

Philippine gov't stages Manila roundup

BY RUSSELL JOHNSON

MANILA, Philippines — In a coordinated sweep February 2-3, military units raided several Manila-area houses, arresting 20 people alleged to be leaders of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the allied National Democratic Front (NDF) and New People's Army (NPA). The CPP has been leading a

This is the first of several reports from the Philippines by Militant correspondents Peter Bradley, Russell Johnson, and Deb Shnookal.

20-year guerrilla campaign against the Philippine landlord-capitalist regime. This insurgency has won significant support among the landless peasantry in many parts of the country.

Those arrested included three people who had publicly represented the NDF in the Visayas Region in negotiations during the 60-day cease-fire between the government and the guerrilla movement that began in December 1986.

Also on February 3 soldiers burst into a Manila hospital and arrested six people, including a doctor and a patient undergoing surgery, whom the military alleged were involved with the urban units of the NPA known as the "Sparrows." In all, 29 alleged CPP and NDF members were arrested in Manila in the space of three days.

Some of those arrested had to be released for lack of evidence. Others were allowed bail by the courts. This provided a pretext for the military high command to demand further limits on the democratic rights of workers and peasants, which they had been able to successfully narrow during 1987.

Brig. Gen. Honesto Isleta, an armed forces deputy chief of staff, demanded the virtual reinstatement of martial law. He favors a declaration by President Corazon Aquino of a state of emergency that would suspend democratic guarantees in the constitution, which he said were only meant for "peacetime conditions."

The army claimed that CPP documents captured in the raids showed that the NPA was about to launch a massive campaign of assassination of government and military officials here in the capital. They alleged that more than 70 military and government officials were shot down by NPA Sparrows in the Manila metropolitan area alone during 1987.

Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos, former army chief of staff, called for the government to reintroduce the death penalty for "insurgents" and for the "limited suspension of the writ of habeas corpus."

Congress and the press have generally opposed the military's call for emergency rule. Public opposition has been fueled by evidence that a number of those arrested in Manila in early February have been subjected to torture and beatings while in military custody.

Meanwhile, the May 1 Movement union federation, the Philippine Peasant Movement, and other popular organizations have called a march to the presidential palace February 24 to protest the government crackdown. February 24 is the second anniversary of the overthrow of dictator Ferdinand Marcos' martial law regime.

Palestinian youth defy Israeli gov't brutality

BY HARRY RING

The admission that Israeli soldiers had buried four Palestinian youths alive offered a grim reminder that the continued subjugation of the Palestinian people can be accomplished only by the most barbaric means.

Not surprisingly, the four youths had been savagely abused before being buried in dirt and sand up to their necks. Witnesses said the youths had been ordered to lie face down and that soldiers walked on their bodies while clubbing them. The four were later rescued by villagers.

Coming on top of the Israeli government's declared break-their-bones policy, the burial torture created such a stench internationally — and within Israel itself — that several of the soldiers were arrested and an investigation promised. An Israeli civilian involved in the incident was not arrested.

On February 15 it was reported that at least 58 Palestinians have been killed so far in the latest revolt — five of them beaten to death. And many more have suffered serious injuries.

The figures confirm that the burial torture of the four youths was part of a policy of murderous repression, not a "deviation" from it, as Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin now claims.

At the same time, the scope of the repression offers testimony to the depth of the Palestinian rebellion, a rebellion that

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Palestinian youth seized by Israeli soldiers. As killings and beatings fail to stem their protest, Palestinians are gaining increased support in other Middle Eastern countries and around the world.

Senate hearings press attack on Panama

BY SAM MANUEL

A Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee has added its efforts to the most recent stage of a year-and-a-half campaign by the U.S. administration to destabilize and bring down the Panamanian government, violating Panama's sovereignty. The Committee held hearings February 8-11 on charges that Panamanian military, business, and government officials are at the center of international drug trafficking.

The hearings were chaired by Democratic Sen. John Kerry. What's actually been exposed in the course of the testimony, however, is the degree to which the CIA and its allies are engaged in drug dealing.

Washington's main fire has been aimed at Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. Two U.S. grand juries handed down indictments against Noriega and 15 others on February 5. They are charged with conspiring to smuggle massive amounts of illegal drugs into the United States and laundering profits from drug sales through Panamanian banks. One of the indictments against Noriega carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. U.S. officials have openly explained, however, that the real purpose of the charges is to get rid of Noriega.

The indictments are based on testimonies of a convicted drug dealer and a former Panamanian consul general, José Blandón.

The indictments also charge that Cuban President Fidel Castro may be linked to the drug trade. The "proof" of this charge submitted before the Senate hearings by Blandón were photographs of Castro, Noriega, and several other individuals in a courtyard in Havana.

Ramon Milian Rodriguez, a convicted drug trafficker and money launderer, and Floyd Carlton Cacerez, a convicted drug traffic pilot, also testified at the hearings.

Their testimony augmented the existing grab bag of charges against Noriega, which

include drug trafficking, running guns to the Sandinistas before the 1979 overthrow of the dictator Anastasio Somoza, meeting with Lt. Col. Oliver North to discuss aiding anti-Sandinista contras, and smuggling guns to guerrillas fighting the Salvadoran government.

Blandón has added to this testimony that Honduran military officers may also be involved in drug trafficking. The February 12 *New York Times* reported that the U.S. embassy in Honduras has opposed efforts by U.S. drug enforcement officials to thoroughly investigate the army.

Testimony surrounding the indictments and hearings have also uncovered further revelations about the administration's role in the contra war against Nicaragua, including the fact that the Central Intelligence Agency often worked with drug traf-

fickers in order to supply arms for the contras.

Milian Rodriguez testified that he had channeled funds gained from illicit narcotics to the U.S.-backed contras after he received a request for help from a "liaison" with U.S. intelligence agencies. He said that a Cuban-American friend involved in CIA-directed operations against the Cuban government introduced him to the trade.

Milian Rodriguez' credibility was immediately challenged by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Blandón testified that in 1986 Oliver North tried to persuade Noriega to divert a shipload of weapons to El Salvador. The objective of the North plan was to enable the Salvadoran and U.S. governments to

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Poisonous leaks spur call to shut struck Maine paper plant

BY JON HILLSON

JAY, Maine — Nearly 300 residents of Jay, along with environmental activists from around Maine, temporarily blocked scab traffic to International Paper Co.'s Androscoggin mill here on February 15 in the wake of the second chlorine leak in the plant in nine days.

About 80 of the angry demonstrators tried unsuccessfully to enter the mill, pressing against the locked main gate and Jay police officers, as hundreds chanted, "No more poison, shut it down!" The protesters, most of whom were women, were demanding a meeting with mill management to protest this latest chemical accident.

On February 14 the leak hospitalized seven employees of BE & K, the scab-herding construction firm contracted by In-

ternational Paper (IP). They were rushed by ambulance past picketing members of United Paperworkers International Union Local 14, which has been on strike since last June along with Firemen and Oilers Local 246. The leak occurred when a scab cut into a pipe in which chlorine had backed up.

Clifford Kelley, a 25-year-old scab, was overcome by fumes and narrowly escaped death. "He stopped breathing twice," said Dale Buckingham, assistant chief of Community Emergency Services of neighboring Livermore Falls.

Local 14 President Bill Meserve told the *Militant* that this chlorine leak confirms the local's demand that the plant, which is operating with a scab force of 1,000, be

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'Militant' sales team discusses politics with Appalachia miners

BY NORTON SANDLER

"On our first stop, we sold 11 copies of the *Militant* in a working-class housing project in Williamson, West Virginia."

In a telephone interview, Cecelia Moriarity was describing the visit by a *Militant* sales and reporting team to coal-mining areas in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Virginia. Joining Moriarity on the team are Eric Simpson, Kate Button, and Joe Walters.

They are encouraging miners and others who bought *Militant* subscriptions last fall to resubscribe. They are also selling the paper at mine portals, in working-class communities, and on campuses.

Moriarity reported that the team spent February 12-14 in the area along the West Virginia-Kentucky border near Williamson.

Miners and others they talked to have been affected by the 1984-85 United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) strike against A.T. Massey Coal Co.

Massey prevented some miners from getting their jobs back at the end of the strike. Union members who returned to the Massey mines have been working without a contract for more than two years.

Five UMWA members are fighting a company-government frame-up on charges stemming from the death of a scab coal hauler during the strike. Massey and federal and state officials are trying to use this case to strike further blows against the union.

There has been a campaign against the five miners in the big-business press. "People here," Moriarity said, "are not surprised that A.T. Massey would try to do something like this, but a lot of people didn't know the facts about the case."

The team has been showing around an editorial from a recent issue of the *Militant* that describes what can be done to defend the miners. "Some we talked to were glad to see a paper that said the miners are innocent and victims of a frame-up," said Moriarity.

The team went door to door in a number of towns and hollows where miners and their families live. Five subscriptions and seven singles were sold in Matewan, West Virginia. Four more copies were sold in Red Jacket, a nearby Black community.

They spent part of Sunday selling in Huddy and Stone, Kentucky. "We had some trouble finding concentrations of miners," Moriarity said, "so we'd ask for suggestions on where to sell."

They were steered to a Williamson shopping center. "That's where we hit pay dirt," she said. "We met working UMWA members, laid-off UMWA members,

nonunion miners, miners' wives, and retirees."

Moriarity said they would point out the *Militant's* coverage of the recent coal contract. "We emphasized that this paper takes the side of workers and farmers and that during the A.T. Massey strike, it took the side of the miners."

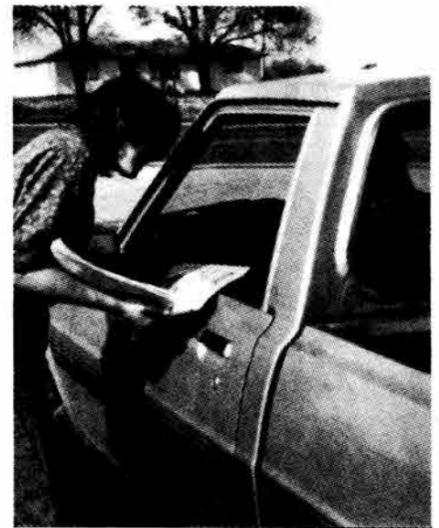
"We also said this paper is against the contras, it's opposed to giving them any money, and it's for the U.S. government getting out of Nicaragua," Moriarity emphasized.

"Then people would respond. They didn't say much, but they were receptive." Nine copies of the *Militant* and five sub-

scriptions were sold in about an hour.

The team then traveled to Norton, Virginia. That's where some mines owned by the Pittston Coal Group are located. Two thousand UMWA members at Pittston mines are working without a contract.

Distributors of the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* from Salt Lake City and Price, Utah, have also been organizing trips to mining areas in the West. They recently sent teams to Sheridan, Wyoming, and to Oak Creek and Trinidad in Colorado. These efforts resulted in three renewals, three new subscriptions, and a number of individual copies being sold.



Militant/James Khyne
Participant in 1987 *Militant* sales team talks with worker near entrance to Illinois coal mine.

U.S. Senate hearings target Panama

Continued from front page

publicly implicate the Sandinistas in a fictitious scheme to arm the guerrilla movement in El Salvador.

Blandón also testified that the CIA station chief in Costa Rica, Joe Fernandez, attempted to frame the guerrilla movement in El Salvador for the September 1985 murder of Hugo Spadafora, a political opponent of Noriega.

