinidad. They were told that, if they seized La Trinidad and then marched up to Estelí, the townspeople would rise up and join them, said Urtecho.

But, he continued, when word spread of the attack on La Trinidad, more than 5,000 armed residents of Estelí mobilized, ready

to smash the invaders. Local militia members in La Trinidad, however, stopped the mercenaries before they ever made it to Estelí. The militia members held off the *contras* until army troops could arrive. In the days that followed, 150 of the *contras* were killed and dozens captured.

Forty of the escaping terrorists got caught trying to sneak into Estelí to hide. Gloria Castillo, a longtime community activist who only learned to read and write after the revolution, told us how they were captured.

She explained that following the La Trinidad attack, the working people of Estelí organized special vigilance teams on the main roads leading into town. Those entering who could not prove they lived there were stopped.

Castillo pointed to this as an example of why Nicaragua's state of emergency laws are so necessary. The laws strengthen the ability of security forces to act swiftly against any activity aimed at terrorism or destabilization of the revolution.

The first line of defense against counter-revolution is the Nicaraguan people themselves, organized in their neighborhoods in Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS). Castillo, a veteran CDS leader, described the origins of these committees in the civil war that brought down Anastasio Somoza. He was the tyrant who ruled Nicaragua until July 19, 1979.

As the guerrillas of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) began to win mass support in their fight against Somoza, the dictator's National Guard started systematically assassinating young men in cities like Estelí.

Castillo told of the Guard slashing youths' throats or castrating them right on the streets. Many others were arrested or disappeared. One of Castillo's sons was killed fighting the Guard in the mountains. In 1980, another son fell in combat against the mercenaries.

Like thousands of other women under the Somoza regime, Castillo became involved in protests for an end to the terror and for the release of the jailed young

people. In the course of struggling, they lost their fear of the Guard. "We decided we would rather die than live any longer under Somoza," she said.

Underground committees began to take shape, especially in working-class neighborhoods like Castillo's, to protect residents from the Guard's fury and shelter FSLN fighters. The committees distributed food, set up secret clinics, and established intelligence networks. Known as the Civil Defense Committees, they became the Sandinista Defense Committees after Somoza was overthrown.

The *Militant* had a chance to observe a citywide meeting of the CDS here. More than 1,000 people, representing the 31 barrios, or neighborhoods, of Estelí, attended.

Government representatives were present and encouraged everyone to come to the microphone and speak about the problems of their barrios. They explained this was the best way for the government to know what the people of Estelí wanted and needed.

People did not hesitate to come forward. Some spoke of the need to have drinking water and sewer systems in those barrios that still lack them. The problem was raised that some families are paying water bills that are too high because of inaccurate meter readings.

A woman spoke of the need to build more housing. Others said the city should fix problems at the electric power plant to avoid frequent shutdowns.

Someone asked why some barrios seem to get all the basic foods they need and some do not.

One man reported that, in his neighborhood, a child-care center built by German internationalists had been turned into a grocery store. People demanded the government do something to restore the child-care center or they would do it themselves.

Throughout the meeting people spoke of the need to continue to organize to make sure there is full participation by everyone in Nicaragua's coffee harvest, which needs thousands of volunteers to be a success.

Coffee is the main source of export income for Nicaragua. The money Nicaragua gets for its coffee will make it more possible to solve some of the problems the barrios of Estelí are facing.

Angela Gutiérrez, a leader of the CDS in the Jaime Ubeda Barrio, invited us into her home to discuss the work of the CDS further. She was enthusiastic about the new steps being taken nationally by the CDS to make the organization more responsive to the needs of the population and attentive to specific neighborhood problems, like access to potable water, supplies of basic goods, and health care. As part of this campaign, every neighborhood in the country is holding elections to choose the most responsible local activists to head up their CDS.

Gutiérrez stressed that the CDS is not just open to members of the FSLN, but is striving to involve as many other residents as possible, from whatever party or political view, in its work.

Another important mass organization here is AMNLAE, the Nicaraguan Women's Association, which works closely with the CDS. Two AMNLAE leaders, Susy Martínez Aráuz and Nery Espinoza Téllez, talked to the *Militant* about the group's activities.

Their immediate task is organizing women to participate as volunteers in the coffee harvest. The challenge is to find solutions to the problem of child care. It is inadequate for the number of women working outside the home today and the number who want to be part of mobilizations in defense of the revolution, such as the coffee harvest.

AMNLAE also plays a general educational role, combating counterrevolutionary propaganda aimed at women and organizing them to participate more actively in politics.

One focus of the work is with the mothers of draftees in the Sandinista People's Army. The counterrevolutionaries spread lies that the draftees are not being properly trained and that they are being sent to their deaths by the FSLN.

AMNLAE holds regular meetings with mothers of the draftees to report to them news about their sons' health and welfare, facilitate families' communication with their sons, and explain politically why the draft is important.

In addition to having sons in the army, many women have children studying abroad, a gain of the revolution here. The *Militant* was invited to attend a meeting of mothers and some fathers who have sons and daughters at foreign universities. More than 30 parents attended the meeting.

The main theme of the discussion was the difficulties of communication between the parents and the youth. The parents wanted to be able to send and receive mail from their sons and daughters more often. They mentioned that some of the students were having difficulty adjusting to a new society and at the same time trying to concentrate on their studies.

All the parents at this meeting had children studying in Cuba, although there are Estelí youth in universities in other countries, too. One of the parents was preparing to go to Cuba to visit the students and find out how the problems can be solved. At the meeting, parents organized a party to raise money to buy gifts to be sent to their sons and daughters in Cuba.

South African union documents in 'IP'

"We the trade union representatives here present firmly commit ourselves to a united democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation."

So begins the preamble to the constitution of the new Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), formed in Durban in late 1985. With half a million members, the bulk of them Black, it is already the largest union federation in the country's history.

The upcoming, January 27, *Intercontinental Press* features a series of documents from COSATU's founding conference, including the constitution's preamble and all the resolutions that were adopted.

Among other matters, the resolutions cover COSATU's support for economic sanctions against the apartheid regime, its opposition to the state of emergency and the racist migrant labor and Bantustan systems, its commitment to fighting for a national minimum living wage, and its championing of the rights of women workers.

The same issue includes two

statements hailing COSATU's formation issued by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the union body allied with the African National Congress (ANC).

The current, January 13, *IP* carries an interview with ANC President Oliver Tambo reprinted from the South African newspaper *Cape Times*.

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In Nicaragua, credit is used to help develop countryside

North Americans see agrarian reform

BY JOHN GAIGE

Thousands of working farmers in the United States and Canada are being forced off their land by the policies of the governments and the bankers of both countries.

So when a group of farmers and unionists active in the farm protest movement in North America met with representatives of Nicaragua's National Development Bank, we considered it a special opportunity to compare the policies of North American and Nicaraguan banks.

The meeting was part of a tour to study Nicaragua's agricultural reform. Our visit, early last fall, was hosted by Nicaragua's National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) and sponsored by the North American Farm Alliance.

Agrarian reform

During our tour, we learned that, since the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in 1979, the Sandinista government has been carrying out an extensive agrarian reform.

Millions of acres of land have been opened to farm workers and small farmers. These producers work the land either individually, on cooperatives, or on government-run farms.

The huge farm debt from the time of Somoza has been canceled.

Farmers participate in decision-making on prices for farm products.

Through working with the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, farmers receive technical assistance, training, and credit.

As we witnessed, a genuine farm cooperative movement has begun. Farmers are voluntarily deciding to either farm individually and get seed, fertilizer, and access to the market through the Credit and Service Association (CCS Co-ops) or to farm collectively in Sandinista Agricultural Communes (CAS Co-ops).

We also saw how the U.S.-sponsored *contra* (counterrevolutionary) war, aimed at overthrowing the Sandinista government, targets rural areas for sabotage and destruction — murdering farmers and their families.

We learned that the members and leaders of UNAG are committed to developing

their revolution by increasing the production of food and fibers and participating in the military defense of the country.

Given all that we had learned about agrarian reform in Nicaragua, we looked forward to meeting with the representatives of the National Development Bank.

The bank is housed in a modest building in the capital city of Managua. The meeting room had comfortable chairs around a large table with fancy desk blotters. We felt like we were in a bank.

But when the meeting began, we knew this bank was different than any bank we had seen in North America.

In fact, some of the farmers on the tour, who have been threatened or foreclosed by banks at home, joked about becoming members of the board of directors or applying for loans at this bank.

Julio Ruiz, the bank director, explained that in Nicaragua the banks are nationalized. "Our bank is run by the board of directors that has representatives from the central bank, industry, commerce, the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, and the workers," he said.

Marcello Mayorga, from the bank's rural credit department, pointed out that Nicaragua's financial system was in transition. This bank, for example, now handled all credit for the rural and agricultural sector. Agriculture is the largest sector of the country's economy. Other banks give credit to the commercial and industrial sectors.

Credit under Somoza

"Before 1979," Mayorga explained, "credit was used by Somoza as another element of domination over the small producer. Only 20,000 small farmers received credit under Somoza. This meant that 160,000 small farmers were kept impoverished and marginalized." These small farmers, he explained, were forced to work for capitalist farmers to survive.

Today, 80,000 small farmers get credit, Mayorga said. Under Nicaragua's workers' and farmers' government, credit is used to help develop the countryside. There are now credit committees, he explained. These committees exist on all levels — national, regional, and local.



Militant/Michael Baumann

"Yesterday's dreams are today's law: Long live agrarian reform!" reads banner in background. Farmers at ceremony celebrate land distribution in Nicaragua.

They consist of representatives from the bank, the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, and small farmers. Their goal is to help increase production.

These credit committees also help to expand the cooperative movement by increasing the number of long-term loans given to the co-ops. Credit, however, is not only given to the cooperatives, Mayorga explained. The bank also provides loans to private farmers and to state-run farms.

Julio Ruiz explained that they put a high priority on credit to the small farmers, the cooperatives, and the state-run farms rather than to capitalist farmers who don't need financial assistance.

Capitalist farmers

These rich farmers, Ruiz said, "don't have financial, organizational, or efficiency problems. The problems they have are ideological." Many rich farmers have left the country rather than put their land into production.

The capitalists in the countryside, along with those in the cities, have their own organization — the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), Ruiz explained. But now, he said, the small and medium producers also have an organization — UNAG. "Everyday," Ruiz said, "UNAG is becoming stronger and COSEP is pushed to the side."

UNAG, we learned, urged capitalist farmers to join if they were "patriotic producers." These "patriotic" growers can't be absentee landowners. They must be trying to raise production and improve efficiency. If they collaborate with the *contras* or refuse to reinvest in their farms to increase production, their land can be seized by the government and made available for distribution to small farmers who need land, or to co-ops.

From their own experience with banking policy at home the farmers on the tour had many questions.

Bobbi Polzine, a farm leader from Minnesota, wanted to know the rate of interest for loans to small farmers and how it compared to the interest rates for other sectors.

Mayorga explained that interest rates vary from 10 to 20 percent depending on who is borrowing the money. Cooperatives, for example, pay 10 percent on short-term loans but capitalist farmers could pay as much as 20 percent depending on what the loan was for and whether it was a short- or long-term loan.

Missouri farmer Ed Fashing asked about the amount of credit available to the agricultural sector and how this credit was divided among the small, medium, and large farmers.

Ruiz explained that 18 billion córdobas were available — 11 billion for short-term loans and 7 billion for long-term loans. Of the 11 billion, 4 billion was earmarked for state-run farms, 3 billion for big farmers, and 4 billion for small producers.

Jim Burkett, an Ohio farmer, asked, "How long is 'long term'?"

"Eight years," Ruiz replied. "Short term is 18 months."

Jean Claude Boucher, a farmer from Quebec, pointed out that the rate of interest on these loans is below the rate of inflation in Nicaragua. Didn't this contribute to the devaluation of the córdoba, he asked.

The rate of interest, Ruiz acknowledged, is below the rate of inflation. "But the Sandinista government has maintained the current interest rate to protect the small producers," he said. Devaluation is one of the economic problems Nicaragua faces, Ruiz explained. "We are thinking of adjusting the interest rates little by little until they level off," he said.

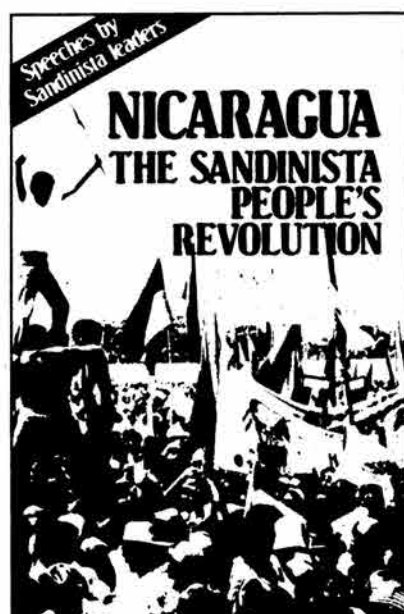
Situation in U.S.

Denise O'Brien, an Iowa dairy farmer, told the Nicaraguan bankers about the situation in her home state.

"We don't have good relations with bankers back home," she said. "We pay 8 to 16 percent interest. The agricultural sector is failing and along with it the rural banks are failing. In my state, we lost 10 banks since January [1985]. The national farm debt is \$220 billion. We need a na-

Continued on Page 9

What they're saying about Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution Speeches by Sandinista leaders



My personal congratulations to Pathfinder Press and the people who have worked on collecting all these excellent speeches of the Nicaraguan leadership today on the reality of that country. The translators have not only done a wonderful, professional job in translating, but have put themselves into the heart of the speeches, and have expressed most vividly the feelings of not only the leadership, but the Nicaraguan people as a whole, and their hopes and dreams for the future.

I trust that the public who reads it will find inspiration, challenge, and hope in this document that is so significant today.

Norman Bent
Reverend of the Iglesia Moravia
Managua, Nicaragua

This new collection contains more than 40 speeches by leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution. 400 pages, \$7.95 (include \$.75 for postage and handling).

Available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

Sanctuary in L.A.'s oldest church

BY JOANNE TORTORICI PICADO

LOS ANGELES — Our Lady Queen of Angels joined hundreds of other churches and synagogues that have opened their doors to provide sanctuary for Salvadorans and Guatemalans. These refugees fled repression at the hands of U.S.-backed dictatorships in their homelands. The church, also known as La Placita, is the oldest and most famous in the city.

During a well-publicized ceremony on December 12 marking its decision to join the sanctuary movement, Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees, clad in black, told those attending why they came to the United States.

Since then, the church has organized public meetings to help educate on the repression in El Salvador and Guatemala and how people here can aid these refugees.

The opening of La Placita as a refuge followed on the heels of the Los Angeles City Council's decision to declare the city a sanctuary for Central American refugees.

Although the city council resolution won't stop the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) from deporting these refugees, it does prevent cops and other city employees from cooperating with INS

attempts to gather information.

Immediately following the city council decision, Howard Ezell, Western director of the INS, publicly vowed to seek punitive measures against the city.

The INS, along with U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson and others, is supporting legislation that would deny federal funding to cities that declare themselves places of refuge. Simpson was an author of the racist, anti-immigrant Simpson-Mazzoli bill.

Other legislation currently being proposed would block federal reimbursement of welfare costs to resettle legally admitted refugees in those cities that declare themselves sanctuaries.

Ezell, while attending the hearings on the sanctuary resolution, was observed recording the names and addresses of Salvadorans and Guatemalans who testified about the terror in their homelands. He later told the *Los Angeles Times* that deportation proceedings would begin immediately against those testifying if they were proved not to have papers permitting them to live in this country.

The opening of La Placita as a refuge provided a fitting reply to the INS attempt to intimidate supporters of these refugees.

Gov't agricultural package means harder times for working farmers

Continued from front page
working farmers.

The new law drastically reduces the prices at which the government will buy farm commodities when market prices are low. For nearly 50 years government farm programs have included a device by which farmers can borrow money from the government when prices are low, pledging their crops as collateral.

The loan is made on the basis of an arbitrary price set by the government. If farmers are able to sell their commodities in the market at a price higher than the loan-rate price, they can pay off the loans plus interest and keep the remainder to meet their production costs. If the market price is lower, they forfeit their crops to the government and keep the money they borrowed.

This year, the loan rates for corn and wheat are \$2.55 and \$3.30 a bushel, respectively. Both loan rates are above market prices in most areas. As a result, farmers have been turning over much of their produce to the government rather than selling it on the market.

Under the new law, the secretary of agriculture must lower the loan rate for corn to \$2.16 a bushel in 1986. He can lower the rate 24 cents more if he thinks competitive conditions warrant it. For wheat, the reduction from the current rate could be as much as 90 cents a bushel.

The Agriculture Department is empowered to make similar reductions for rice and cotton.

These are the first reductions in price support loan rates since they first began to be used in the 1930s.

By lowering the prices at which the government will purchase commodities, the architects of the bill hope to challenge competitors from other countries who are currently underselling grain produced in the United States.

The reduced loan-rate support price, which under current market conditions is usually the best price farmers can get, will mean a slash in their income.

Supposedly to protect farmers' income, the new farm law employs another device from previous farm programs that guarantees a minimum payment for farmers who participate in government farm programs.

When market prices fall below a target price (usually higher than the loan-rate price) set by the Agriculture Department, the government makes up the difference with direct cash payments. The current target price for corn, for example, is \$3.03 a bushel. If participating farmers received \$2.55 a bushel (the 1985 loan-rate price for corn) from the government for their corn, they would get deficiency payments of 48 cents a bushel.

Under the new law, target prices for wheat, corn, and other grains will be frozen in 1986 and 1987. This means that farmers who sold their corn to the government at the new loan rate of \$2.16 per bushel will get deficiency payments of 87 cents a bushel in order to receive the full amount they are entitled to at the target price.

Freezing the target prices for two years, presented as a concession to farmers, will not benefit many of them, however, because their costs of production per bushel already exceed what they can get from the government's guaranteed price and deficiency payment programs. That's why they are so deeply in debt.

The new law promises to worsen this situation by successive reductions of target prices in 1988, 1989, and 1990. This will lower the total income per bushel grain farmers are able to receive from government programs.

Target prices for rice and cotton will be frozen for only one year before they are lowered.

Theoretically, increased export sales resulting from cheaper grain prices will offset the possibility of an income loss for farmers because they will be able to sell greater volume. This will primarily benefit the largest producers, whose costs per unit of production are less.

Another provision of the new law, how-



Government food storage bins. Commodity Credit Corporation is agency through which farmers borrow money using their crops as collateral. New bill will mean farmers get less money.

ever, cuts across increasing the volume of sales. In order to qualify for the government programs, farmers are required to withdraw land from production. The amount of acreage to be held fallow for corn will double from last year's program, and for wheat it will rise by 12 percent.

The act also includes measures to prevent new land from being brought into production either by plowing up virgin prairie or filling in wetlands. If farmers agree to participate they will be paid an annual fee. Once they sign up, they can't use this land for anything other than growing erosion-resistant grass or trees.

Most farmers support serious conservation measures. But the steps outlined in the new law were only included to try to make it more palatable to working farmers and their supporters. They don't have anything to do with alleviating the current problems facing farmers.

Slaughter milk cows

The new farm bill, which will help drive tens of thousands of farmers off the land, explicitly states that this is its goal for dairy producers.

If dairy farmers agree to slaughter their entire herd, the government will reimburse them just under 60 cents for every gallon of milk the herd would have produced that year. The costs of the program will be borne by the remaining producers, who will be taxed 3 cents a gallon in 1986. Participating farmers will be free to market the meat. The government aims to slash the current dairy herd of 11.4 million by 600,000 in the next 18 months.

Instead of offering relief to the worst-off dairy farmers, who are struggling to make a living for their families, the government intends to organize them out of farming altogether. To insure that many farmers will "volunteer" for this program, the new farm bill tightens the squeeze on them. Government price support for milk will be reduced by 4 cents a gallon in 1987 and can be reduced by 12 cents more by 1990.

While the farm bill is a sour mixture for the majority of dairy farmers, most of whom are independent producers using primarily family labor, it is somewhat sweeter for sugar producers. The price at which the government will buy sugar will be maintained at 18 cents a pound. The current world market price is 6 cents.

Most of the U.S.-produced sugar, however, will not be dumped on the government but will be purchased directly by refineries. Stiff restrictions against imported sugar help keep the domestic market price at about 21 cents, that is, 3 cents higher than the government will pay.

The 1985 farm bill empowers the government to lower sugar import quotas by a third for El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and other semicolonial countries.

The significant influence of a small

number of capitalist cane growers in Florida, Hawaii, and Louisiana was responsible for these measures being adopted. And they will be the biggest beneficiaries.

The wealthy sugar plantation owners' privileged treatment under government farm programs is especially blatant. But they are not the only ones who do well.

According to a Department of Agriculture study distributed last July, farmers with sales above \$100,000, that is, 12 percent of all farmers, received 45 percent of government farm payments in 1984.

Most commodity programs have \$50,000 payment limits, but some capitalist farmers have been able to collect considerably more because of loopholes. Under the new law, even these limits will be relaxed, making it possible for large capitalist producers to cash in big.

New collection agency

Alongside the Food Security Act, Congress and the White House approved legislation to assist the Farm Credit System (FCS). This system, made up of 37 regional banks, is the biggest lender to farmers and currently holds a third of the nation's \$214 billion farm debt.

The FCS obtains the funds to lend farmers by selling bonds on Wall Street. Bondholders are paid comparatively low interest rates, which theoretically means that the Farm Credit banks can charge less interest to farmers.

The big banks, insurance companies, managers of pension funds, and other investors who purchase Farm Credit bank bonds generally consider them to be a sound investment even though their interest rates are lower than those for private commercial bonds.

In the last half of 1985, the FCS reported its first losses since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The new legislation sets up the Capital Corporation within the FCS to buy up the "problem" loans. It will use funds from the FCS itself to take over these loans. If the FCS's resources dry up, it can borrow from the U.S. Treasury. These measures are aimed at bolstering the confidence of Farm Credit bondholders.

The Capital Corp. will function essentially as a collection agency. It is empowered to tighten the screws on farmers by getting them to renegotiate or pay back their loans or sell their farmland and liquidate their other assets. And if they can't, they will be foreclosed.

Another farm lender — the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) — has also announced that it's going to step up foreclosures on farmers who are behind in their debt payments. The FmHA is a government agency originally set up to provide credit to low-income farmers who were unable to get it from private bankers or the FCS. It holds about 12 percent of the na-

Do you know someone who reads Spanish?

'PM' on Nicaragua abortion debate

Botched, illegal abortions are the leading cause of maternal death in Nicaragua today. Hundreds of women die each year.

Although the number of abortions is about the same as before the revolution, the inflation caused by the war imposed on Nicaragua by the U.S. government has put private clinics further out of reach of most Nicaraguan women. More of them are resorting to back-alley abortionists, thus endangering their health and lives.

As a result, the Sandinista National Liberation Front has opened up a public debate in the pages of its daily newspaper *Barriada* on whether abortion should be legalized.

The working women of Nicaragua are propelling this debate forward.

The new issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* features an article from its bureau in Managua by Cindy Jaquith, explaining how this debate has begun to unfold there.

It also presents the facts about this issue and discusses the implications of this debate for the Nicaraguan revolution. Be part of this discussion. Introduce *Perspectiva Mundial* to your coworkers and friends.

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tion's farm debt.

In the early 1980s it tightened up its lending policies and foreclosed on thousands of farmers. Two years ago protests by farmers led to court rulings that forced the FmHA to stop foreclosures in most cases. Since then, the agency's lawyers have drafted new guidelines to get around the court rulings. In the next few weeks, 80,000 farmers will receive notices demanding repayment.

In another attack, President Reagan's proposed 1987 budget calls for eliminating federal support for the Agricultural Extension Service. Since its founding in 1914, this agency, through its offices in virtually every county in the country, has provided farmers with technical and scientific information.

Reagan's original proposal

In February 1985, when the Reagan administration announced its proposal for the new farm bill, it called for a drastic reorientation of U.S. farm policy. The heart of its proposal was a relatively rapid abandonment of support programs and deficiency payments that have been a central feature of farm programs since the 1930s.