Blandón charged that Fernandez provided a "witness" who appeared on Panamanian television and declared that Spadafora had been killed by Salvadoran guerrillas. The witness, described by Blandón as an occasional employee of the CIA, was never questioned by Panamanian officials and was whisked out of the country.

Noriega has reported that Reagan's former national security advisor John Poindexter, on a visit in December 1986, attempted to pressure Panama to withdraw from participation in the Contadora peace group and to tailor its foreign policy to reflect Washington's interests in the region. According to Noriega, Poindexter also sought that country's aid in bringing down the Sandinista government. When he was turned down Poindexter warned of the "consequences."

Other administration officials have placed more emphasis on trying to divide Panamanian military leaders and fomenting opposition within the country in hopes of a coup against Noriega.

The February 8 *Wall Street Journal* reported that the U.S. government and Panamanian opposition leaders are suggesting to Panamanian military officers that it is time to replace Noriega "to protect their own futures."

The *New York Times* lamented February 12, "The problem is that no one seems to have a good plan for ousting Panama's strongman. The best track for now may be to keep up the pressure and wait for Panamanians to act." But the hearings

show that Washington intends to continue intervening in Panama's internal affairs.

The campaign against Noriega has nothing to do with fighting drug trafficking.

Panama's government has been targeted for two reasons. First, it has refused to give full backing and cooperation to Washington's contra war against Nicaragua, a war the U.S. administration continues every effort to keep alive.

Secondly, Panamanian leaders have continued to insist that Washington fulfill agreements to turn over control of the Panama Canal to Panamanian sovereignty on Dec. 31, 1999. Washington also pledged

to evacuate its troops stationed in bases in Panama on that date.

The agreements were signed in 1977 by U.S. President James Carter with the Panamanian regime of Gen. Omar Torrijos.

The U.S. military's Southern Command and 10,000 troops are headquartered in Panama. It is the Pentagon's nerve center for directing the contra war against Nicaragua and the activities of U.S. military forces throughout Central America. Noriega and others in the Panamanian government have called for removal of the Southern Command.

Framed-up miners sentenced

BY JIM LITTLE

LEXINGTON, Ky. — "When labor disputes result in violence, then none of us are safe and we cannot live in a free society."

These pompous words were spoken by federal Judge Henry Wilhoit as he sentenced four Kentucky coal miners to long prison terms on February 4.

Ignoring the facts that had emerged in the three-week frame-up trial late last year, Wilhoit handed out brutal sentences to the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members.

Arnold Heightland was slapped with 45 years in jail; Donnie Thornsby with 40; and James Darryl Smith and David Thornsby each received 35.

The four men stood proud in the courtroom during the sentencing. Donnie Thornsby, president of UMWA Local 2496 said, "I love my God and love my family and I am not guilty." The other miners also proclaimed their innocence.

The frame-up was constructed after the shooting death of scab coal hauler Hayes West during the UMWA's 1984-85 strike

at Samoyed Energy and A.T. Massey Coal Co. mines.

Union member Paul Smith was arrested on the same charges but acquitted in a separate trial in federal court last month. After the acquittal, he was immediately rearrested by the Kentucky cops and now faces state murder charges.

That trial will be held in Pikeville, Kentucky, in June. Paul Smith is out of jail now, after posting \$100,000 bail.

Much of the prosecution's case in both trials revolved around the testimony of Ervin Smith. He too had been arrested in the case but accepted a plea bargain. Wilhoit rewarded him with only a six-month jail sentence for testifying against the others.

Ervin Smith had trouble keeping his story straight during the two trials. In the second trial he admitted that federal officials had threatened him with the death penalty if he refused to cooperate on the frame-up. In the first trial he had testified that there were no such threats made.

Wilhoit ignored this. Instead he declared that Ervin Smith was "the only real man" among the miners.

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striking member of United Paperworkers International Local 14 in Jay, Maine

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The *Militant*

Closing news date: February 17, 1988

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Published weekly except one week in August and the last week of December by the *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: Editorial Office, (212) 243-6392; Telex, 497-4278; Business Office, (212) 929-3486.

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The *Militant* Business Office, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Subscriptions: U.S., Canada, Latin America: for one-year subscription send \$30, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$65. Britain, Ireland, Continental Europe, Africa: send £25 check or international money order made out to Pathfinder Press and send to Pathfinder, 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL, England. Australia, Asia, Pacific: send Australian \$60 to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040, Australia.

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

Canada nurses' strike ends with victory

BY GARY WATSON

EDMONTON, Canada — A 19-day strike by hospital nurses in the western Canada province of Alberta ended in victory February 12. The walkout pitted the 11,400-member United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) against the Alberta Hospital Association (AHA) and the Conservative Party-led provincial government.

The strike was waged in defiance of anti-union legislation adopted in 1983. Under the law nurses faced civil and criminal contempt-of-court charges, fines, jail terms, and decertification of their union if they exercised their right to strike.

Fifty-four union members were found guilty and fined for striking, 139 nurses were fired by local hospital boards, and the UNA was slapped with and paid a \$250,000 fine, the largest such penalty in Alberta labor history.

"The AHA clearly wants to destroy the union," UNA Vice-president Dave Harrigan said in a February 11 news conference,

"and the government is interested in seeing it destroyed, too."

Elizabeth Morahan, a striking nurse, summed up the mood when she commented about doing picket duty in subzero temperatures: "When people are prepared to picket in these conditions, they're either very serious or crazy. The government and the hospitals have thrown the book at us. They're trying to intimidate us. They're using the courts to scare us. But they're digging their own graves because it's just unifying us."

The nurses were fighting for the right to strike, better wages and working conditions, and against the deteriorating quality of health care in the province.

In the five years since the adoption of the anti-strike legislation, nurses' wages increased only 7 percent. At the opening of the recent negotiations, the AHA demanded a 3 percent wage cut.

Alberta is the center of the Canadian oil industry. Since the worldwide drop of oil prices, the Conservative Party government has given more than \$1 billion in loans and direct grants to private industry.

But funding for hospitals was increased only 1.5 percent this year, after a 3 percent cut last year. Hospitals Minister Marvin Moore has advocated "scaling down the number of employees" and "closing more beds" to meet the financial crunch.

Opposition to cutbacks and anger at the government's antilabor policies helped galvanize public support for the nurses.

"We received tremendous labor support," Harrigan said. "We received letters



United Nurses of Alberta rally during strike, which defied antiunion legislation passed by Conservative provincial government.

Puerto Rican frame-up victim, detained 2½ yrs, wins bail

BY SUSAN APSTEIN

After spending almost two and a half years in jail — the longest pretrial detention in U.S. history — Puerto Rican independence activist Juan Segarra Palmer won his fight to be released on bail.

Blaming defense attorneys for the "delay" in releasing Segarra Palmer, Judge T. Emmet Clarie set bail February 11 at the outrageously high sum of \$1 million. The judge observed that the defendant's constitutional rights would be violated if the government continued to hold him without bail.

But it was Judge Clarie who imprisoned Segarra Palmer for more than two years without even setting a trial date. This was done under the "preventive detention" provision of the 1984 Bail Reform Act, which allows judges to lock up and deny bail to anyone they label "dangerous to the community."

Segarra Palmer is one of the Hartford 15, who were arrested in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the United States in 1985 and 1986. The 15 are accused of conspiracy in the 1983 robbery of a Wells Fargo depot in Hartford, Connecticut, and with membership in the Macheteros, an organization that supports independence for Puerto Rico.

Two hundred FBI agents swooped down on the island of Puerto Rico in August 1985, raiding homes and offices and terrorizing the defendants and their families. The cops forcibly removed them from Puerto Rico to stand trial in the United States.

Seven of the defendants were held in detention for almost a year and a half. Clarie continued to jail Segarra Palmer and Filiberto Ojeda Ríos on the basis of FBI claims that the two were "dangerous terrorists."

Segarra Palmer had begun a hunger strike at the federal detention center in Hartford the week before bail was set. He did this to draw public attention to the unconstitutionality of the Bail Reform Act and flagrant legal violations carried out by FBI agents who spied on the defendants in Puerto Rico.

He explained that the purpose of the fast was also to "reflect on how colonialism victimizes the Puerto Rican people and corrupts the values cherished by the American people."

Segarra Palmer will be able to post bail and could be released within a week.

Ojeda Ríos appeared before Judge Clarie January 26 to demand an end to his detention. Clarie has not yet ruled on the request.

Messages and telegrams demanding that Ojeda Ríos be released can be sent to Hon. T. Emmet Clarie, U.S. District Court, 450 Main St., Hartford, Conn. 06103.

Ariz. socialist fights for ballot spot

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

PHOENIX — An effort has been launched to win a ballot spot for Bernie Senter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Arizona, in the May 17 election. The election was scheduled as a result of a petition drive to recall Gov. Evan Mecham, who is widely hated by working people here for his overtly racist views.

Supporters of the socialist campaign plan to collect 10,000 signatures, well over the 3,336 signatures required, which must be filed by March 18.

Senter is a 37-year-old meat-packer and member of Local 99R of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. Many of his coworkers at Sunland Beef Co. have responded warmly to the announcement of the socialist campaign. One already volunteered to help petition to put his name on the ballot.

"People at work are disgusted by Mecham's bigotry," Senter reported. "They were pretty glad when I told them my campaign is opposed to everything Mecham stands for."

He added that the socialist campaign is for restoring the Martin Luther King Day state holiday rescinded by Mecham.

"We're also campaigning to put an end to

from all over the world."

Early in the strike, the Alberta Federation of Labour organized large solidarity rallies in Calgary and Edmonton. It launched two broadly based strike support committees in the northern and southern regions of the province.

Unionists from all over the province joined nurses on picket lines.

The Canadian Labour Congress, the countrywide labor federation, pledged the full support of its 2.3 million members.

In the face of the nurses' determination and the solidarity they won from the labor movement, the AHA and the government were forced to negotiate a settlement with the union.

The pact calls for wage increases of between 8 and 10.9 percent over a 27-month period, improvements in health-care benefits, the rehiring of all nurses fired for striking, and the dropping of civil contempt proceedings against individual nurses. Some nurses expressed disappointment at not winning improvements in working conditions.

Nurses voted by an 82 percent majority to return to work. The nurses voiced pride in what they accomplished in the strike. Heather Smith, vice-chair of the UNA negotiating committee, said, "We have a sense of confidence and strength. The issues are not dead. This is just one battle in a very long war."

the U.S.-run war on Nicaragua. And we're presenting a program for workers and farmers to resist the attacks on our rights and living standards."

Teams of petitioners will be pounding the streets of Phoenix every day. In addition, campaign supporters will travel throughout the state talking to copper miners in southern Arizona, coal miners in the Navajo Nation to the north, students at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and farm workers outside Phoenix. "We'll even go to the city of Mesa, which is supposedly a Mecham stronghold, because we're sure to get a good response there too."

Members of the Young Socialist Al-

liance in Phoenix and Tucson are excited about the opportunities the campaign will provide to introduce other young fighters to the YSA.

Mecham was impeached by the Arizona House of Representatives on February 5 and will be tried by the state Senate starting February 22 on charges of concealing a \$350,000 campaign loan and misusing \$80,000 in state funds by channeling them to his car dealership.

Volunteers are needed now for petitioning and publicizing the socialist campaign. Contact the campaign office at 1809 W. Indian School Rd., Phoenix, Ariz. 85015. Telephone (602) 279-5850.



Militant/Holbrook Mahn
Bernie Senter, Socialist Workers Party candidate.

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Nicaraguan gov't reports on land distribution

BY ROBERTO KOPEC

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Ministry of Agrarian Reform has reported that 9,300 landless peasant families received land in 1987. This figure represents about two-thirds of the goal that had been projected at the beginning of the year. The pace of land distribution was the slowest for any year since 1982.

At the start of 1987, the government had estimated there were still 60,000 landless peasant families. If these figures are accurate, that would leave just over 50,000 landless peasant families today. No projections for land distribution in 1988 have yet been announced.

Since the 1979 overthrow of the dictatorship that ruled Nicaragua in the interest of the capitalists and landlords, a total of 72,000 landless peasant families have received land.

An additional 40,000 peasant families have received titles to the land they had been farming as squatters. At an estimated average of six individuals per family, this means that well over 600,000 people have benefited directly from the land reform program of the workers' and peasants' government. The total population of Nicaragua is judged to be between 3 and 4 million.

The government distributes land to peasants to work as individual farmers or as members of collective farms or cooperatives.

Collective farm members own and work the land together. Cooperative farmers own their land individually, but join together to get credit, technical help, assistance in marketing their products and buying supplies, and other benefits.

From the start of organized land distributions in 1981 to the end of 1986, about 20 percent of the families who benefited from the land distribution established individual farms. The remainder became part of cooperatives or collective farms. (The 1987 breakdown is not yet available.)

Twenty-two percent of the land distributed in 1987 came from privately owned properties. The rest came from state-owned lands.

Land expropriations

At the time of the 1979 Sandinista revolution, the new government expropriated all the property owned by the dictator Anastasio Somoza and his close associates. This gave the government 20 percent of the total farm and ranch land in the country.

Some of this land was used to set up state farms. Much of the rest has now been given to landless peasants. The state now holds only 12 percent of agricultural land.

The agrarian reform law adopted by the revolutionary government allows the expropriation of private landholdings under

the Somozaist properties, these expropriations have greatly reduced the share of agricultural land held by large landowners — defined in Nicaragua as those with more than 865 acres. Before the revolution, they held 36 percent of the land. Today they have 9 percent.

Government priorities

There is no legal limit on the size of private landholdings. The government encourages capitalist farmers and ranchers to keep their lands and maintain production. Government policy is to try to avoid expropriating their properties, even to meet the needs of landless peasants, when alternatives are available.

Vice-minister for Agrarian Reform Alonso Porras recently explained the priorities in finding land to distribute.

The government first encourages peasants to move onto land in areas that had been abandoned because of contra attacks, but are now available for resettlement as a result of Nicaragua's military victories against the contras.

The second priority, Porras said, is to give peasants an option of joining existing



Militant Peasants of Masaya Province demand, "We want land so we can work it." Some 72,000 landless peasant families have received land since 1979 revolution; 50,000 remain landless.

cooperatives or collective farms that have more land than they are using productively.

The third priority is to distribute state land that is not being used.

Only as a last resort, he stressed, will the government take over private landholdings to give to landless peasants.

With the changes brought by the revolu-

tion, state farms now hold 12 percent of the agricultural land, collective farms 12 percent, and cooperatives 11 percent. These are forms of land ownership and use that did not exist at all before the revolution.

The remaining 65 percent is owned by individuals, who range from poor peasants to capitalist farmers and ranchers.

Children are target of contra attacks on peasant settlements in south

BY DAVE WELTERS

LAS PALOMAS, Nicaragua — "It was atrocious. They attacked as if it was a military installation — with mortars, automatic weapons, and rocket launchers."

Lt. Juan Correa stood next to the burned remains of the children's center here in this settlement located in south-central Nicaragua. He was describing the recent contra attacks here and in the nearby settlement of Never Oporta to members of the New York-Nicaragua Construction Brigade.

The 12 brigade members, mostly from the New York City area, spent three weeks building homes for families who work on the state cattle ranch in Morillo, about 40 miles south of here on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, near the Costa Rican border.

"Here there were only 33 peasants armed," Correa said. "All we had were AKs," he said, referring to their automatic rifles.

Roughly 200 contras attacked Las Palomas with heavy weapons early in the morning last November 21, while a similar force attacked Never Oporta.

Defenders held off the contras for an

hour and a half until militia members from San Miguelito arrived and drove off the attackers. Fourteen residents were killed by the contras, and 29 wounded. Half the casualties were children.

Twelve-year-old Juana Guitan and two of her brothers were kidnapped by the contras the day before the attack. They had been bringing in bananas from a nearby field. "We were surprised by them," she said, referring to the contras. "They took our animals and bananas."

The three were held in an isolated area and escaped that night when the attack began. Juana's father, who went looking for the children, was captured and murdered by the contras.

In Never Oporta, six children were killed and two were still hospitalized with their wounds at the time we visited. Several children we saw playing near their homes wore bandages on their arms and legs.

Fourteen-year-old Estelina Lugo described how four "bombs" destroyed her family's home, killing two of her brothers. She also showed where fragments scarred

her head and tore through her left hand.

These communities look like anything but military installations — simple homes spread throughout a rough clearing. Most had tin roofs and dirt floors, and a few, lacking enough wood for walls, were enclosed by large sheets of black plastic.

Women were doing their laundry in a stream and pond near the settlements, and children bathed and played.

In Las Palomas, the destroyed children's center was the building that served as a combined school, health center, and commissary. Seven weeks after the attack, a new center was nearly completed.

Brigade members encountered Rosa Pérez in front of her home nearby. Her husband was one of the defenders killed in the attack, leaving Rosa to care for her elder mother and five young children. She said the family had come here because a peasant cooperative was being formed and conditions would be better.

Las Palomas co-op

The cooperative was formed in 1983 and now has 320 residents. There is land for grazing cattle, in addition to small plots on which families grow squash, corn, yucca (cassava), and other foods.

Families were brought here from isolated areas in the mountains east of here, from as far away as 20 miles. In these areas, unreachable by road, there was no contact with the government. There were no schools or health-care centers. The contras were able to take advantage of this to persuade or force many people to fight against the government.

Rosa Pérez said there was fear of the contras in these isolated areas. But it was undoubtedly hard on many to leave their mountain homes.

"No one really wants to live here," she said. "But it is more secure."

This is the same area of Nicaragua where a CIA cargo plane carrying weapons to the contras was shot down in October 1986 and the U.S. mercenary Eugene Hasenfus captured.

Lieutenant Correa estimated that there are about 600 contras in the area, but that they could not capture these settlements, even with superior numbers and weaponry.

The newly covered graves at the entrances to Las Palmas and Never Oporta testify that contra terror in Nicaragua will continue until all U.S. funding of the contras is stopped.

Annual number of peasant families receiving land

Year	Families
1982*	7,432
1983	11,585
1984	12,090
1985	15,410
1986	16,005
1987	9,300

*Includes Oct.-Dec. 1981

certain conditions. These are: if the land is abandoned or underutilized; if the owner exploits peasants as sharecroppers or tenant farmers; or if the land is needed "for reasons of public necessity or the interests of society."

Since 1981 some 8 percent of the nation's agricultural land has been taken from capitalist farmers and ranchers and other big landowners.

Together with the 1979 confiscation of



Militant/Dave Welters Contras mortared home of Estelina Lugo, wounding her and killing two of her brothers.

Sankara on revolution in Burkina Faso

Cuban interview with late president of West African country

The following interview with Thomas Sankara, the late president of the West African country of Burkina Faso, appeared in the Aug. 4, 1987, edition of the Cuban daily newspaper *Granma*. Sankara's government was overthrown by a military coup on Oct. 15, 1987, organized by then state and justice minister Blaise Compaoré. That same day Sankara and 12 of his aides were executed.

The interview was conducted in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, just two months before the coup. This translation is copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder and is reprinted by permission.

On Thursday, Aug. 4, 1983, a group of young army officers led by Capt. Thomas Sankara carried out an action that was to mark forever the destiny of Upper Volta: they overthrew the neocolonial government and declared the establishment of the Republic of Upright Men (Burkina Faso).

That exceptional day in the history of this African country culminated a process

achieved between the most honest and progressive forces in the nation on the one hand, and young revolutionary officers on the other.

To mark the anniversary of this event President Thomas Sankara granted an interview to Claudio Hackin, special correspondent of Radio Havana Cuba. Sankara expressed concepts of great interest to both the revolutionary process in Burkina Faso and bilateral relations.

Question. Comrade Thomas Sankara, you have met several times with President Fidel Castro. Would you please tell us about your first meeting with him, which took place in New Delhi [India] in March 1983, at the summit meeting of the seventh congress of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries — before you became leader of the revolution in Burkina Faso?

Answer. For me this was and remains a memorable encounter. As I recall he was very much sought after. There were many people around him, and I thought it would be impossible to talk with him because he didn't know me. I did, however, get the chance to meet with Fidel.

In this first conversation I realized Fidel had great human feelings, keen intuition, and that he understood the importance of our struggle, the problems of my country. I remember all this as though it were yesterday. And I have recalled it with pleasure each time I met with him again. We are great friends, thanks to the revolution that guides both Burkina Faso and Cuba.

Q. After Aug. 4, 1983, new relations opened between Cuba and Burkina Faso. How do you view the development of these links of collaboration?

A. Cooperation between Cuba and Burkina Faso has reached a very high level, which we see as very important because it puts us in contact with a sister revolution. We like to feel we are among friends; nobody likes to feel alone. For us, the knowledge that we can count on Cuba is an important source of strength.

A number of programs of economic cooperation have been established, including in sugar cane, in which Cuba is a specialist, and ceramics. In addition, Cuban technicians have carried out studies in the railroad sector, including the production of ties, and in the prefabrication of units that could be used in housing construction.

The same is true in the social sector — in health and education. A number of Cubans have helped in the training of technical cadres here. And we also have many students in Cuba.

Cuba is very close to us.

Q. Do you believe it is necessary to build a vanguard party in Burkina Faso?

A. We have to build a vanguard party. We have to create a structure based on organization because the achievements we have attained will remain fragile unless we also have the means to defend them, the means to educate the masses so as to attain new victories.

We don't see formation of a party as something far away or impossible to reach. We are actually quite close to this objective. But there still remain a number of small-group concepts we have to approach with a serious effort of seeking agreement, regroupment, and unity.

The nature of the party, its concept, and the process of building it will surely not be the same as it would have been had we built it before coming to power. Many precautions have to be taken to avoid falling into leftist opportunism. We cannot deceive the masses. We have to be very careful, selective, and demanding.

Q. In various speeches you have referred to the class struggle in your country. What are the elements in this struggle today?

A. In our country the question of the class struggle is posed differently from the way it's posed in Europe. We have a working class that is weak from a numerical point of view, insufficiently organized.

And we don't have a strong national bourgeoisie that might have given rise to an



Militant/Ernest Harsch
Billboard in capital city of Ouagadougou read, "For the health of everyone in the year 2000, get vaccinated." Before its overthrow, the revolution in Burkina Faso won widespread support in population for carrying out a series of social programs in the interests of peasants and workers.

antagonistic working class. So what we have to retain is the very essence of the class struggle. And in Burkina Faso this is expressed as the struggle against imperialism, supported by its internal allies.