In addition, the White House urged that all future emergency loans from the FmHA be shifted to commercial banks, thus dealing a sharp blow to the idea that the government should be the lender of last resort for working farmers.

Agriculture Secretary John Block (who announced his resignation January 7) contended that these proposals were essential to provide a long-term "market-oriented" agricultural policy that would make U.S. farm products more competitive on the world market.

Moreover, he argued, it would mean a big saving in government expenditures.

This policy reorientation was widely supported by many in the U.S. ruling circles. And an extensive campaign was waged by the editors of major dailies, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, to stop subsidizing "inefficient" farmers.

Divisions, however, developed in the ruling class over how fast to proceed with this course. And the wave of farm protests in the winter and spring of 1985 — the largest since the early 1930s — convinced



Above, National Crisis Action Rally at Ames, Iowa, last year drew 16,000 people demanding emergency federal aid for working farmers. New farm package offers no relief for hard-pressed farmers. While silos such as these at right in Illinois overflow with corn, much of the world goes hungry. Instead of using this surplus to help alleviate hunger, government attempts to cut back production.



many Democratic and Republican legislators from farm states that they would face difficulties at the polls in 1986 if they adopted such extreme measures.

By midsummer Reagan had pulled back from fighting for his full proposal. Nonetheless, he had strengthened his position in the horse trading carried out in Congress.

The result, although not as severe an attack on working farmers as Reagan initially projected, is still one of the most serious governmental assaults on farmers ever.

Most farmers' organizations, including the National Farmers Organization, the National Farmers Union, and the North American Farm Alliance, opposed the adoption of the Food Security Act. The main exception was the American Federation of Farm Bureaus, which is more of a capitalist enterprise engaged in the insurance business than it is a genuine organization of farmers.

Harkin-Alexander bill

Many farm leaders supported a proposal promoted by Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Hightower called the Farm Policy Reform Act of 1985. It was introduced into Congress by Sen. Thomas Harkin of Iowa and Rep. William Alexander of

Arkansas.

Unlike the Food Security Act, which is aimed at lowering prices paid to farmers, the Harkin-Alexander bill called for raising prices by significantly curtailing production. It proposed to do this by authorizing a nationwide referendum of grain farmers to vote on mandatory limits on production. If a majority favored this proposal, all would have to comply by reducing production. The proposal had a formula that called for the largest farmers to take proportionately more land out of production.

In a column in the Oct. 1, 1985, *Washington Post* defending this idea, Hightower argued that the "Harkin-Alexander approach is not an untested one. The sound principle of balancing supply with demand is used by every successful business in America from McDonald's to GM. The same supply-management approach is now being used profitably for American farmers producing other commodities, including peanuts and a long list of specialty crops." (See accompanying article for how this actually works for other farm commodities.)

Massive foreclosures coming

Both opponents and supporters of the new farm bill agree that tens of thousands of working farmers are going to be forced

to leave their farms in the coming year.

There's nothing new about farm families being driven off the land. In the last 50 years the number of farms has decreased by 4.5 million, or 66 percent of the total in 1935. In years that were relatively better for farmers than today, tens of thousands left farming. Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, and in spite of government price-support programs, farmers were forced out of farming.

What's different now, and why there has been such an extensive protest movement by farmers, is the accelerated pace of this process and the high unemployment that makes it difficult to find other work.

A former Department of Agriculture official admitted to the *Wall Street Journal* that "we're telescoping 10 to 15 years of rural adjustments into three or four years."

Raymond Daniel, an economist for a unit of Chase Manhattan Corp., told the *Journal* the pace of the current situation is too rapid for a smooth transition. "We've got a structural inability to move land and people out of industry fast enough," he said.

What are technical problems of "adjustment" and "transition" to these hirings of the handful of ruling families that dominate this country are a painful shake-up in the lives of hundreds of thousands of farmers and their families. For them it is not simply a job transition — assuming they can find other employment, which many can't — but a life transition. Losing their land and machinery means involuntarily abandoning an entire way of life that they know and prefer.

Farmers are demanding and need emergency relief. They need a permanent moratorium on all farm foreclosures and the cancellation of all unpayable debts.

The federal government should offer low-interest loans on the basis of need, not according to the "credit worthiness" of the borrowers.

The government should guarantee prices to farmers adequate to meet growing costs, repair and replace equipment, and make a living income for their families. Price supports can easily be financed by cutting the military budget and by taxing the profits of the big food trusts and banks.

But these measures should not be geared to curtailing production. Instead of periodically cutting back production or storing mountains of surplus food, U.S. farm producers should be permitted to turn their gigantic capacities to helping alleviate hunger and famine in the world.

A determined struggle for these demands by both the labor movement and working farmers will lead increasing numbers of working people to the conclusion that they cannot expect any relief from the capitalist ruling families nor their hired politicians in the Democratic and Republican parties.

It can help begin the process of building a powerful political and social movement of all the exploited producers that can overturn the political rule of the capitalist bankers, landlords, and monopolies and replace it with a workers' and farmers' government.

'Marketing orders' strengthens big growers

Government price support programs are applied to 16 farm commodities. Many of them, such as wheat and corn, are very important export crops.

Since these programs were initiated in the 1930s, they've usually made limiting production by farmers a requirement for participation. The Food Security Act of 1985 is no exception.

Many farmers, however, do not participate in these voluntary programs. And because limits on many crops are based on acreage, many farmers who do participate find ways of increasing their productivity per acre in order to keep up their total production. So these acreage "set-asides" have generally not accomplished their goal.

For many other commodities, however, there are no government price support programs at all. For some of them, such as lemons, eating oranges, raisins, and almonds, a different device is employed called "marketing orders."

A 1937 law permits growers to set production and sales quotas. These quotas, which are assigned to each grower, also have to be ratified by the Department of Agriculture. It nearly always gives its approval.

For some crops, growers may produce as much as they want, but they can't sell more than their weekly or seasonal quota for the United States or Canada. If they are unable to export their perishable fruit, the excess production is often left to rot.

The idea behind fixing total sales is to limit supply, thus helping to jack up the prices growers receive.

Generally there are fewer growers producing the commodities covered by marketing orders than by government price support programs, and a greater percentage of them are capitalist farmers. A tiny number of these capitalist enterprises dominate the marketing orders.

For example, the Los Angeles-based Lemon Administrative Committee sets limits on the number of lemons that growers in Arizona and California can sell in the United States and Canada. But one company, Sunkist Growers, Inc., markets more than 70 percent of the lemons covered by this order. Sunkist also markets about one-half the country's navel oranges

and dominates the Navel Orange Advisory Committee.

A couple of years ago, when the government threatened not to extend a longstanding marketing order for lemons, Sunkist officials met with White House representatives and stopped this action. Jim Lake, a Sunkist lobbyist, subsequently served as communications director for Reagan's 1984 election campaign.

The mandatory production and sales quotas have served as an effective mechanism for companies like Sunkist to maintain and strengthen their monopoly position in marketing many important farm commodities.

— D.J.

How farm credit works in Nicaragua

Continued from Page 7

tional forgiveness program to wipe out our debt."

Under Somoza, Ruiz explained, the banks' credit policy was similar to that in the United States. "If we maintained that policy now in Nicaragua we would have only half the production," he said.

John Enestvedt, a retired Minnesota farmer, explained that one of the key problems facing U.S. farmers is that they need better prices for their farm products. "Your problems are different from ours," he said. "And the U.S. government is not meeting our problems."

"In 1972, the price of grain was good. Then, the U.S. government pushed easy credit," added Boucher. "Now there is too much grain and the prices went down. The

farmer tries to get more money to pay loans by trying to produce more."

"But," Enestvedt continued, "that only drives the price down even more."

"The Nicaraguan government," Ruiz said, "has sought a humanitarian solution — to protect the producers rather than to liquidate them."

"I know that the problems are different in countries like the United States and Canada than in Nicaragua. We are a young country, in formation," he continued, "principally trying to eliminate hunger and malnutrition, which was very grave before the revolution."

"The financial problem becomes of secondary importance. Today the principal problem is production, efficiency, and technology," Ruiz said.

Nicaragua builds Atlantic Coast port

El Bluff deep water port project will help make autonomy plans possible

BY BILL GRETTNER

EL BLUFF, Nicaragua — Jogging slightly at its end in a way that made it invisible to English pirates two centuries ago, the Río Escondido, or "hidden river," empties into the Atlantic Ocean in Bluefields Bay. On the protected inner edge of the bay lies Bluefields, a picturesque seaport town with a mixture of Spanish, English, African, and Indian cultures.

A narrow strip of land shelters the bay from the ocean. At its end is El Bluff, almost an island. Here, Nicaragua's revolutionary government is building an \$80 million port for ocean-going vessels. Despite hundreds of miles of Atlantic coastline, Nicaragua has never before had such a port on the Atlantic.

Ever since the Spanish colonizers decided that they preferred the Pacific Coast, Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast has been neglected. Even today, the Pacific half of the country has 90 percent of the nation's population. Goods entering or leaving Nicaragua go through the Pacific Coast port of Corinto, then pass through the Panama Canal in most cases. Or they go through Atlantic Coast ports in Honduras or Costa Rica.

According to Edwin Castro of the branch of the Sandinista National Liberation Front here, port facilities in El Bluff were developed just enough in the past to allow U.S.-based companies to take out wood and bananas. Only relatively small ships of 2,000 tons could be accommodated.

The new port will handle ships of five times this size when the first stage is completed in early 1988. The second stage, to be completed in 1990, will double the capacity of the port again.

Construction of the port will require dredging part of Bluefields Bay and dredging an access channel into it from the deep waters of the ocean. Two piers for ocean-going ships, two piers for barges, and facilities for handling and storing cargo will be built. A second channel will lead into the Río Escondido.

Cargo will be unloaded from ocean-going vessels in the port and transferred to barges, which will carry it up the Río Escondido to Port Arlen Siu in the town of Rama. From there it will be carried overland in trucks to Managua or other destinations in Nicaragua.

Government planners anticipate that in some cases international cargo will be trucked to Corinto to be loaded again onto ships sailing the Pacific. The deep-water port at El Bluff will thus complete a transportation link providing an alternative, in some cases, to the Panama Canal.

The project includes the construction of barges and tugboats, improvements in port facilities at Arlen Siu, and some work to dredge the Río Escondido.

This was partially done under the Somoza dictatorship that ruled Nicaragua until 1979. The goal at that time, however, was not to develop the Atlantic Coast, but rather to enrich the Somoza family, which had large holdings in the construction industry. "Somoza spent three times the real cost of the job," Edwin Castro explained. "Even at that, it was never finished."

The Atlantic deep-water port project is described here as a modest plan, in line with the country's limited resources. And, in reality, it is not extremely large by the standards of a developed nation like the United States. But for Nicaragua, the project is a gigantic undertaking. It is one of a handful of large-scale development projects that are going ahead despite the serious economic difficulties caused by the U.S.-backed war of aggression.

Work on the first stage of the project began at El Bluff five months ago. This involved preparatory work to make the subsequent stages possible. Construction of the port will consume hundreds of tons of concrete, for example. Since Bluefields has no facility that can produce this, it was necessary first to build a plant to make concrete. To supply that plant, it was necessary in turn to build a quarry to produce the crushed rock that will be used in the concrete.

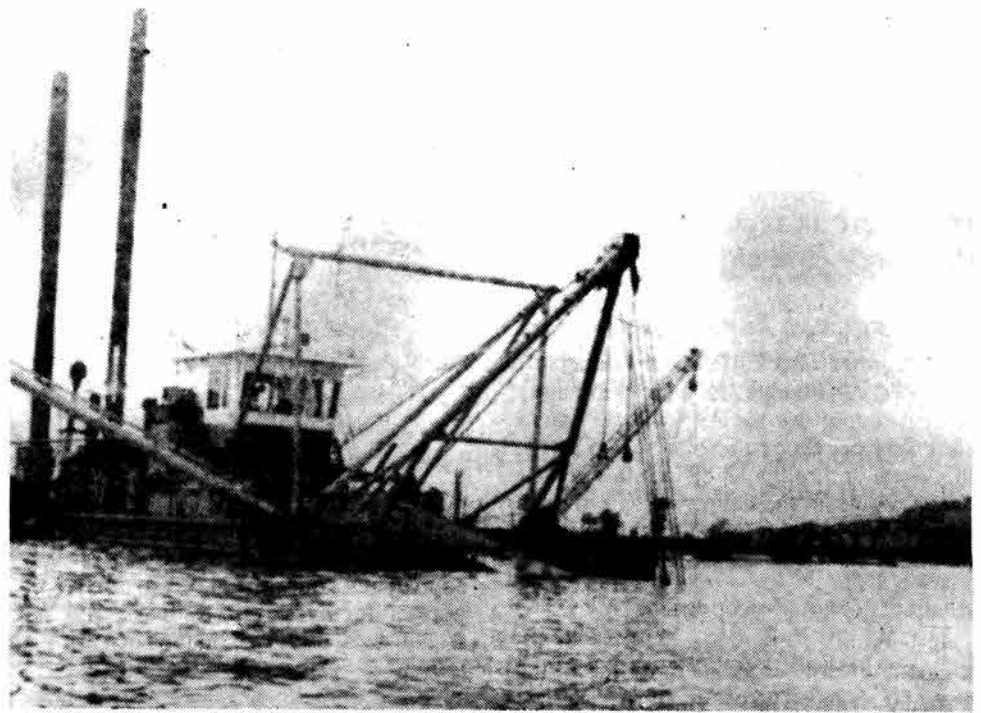
Nicaragua is now working out an ambitious plan to establish autonomous regional governments on the Atlantic Coast. In Castro's opinion, the deep-water port is an es-

sentential complement to that autonomy project. "The port is part of the economic base that is needed to make the political project work," he said.

Thomas Gordon, the region's presidential delegate, agreed that significant investments in the region are needed "in order to develop a situation in which autonomy can succeed."

But he pointed out that economic development alone is not enough. The deep-water port and two other projects in the region were initiated several years ago, he said, before the autonomy project was begun. "They were based on a desire to develop the Atlantic Coast, of course, but they were based more on national economic plans."

Gordon, a native of Bluefields, has the task of explaining to the central government in Managua the special needs of the Coast. In his view, economic development projects like the deep-water port are an important advance from the time of Somoza. The autonomy project, he said, represents another huge step.



Dredging El Bluff, which will be Nicaragua's first port for ocean-going vessels on Atlantic Coast.

Autonomy plan: blow to 'contra' war

Continued from front page groups.

- Better education is a concern of all costeños. In the past, the best-educated people from the Coast have left in search of job opportunities, and few ever returned. Bilingual-bicultural education and other efforts to revive and promote their languages are important demands for those whose native language is not Spanish.

- Foreign export trade is now managed by the central government in Managua and focuses on only a few products. Costeños believe there are opportunities to expand exports if there is more control on a local level.

Autonomy project 'unique'

Johnny Hodgson, who stepped down as mayor of Bluefields several months ago to work full-time as coordinator of the region's Autonomy Commission, is optimistic. "But we have to explain frankly that autonomy will not immediately solve every one of these problems," he said, speaking to the rally that concluded the consultation period. "It only makes it possible to begin dealing with them."

"That's what's so unique about this autonomy project," the young Black man continued. "That's why only a revolutionary government can do it. It has to begin with this stage of popular consultation — by going to the people to find out what's important to them."

To do this, hundreds of "autonomy promoters" were trained to take the discussion door-to-door in the major cities and towns. The promoters were supplied with pamphlets and flyers in four languages. After visiting each house at least twice, they filled out a survey form to record the concerns of the people they had talked to.

Organizers estimate that, in the larger towns, 95 percent of the houses were visited, although they acknowledge that they cannot be sure they talked to all of the people living in each house. In the countryside, local assemblies were held.

The widespread discussion that was thus opened up is an essential part of the autonomy project. In a judicial sense, autonomy will not be established for many months. But some of the aims of the project are already being realized.

Bilingual-bicultural education

In Southern Zelaya, a pilot program now offers bilingual-bicultural education to Black students whose native language is Creole English, and the first steps have been taken to teach the Garifuna language. In Northern Zelaya the program is one year ahead, teaching Miskito first and second graders in their native language.

"We're going to have a big problem next year," explained William Shwartz, the Ministry of Education's delegate in

Bluefields. "The autonomy project has created a tremendous demand for bilingual education: now we want to expand the English program to all the Black children; we want to teach Garifuna and Rama; and people are asking for adult education in all these languages."

"We can't possibly do all of this right now; we don't have nearly enough bilingual teachers. But we regard all of this as positive. This is what the discussion is for."

At a press conference in Managua Dec. 5, 1985, the National Autonomy Commission evaluated its first year of existence. The commission was originally formed with five members, later expanding to form separate commissions in Northern and Southern Zelaya involving scores of people. The groups worked jointly to prepare the documents on which the consultation was based.

Accomplishments

Among the accomplishments of its first year, it noted the expanded cease-fire between the Sandinista People's Army and Miskito groups that had taken up arms against the Managua government and the return of 13,500 Miskito Indians to their homes along the Río Coco.

'Contras' linked to drug trade

BY ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

"Drug trafficking" is one of Washington's favorite slanders against the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments. In a recent interview with a Mexican publication, for example, President Reagan charged that "the links between governments of such Soviet allies as Cuba and Nicaragua and international narcotics trafficking and terrorism is becoming increasingly clear."

No proof for such slanders is offered. No such proof exists. In fact, Washington's own Drug Enforcement Agency admits that its investigation has found no such links.

Such slanders, however, make front-page news in the big-business press. But a recent Associated Press dispatch linking the CIA-sponsored *contras* (counterrevolutionaries) who are waging war against Nicaragua to the international drug traffic was buried in the classified section of the *Boston Globe*. The article reported that the *contras* refuel cocaine-loaded planes at clandestine airstrips in Costa Rica.

Both U.S. cops and supporters of the *contras* from the United States confirm that members of the two main mercenary groups — the Nicaraguan Democratic Force and the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance — are involved in the drug trafficking.

The commission also drew attention to the success of the autonomy project in blocking attempts by the U.S. government to intervene against the Nicaraguan revolution.

In a meeting of a UN subcommittee on Indian affairs in Geneva last summer, Washington proposed the following addition to the subcommittee's statement of principles: "Indian nations and tribes, when they find their rights threatened, may request the intervention of third-party governments."

The motion is clearly designed to provide an opening for U.S. intervention against Nicaragua. It was sharply rejected in Geneva. The U.S. government then proposed it again in the Inter-American Indian Institute convention sponsored by the Organization of American States in New Mexico in October. Again, Indian groups from Latin America rejected the motion.

In Northern and Southern Zelaya, the autonomy commissions will now process the responses given during the consultation period, working out the judicial framework that will meet the aspirations of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast. Nationally, the commission will take on the task of educating the Pacific Coast majority about the meaning of autonomy for the Nicaraguan nation.

According to the Associated Press, a CIA-sponsored analysis of the international drug trade includes a report that one top commander of ARDE made enough money from drug dealing to buy a \$250,000 arms shipment and a helicopter. ARDE is the group headed by former Sandinista Edén Pastora.

Another *contra* leader, Sebastian González Mendiola, was indicted last year by the Costa Rican government for drug dealing.

AP further reports that Drug Enforcement Agency spokesman Cornelius Dougherty admitted that his agency knew about drug traffickers using airstrips in Costa Rica but had not investigated the political affiliation of those involved.

At least one member of Congress, Rep. Sam Gejdenson of Connecticut, has called on the administration to investigate these charges "with the same vigor that they would devote to charges of left-wing drug trafficking."

State Department deputy spokesman, Charles Redman, however, made it clear that Washington has no intention of investigating and exposing the criminal activities of its puppets in Central America. He announced that the government is not investigating these charges.

Political prisoners protest in Ireland

BY MARC LICHTMAN

NEW YORK — Irish political prisoners at Long Kesh prison in British-occupied Northern Ireland suspended their hunger strike January 6. The patriots took food after they received assurances from Lord Gifford of the British Labor Party that the appeal process in their cases would be speeded up.

The hunger strikers are among the 27 alleged members of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), an armed group in solidarity with the Irish Republican Socialist Party. They were convicted in Belfast December 18 in a "supergrass" trial.

"Supergrass" is slang for informers who are paid or promised immunity from prosecution for their testimony. In the past few years more than 400 people have been tried on the sole basis of testimony from these informers. The overwhelming majority of the victims have been Irish nationalists, although a few pro-British loyalists have been charged in order to make the system appear impartial.

The 27 were convicted on the basis of testimony from supergrass Harry Kirkpatrick, with no corroborating evidence. As is the case with all political trials in Northern Ireland, they were tried in a special "Diplock" court, with one pro-British judge and no jury. The 27 nationalists were convicted of charges including arms possession, membership in an illegal organization, and murder. The sentences range from five years to life.

Even Judge Carswell, who presided over this mockery of justice, described Kirkpatrick as "a man of bad character and low moral standards." Carswell called Kirkpatrick's stated motives for his testimony "a series of lies and evasions." Kirkpatrick is currently serving five life sentences, but with no recommended minimum. Clearly he has been promised an early release date in exchange for his testimony.

On the day after they were convicted, December 19, Robert Tohill began a hunger strike. He was followed by Gerard Steenson on December 26 and Thomas

Power on January 2. The other prisoners pledged to join in the hunger strike at intervals of a week.

The strikers were demanding an early appeal date in writing and a judicial review of all supergrass convictions.

Some nationalists convicted in informer trials have been in jail for two years waiting for an appeal. Steenson and Power, for example, have been imprisoned since February 1982. The two men were jailed while being tried in four other supergrass trials before their conviction in the Kirkpatrick trial.

Activists in Ireland are organizing support for the hunger strikers. Sinn Féin, the political party associated with the Irish Republican Army, has announced its full support for these patriots.

Relatives of the jailed men attempted to meet with Peter Barry, the Irish minister of foreign affairs in the southern part of that divided nation. Barry refused to meet with them.

The desperate situation of the prisoners shows that nothing fundamental has changed since the Anglo-Irish Accord was signed. This agreement maintains British colonial control of Northern Ireland while giving the Irish government in the south a symbolic role in the affairs of the region. British Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King explained at a recent luncheon in Luxembourg that under the accords the Irish prime minister has "accepted that for all practical purposes and into perpetuity, there will not be a united Ireland."

In New York, actions have been called in support of the prisoners.

The Committee for Legal Justice in Northern Ireland has called a protest for Sunday, January 12, at 2 p.m. It will take place at the British consulate, 52nd Street and Third Avenue in Manhattan.

The New York H-Block/Armagh Committee is sponsoring a rally on Sunday, January 19, at 2 p.m., to be held at British Airways, Fifth Avenue between 44th and 45th streets in Manhattan.

Utah coal miners strike

Continued from back page

the strike. Presently, there are no big stockpiles of coal at any of the three struck mines.

Miners are standing firm and refusing to go back to work until Emery reverses its contract violation policies. Strikers are demanding that the company sit down at the negotiating table and talk out the issues that caused the strike.

This is the second time in the last four months that miners at the Deer Creek mine have been forced off the job over the same issues.

In mid-September, the company tried to establish new restrictive policies forcing miners to give advance notice for taking graduated vacation days off. Local 1769 members backed the company off from its proposed restrictions. This was a victory for all UMWA locals.

The present wildcat strike action was

seen as necessary by UMWA members, who have little confidence in the grievance and arbitration procedures. The mood among miners is one of militancy and resolve to fight.

On January 8, Emery obtained a temporary restraining order in federal district court against the striking locals. The ruling orders miners back to work and places severe restrictions on strike-related activities. The miners are defying the back-to-work order.

Miners expect the company's next step will be to seek John Doe warrants under which the back-to-work order must be served individually to the strikers.

Attempts are now being made by UMWA members to continue the process of unity and solidarity between the three striking locals.

Dave Hurst is a member of UMWA Local 1769 and works at the Deer Creek mine.



Crumlin Road Court House in Belfast, Ireland, where trials of Irish political prisoners are held.

Oklahoma nuke disaster: gov't, company to blame

Continued from back page

"We've got a problem here. The problem is nobody there ever tells you anything."