Q. What social groups oppose the revolution?

A. Forces of the feudal type that cannot applaud the disappearance of their privileges. We also have a bureaucratic bourgeoisie, which is still here, crouched in the corridors. It has experience in administrative work in the state apparatus, it's placed at some points in government leadership, and it never ceases to harass us, to create difficulties, with the support of imperialism.

There are in addition the big landowners, who are not very numerous. And there

is, through friendship with a few individuals. It was also the result of my social experience. I had heard these men talk, propose clear and logical solutions to the problems of society. Gradually, thanks in part to reading, but above all to discussions with Marxists on the reality of our country, I arrived at Marxism.

Q. There's a street in Ouagadougou named after Ernesto Che Guevara. What meaning does this remarkable Latin American patriot have for you?

A. This is a man who gave himself totally to the revolution; his eternal youth is an example to all of us. For me the most important thing is to achieve the victory bound up inside each one of us. I admire Che Guevara for having done this in an exemplary way.

Q. In the context of Africa, what does Patrice Lumumba mean to you?

A. Patrice Lumumba is a symbol, and when I see contemporaries of this hero who were unable to evolve even a little despite contact with him, I consider them miserable wretches. They stood in the presence of a work of art and were unable to appreciate it.

Lumumba confronted a very unfavorable situation. He grew up under conditions in which Africans had practically no rights whatsoever. Largely self-educated, Patrice Lumumba was one of the few who more or less learned how to read and managed to attain consciousness of the situation of their people and of Africa.

When you read the last letter Lumumba wrote his wife, you ask yourself, how could this man have come to an understanding of so many truths if not because he lived them internally and sincerely?

It makes me very sad to see how some people use his image and name. There should be a tribunal to judge those who dare take the name of Patrice Lumumba to serve the low and filthy causes they are associated with.

Q. Comrade president, if you could step back four years, would you do the same thing, follow the same road?

A. I'd take a different road in order to do much more than I have accomplished, because in my opinion it hasn't been sufficient. Many mistakes have held up the process when progress could have been more complete and rapid.

So if I had everything to do over, with the experience we have today, we would correct many things. But we would never abandon the revolution; we would make it deeper, stronger, and more beautiful.



Militant/Ernest Harsch

Thomas Sankara

that had begun in the 1970s with the emergence of a progressive current inside the army and an increase in the influence of several parties of the left — a process in which Thomas Sankara played a significant role.

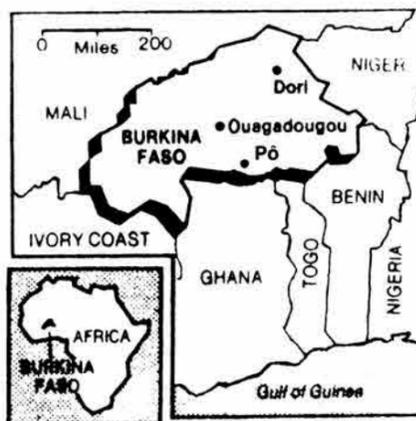
Sankara had been named prime minister in the government of Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo that had emerged from the coup of Nov. 7, 1982, with rightist sectors believing they could neutralize this progressive officer.

How mistaken they were! From the moment he took office, Sankara used all the means at his disposal to try to channel government action toward what people really wanted. This led to his removal from office on May 17, 1983. But by that time the revolutionary process was already irreversibly under way.

Significant popular sectors, especially the youth, mobilized to protest Sankara's dismissal and defend him from possible assassination. Many of them went to Pô, some 90 miles from the capital, Ouagadougou, and asked troops loyal to the progressive officers to give them military training.

This revolutionary situation led to the action of August 4. Commandos from Pô, supported by civilians they had armed, took control of strategic points in Ouagadougou and established the revolutionary government.

August 4 resulted from the unity



are some sectors of the religious hierarchy who more or less openly oppose the revolution.

Q. What is democracy, in your opinion?

A. Democracy is the people, with all their strength and potential. Ballot boxes and an electoral apparatus in and of themselves do not signify the existence of democracy. Those who organize elections every so often, and show concern for the people only when an election is coming up, do not have a genuinely democratic system.

But wherever people can say what they think at any time, there is genuine democracy — because the confidence of the people must be earned every day. Democracy cannot be conceived of without total power in the hands of the people — economic, military, and political power; social and cultural power.

Q. How did you become a Marxist?

A. It was very simple — through discus-

Palestine youth defy Israel gov't brutality

Continued from front page

beatings and killings have not been able to stamp out.

Declaring February 16 a "Day of Anger," Palestinians shut down the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Steel shutters were pulled down over shops, and the streets were deserted in every village, town, and refugee camp," one dispatch said.

"The Israeli army," the dispatch added, "appeared to be keeping a low profile."

And in the first public admission of any kind of retreat, the deputy army chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Ehud Barak, told reporters that, for the moment, the army was abandoning as counterproductive its campaign to force the reopening of Palestinian shops whose owners have joined in protest strikes.

Troops have broken shop gates open with crowbars or, in reprisal, welded them totally shut. Shop owners have been beaten and in at least one case, teargassed while locked inside a shop.

In many cases, where store locks were smashed, Palestinian locksmiths promptly appeared to repair them without charge.

General Barak also abandoned the official fiction that the uprising was the work of "outside agitators."

"What we confront," Barak said, "is a widespread violent uprising led by a nucleus of activists which enjoys the support and cooperation of the masses."

There were added Israeli difficulties on other fronts.

In the Golan Heights on February 14, 1,600 Israeli police battled Druze protesters in Majdal Shams, the largest of the four villages in the area.

The Golan Heights was taken from Syria in Israel's June 1967 war against its Arab neighbors.

Each year the Syrian people of the Golan Heights protest on February 14. This was the date in 1982 when the area was de-

clared an official part of Israel.

This year the protest erupted into a fierce clash between the huge battalion of cops and stone-throwing villagers.

"We are demonstrating to show the Israelis we don't want to be part of their country. We are Syrian, and we want to go back to Syria," one teenager told a reporter.

Israeli officials announced they would ease restrictions on visits to families in Syria.

This past January 23, a general strike was called in the Golan Heights. This was in solidarity with a demonstration in Nazareth that day of 10,000 Palestinians in Israel. The actions were in support of the uprising in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Meanwhile, the findings of Physicians for Human Rights confirmed that the massive beatings being inflicted by the Israeli army are a calculated method of repression and not the product of the heat of combat.

The Boston-based medical committee, which has worked in some 20 countries, investigated conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Dr. Jennifer Leaning of Harvard Medical School said, "There is a systematic pattern of limb injury that is clearly organized to cause fractures that will not result in mortality."

Speaking of the Israeli soldiers, she said, "They definitely do not appear to be out of control. That is one of the darker things we saw."

"These are not aberrations. It's a pattern that is controlled, a systematic pattern over a wide geographic area."

A dispatch to the February 14 *Washington Post* described several cases at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

"In one bed in the men's surgical ward lay Yusef Jamil Ali Hammada, 40. He had two broken arms, two broken legs, a broken left hand, and 12 scalp lacerations. When ambulance workers carried him in



Palestinian struck by Israeli soldier

last Monday from the Ansar II detention center, he had no blood pressure whatever. He is slowly recovering. . . .

"In the next room lay Khaled Akal, 19, nursing a broken left arm and deep bruises on his legs and arms. His 17-year-old cousin Iyad died in the bed next to him last Sunday night.

"Akal says he and his cousin were seized by soldiers, dragged from their homes in the Bureij refugee camp, and beaten in a vacant lot near the camp cemetery. . . .

"Downstairs, in the women's ward Fatma Hashisha, 34, was brought in Tuesday with a fractured leg.

"She said soldiers came to arrest her 17-year-old son for stone-throwing and she stalled them while he fled.

"The soldiers got angry, smashed furniture in her house, and then broke her leg, she said."

Meanwhile, the Palestine Liberation Organization said it was seeking another vessel for its "journey of return." The Cypriot ferry chartered for the voyage was hit by an explosion February 15. The ship was to have carried 131 Palestinians deported from the West Bank and Gaza Strip by the Israeli military.

Since the 1967 Israeli takeover of these areas, more than 1,200 Palestinians have been exiled for political opposition, real or alleged.

The day before the sabotage of the ship that was to be used for the return, three PLO leaders were killed in the area by a car bomb.

The Israeli government had vowed the ship would not reach its destination, the port of Haifa.

A Foreign Ministry spokesperson had declared that those trying to return to their homeland were "the scum of the earth."

Nora Astorga, Nicaragua UN ambassador, dies

Nora Astorga, Nicaragua's ambassador to the United Nations, died February 14 in Managua, Nicaragua. A victim of cancer, she was 39.

In 1984 the Sandinistas appointed Astorga to become Nicaragua's ambassador to the United States. Washington went into an uproar. One Reagan administration official called her a "terrorist" who was "not suitable material for an ambassadorship." The *New York Times* branded her a "femme fatale."

Astorga's "crime" was the fact that in 1978, she had helped bring to justice Gen. Reynaldo Pérez Vega, known in Nicaragua as "The Dog." He was one of the most hated torturers of the Somoza regime, the second in command of Somoza's National Guard, and a CIA agent to boot.

Astorga had been working with the San-

dinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) since 1969. Coming from a wealthy lumber and ranching family, she had used this as cover to get to know Pérez and other henchmen of the dictatorship.

As part of a Sandinista plan to kidnap Pérez and exchange him for imprisoned FSLN members, Astorga lured him to her bedroom one day in 1978. Sandinista guerrillas were waiting. Pérez put up a fight, however, and his captors had to kill him. Following the operation, Astorga went underground and became a guerrilla fighter.

Washington flatly refused to accept her credentials as ambassador to the United States in 1984, and the Nicaraguan government finally had to withdraw the appointment. Astorga became Nicaragua's ambassador to the United Nations in 1986.

Prior to that, she had served as a deputy foreign minister and as a prosecutor against the National Guardsmen and other criminals of the Somoza regime. She was also a member of the Sandinista Assembly, the highest consultative leadership body of the FSLN.

Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, sent a message to the FSLN National Directorate February 16. Nora Astorga was targeted by Washington, he noted, "out of fear of the powerful message the Sandinista revolution sends to working people in this country, fear of the truth about Nicaragua that Nora Astorga presented to the world and to the United States as ambassador to the United Nations."

"It is out of the same fear," he continued, that today, the U.S. government is attempting to close down offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization "as sympathy grows in this country for the courageous Palestinian youth fighting for the return of their land and their rights."

"The best tribute U.S. supporters of Nicaragua can pay today to Nora Astorga's years of revolutionary work is to redouble our efforts to end all U.S. aid to the contras and bring a halt to Washington's bloody war against the Nicaraguan people."



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Nora Astorga

Arab gov'ts reject Camp David pact as basis for Palestine settlement

In an apparent setback for U.S.-Israeli maneuvers, key governments in the Mideast have declared they reject further negotiations based on the Camp David accords.

The prime minister of Jordan said the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has "changed many of the political equations, pushing us to focus on the need to find a fair solution that guarantees the end of the occupation" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Washington has been pushing a plan, whose terms remain to be publicly reported, to contain the Palestinian uprising with a new Camp David-type agreement.

Under it, the people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be conceded some limited form of self-government, with their future to be decided at a later date.

According to a February 16 report, the Washington plan has been rejected by a coalition of governments including Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and several of the Persian Gulf emirates.