Meanwhile, as usual, an attempt was being made to blame the workers for what happened.

Right off the bat, an NRC "investigator," Richard Bangart, told a news conference that the tank had become overloaded because the workers had placed it on the scale wrong.

But by the company's admission that's a flat-out lie.

Robert Lukes, executive vice-president of Sequoyah Fuels, the Kerr-McGee subsidiary that operates the plant, said the tank got overloaded because the scale it was weighed on was not working right.

"The scale pointer got stuck, and that has never happened before," he said.

Confronted with this, Bangart said, "Sunday I was describing what I thought I knew at the time."

A defective scale was only part of the problem.

What happened at Gore was not simply the result of a foul-up by local plant management. Nor was it only Kerr-McGee's proven record of putting profits before safety.

The danger is prevalent throughout the nuclear and chemical industries, and the danger is huge. All of these plants are ticking time bombs.

An indication of the magnitude of the problem was offered by the *New York Times*, a big-business paper that has tried to cover up for both the chemical and nuke industries.

In a January 6 article, the paper compared what went wrong at the Kerr-McGee

plant and the 1984 disaster at Bhopal, India, which killed more than 2,000 and injured 200,000.

Discussing the absence of serious safety regulations, the article said, "The potential problems that could result from these conditions have been widely known, and experts consider most of the solutions relatively cheap and easy."

A World Bank chemical engineer and safety expert is cited. He says, "It's more of a management problem than anything else. These kinds of things have happened in many accidents, and they are easily avoided with proper alarms, measuring devices and backup systems."

An EPA official adds, "Too much is left to chance now."

Why is too much left to chance?

According to the *Times*, "One reason is cost. Companies operating on thin margins are sometimes reluctant to install extra safety equipment not needed to run the plant."

Concern for cost? For sure. Because of "thin margins"? That's really a shameless crock.

Take Kerr-McGee. It's the country's 111th biggest corporation. It's into oil, gas, coal, chemicals, and uranium. In 1984 it had a gross take of \$3.54 billion.

After Karen Silkwood's death in 1974, her family sued Kerr-McGee for damages. In 1979, a jury awarded them \$10.5 million — an award the company is still fighting in the courts.

By that verdict, the jury said in effect that the blood of Karen Silkwood was on the hands of Kerr-McGee.

The same can be said for James Harrison, the young worker who died such a cruel death at their uranium plant.

U.S. war moves against Libya

Continued from front page

for all people of Arab descent.

This move comes at a time when the FBI has yet to make a single arrest in the murder of Alex Odeh, West Coast regional director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and in the attacks on several ADC offices.

Reagan justified acts of war against Libya by claiming that the government of that country is an "outlaw regime."

The number one international outlaw in the world today is the United States government, which claims the right to lay down the law for all the nations of the world and to punish alleged violators.

Washington has systematically trampled on human rights, the sovereignty of nations, and international law in carrying out acts of war against countries that refuse to follow the dictates of U.S. big business.

Washington has organized the killing of thousands of Nicaraguans by bands of *contra* terrorists.

It has supported terrorists in Angola, who, together with the South African government, have taken the lives of 10,000 Angolans in the last decade.

Washington is organizing the air war carried out by the government of El Salvador against its own people — the biggest air war in the history of the Americas.

Washington's massive military and eco-

nomic aid to the Israeli government made possible Israel's invasion of Lebanon, which took well over 50,000 lives; the October 1 bombing of Tunisia, which took 67 lives; and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes.

Washington supports the South African government, which is recognized nearly everywhere as an international outlaw because of its bloody repression and imposition of slavery-like conditions on the vast majority of the population.

Libya has also been a frequent victim of Washington's outlaw actions. U.S. jets shot down two Libyan planes in August 1981.

Recently, the U.S. government launched a virtually public "covert" operation aimed at assassinating Libyan head of state Muammar el-Qaddafi, embroiling Libya in a war with Egypt or other neighboring countries, and provoking pretexts for U.S. military action against Libya.

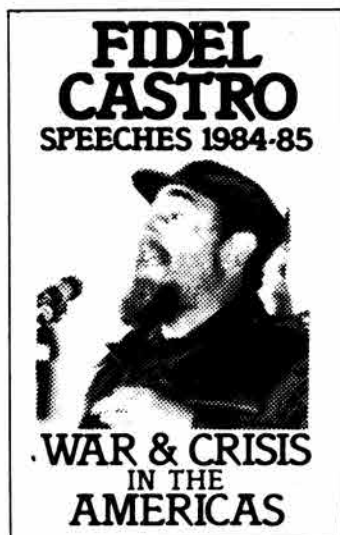
But Libya is no threat to U.S. working people. The threat to our lives and well-being comes from Washington's acts of war against Libya, Nicaragua, and other countries.

Along with millions of people around the world, U.S. working people should say to Washington: "Hands off Libya. Get the U.S. military out of the Middle East and Mediterranean!"

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Well Ron? — Commenting on Reagan's plan to subject his underlings to lie-detector tests, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega in-



Harry Ring

vited Reagan to join him in such a test to see who's telling the truth about Central America.

Not to worry — We reported

the Labor Dept. was considering ending compensation awards to civilian federal employees who lose sex organs, kidneys, breasts, or lungs in the line of duty. The Dept. feels these aren't essential for earning a living. However, they will continue to pay for the loss of legs, arms, hands, or fingers.

Don't leave home without it — "In all aspects, marketing men's beauty aids is getting bolder. . . . Now some markets brazenly say they want to do for the American male what they have done for (or to) the American female: make him feel ashamed to go out without first 'doing' his face." — *The Wall Street Journal*

on the rapid growth of the men's cosmetics industry.

Better than Russian roulette — The First Commodity Corp. of Boston cheerily advises: "Third World and Eastern bloc nations now owe a staggering \$853 billion to the world banking community. . . . The escalation of violence and turmoil in the Mideast is threatening to sweep over the entire area. The inevitable entanglement of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia would require immediate U.S. involvement." What to do? Invest in silver — "if you can afford the risk."

It never even occurred to us — "Kennedy says politics played

no role in decision not to run" — Headline in *Boston Globe*.

Keeping the fat fit — To alleviate the stress of job-hunting, one outplacement firm (that's a high class employment agency) gives free health club memberships to upper level jobless executives. Lower echelon execs get a discount rate. And, we assume, ordinary job-seekers can reduce stress by walking the pavement.

He moves in mysterious ways — Michigan will be selecting delegates this year for the 1988 Republican presidential convention. And it was "God Almighty" who selected the state to be first, as-

ures TV evangelist Pat Robertson. According to local pundits, he's also hopeful the Almighty will tap him for the presidential nomination.

Prefers mild — "Eat Cheese or Die" and "Come and Freeze in the Land of Cheese" were among the entrants in a Wisconsin license-plate slogan contest. But the guy announced the winner was "America's Dairyland."

And how are you doing? — A doctor's annual take was up 7.8 percent last year. Corporate execs, figuring in bonuses, took home 10.7 percent more, while chief execs "earned" almost 14 percent more.

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Commemoration of Martin Luther King. Speakers: Eli Green, leader of Socialist Workers Party; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

San Diego

Adapt or Die. Video about the freedom struggle in South Africa, followed by discussion. Sat., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 1053 15th St. (across from City College), open house at 6:30 p.m. to meet the socialist candidate for mayor, refreshments. Donation requested. Ausp: Socialist Workers Campaign Committee. For more information call (619) 234-4630.

San Francisco

Living the Dream, a Commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. March and rally. Mon., Jan. 20. Assembly 10 a.m., foot of Mar-

ket St. March to Civic Center. For more information call (415) 771-0574.

FLORIDA

Miami

Keep Abortion Legal! Panel of speakers on right to legal abortion and March 9 abortion rights demonstration in Washington, D.C. Fri., Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 754-0967.

Defending Our Unions. Speaker: Stu Singer, member of Machinists union at Eastern Airlines. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 754-0967.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Support the Freedom Struggle in South Africa: Join the Boycott Against Winn-Dixie.

Speakers: Rev. Fred Taylor, direct-action coordinator, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Brenda Davenport, student-affairs coordinator, SCLC. Sat., Jan. 11, 7 p.m. 504 Flat Shoals Ave. SE. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

U.S. vs. Libya: Who Are the Real Terrorists? Speakers to be announced. Sat., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

Abortion is a Woman's Right. A panel discussion. Sat., Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Freedom Struggle in Southern Africa: a Decade of Advances Against Imperialism. Speakers: Gabriel Uahengo, member of South West Africa People's Organization; Michael Maggi, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 6-662 and Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Jan. 12, 4 p.m. 508 N Snelling. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Minnesota Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

No to Apartheid! Hear Dr. Fred Dube, representative of the African National Congress. Sat., Jan. 18, 7 p.m. Pilgrim Baptist Church, 732 Central Ave. W. Ausp: Minnesota Anti-apartheid Coalition. For more information call (612) 870-1501.

OHIO

Cincinnati

Socialist Education Weekend: The Roots of Women's Oppression. Two classes by Pat Grogan, member of National Committee of Socialist Workers Party and staff writer of *Militant* newspaper. Class 1, Sat., Jan. 11, 2 p.m.; Class 2, Sun., Jan. 12, 11 a.m. 4945 Paddock Rd. Donation: \$1.50 per class. Ausp: Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (513) 242-7161.

Women in Revolutionary Cuba and Nicaragua. Speakers: Betty Jean Carroll, vice-president of American Federation of Government Employees at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base; Pat Grogan, Socialist Workers Party; Juanita Jenkins, executive board member of National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees Local 1199; Sue Kinne, participated in educators' tour of Cuba; Arlene Rubenstein,

member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 496 and Louisville NOW Abortion Rights Task Force. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 4945 Paddock Rd. Donation: \$2.50. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (513) 242-7161.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement. Speaker: Michael Christopher, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 402 N Highland. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

Fight to Defend Abortion Rights. A panel of speakers. Sat., Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. 402 N Highland. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

UTAH

Price

Fight to Defend Abortion Rights. Speakers to be announced. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 23 S Carbon Ave., Room 19. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 637-6294.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Legacy in the Fight for Black Rights Today. Speakers: Ken Morgan, chairperson, National Steering Committee of National Black Independent Political Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 18, 7 p.m. 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

Palestinians and the Road to Mideast Peace. Speakers to be announced. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Jan. 25, 7 p.m. 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

WEST VIRGINIA

Morgantown

Terrorism: Who Is Really at Fault? An Answer to Reagan's War Threats Against Libya. Speaker: Sara Logan, member Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. Sun., Jan. 12, 6 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

British Miners Still Fighting Back. Speaker: Kathy Mickells, member Socialist Workers Party and United Mine Workers Local 2300. Sun., Jan. 19, 6 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

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Zimbabwe's Prime Minister visits



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MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: SWP, YSA, 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th Floor. Zip: 02215. Tel: (617) 262-4621.

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TEXAS: Austin: YSA, c/o Mike Rose, 7409 Berkman Dr. Zip: 78752. Tel: (512) 452-3923.

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VIRGINIA: Tidewater Area (Newport News): SWP, YSA, 5412 Jefferson Ave., Zip: 23605. Tel: (804) 380-0133.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: SWP, YSA, 3106 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 797-7699.

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WEST VIRGINIA: Charleston: SWP, YSA, 611A Tennessee. Zip: 25302. Tel: (304) 345-3040. **Morgantown:** SWP, YSA, 221 Pleasant St. Zip: 26505. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

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

'Letters Home from Vietnam': GIs tell their story

Dear America. *Letters Home from Vietnam*. Edited by Bernard Edelman for The New York Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission, W.W. Norton & Co., 1985. Hardcover, \$13.95.

BY LINDA JENNESS

• Pfc. George Robinson, wounded June 11, 1966:
"Dear Mom . . . Don't ask any questions. When I come

BOOK REVIEW

home, if I feel like talking about it I will, but otherwise don't ask. It may sound dramatic, and I'll tell you it is. It's just something you don't feel like discussing and can't begin to write about."

Dear America. Letters Home from Vietnam is an eloquent statement of the fears, suffering, contradictions, hopes, and aspirations of the young men who enlisted or were drafted to fight Washington's criminal war in Vietnam.

They were so young.

• 2d Lt. Don Jacques, killed in action Feb. 25, 1968:
"Dear Mom and Dad . . . Tonight I had a 19-year-old come to me for help and advice. He is married to an 18-year-old, and he was having problems. If he knew I was only 20, I wonder if he would have come. I think I helped him — he seemed happy."

They were confused.

• Sgt. Phillip Woodall:
"Dear Dad . . . This war is all wrong. I will continue to fight, win my medals and fight the elements and hardships of this country. But that is because I'm a soldier and it's my job and there are other people depending on me. That's my excuse. That's all I have, theories and excuses — no solutions."

• 1st Lt. James Simmen:
"Hi Vern . . . I know I'm not nuts. If I killed a man in the U.S., everyone would stare. Last night I killed and everyone has been patting me on the back, including the battalion commander. What do you think?"

Letters Home from Vietnam is a product of the New York Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission established by New York City Mayor Edward Koch. During the design competition for the memorial, letters were solicited, then selected and edited to compile this book. Putting aside differing opinions about the memorial, this is a wonderful book. It is a sad, insightful picture of one part of the war in Vietnam.

Arranged basically in chronological order, the reader is taken on a quiet, unsettling ride into the horrors of a war.

There are many views and feelings represented here; but the power of the book is its ability to present common ground. The anguish of losing a buddy; the fear of mortars, booby traps, and mines; the exhaustion; and the dreams of home and loved ones bind these men together. There are letters from medics, nurses, "Donut Dollies," clerks, "grunts," and officers.

While struggling with the feeling that no one could un-



Experience of GIs described in book *Dear America. Letters Home from Vietnam* led many to join movement against U.S. war in Vietnam.

derstand who wasn't there, they desperately tried to communicate. They wrote poems. They wrote to tell high school buddies what they were too protective to tell their mothers, sweethearts, and wives. They wrote to their newborn babies, to their sisters and brothers.

They wrote of their respect for the "enemy," of the orphans of war, of anger, of Saigon, of Christmas truces in a faraway country.

They laughed, they cried, they prayed, they tried to survive. And, they tried to maintain a sense of humanity.

Marion Lee Kempter, killed by a mine explosion in 1966, wrote to his great-aunt three weeks before his death: "Dear Aunt Fannie . . . This morning . . . one of my men turned to me and pointed a hand, filled with cuts and scratches, at a rather distinguished-looking plant with soft red flowers waving gaily in the downpour . . . and said, 'That is the first plant I have seen today which didn't have thorns on it.' I immediately thought of you."

There are a few letters from fathers and mothers. But these are included to tell more about the GI than the writer.

One father, for instance, writes to his wounded son: "Hello Son . . . Let me say here and now that I'm extremely proud of you, son. Not because you were awarded the Heart, but because you did an honorable thing. I know that you were bitterly against going into the service and rejected our reasons for being in Vietnam. I also knew of your feelings about the U.S. and its treat-

ment of Negroes. I also imagine that you were contemplating going AWOL. Yet, in spite of these conditions, you did everything that was asked of you. Whether it was to please your mother or your grandmother I do not know. But, I do know that you made a prudent and honorable decision."

The war in Vietnam was a bloody chapter in the history of aggression by the U.S. government. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese men, women, and children heroically gave their lives to defend their country from the invasion. They faced, fought, and defeated the mightiest imperialist power in the world. Their suffering was unimaginable. And today, the task of rebuilding their country is awesome — especially in the face of continuing U.S. pressure and aggression.

Letters Home from Vietnam is a book about another segment of victims in the Vietnam War. They were young U.S. soldiers. They were primarily working class and many were Black. They were used by Washington as cannon fodder in a war in which the working people had no interests and from which they had nothing to gain.

Ten years ago the war ended. Millions of people in the United States — including, so importantly, significant numbers of GIs — had participated in a giant antiwar movement. This movement helped force the U.S. government to withdraw its troops from Vietnam.

This book echoes the banners we carried and marched behind: "Bring our boys home, now!"

20,000 striking miners fired in South Africa

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practices developed by the apartheid regime are enforced there.

As in the rest of South Africa, 97 percent of the mine workers must be migrants who are barred from living with their families while working. Employers can fire workers for striking. And Black miners are barred from high-paying job categories reserved for white miners.

The fiction of "independence" allows the regime in some instances to attempt even more repressive policies in the Bantustans than elsewhere in South Africa. For example, both the "independent" Bophuthatswana and Ciskei Bantustan administrations refuse to recognize unions that the government has been forced to recognize elsewhere.

Attack on Moutse reserve

Brutal repression is also being used to forcibly annex the Moutse reserve in Transvaal Province to the KwaNdebele Bantustan. Moutse is inhabited by 120,000 Africans who are mostly Sotho-speakers of Pedi tribal origin.

The regime claims that the KwaNdebele Bantustan, a tiny plot of land some miles from the capital city of Pretoria, is a "homeland" for Africans of Ndebele tribal origin. In reality only about 40 percent of the people forced to live in the KwaNdebele reservation are of Ndebele origin.

The real function of the Bantustan is to provide a pool of cheap migrant laborers for Pretoria, while barring them from residing permanently in the cities.

The government of President Pieter Botha plans to declare KwaNdebele an in-

dependent nation later this year. As a reward for going along with this phony independence, the Bantustan administration, headed by Chief Minister Simon Skosana, is being given the Moutse district.

Under present South African law, the residents of Moutse will lose their South African citizenship when KwaNdebele becomes "independent." So will the other residents of KwaNdebele and many workers in the Pretoria area and elsewhere who are arbitrarily assigned by the regime as "citizens" of KwaNdebele. The local hospital and school system would have to be financed by the impoverished Bantustan administration, which would mean even less support than they presently receive from the Pretoria government.

The subservient Bantustan administration would also gain the power to seize their land and give it to white capitalist farmers and mining operators — who have long coveted the district's land — as well as to Blacks favored by the Bantustan administration and the regime.

Vigilantes go on rampage

In the early hours of January 1, hundreds of cops and vigilantes organized by Pretoria and its Bantustan administration poured into Moutse to enforce the annexation.

The vigilantes, linked to the Bantustan administration, went on a rampage of beating and looting. They tried, unsuccessfully, to kidnap Chief Tlokwe Mathebe, the traditional community leader, who was opposed to the annexation.

More than 250 residents were rounded up and held in a community hall where

they were tortured in the presence of Chief Minister Skosana.

The streets of villages were patrolled by cops in armored cars and ax- and gun-toting vigilantes.

As the vigilantes moved in, the cops also attacked. Two cops were killed January 1 after they shot three people, one of whom later died, at a protest meeting in the district.

The next day, massive numbers of cops occupied villages, using helicopters to search for fleeing protesters. Eighty-nine residents were reported arrested.

More than 20 people were reported killed in the fighting set off by the white minority government's attack on Moutse.

"Why are they doing it?" asked community leader Godfrey Methebe. "Botha says he is abolishing apartheid, so why is he pushing for another independent homeland? He says he has ended forced removals, so why is he forcing us to join KwaNdebele?"

Funeral of apartheid foe

On January 2, about 20,000 people — mostly Blacks — gathered in a white neighborhood in Port Elizabeth to join the funeral ceremony for Molly Blackburn, a leading white opponent of apartheid. She and Brian Bishop, another white anti-apartheid activist, died in an automobile accident December 28.

The outpouring for her funeral was organized by the United Democratic Front, the anti-apartheid coalition of 600 groups with more than 2 million members.

Blackburn was a leader of the Black Sash organization. Made up of white

women, Black Sash investigates and exposes many human rights abuses by the regime.

A member of the Progressive Federal Party, she served in the Cape provincial legislature. The Progressive Federal Party is the main capitalist opposition party in South Africa. It has been critical of the apartheid system but opposes the struggle for majority rule based on the principle of one person, one vote.

According to the *New York Times*, Blackburn's friends say she "had moved far beyond the policies of her own party and referred frequently in private conversation to her association with 'the struggle' — the term used by Black activists for their war against white rule."

She regularly attended the massive funerals for Black victims of the regime.

When the government began arresting Blacks who sought hospital treatment after their protests were violently attacked, Blackburn and her husband, a doctor, opened a clinic where Blacks could receive confidential treatment.

As at other funerals, Blacks "openly displayed the black, green, and yellow colors" of the outlawed African National Congress and "sang songs in praise of its leaders, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo," reported the January 3 *Washington Post*.

At the funeral service, the Rev. Mvume Dandala stated to loud applause: "Molly Blackburn proved conclusively that being white does not in itself make one an enemy of the people."

The regime banned a memorial meeting for Blackburn that had been scheduled for the following Saturday.

Gov't revives witch-hunt boards

The U.S. government's Office of Personnel Management has laid the basis for reestablishing "Security Hearing Boards." According to Director Constance Horner, such boards would have the power to summarily fire federal employees "in the interests of national security." In a December 2 letter, she asked the secretaries of the army, navy, and air force to make nominations of civilian employees to be members of the boards.

The proposal to reestablish the boards is one of the latest steps in the drive by the capitalist ruling class to prepare for further use of its military power abroad, to reduce democratic rights at home, and to deal new blows to the union movement.

The formation of the boards was first authorized by a 1950 law permitting arbitrary firing of government employees on "national security" grounds. The boards were kangaroo courts that investigated, harassed, and smeared workers targeted for dismissal.

The attack on the democratic rights of government employees was part of an antilabor, racist, and anticommunist witch-hunt that began after World War II. The U.S. ruling class used it to suppress and intimidate opposition as Washington built up a massive, nuclear-armed war machine, threatened military action against the Soviet Union, and waged war against the peoples of Korea and China.

When this intensive witch-hunt died down in the late 1950s, the "security boards" went into abeyance. But the expanded network of antidemocratic legislation, executive orders, and political police agencies remained.

Days after the announcement of the proposal to revive the witch-hunting boards, the White House published a November 1 directive authorizing lie detector tests for "all individuals with access to United States government sensitive compartmented information, communications, security information, and other special-access program information."

After Secretary of State George Shultz publicly complained about the program, the White House assured him that he and other top officials would not be expected to submit to lie detector tests. But the November 1 directive remains in force.

As in the witch-hunt after World War II, a spy scare engineered by the government and the capitalist media is the pretext for these attacks on democratic rights.

On November 30, President Reagan portrayed the United States as under attack from "spies and turncoats."

More spy trials are being staged than ever before in U.S. history.

Following each arrest on spy charges, the government and big-business media blanket the country with versions of the facts that assume the guilt of the accused.

The constitutional guarantee that accused persons are to be presumed innocent until proven guilty has been reversed in espionage cases. This violation of democratic rights sets the stage for others.

There are differences within the government and ruling class over how to proceed in further restricting democratic rights. But the capitalist media and the leading politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties agree that more restrictions are called for.

Editorials in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, for instance, have criticized the expanded use of lie detectors. They fear that the unpopularity and notori-

ous unreliability of these tests will spur resistance among working people to the attacks on our rights.

Working people know that "lie detectors" have nothing to do with the truth and everything to do with intimidating, blackmailing, framing up, and prying into the union and political activities of workers. The *New York Times* noted in a December 8 editorial, "Organized labor has complained for years that companies use lie detector tests to ferret out employees they consider to be troublesome or inclined to join a union."

But *Times* and *Post* editorials supported government moves to step up police surveillance over government workers, those employed in the arms industry, and others through the system of "security clearances." Millions of workers are required to obtain such clearances in order to get and keep their jobs.

The system of "security clearances" was established in the late 1940s. Like the "security hearing boards," it was part of the antidemocratic witch-hunt.

The security clearance system is overseen by a Pentagon political police agency, the Defense Investigative Service. It maintains files on more than 15 million people and carries out surveillance over 14,000 military installations and military contractors. This system gives the government the ability to directly intervene in the workplace, intimidating and disciplining workers, all in the name of "national defense."

Union activists, opponents of U.S. war policies, and Blacks, Latinos, and women who assert their rights are special targets of government snoops.

For instance, the government lifted the security clearance of Sally Goodman on April 17, 1985. Goodman, an employee at Martin Marietta in Denver, was charged by the DIS with being a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, being "at least an associate of known members of the Socialist Workers Party," and being a lesbian.