They were reported as insisting that the issue of Palestine be discussed at an international peace conference supervised by the five members of the United Nations Security Council, and that the Palestine Liberation Organization be included in the negotiations.

Israel has refused to recognize or deal with the PLO even though it enjoys the allegiance of the big majority of the Palestinian people.

The Camp David accords, put over by the administration of President James Carter in 1978, provides for limited self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in exchange for Egyptian recognition of Israel.

Israel, however, never implemented the self-rule provision.

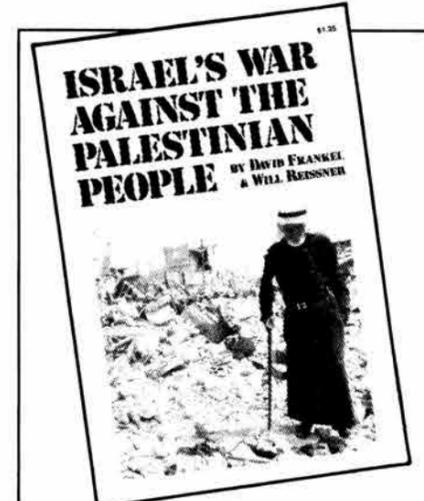
Egypt was alone in signing this agreement, which dealt a blow to the Palestinian

struggle for self-determination. The principal governments of the region then broke relations with Egypt.

But fences were mended with Egypt at a meeting of the Arab League this past November.

At this gathering the member governments downgraded the Palestinian struggle in favor of trying to rally support for Iraq in its reactionary war against Iran.

With the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising a month later, these governments apparently now feel the need to bolster their public stance in support of the Palestine liberation struggle. — H.R.



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Paperworkers tour successful in New York, New Jersey

BY JANICE LYNN
AND L. PALTRINERI

NEW YORK — Striking paperworkers from Jay, Maine, and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, spent a week in the New York-northern New Jersey area in early February, winning new support for their eight-month strikes against International Paper Co.

Cindy Bennett and Rick Rush were the representatives from United Paperworkers International Union Local 14 in Jay, where 1,250 workers are on strike. Bennett was one of the first women hired at IP's Jay mill 11 years ago; Rush had worked 20 years in the mill when the strike began last June.

Railroad workers from United Transportation Union Local 60 heard Bennett and Rush describe the paperworkers' fight against concessions. The two strikers visited the train crew rooms at the New Jersey Transit Rail Terminal in Hoboken, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania Station in New York City.

At the Hoboken crew room, they were introduced by a UTU shop steward. The UTU members there have been working without a contract for two and a half years and were interested in hearing about the support the IP workers have been winning throughout the labor movement for their strike.

Bennett and Rush also visited members of UTU Local 77 at the crew room for Metro North trainmen at New York City's Grand Central Station. The rail workers identified with the strikers' description of IP's attempts at job combinations and the safety hazards that result. The railroads are trying to do the same thing by changing work rules.

The paperworkers also spoke to union meetings of chemical workers and airline workers, met with executive board members from a fellow UPIU local in Brooklyn, and gave several interviews to the media.

Bennett and Rush wrapped up their three-day stay with a talk at the New York

Militant Labor Forum, which was attended by 85 people. Over \$1,000 was raised during their New York visit, mainly in small donations from the unionists they met.

A week earlier, two other Jay strikers — Dick Bates and Mike Spiotta — spoke to a meeting of Teamsters Local 877, whose members work at Exxon's Bayway Refinery and Chemical Plant in Linden, New Jersey. The 200 members present at the meeting voted to donate \$2,500 to the paper strikers.

Six strikers from UPIU Local 1787 in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, followed the Jay workers with a visit to northern New Jersey.

The Lock Haven workers were invited to set up a table at the National Student Conference held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick the weekend of February 5-7, which was attended by 700 students from around the country.

Two Lock Haven strikers addressed a group of more than 300 of the students at a reading featuring noted poet Allen Ginsberg.

The paperworkers also spoke to two classes at Rutgers. The students were interested in every aspect of the strike, from learning more about conditions in the mill



Militant/Jon Hillson

Paperworkers Local 14 members and supporters in protest at Maine state capitol in January. Union is demanding governor shut down unsafe scab-operated mill.

to whether the strikers felt they were winning. Between the conference and classes, the students donated more than \$350 to the strike fund.

A student strike-support group for the Lock Haven paperworkers has been formed at Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania, and the strik-

ers hope to see more such committees established.

The Lock Haven strikers also spoke to union meetings of chemical workers, airline workers, and communications workers, and addressed a meeting of the Bergen County Central Labor Council. An additional \$1,000 was raised for the strike.

Mill shutdown demanded after leaks

Continued from front page

closed. "People in there don't know what the hell they're doing," Meserve said.

The February 15 demonstration was organized by Jay residents led by Deb Thorne and Patty Pineau. Thorne is married to a Jay striker. Pineau's husband works at the James River paper mill in Jay.

Thorne and Pineau are both mothers of small children. They and their kids went through the traumatic experience of a forced evacuation of the town February 5,

when more than 112,000 gallons of deadly chlorine gas leaked from the mill.

After a night-long meeting at Pineau's house, word went out for the February 15 demonstration. Jay and Livermore Falls high school students, housewives, senior citizens, teachers, professionals, and small business owners took part, as well as strikers' spouses.

Local 14 observed the restrictions of the court injunction on union picketing at the mill, limiting pickets to 12 per gate.

'Poison out! People in!'

Chanting "We want [Maine Gov. John] McKernan, shut it down" and "Poison out, people in," the militant community protest was the first such action since the February 5 leak.

The demonstrators, along with representatives of Maine's numerous environmental groups, were cheered as they marched by Local 14's union hall. A mile later they were hailed by pickets at the mill gates, some of whom had donned white coverall protective garb and gas masks.

"I am not sending my kid to school to die," Patty Pineau said, speaking to the demonstration. "I want my kids to go to sleep knowing they're going to wake up. There's no force field around this mill. It has to be shut down now." The crowd erupted in cheers.

Later, 85 of the demonstrators met in the basement of Jay Junior High School to hash out future educational and protest plans, constituting themselves "Citizens Against Poison."

In response to community and union demands, International Paper spokesperson K.C. Lavoie stated that the company "stood on its record of safety."

The bleaching department within the mill has been shut for the time being, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection officials have said they plan to remain at the mill indefinitely.

Following the February 5 gas leak, Local 14 President Bill Meserve announced efforts to force IP to "cease and desist operations" at the mill. He spoke to some 1,000 strikers and supporters attending the weekly union/family meeting February 10.

He was also critical of upcoming investigations of the leaks. In the wake of the accident, word of an investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was made public — 10 days in advance of the inspection, allowing IP time to order scab maintenance workers to do a round-the-clock cleanup of the mill. Nonetheless, the union is cooperating with

a team of six OSHA investigators who have begun an in-plant investigation.

A second "independent review committee" set up by Governor McKernan promptly denied a request by the striking unions to participate in the inspection. "As the bargaining agent, we've got the right to be on that," Meserve told the union/family meeting. "What are they afraid of?"

Between the February 5 gas leak and the February 14 in-plant chlorine leak, union monitoring of the company's communications and warning devices picked up news of three other small chlorine leaks and two oil spills in the mill.

The Jay strikers won a victory in early February when the Maine legislature voted to extend their unemployment benefits an additional 26 weeks just days after their first benefits expired.

In addition, Maine's television network affiliates will be granting the union free air time to answer company anti-strike commercials.

The Jay workers are joined in their fight against IP by paperworkers on strike at the company's mills in De Pere, Wisconsin, and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. Workers are locked out at IP's mill in Mobile, Alabama, as well.

Ray Rogers also spoke at the February 10 meeting. He heads Corporate Campaign, which is helping to organize solidarity efforts for paperworkers at all four mills. Rogers described the union's "southern offensive" — a union caravan that will leave Mobile, Alabama, February 17 and travel through Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Some \$15,000 was presented to the strikers from visiting unionists who attended the meeting.

Maine paper strikers receive report from Nicaragua trip

BY MARK EMANATION
AND AARON RUBY

JAY, Maine — Paperworkers on strike at International Paper Co.'s Androscoggin mill here recently had several occasions to learn more about the Nicaraguan revolution and the struggle of that country's working people against Washington's contra war.

At the January 27 union/family meeting — the big, weekly gathering of strikers, family members, and supporters — Jon Hillson, a Boston-area unionist, gave a brief report on his recent participation in the Benjamin Linder Peace Brigade. The brigade, made up of U.S. volunteers, traveled to Nicaragua for several weeks in January to help with the coffee harvest there.

Hillson reported on the discussions he held with Nicaraguan unionists in the northern city of Estelí about the paperworkers' fight against concessions, and read two letters of solidarity sent to the Jay workers from Sandinista unions.

The message from the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), read, in part, "We have seen and understand the struggle you are carrying out to defend your class interests in an unjust society.

"We were also obliged to carry out similar actions to make sure the interests of working people were respected.

"With the triumph of the Sandinista People's Revolution on July 19, 1979, which was achieved with the active and conscious participation of the workers, we were able to take power.

"We are aware," the letter continued, "that disinformation in your country is another weapon of imperialism to slander us, but we invite you to visit our country so

that you can see with your own eyes and get to know the reality of our revolution."

The letter from the Rural Workers Association (ATC) said, "We want you to know that neither distance nor cultures nor other customs are an obstacle that separates our unity and solidarity. We are one single fist in the struggle against social injustice imposed by the capitalist bosses who fatten themselves at the cost of our blood and our sweat.

"We know about the union struggle you carry forward against the greatest of social injustices, because we know that the more highly developed the industry of capitalist exploiters, the more the workers are exploited.

"We want you to know that Nicaragua is a small nation, but that we, the workers, are going to build our heaven here on earth, where power will always be in the hands of the workers."

On January 6 Hillson gave a slide presentation on Nicaragua at the Jay Knights of Columbus hall, which some 35 paperworkers and their spouses attended. In addition to strikers from the IP mill here, several paperworkers from the nearby Boise Cascade mill in Rumford also were present.

Nearly two hours of discussion followed the slideshow. Questions included requests for basic information about Nicaragua, the nature of the Sandinista government, the situation of the Miskito Indians, the Central America peace treaty, Nicaraguan life and customs, and the contra aid vote in the U.S. Congress.

"There is so much that we've been lied to about," one striker said. Several paperworkers have expressed interest in visiting Nicaragua.

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How gov't, employers violate work

John Studer, executive director of the Political Rights Defense Fund, drew up a memorandum last October reviewing the status of workers' rights in the United States for use by representatives of the Human Rights Subcommittee at the United Nations.

The memorandum provides a summary of government- and employer-organized obstacles to workers' organization and struggle in this country. We thought *Militant* readers would find it useful.

The U.S. government has engaged in systematic violations of political rights of the residents of this country and argues today for its right to continue to do so in the future.

Much of the truth about this has been revealed in federal court by the lawsuit *Socialist Workers Party v. Attorney General, et al.*

This assault on democratic rights has involved especially targeting workers, farmers, and trade unionists for surveillance and victimization because of their views, activities, and associations.

Working people are a special target for the political police due to their strategic position in society and to the potential social and economic power of the union movement.

In addition to violations of democratic rights in their political activity, workers also face government attacks on their legal rights while on the job; on the right to organize unions, conduct strikes, and picket in defense of wages and humane working conditions; and on other rights necessary to organize to meet employer attacks.