As "evidence" against her, the DIS investigators cited claims that she discussed union matters on the job and knew more about union activities than the "normal" worker.

Goodman's fight for the right to her job has won the support of her union, United Auto Workers Local 766, and a range of other organizations and individuals.

At a time when the great majority of unions publicly oppose the U.S. government's support to the apartheid regime in South Africa and a growing number are openly critical of Washington's intervention in Central America, the U.S. rulers are seeking to bind the unions more tightly to their war machine.

They demand that the interests of the workers and farmers be completely subordinated to the big-business drive to roll back the Nicaraguan revolution and revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and elsewhere.

The rulers plan to further undermine the union movement through the atmosphere of intimidation and mutual suspicion that the stepped-up use of the clearance system and the hearing boards can generate. They want to break up and prevent solidarity among workers and block the defense of union rights on the job.

The union movement and all working people have an interest in opposing the "security" investigations, hearing boards, lie detector tests, and all other attacks on democratic rights that are being implemented under cover of the bosses' spy scare.

Airport workers under attack

A vigorous response by the labor movement is needed to beat back government moves to step up harassment, intimidation, and victimization of workers at U.S. airports.

On November 27, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ordered "background investigation" checks for airport, airline, and contractor personnel who have access to airports and airplanes.

At the same time, the FAA announced plans to pursue passage of new legislation making it a federal crime to be in many sections of airports without "authorization."

Government officials are using recent hijackings as a pretext for attacking workers' rights.

Under the new rules, which went into effect December 15, the FAA is demanding as a "minimum" that background checks include a detailed investigation of a worker's past job history and references.

The *Washington Post* reported that the government agency is focusing its attention on people who have access to planes, "including food service personnel, cleaners, and mechanics." The *Post* added that many workers in those categories are "not airline employees but employees of contractors, often working for relatively small wages."

This is the latest in a series of assaults on the rights and living standards of airport workers. Wages and working conditions in the industry have been drastically attacked in the past several years. Many airlines today are not unionized. Thousands of jobs at airports are now being carried out by nonunion workers. And two-tier wage pro-

visions, which discriminate against new hires and divide the work force, have been introduced into many union contracts.

The government's latest move will give the airlines and other companies that service airports a handle to try to go after workers who want to fight back against these attacks and a way to intimidate all employees.

The airlines already have hiring practices that subject workers to numerous interviews, tests, and investigations.

The new rules will serve to increase the number of company and government investigators combing through job applications looking for discrepancies.

They will increase the number of times family, friends, coworkers, and past employers are grilled about a worker's political views and personal life.

What are these investigations supposed to turn up? Under the guise of fighting terrorism, the government and the companies will go after workers whose activities they don't like. Those active in involving their unions in resisting the employers' attacks will be high on the list. Those involved in protests against U.S. government policy in South Africa, Central America, or the Middle East will also be prime targets.

The International Association of Machinists, which organizes 70,000 airport workers, should take the lead in protesting and fighting this attempt to victimize workers. Bringing the full weight of the unions that organize airport and airline workers into this fight will also be a big help to the thousands of workers at the airports who don't have union contracts.

Marx: why Irish struggle is key to British revolution

In 1869 Karl Marx came to conclusions about the relationship between oppressor and oppressed nations that have guided the work of revolutionaries since then.

British soldiers and cops were then occupying Ireland to preserve the domination of Britain's landlords over the mostly peasant Irish population.

Marx put forward his views as part of a debate on Ireland that was taking place in the General Council of the First International. Below are excerpts from a letter written by Marx in 1870 where this position was developed.

I shall give you here only quite briefly the decisive points. Ireland is the bulwark of the English landed aristocracy.

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ocracy. The exploitation of that country is not only one of the main sources of this aristocracy's material welfare; it is its greatest moral strength. It, in fact, represents the domination of England over Ireland. Ireland is therefore the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains its domination in England herself.

If, on the other hand, the English army and police were to withdraw from Ireland tomorrow, you would at once have an agrarian revolution there. But the overthrow of the English aristocracy in Ireland involves as a necessary consequence its overthrow in England. And this would fulfill the preliminary condition for the proletarian revolution in England. The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England herself, because in Ireland the land question has hitherto been the exclusive form of the social question, because it is a question of existence, of life and death, for the immense majority of the Irish people, and because it is at the same time inseparable from the national question. This quite apart from the Irish being more passionate and revolutionary in character than the English.

As for the English bourgeoisie, it has in the first place a common interest with the English aristocracy in turning Ireland into mere pasture land which provides the English market with meat and wool at the cheapest possible prices. It is equally interested in reducing, by eviction and forcible emigration, the Irish population to such a small number that English capital (capital invested in land leased for farming) can function there with "security."

But the English bourgeoisie has, besides, much more important interests in Ireland's present-day economy. Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of tenant farming, Ireland steadily supplies her own surplus to the English labor market, and thus forces down wages and lowers the moral and material condition of the English working class.

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker.

The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Working Men's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent. Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment, but the first condition of their own social emancipation.

12-hour shifts — attack on rights of oil workers

BY NELS J'ANTHONY

I work for Shell Oil Co. in Norco, Louisiana, as a process operator. Three years ago, the company succeeded in putting operators on 12-hour shifts.

For the increased length of the workday you are "compensated" with a three-day weekend every other week and more days off. This sounds great on paper, but reality has proven otherwise.

The thing I always notice about working 12-hour shifts is that the workday seems to last forever. Working that

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many hours leaves me with little energy and no time for anything but sleep. My commute to and from work takes up another hour and a half each day. So I have just about enough time to clean up and eat before I have to get some sleep for the next 12-hour day.

Maybe I'll watch a little TV or glance at a newspaper, but little else gets done on the days that I work. This means that things pile up for those weekends and days off during the week.

Each week we shift from working days to working nights. I'll work two 12-hour nights and have about a day and a half to get ready to work three 12-hour days. Each week I'll change from eating and sleeping at night to eating and sleeping during the day. Many of my coworkers agree that we are less alert and experience sleeplessness. We seem to be in a state of permanent jet lag. In a refinery, this is a real safety hazard.

The company had predicted that the 12-hour shift would mean less sick leave and therefore less overtime coverage. But the strain of 12-hour shift work means we need to use more sick leave. And I've been forced to work more overtime since the 12-hour shift started.

The only relief system set up by Shell to cover sick leave is forcing junior operators to take overtime. This means that two junior operators must work six hours in addition to their scheduled 12. (One stays over and the other comes back early.)

Often it happens that I'll be forced to work 18 hours, then have to face one or two more scheduled 12-hour shifts.

Shell has also begun to crack down more on sick leave. Allowances for sick time were shortened by the 12-hour shift agreement, and further restrictions have been handed down since then.

The issue of changing to 12-hour shifts was presented at my plant as a movement by the workers, with the company maintaining the appearance of neutrality.

How are employers able to maneuver unionists into accepting 12-hour schedules?

With the companies tightening the screws on work discipline and attendance, the rigors of shift work are magnified. Operators saw Shell's proposal for 12-hour shifts as a partial way out of the pressures of shift work. Thus they were willing to sacrifice even the eight-hour day.

Shell pushed discussion about the 12-hour shift — getting the workers to pressure the union — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 4-750 — to negotiate the 12-hour shift proposal.

Nationally, OCAW opposes the 12-hour shift. It favors a reduction of the workweek with no cut in pay. This position, however, needs to be backed up with action.

A national education campaign around the importance of defending the eight-hour day is needed, as well as a discussion on how the union can respond to the pressure of shift work.

The lack of a national struggle in solidarity with other unions around this issue placed our union in a weak position. So the company's scheme was able to attract the support of many workers.

The union leadership in my local argued against the proposed 12-hour shift on the basis of the cutbacks included in it.

A few workers saw that Shell's 12-hour shift proposal was an attack on the eight-hour day. We argued that we must defend this hard-won gain of the working class.

When Shell pushed for a vote on the 12-hour proposal in the name of democracy, we argued that the union was under no obligation to negotiate the issue or put it to a vote. This phony democracy argument was used by Shell to sow discontent and divisions in the union. It was aimed at weakening the union. But workers who supported the proposal threatened to quit the union — playing into Shell's hands.

Shell's proposal was voted down the first time. But, with a few changes, another proposal narrowly passed. One thing that helped Shell's final proposal pass was the stipulation that the 12-hour shifts would have a trial period.

Three years have passed since then, and I do not believe Shell has any intention of ever going back to eight-hour shifts.

As a result of the 12-hour shift, Shell was able to deal further blows to our rights:

- the loss of 20 hourly positions;
- cutbacks in holiday pay and overtime meal allowances;
- a cutback in the number of hours that shift differential was paid;
- an increase in sick leave restrictions;
- an increase in the number of hours an operator could be forced to work overtime from 16 to 18.

In sum, Shell was motivated to put us on 12-hour shifts because it meant increased profits and increased control over the work force. The company used the issue to weaken the union. It is a further step toward gutting the eight-hour day.

LETTERS

Likes Nicaragua coverage

Enclosed is the remainder of my pledge toward the Socialist Publication Fund.

As a regular reader of the *Militant*, I look to it for a perspective on the crucial events that shape this age of transition from capitalism and imperialism.

I value particularly the coverage of the battle for progress in Nicaragua as typical of the thoughtful *Militant* analysis of people and events.

That coverage is helpful in clarifying my views for a small newsletter I offer coworkers and people associated with a local, active chapter of U.S. Out of Central America. The *New York Times* yields a mine of information to careful readers, but I would not recommend it for analysis or perspective.

Keep up the good work, a task that must be more difficult as the world explodes with effective opposition — from South Africa to Nicaragua — to imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

James Smith
Erie, Pennsylvania

Excellent publication

I am a 29-year-old convict serving a term in the Illinois Department of Corrections. I recently read several issues of your publication. I found them excellent. Would it be possible for me to receive a free trial subscription of that journal? I'll pay and contribute when I get the funds.

A prisoner
Pontiac, Illinois

From occupied territory

I am sorry that I can't send money to your interesting newspaper for two reasons: 1) it's a very complicated deal to go to an Israeli bank and ask them to send a check for \$3, and 2) I haven't much money.

I hope I can read your newspaper all the time and write about it in my Palestinian magazine in the occupied territory.

I will be very happy to help your

staff in any journalist mission here in Israel.

Khaled Khalefeh
Ibillin Village, Israel

Seattle anti-apartheid

December 8 marked the one-year anniversary of weekly anti-apartheid pickets at the South African consulate in Seattle. About 200 attended the protest, demanding, "Close the consulate down!" Rev. Jesse Jackson addressed the action.

The Seattle Coalition Against Apartheid announced that, in one year, 400 people had been arrested at Consul Joseph Swing's home, and \$15,000 had been raised for the coalition.

Coalition cochair Maryamu El-tayeb played a role in the recent November 16 protest that demanded "U.S. out of Central America and South Africa."

That demonstration featured two representatives of the African National Congress. Leo Robinson from the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in San Francisco also participated.

Earlier this fall, the Seattle Pension Board held a public hearing on its investments in businesses that have relations with South Africa. A picket was held prior to the hearing by anti-apartheid activists who participated in the hearing urging divestment.

Laura Flicker
Seattle, Washington

Needs free sub

I was reading the *Militant* newspaper for awhile, and I really did enjoy its articulate news articles. Unfortunately, I am a prisoner at San Quentin, and I can't afford to buy it anymore. I would appreciate it very much if you could send me a free subscription.

A prisoner
Tamal, California

Dictatorship must go

In a not-so-surprising but no less despicable verdict, the San-

diganbayan (People's Court) on Dec. 2, 1985, found Gen. Fabian Ver and his 25 coaccused not guilty! The court's decision to acquit everyone in the murder of Aquino and uphold the Galman-lone-gunman theory is the biggest cover-up in the history of the Philippines.

Despite the U.S. posture of pressuring for a fair trial, it cannot wash its hand of this cover-up.

Aquino must be turning in his grave now. After all, he had great faith in the United States and now it turns out the United States will do him in, too.