Workers also face the additional problem of having to do work that is organized by employers in such a way as to endanger life and limb, lead to physical and mental exhaustion, and otherwise curtail their ability to engage in personal activity or to organize to defend their basic human rights. The employers are unpunished by the government.

Violations of rights in the workplace

Under presidential Executive Order 10450, which authorizes government investigations of political and personal views and activities of federal employees, and Executive Order 10865, which extends such investigations to employees of private corporations that have government contracts, the U.S. government has established special criteria for denying clearance for such jobs to workers whose employment is not "clearly consistent with the national interest." The government has created a special spy agency — the Defense Investigative Service (DIS) — to work with the FBI to conduct loyalty investigations, and special loyalty courts to review actions taken against workers under these federal programs.

When these loyalty clearance programs were begun in 1947, they authorized the attorney general to maintain a list of suspect political organizations, association with which would lead to denial of clearances or employment.

The attorney general's subversive list grew to include 283 groups, including the Socialist Workers Party.

Organizations included on the list were denied due process rights to challenge their inclusion on the list or even discover what evidence had been presented by whom that had led them to be included.

While the attorney general's list was abolished in 1974, the government still maintains political criteria by which it spies on unionists and denies clearances and jobs to workers because of their legal political associations.

Today DIS maintains a special computer in its Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office, in Columbus, Ohio, where it maintains files on more than 15 million workers.

Under Executive Order 10450 the federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducts 150,000 investigations each year into the views, associations, and personal lives of government workers whose jobs will require them to have ac-

cess to classified information, materials, or sites.

As part of these investigations, the OPM seeks extensive information from the FBI and other political police agencies.

Outside government employment, the Industrial Security Clearance Program covers millions of workers employed in 21,000 private plants.

During the first 10 years of this program, more than 5,000 workers had their clearances to work in these plants revoked.

In 1985 some 2.2 million federal employees were required to hold security clearances, and the employees of 1.4 million government contractors spent \$163 million in 1985 alone for security clearance investigations and related activities.

A congressional study found that certain kinds of government probes into the lives and activities of federal employees had more than doubled between 1981 and 1985.

For instance, the study reported that the Department of Defense administered 13,786 lie detector tests to its civilian



Immigration cop searches undocumented workers. New immigration law attempts to take another step toward making undocumented workers an outlawed caste employers can brutally exploit.

workers in 1985, more than 100 percent higher than in 1981.

Where government agents feel they cannot victimize workers formally covered under these programs, they often collaborate with private employers to find a pretext to get workers fired when the real reason is their political views or union activity.

Many private employers not covered by these programs have attempted to implement similar "loyalty" programs where they feel they can get away with it.

In 1952 the National Industrial Conference Board, an employers' organization, wrote:

Where the union is cooperative or where there is no union, companies report that the best thing to do is to fire men of questionable loyalty. Communist affiliation is rarely used as the premise since this may be difficult, if not impossible, to prove legally. Instead, an infraction of company rules, submission of a false employment application, or failure to perform work satisfactorily are generally bases of dismissal.

Security personnel maintain... that in the long run, with vigilance and careful 'bookkeeping' of the actions, comings and goings, absences, vacation leaves, and any violations of these or other company rules, management will be able to get rid of some of its security risks.

Machinists and other industrial unionists who are members of the SWP have fallen victim to such pretextual firings, actually predicated on their political and union activities.

These include 15 members of International Association of Machinists Lodge 709 at Lockheed in Georgia in December 1980-January 1981; three members of IAM Lodge 837B at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis; and other workers at General

Dynamics in San Diego, California; Lockheed in Sunnyvale, California; Tenneco Shipyard in Newport News, Virginia; and Bendix in Kansas City, Missouri.

In labor battles, private companies have also attempted to bring in the federal political police to use political criteria to target and weaken the union.

The United Auto Workers was forced to conduct a bitterly contested union representation drive at Superior Industries, one of the largest manufacturers of aluminum wheel rims for the auto industry in the United States. In 1986 the company sought FBI intervention against the union, which had won the right to represent the workers — many of whom are Mexican and Central American immigrants — the year before.

George Musson, Superior's director of personnel, explained the company's justification for enlisting FBI assistance:

"We had heard the union was stockpiling weapons in Van Nuys for shipment to Communist radicals in Central America. The employees working with the union to organize Superior are from Central Ameri-

officials are using other political themes to justify violating the rights of workers.

Popular fear and concern about AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is being used in this way.

Instead of helping victims with the disease, educating about causes and prevention, and countering exaggerations about how easily AIDS can be spread, the U.S. government has imposed new restrictions on the right to privacy and the rights of prisoners and immigrant workers.

Attorney General Meese has decreed compulsory AIDS testing of anyone seeking admission into or permanent residence in the United States as well as of new inmates in federal prison.

Government officials have also utilized the widely accepted — and mistaken — notion that immigration is a cause of unemployment to target workers without papers.

This political campaign was utilized to justify the passage of a new immigration law in 1986 that legalizes discrimination against undocumented workers who cannot meet the amnesty provisions of the law, barring them from legal employment in the United States.

This law illegalizes the undocumented workers who remain in this country, opening the door to their superexploitation.

The aim is to make these undocumented workers a special caste: forced underground; unable to exercise the right to organize unions or seek governmental or other aid in combating employer abuse and forced to work for sub-minimum wage and under inhuman conditions.

As part of this drive against undocumented workers the new immigration law requires employers to confirm the legal status of all new hires in the United States and specifies certain forms of identification acceptable to the government.

This law extends surveillance over all workers in this country and moves in the direction of establishing a required government I.D. or pass system.

Federal government officials have alleged increasing influence in U.S. labor unions of "organized crime."

Based on these allegations, the Justice Department has successfully restricted the right of union members to organize to defend their interests without government interference by placing union locals under court control.

Their aim is not to counter criminal influence but to set precedents for further government interference in the union movement.

For instance, the 8,000 members of Local 560 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) have seen their union seized and run by court-appointed trustees since June 1986 in the face of membership demonstrations and demands for membership election of officers.

On June 10, 1987, the Justice Department announced that it is preparing a lawsuit aimed at replacing the national executive board of the IBT and placing it under federal control.

The Justice Department announced it is considering similar moves against other international unions, including the International Longshoremen's Association, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, and Laborers' International Union of North America.

The target of these efforts is not criminal racketeering but union membership rights to organize without government interference and the freedom of association guaranteed in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Their aim is to expand the area for federal penetration into the affairs of the union movement.

U.S. antilabor laws

In addition to these direct federal antilabor practices, there are a series of laws covering the labor movement that restrict the ability of workers to organize, picket, strike, and engage in other activities to defend wages, working conditions, and union activity.

In addition, many laws originally passed under the pressure of the rise of the indus-

Workers' democratic rights today

trial labor movement in the late 1930s are increasingly being interpreted by federal agencies, the courts, and labor boards established by these laws to restrict rather than advance union activity and the rights of workers.

U.S. courts have held that because industrial plants are privately owned rather than government property, they do not come under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Constitution.

Thus workers on the job do not have legally guaranteed freedom of speech or association, protection from warrantless searches, or the other guarantees found in the Bill of Rights.

Workers cannot publicize unsafe or illegal conditions in the plant and be protected from discipline by the right to free speech.

They are not "innocent until proven guilty" while at work, and if fired have to leave their job before they can challenge the firing.

Constitutional rights are surrendered at the workplace door.

The protection workers do have on the job comes instead from successes in organizing unions and fighting to win rights and standards through union contracts, and from gains won in laws that cover unions and workers.

These protections are subject to erosion and violation by both the government and employers.

For instance, the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act was enacted to guarantee the eight-hour workday. In fact, as it has been interpreted by the courts and applied, it only guarantees certain pay premiums for work over 40 hours a week.

Many industries, such as auto, systematically require extensive forced overtime, curtailing workers' time for personal, political, and union activity off the job, and increasing fatigue and health dangers.

• **The Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932.** This law for the first time in U.S. history restricted courts and government officials from arbitrarily outlawing strikes by court injunction.

Nonetheless, court injunctions limiting the right to strike remain a central obstacle to workers successfully defending themselves against corporate takebacks and strikebreaking. Courts routinely limit the number of pickets the union can post at plant gates to a token few, allowing management to bring scabs into the plant, resume production, and defeat the strike.

• **The Wagner Act of 1935.** This law, enacted during a powerful labor upsurge in which unionists around the country were compelling union recognition from employers and winning gains in wages, seniority rights, and working conditions, gave legal recognition to workers' right to union recognition.

It made it illegal for employers to interfere with this right in certain ways, defined as "unfair labor practices." It created the



Militant/Nancy Cole



Militant/Mike Shur

Government and courts continue to use injunctions against workers' right to strike. Left, 1978 protest by striking miners. President James Carter attempted unsuccessfully to use Taft-Hartley injunction to break walkout. Court injunction limiting pickets in current strike against International Paper in Jay, Maine, aimed to enable company to ship strikebreakers into plant without meeting massive protest by workers. At right, pickets confront scab at plant gate.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to oversee the implementation of the law.

Since the law was passed, the NLRB and U.S. courts have limited the legal right to engage in union activity:

1. In workplaces where a union has been recognized, the board and the courts now protect only collective activity approved by the union, rather than activity that is conducted by union members but that may not have been decided by the union local as a whole or is the subject of debate in the local.

2. Protected activity has been interpreted to cover only activity that is engaged in collectively, as opposed to by one individual, such as refusing to work in unsafe conditions.

3. The NLRB and the courts have increasingly restricted the objectives on behalf of which unionists may legally act to narrow economic interests in their particular plant. Solidarity activity with other workers or broader union social activity are left unprotected by law.

In addition, the existence of the NLRB as an arena for union-company relations has provided an excuse to legally prevent unions from using their organized power to resolve disputes with management, derailing disputed issues into time consuming hearings before the board, enmeshed in legalistic red tape.

This trend has weakened the unions' capacity to organize and fight to protect workers' interests.

• **The Hatch Act of 1939.** Unionists employed by the federal government also face special laws barring them from any public participation in electoral politics.

Under the Hatch Act, enacted in 1939, government workers are denied the right to run for public office and are forbidden from supporting the campaigns of other candidates. This law covers both government union leaders and rank and file workers.

Following the 1984 presidential election, the national presidents of three major government unions — Kenneth Blaylock of the American Federation of Government Employees, Moe Biller of the American Postal Workers Union, and Vincent Sombrotto of the National Association of Letter Carriers — representing more than 800,000 federal workers, were charged and victimized for violating the Hatch Act by actively working against Ronald Reagan's presidential reelection campaign.

Enforcement of this law, which violates political freedom, was carried through by the Justice Department even though the three union presidents were all on leave from government service while serving in their full-time union posts, and had campaigned against Reagan in that capacity.

• **The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947.** This law, passed during the beginning of the post-World War II witch-hunt, is one of the most notorious antilabor laws in U.S. history. In form, it is actually a series of amendments weakening provisions of the 1935 Wagner Act.

These revisions include enacting a list of "unfair labor practices" that unions can no longer legally engage in. The bill outlaws working-class solidarity by making it illegal for workers of one company to picket on behalf of workers in struggle at another company.

Section 14(b) of the act gives legal sanction to state legislatures to outlaw the union shop. This law has allowed state officials to enact right-to-work laws, restricting union organizing in many states.

Section 301 of the act for the first time made union-company collective bargaining agreements enforceable in court. This gives management the right to sue the union for violation of the contract.

It is now routine in the United States that when unions are forced on strike in violation of a no-strike clause in the contract, the employers gets a court order barring the strike and win monetary damages from the union for striking.

The Taft-Hartley Act made it law that union officers had to sign a loyalty oath asserting that they were not members of the Communist Party as a precondition for NLRB recognition of the union.

This provision, later overturned, reinforced the government's right to interfere in the unions and introduce political criteria for legal recognition of union organizations.

The refusal of many unionists to sign such oaths after the law was passed in the late 1940s was used by conservative union officials to expel a number of international unions from the CIO and to split and thereby weaken a number of international unions.

The act also authorizes the U.S. president

Continued on Page 13



Engelhardt

"We can always get a lot of cheap cuts out of plant safety."

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Antiwar Vietnam vets hold N.Y. speak-out

BY CAPPY KIDD

NEW YORK — Twenty years after the North Vietnamese Tet offensive, 15 years after the signing of the Paris peace accords, one week before the vote on President Ronald Reagan's contra aid package, nearly 400 Vietnam veterans and their supporters gathered to call for reconciliation with Vietnam and to oppose U.S. intervention in Central America.

Since Washington was forced to withdraw its troops from Indochina in 1973, Vietnam has not known one day of peace. The U.S. government has carried out uninterrupted aggression against the people of Vietnam through an economic embargo and through support to reactionary armed bands in the region.

On January 30, Vietnam Veterans Against the War sponsored a "Speak-out for Peace and Justice," which included veterans, antiwar activists, and others.

Rally speakers called on the U.S. government to end its aggression in Indochina and normalize relations with Vietnam. Having lived through the Vietnam War, these veterans are part of the fight to stop Washington from embarking on another Vietnam in Central America.

Barry Romo, national coordinator of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, had recently visited Vietnam as part of a delegation of U.S. vets. Referring to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., Romo asked how big the wall would have to be if it were in Vietnam and how much granite would be needed to contain the names of the 2 million Vietnamese victims of the war.

Romo also spoke about the special role that veterans have played and can continue to play in the fight against intervention.

David Dellinger, a central leader of the anti-Vietnam War movement, drew some of the parallels between the early stages of the Vietnam War and U.S. aggression in Central America today. He said that a fundamental difference between the two situations is the existence of the "Vietnam syndrome" — massive opposition among the people of the United States to direct use of U.S. troops in Central America.

The veterans who attended were proud of the role they and others had played in helping to end the Vietnam War and create the Vietnam syndrome.

In recent years, veterans have gone on construction and fact-finding teams to Central America and Southeast Asia. They have carried out well-publicized fasts and other protests against U.S. intervention. They have organized material aid projects

for Vietnam and Nicaragua. And they have also participated in educational programs in high schools and campuses across the country.

A featured speaker was Brian Willson. On Sept. 1, 1987, Willson lost both his legs when he was run down by a locomotive. He had been part of a protest at the U.S. Naval Weapons Station in Concord, California, that was attempting to block the shipment of arms to Central America.

Willson received a standing ovation as he walked to the podium on artificial legs. He recounted some of the experiences that had led him to dedicate his life to antiwar activity. In Nicaragua as part of the Veterans Peace Action Teams, Willson said he had met more than 400 amputees who were victims of the U.S.-sponsored aggression against that country.

Willson told the audience that a congressional committee had labeled him and other veterans "terrorists" and a threat to "national security" because they had "conspired to coerce the government of the United States to change its policies in Central America by advocating resistance across the country."

Restating his commitment to nonviolent resistance, Willson continued, "As long as my country continues its policies in Central America, I hope that every one of you will be perceived in a manner that is considered a threat to our national security."

Job Mashariki of Black Veterans For Social Justice urged his fellow veterans to take up the struggle against the blatant racist attacks that have been occurring in New York and around the country. Speaking of the worsening conditions of Blacks, Latinos, and poor whites, he stated, "When we get justice in this country, we will see peace throughout the world."

U.S. group opens new drive to aid Nicaragua

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A new campaign to ship more than \$100 million in humanitarian aid to Nicaragua was announced by the Quest for Peace at a January 28 news conference in front of the Capitol.

During the news conference, the scope of this effort was dramatically illustrated as hundreds of boxes of donated medicine, clothing, and school supplies were loaded into a 20-foot cargo container destined for Nicaragua.



Susan Schnall, who addressed recent veterans' speak-out, leads contingent of hundreds of GI's in 1968 march against Vietnam War. Schnall was later court-martialed for dropping antiwar leaflets on naval installations from an airplane.

Other speakers on the platform included Norma Becker, longtime peace activist and coordinator of the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, and Charles Liteky and Duncan Murphy of Veterans Fast for Life.

Susan Schnall closed the meeting by relating the story of her court-martial in 1968

when, as a navy nurse and a lieutenant, she carried out her "peace leaflet bombing mission." Schnall was court-martialed for dropping antiwar leaflets from a rented airplane on several naval installations in California and the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger*.

The event was one of many demonstrations, vigils, and other actions aimed at opposing U.S. aid to the contra war in Nicaragua in the days before Congress voted on the Reagan administration's proposal for an additional \$60 million for the contras.

The Quest for Peace campaign to aid the people of Nicaragua is a project of the Quixote Center, a Catholic-based peace and justice organization in Washington, D.C. Last November, the \$100 million goal of a similar aid campaign was successfully met. The figure was designed to match the \$100 million Congress had voted for the contras in the summer of 1986.

The new Quest for Peace campaign is specifically earmarked to help Nicaragua with resettlement efforts undertaken as part of the Guatemala peace accords. Aid will go to help Nicaraguans displaced by the U.S.-sponsored war, including Miskito Indians returning from Honduras.

The campaign will also provide help to towns and villages that agree to take in former contras who have accepted the amnesty program established by the Nicaraguan government.

As with previous Quest for Peace efforts, this material aid will be raised from hundreds of cities and towns across the United States. Many local solidarity, religious, and community groups have already pledged to fill one or more 40-foot cargo containers in the coming months.

Additionally, Quest for Peace will seek to raise \$2 million to help fund small development projects in Nicaragua designed to rebuild vital infrastructure and services destroyed by the contra war.

This sum will be raised by establishing thousands of "Communities of Peace and Friendship": religious groups, Central America organizations, unions, schools, and community groups that will pledge at least \$1,000 each toward the goal.

Maureen Fiedler, a leader of Quest for Peace and a prominent figure in the Central America solidarity movement, denounced the Reagan administration's push for continued funding of the contras at the press conference here. "They try to cover up the reality of their deadly policy with words like 'non-lethal' or 'humanitarian' aid," she said, when in truth the \$60 million re-

quested was designed to continue the killing of thousands of Nicaraguan civilians — women, children, teachers, doctors, and those involved in development projects in rural areas of Nicaragua.

Fiedler pointed to a banner on the side of the cargo container parked in front of the Capitol that read "Elliott Abrams reparations container." Abrams is the under secretary of state responsible for overseeing the U.S.-sponsored war against Nicaragua. He was a key figure, Fiedler remarked, in the Iran-contra scandal and the secret funding of the contras, operating through deception and stealth because the government's policies in Nicaragua are so unpopular.

"Unlike Elliott Abrams, the Quest for Peace has always been completely open, public, and honest about its efforts. Unlike Abrams, we have no need for paper shredders," she added.

Other speakers at the news conference included Rep. Louise Slaughter from New York State; Frank Murphy, auxiliary bishop of Baltimore; John Linder, brother of the U.S. engineer slain by the contras last spring; Daniel Ellsberg, who, along with a variety of veterans groups, was fasting on the steps of the Capitol to protest contra aid; William Callahan, another leader of Quest for Peace; and a priest from Rosita, a mining town in Nicaragua that was recently the site of a contra attack.

Also appearing at the news conference to lend his support was Brian Willson, the veteran who lost both legs after being run down last fall by a U.S. navy train carrying arms for U.S.-backed forces in Central America.

Jerry Freiwirth, former national coordinator of the Benjamin Linder Peace Tour, is currently a staff member of the Quixote Center/Quest for Peace.

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The article reviews a talk given by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, that discussed the past seven years of the ruling-class offensive against working people, and the international working-class unity that is necessary to wage an effective fight against the rulers' attack.

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Gorbachev sets date for Afghan pullout

BY FRED FELDMAN

Soviet Communist Party head Mikhail Gorbachev announced that Soviet troops will begin pulling out of Afghanistan on May 15, provided the Pakistani and Afghan governments reach agreement on a pact by March 15 in upcoming negotiations in Geneva. The next round of talks, mediated by a top United Nations official, are scheduled to begin March 2.

Gorbachev said the withdrawal would be completed within 10 months.

The top Soviet official's statement was read on a nationwide Soviet television broadcast February 8 by an announcer who interrupted regular evening programs.

Gorbachev called for an agreement that would include a promise of "non-interference in each other's internal affairs" by the Afghan and Pakistani governments and "international guarantees of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs."

He said the agreement should also include verification procedures, the return of

Afghan refugees from Pakistan, and "a document on the interrelationship of all elements of political settlement."

The "international guarantees" sought by Gorbachev include an end to Washington's massive aid — more than \$1 billion over the last two years — to rightist-led forces combating the Afghan government.

Washington has vastly increased its arms shipments to these groups since December 1979, when tens of thousands of Soviet troops poured into the country to prop up the government headed by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Soviet military intervention, far from rolling back the insurgency, enabled it to win more popular support.

The Pakistani government has provided bases for the rightist-led groups and has funneled U.S. arms and supplies to them.

Gorbachev stressed that Soviet forces would withdraw even if no agreement was reached on the composition of the government or on a cease-fire between the gov-



Soviet troops in Afghanistan

ernment and the opposition groups. "National reconciliation and the establishment of a coalition government is another thing," he said. "This is a purely internal Afghan issue. It can only be resolved by the Afghans themselves."

Reagan administration officials had mixed reactions to the announcement. State Department spokesperson Charles Redman welcomed Gorbachev's "apparent willingness to address" the question of a timetable for withdrawal. He continued: "Naturally, we'll want to see further details on the Gorbachev offer and consult with the Pakistanis on the matter." Another official praised the Soviet declaration as a "major step forward," but voiced "great skepticism."

Within days, however, some White House officials leaked to the press that they were raising objections to the Reagan administration's commitment to end arms shipments to the antigovernment bands as soon as Soviet withdrawal begins.

The promise was given by Michael Armacost, under secretary of state for political affairs, in December 1985. Armacost promised that Washington would serve as a guarantor of an Afghan-Pakistani pact that included withdrawal of Soviet troops and non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

The officials claimed that President Ronald Reagan had not been briefed about the commitment or did not understand what it meant. "Other officials pointed out," reported the February 11 *New York Times*, "that the international situation was significantly different in 1985, when few people thought there was much prospect of a negotiated Soviet pullout."

A February 11 editorial in the *New York Times* warned the administration not to appear to obstruct Soviet withdrawal "by claiming that the State Department agreed to halt rebel aid without President Reagan's approval."

How British miners' union aids education of its members

BY KATHY MICKELLS

BARNESLEY, England — "You're from America, right? Come have lunch with us. We're studying Nicaragua today and the lecturer told us to use whatever resources we have available."