This verdict is tantamount to a second assassination of Aquino. This proves that justice for Aquino and all victims of the repressive dictatorship cannot be achieved short of the overthrow of the Marcos regime. This solidifies the decision already made by the Filipino people — the Marcos dictatorship must be ended and a genuine democracy established.

[We demand:]

- Genuine trial of the Aquino murder and all victims of the Marcos regime.
 - Release all political prisoners.
 - Abolish all repressive and secret decrees and edicts.
- Philippine Solidarity Network
Coalition Against Marcos
Dictatorship
Woodside, New York

Philippine election

The Aquino assassination verdict and the declaration by his widow to run for president against the Philippine dictator in the coming snap election are two recent major developments in the boiling pot of Philippine politics.

The acquittal of all the conspirators in the assassination only strengthens our position that all instrumentalities of the dictatorial apparatus are beyond salvation, much less capable of reform.

Short of a U.S.-sponsored coup d'état, which is equally reprehensible, no amount of cajoling and coercion would make Marcos peacefully yield and relinquish his tight dictatorial grip.

With the recent declaration by Cory Aquino to challenge Marcos



Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos

in the snap election, new hopes are being raised among the opposition elements that indeed the light at the end of the tunnel is near.

Her candidacy has lifted the Filipinos from the depths of despair and imbued them with a sense of expectant victory that may altogether prove to be illusory.

With Mrs. Aquino's candidacy, the snap election has degenerated into a meaningless referendum on Mr. Marcos' widely presumed guilt regarding the assassination. Other social and economic issues of greater import are being ignored.

With this snap election and whatever its outcome, we can only reasonably expect a transfer of power from one elitist group to another within the privileged class. Such distortion and prostitution of pseudo-democratic electoral processes are hardly surprising in countries where oppression, class exploitation, tyranny, and predatory capitalism remain rampant and unchecked.

Arturo Taca
Venice, Illinois

Social grievances

I have been locked up under segregated conditions, like many

of our Mexican-American *compañeros* who chose to oppose this brutal and racist system.

We have come to realize that we are not the only ones experiencing this problem, that people here in the United States and working people in general are plagued with the same social grievances.

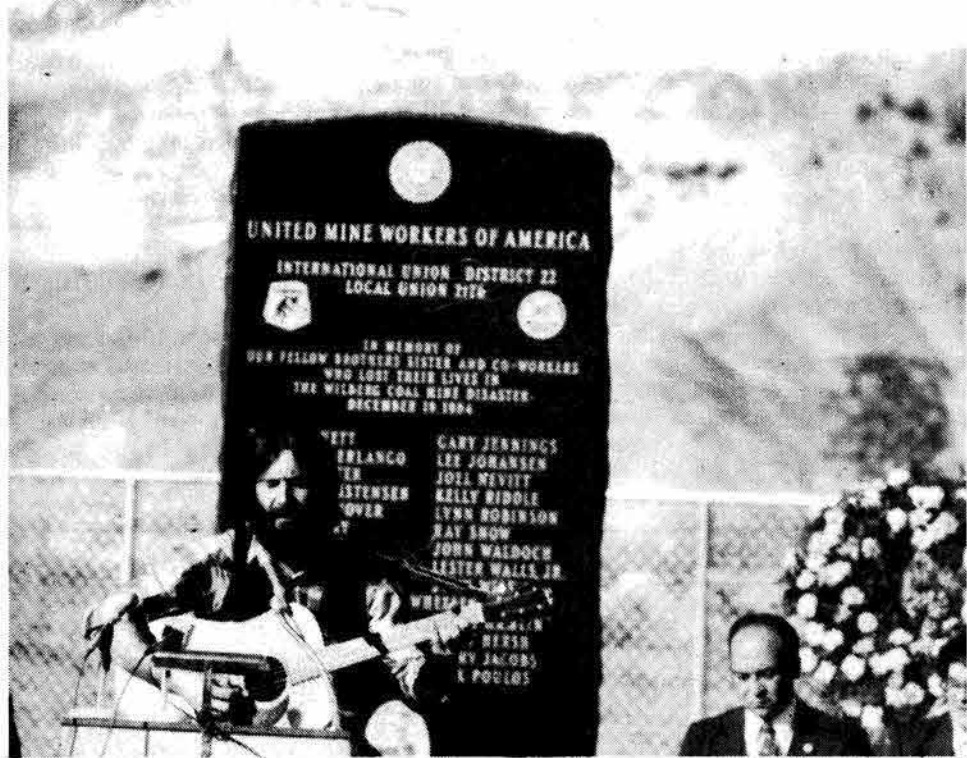
Our aim is to learn more about our common hardships and solutions to this problem. We are having hard times. We would like to apply for your publication, the *Militant*.

A prisoner
Rosharon, Texas

The *Militant* special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.

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

Company contract violations provoke Utah coal miners strike



Member of miners' union Local 2176 singing at Dec. 19, 1985, tribute to Wilberg mine fire victims. Wilberg mine is one of three involved in wildcat strike.

BY DAVE HURST

HUNTINGTON, Utah — More than 800 union miners went out on a wildcat strike January 2 against the Emery Mining Corporation. Emery operates three coal mines owned by the Utah Power & Light Co.

The strike is viewed by members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as a defense of the contract against company violations. At issue is Emery's attempt to take floating vacation days away from union members.

When the afternoon-shift miners showed up at Emery's Deer Creek mine near Huntington after the first of the year, we were greeted by a posted notice explaining the company's new proposed policy.

The notice said that miners would lose the workday credits that floating vacation days off are based on if they lost time from work because of injury, illness, mine closings, or disasters. This notice was a violation of the contract since none of these reasons for lost time are supposed to count against miners' work records.

Members of UMWA Local 1769 reacted to this contract violation by walking off the job at the Deer Creek mine on the January 2 afternoon shift.

We were joined by Local 1859 members at the start of the afternoon shift January 6 at the Deseret Beehive-Little Dove mine in nearby Orangeville. The strike against

Emery was made 100 percent solid when day-shift members of Local 2176 walked out the morning of January 7 at the Wilberg Cottonwood mine outside Orangeville.

The area news media has increased coverage of the strike since the last two locals joined in, especially because of the memory of the company's responsibility for a fire in the Wilberg mine on Dec. 19, 1984, that killed 19 miners and 8 company supervisory personnel.

All three UMWA locals called special membership meetings during the morning of January 7. Later, the memberships of locals 1859 and 2176 went to the Local 1769 meeting.

Emery's attack against the union is based on an arbitration ruling against the UMWA at a U.S. Fuel Co. mine in Hiawatha, Utah. The ruling stated that miners laid off due to a mine shutdown caused by a mudslide could be charged with lost workdays and therefore not be entitled to credits for floating vacation time off. The mudslide occurred on the main rail line between Price and Provo, Utah, and prevented coal from being shipped out of the Hiawatha mine.

Emery has threatened federal court injunctions and class-action lawsuits against the striking union locals. It has also begun diverting coal from one Utah Power & Light plant to another in an effort to break

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Oklahoma nuke disaster: gov't, company to blame

BY HARRY RING

A Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) report confirms that the Kerr-McGee Co. and the government share criminal responsibility for the recent disaster at the company's uranium processing plant at Gore, Oklahoma.

Last September, the NRC filed a report listing "repeated" safety violations at the plant going back as far as 1978. Fear was expressed in the report of precisely the kind of accident that occurred.

The NRC inspection was in response to a company application for renewal of its license to operate the plant.

The license was renewed.

The NRC simply asked the company to make monthly safety inspections and to file a quarterly report on how it was doing.

Following the accident, neither the company nor the government was ready to say such inspections had been made.

The result of this criminal disregard for human safety came on Saturday morning, January 4.

An overloaded tank cracked open, releasing 29,500 pounds of deadly chemicals. One worker died a horrible death. At least 30 people were injured. More than a hundred other workers and nearby residents suffered harm yet to be fully measured. A poisonous, radioactive smog fell on the surrounding area.

The tank split open when a supervisor ordered use of a procedure barred by company and federal regulations to try to expel excess gas from the tank.

Kerr-McGee gained world notoriety when Karen Silkwood, a worker at its Crescent, Oklahoma, plant, became contaminated with plutonium. Soon after, she was killed when her car crashed off the road while she was bringing documents to a reporter proving safety violations at the plant. The documents were gone from the smashed car.

The Gore plant, operated by a Kerr-McGee subsidiary, partially refines uranium. It is then shipped to government plants where it is used in making nuclear

weapons and fuel for nuclear power plants.

Overloaded tank

The car-sized tank that ruptured was overloaded with uranium hexafluoride. A twentieth of an ounce is enough to kill someone.

Once released, the hexafluoride broke down into two gases. One, a caustic gas, spread across 18 miles of the surrounding area. The second, described as "mildly" radioactive, fell on the area surrounding the plant.

James Harrison, 25, the worker who died, was blinded and trapped in fumes three to five minutes. He died four hours later, his face and eyes burned, his lungs

swollen and bleeding.

At least four other workers suffered lung tissue inflammation.

None of the workers were wearing protective clothing.

A company official asserted that all significant radiation was "probably" confined to company property. But he conceded that some "low level" radiation had been found along the highway outside.

Not to worry

An NRC spokesperson hastened to add that the radiation contamination "was not of any consequence to health or safety."

Meanwhile, company workers were removing topsoil in spots alongside the road

and scrubbing parts of the road itself.

State agriculture officials were reported checking animals and vegetation in the area.

And the NRC announced that a helicopter with highly sensitive instruments would try to determine if other areas had been contaminated by radioactivity.

All this for "mildly" radioactive gas?

Understandably, area residents were not put at ease by company and government assurances.

"Hell, yes, I'm worried," James Thomas told a reporter. His three children were among those tested at a local hospital for exposure to the escaped gas.

Another resident, Charles Davis, added,

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Unions back Boston abortion rights rally

BY HELEN LOWENTHAL

BOSTON — Joyce Miller, national president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and Gov. Michael Dukakis will be among the speakers at a January 22 rally to protest attacks on abortion rights.

The theme of the action is: Your choice or no choice: keep abortion safe, legal, and funded. January 22 marks the 13th anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

The rally is sponsored by the Coalition for Choice, a broad-based coalition of women's rights organizations, unions, religious groups, and civil liberties activists. It was formed to defeat a statewide referendum against abortion funding and abortion rights.

Leading the coalition are the National Organization for Women (NOW), Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, the League of Women Voters, Massachusetts Choice, Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, and the Reproductive Rights National Network.

Dr. Kenneth Edelin, director of obstetrics and gynecology at Boston City Hospi-

tal, will also speak at the protest. Edelin is a Black doctor who was indicted in 1974 for performing a legal abortion. He was charged with killing a fetus. His prosecution came during the fight for desegregation of the Boston schools, which is also under attack now. Many of the forces in Boston leading the fight against busing were also leaders in the fight against abortion rights, including Raymond Flynn, who is now the mayor of Boston.

Other speakers at the rally include Gayle Brooks of Connecticut NOW, who was involved in the fight to defeat an antiabortion referendum in Bristol, Connecticut; Mary Hunt from the National Board of Directors of Catholics for a Free Choice; and Juanita Wade of the Boston School Committee.

Among the many endorsers of the January 22 protest are: United Electrical Workers District 2; Harvard/Radcliffe Students for Choice; United Steelworkers Local 8751; Central America Solidarity Association; Black Women for Policy Action; Ed Clark, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union district director; United Auto Workers District 65; National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.; New

Bedford Women's Center; Service Employees International Union Local 509 Women's Committee; Wellesley College Feminist Coop; Boston Socialist Workers Party; Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance; Boston and Cambridge YWCAs; and Boston Young Socialist Alliance.

The meeting is seen as the first in a series of events to fight back against the attacks on abortion rights being waged by the federal and state government and the Catholic church hierarchy of Massachusetts, led by Cardinal Bernard Law.

It will also give a boost to local efforts to build the national abortion rights action in Washington, D.C., March 9, called by NOW. Boston NOW is projecting sending 2,000 people to the protest.

At a recent NOW meeting, Boston NOW President Jennifer Jackman explained how the national demonstration will inspire people to come back and wage a fight against the referendum that would end Medicaid-funded abortions in Massachusetts. This is one of the few states that still provides such abortions since Congress passed the Hyde Amendment in 1976, cutting off federal funding.