That's how a coal miner greeted me at Northern College here. He was part of a group of miners attending a week-long course titled the "National Union of Mineworkers and the International Community."

Northern College is funded by Britain's trade unions. It offers college courses as well as week-long and weekend programs for union members.

The class I attended in early February was comprised of 20 miners ranging in age from 20 to 50. They were from various parts of the country.

The National Union of Mineworkers arranges for its members to get excused time off from work to attend the course and also pays their lost wages. This particular course was being led by Hillary Cave, the union's educational director. The miners had already discussed the economics of underdevelopment, what imperialism is, and the political situation in Africa — with an emphasis on South Africa.

The final portion of the course focused on what action union locals could take in solidarity with workers in other countries. That day they were specifically taking up U.S. government policy toward Nicaragua.

After a while, they broke down into discussion groups. When everybody got back together summaries of each discussion were presented.

"The cancer Reagan sees in Nicaragua is the peoples' desire for freedom and self-determination, that's what our group thought," Mick from Nottinghamshire said.

Another group concluded the reason for U.S. aggression against Nicaragua "is that Reagan and the industrialists fear the Nicaraguan revolution will have a positive effect on ordinary working people in their own country."

Others said the U.S. government had not invaded Nicaragua because "American public opinion is against the war and Nicaraguans will defend their country. They're a strong group of people prepared to die for their revolution."

The miner's union has an official position opposing the U.S.-run contra war. The miners at the class strongly backed this position. They told me that the union had just sponsored a miner on a trip to Nicaragua.

The National Union of Mineworkers regularly sponsors its members on visits to other countries, especially trips to talk to other miners. A young union member at the class told me he had received NUM backing for his participation on a five-week internationalist brigade that helped build houses near Havana, Cuba. He said he hoped to return to Cuba soon.

Utah labor, students hit Aryan Nations

BY STEVE WARSHALL

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — More than 100 union members, students, and others turned out for a forum here to protest the racist Aryan Nations group, which is trying to organize in Utah. The event was held at the Union Labor Center and was sponsored by the Utah State AFL-CIO and chaired by its state president, Ed Mayne.

Speakers included Lenoris Bush for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Curtis Sewell of the Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church here; Lucy Malin, a regional board member of the National Organization for Women (NOW); Gena Edvalson, student activist from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah; Merle Hansen, president of the North American Farm Alliance; and Bill Wassmuth of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, where the Aryan Nations is based.

Wassmuth has been a target of Aryan Nations violence and is a leader of the Northwest Coalition Against Malignant Harassment, an organization set up to oppose the racists.

The January 26 meeting was part of a tour for Wassmuth and Hansen sponsored by the Utahns Against the Aryan Nations

and a broad range of community, student, and labor organizations including United Steelworkers Local 2702, Geneva, Utah; Salt Lake County NOW; Utah Diocese of the Catholic Church; and the state AFL-CIO.

At the meeting, Wassmuth noted that "silence in the face of the Aryan activity is taken as support or at least acceptance. I doubt that the people of Utah will have the problems that we have had in Idaho because you responded so quickly with positive meetings of this kind."

Merle Hansen noted that the Aryan Nations, like other racist and ultraright organizations, appeal to farmers facing extreme crisis. "Farmers who are looking desperately for solutions are given nothing more than scapegoats," by these outfits, he said.

Hansen also stated that government policies aimed against working people and promoting war, racism, and anticommunism, "dehumanize the whole society and legitimize the efforts of the ultraright groups. One of the best ways to undercut the racists is to oppose these policies."

Wassmuth and Hansen spoke to audiences totaling 750 people in their statewide tour.

—WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

Cops attack funeral of South African youth

Hundreds of the apartheid government's cops and soldiers used tear gas in an attack on people attending the February 6 funeral of Godfrey Sicelo Dhlomo.

A massive six-hour operation, involving police and troops, armored vehicles, helicopters, and a spotter plane, was mounted with the aim of preventing people from attending the services. Cops and troops completely surrounded the church where the funeral was held, frequently entering it.

Dhlomo's funeral was attended by Albertina Sisulu, a co-president of South Africa's largest anti-apartheid coalition, the United Democratic Front (UDF). Winnie Mandela, a leader of the African National Congress, attended a vigil the night before.

When Mandela and hundreds of others visited the home of Dhlomo's mother, Sylvia Jele, they were fired on with tear gas.

Dhlomo was active in the Detainees' Parents Support Committee, an organization of parents and supporters of children detained by the apartheid regime. The committee, an affiliate of the UDF, estimates that some 400 children under the age of 18 are still being held in South Africa's jails.

Dhlomo had recently been interviewed in a CBS documentary "Children and Apartheid." In the film Dhlomo said that he had been detained four times and had been tortured. Dhlomo was arrested by the police and questioned about the interview. Five days later Dhlomo's body was found. He had been shot in the head.

U.S. presses allies to shore up NATO

The Reagan administration is pressing its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies to bear the responsibility for relocating and finding a country to accept 72 F-16 fighter planes.

The administration's actions follow the decision of the Spanish government to close the U.S. air base at Torrejón, where the planes are now based, along with several thousand U.S. military personnel.

In a 1986 referendum on whether Spain should remain a member of NATO, Prime Minister Felipe González pledged to reduce the U.S. military pre-

sence in the country if the people of Spain voted to remain within the NATO alliance.

Italian Defense Minister Valerio Zanone has stated that the Italian government will consider accepting the planes. He said it would be "disastrous" for Washington to remove aircraft "so important for the defense of the southern flank of the Atlantic Alliance," adding that if Italy were to receive the planes "an agreement with NATO is required."

The loss of the air base at Torrejón is a blow to the U.S.-backed alliance — which includes Canada, and the major capitalist countries of Europe — against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There are 340,000 U.S. military personnel at 275 installations in Europe.

Thais charge U.S. stole art from temple ruins

A prominent advertisement in Bangkok newspapers, believed to have been sponsored by students at Silpakorn University, charges that the U.S. government participated in the theft of a stone carving from a thousand-year-old temple in Thailand during the Vietnam War. The advertisement called the removal of the carving an "act of transnational theft."

Witnesses in the area said that during the Vietnam War an American soldier came with a helicopter and took some of the temple's art. A matching piece from the carving was found in California and returned.

Once a part of a 10th to 13th-century Hindu-era temple complex near the Thai-Kampuchean border, the carving entitled "Vishnu Sleeping on the Water" is now on display at the Art Institute of Chicago. The institute said it might consider returning the carving if it received a replacement from the Thai government.

The U.S. embassy in Thailand issued a statement denying "official" complicity in the theft. The embassy statement noted that Washington is a signer of a UNESCO convention that provides for "just compensation" to countries or institutions forced to return national treasures believed to have been stolen.

Pornthep Techapaibul, a legislator from the province from which the carving was taken, responded that Thailand has not signed the convention because Thailand could not agree to pay for art objects it believed were rightfully Thai.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Art in the New Nicaragua. Speakers: Judith Baca, director of Spark (Social and Public Art Resource Center); Barbara Carrasco, muralist who has done work in Nicaragua and the Soviet Union; Mike Alewitz, director of Pathfinder Mural Project. Bilingual program in English and Spanish. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m. Spark, 685 Venice Blvd., Venice. Donation: \$5. Sponsor: Spark and Pathfinder Mural Project. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Oakland

Socialist Educational Weekend on Black History. 1. Forum: "Malcolm X: an Internationalist Revolutionary Leader" Speaker: Cathy Sedwick, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers at NUMMI. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2. Two classes on "The Black Struggle for Equality — 1776 to Today." Speaker: Malik Miah, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sun., Feb. 28, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave. Donation: \$2 each session. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

FLORIDA

Miami

The Fight Against South African Imperialism. Cuba: An Example of International Solidarity. Speakers: Charles Brunson, member of American Postal Workers Union, Free South Africa Coalition; Alan Gummerson, Socialist Workers Party, member International Association of Machinists Lodge 702. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St., Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Speaker: Pat Hunt, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

Now available . . .

Pathfinder Mural Project video, photos

The *Pathfinder Mural Project: an International Collaboration* shows the work in progress, including Nicaraguan artist Arnoldo Guillén painting on the mural and speaking about it. Provides a brief description of the Pathfinder publishing house.

Produced by students at New York University. It is 15 minutes on 1/2 inch tape; VHS recorder or player needed for showing. The cost is \$15.

Also available is a set of three 8 x 10 color photos of Nicaraguan painter Arnoldo Guillén completing the portraits of Augusto César Sandino and Carlos Fonseca. The cost is \$10 a set.

To purchase the video or photos, send a check to Pathfinder Mural Project, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

An Evening in Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Speakers: Dr. Hatem Hussaini, member, Palestine National Council; Kamil Eid, Palestine Human Rights Campaign; Katrina Breeding, attorney; representative, Georgia Black Students Association. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, 450 Auburn Ave. Donation requested. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Malcolm X. A videotape showing and discussion on the life of Malcolm X. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

The State of Black America. Speaker: Rashaad Ali, member Socialist Workers Party National Committee and United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 27. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Malcolm X: the Struggle for Freedom. Film and discussion. Speakers: Yusef Mgeni, Black community activist; August Nimtz, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop. Speakers: Chris Nisan, coordinator of Marketplace Forum; August Nimtz, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Legacy of Malcolm X. Speakers: Alice Windom, Black community activist; Pat Barker, Young Socialist Alliance; Ntisi Shishebe, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 20, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Cuba Today. An 11-part weekly educational series. Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m., through April 16. 140 S 40th St. Donation for series: \$1.50. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance, Socialist Workers Party, Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

Stop the U.S. War on Nicaragua! Speakers to be announced. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Protest the Murder of Juan Rodríguez by Police. Sat., Feb. 20. Assemble, 1 p.m. Bushwick Park (DeKalb subway stop). March to the 83rd Precinct. Sponsor: Latino Coalition for Racial Justice. For more information call (212) 927-9065.

20th Annual Malcolm X Memorial Awards Program. Guest speaker: Utrice C. Leid, the *City Sun*; film *Malcolm X*; cultural presentations by community artists. Sun., Feb. 21, 4-7 p.m. The College of New Rochelle, Brooklyn campus, 1368 Fulton St. (at New York Ave). Donation: \$3. Sponsor: East/Uhuru Cultural Center. For more information call (718) 398-1729.

Manhattan

What Road Forward in the Fight Against Racism? Speaker: Mac Warren, Black activist, national leader of Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

A Night in Solidarity With Casa Nicaragua. Commemorate the 54th anniversary of Augusto César Sandino's death. Inauguration of newsletter *Barricadita*. Sat., Feb. 20, 6-10 p.m. Goddard Riverside Community Center, downstairs at 593 Columbus Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Casa Nicaragua. For more information call (212) 769-4293.

End U.S. Intervention in the Philippines! Stop all military aid to the Aquino government. CIA and U.S. bases out! Picket line and rally. Thurs., Feb. 25, 5 p.m. Philippine consulate, 46th St. and 5th Ave. Sponsor: Campaign to End U.S. Intervention in the Philippines, Alliance for Philippine Concerns. For more information call (212) 269-2710.

Bound to Strike Back. A newly released film on the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Features material on the African National Congress and the United Democratic Front. Translation to Spanish. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

Fund Raiser Dance for the New York-Nicaragua Construction Brigade. Sat., Feb. 27, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. Taller Latinoamericano, 63 E 2nd St. Donation: \$7. Cash bar and music by DJ Will K. Wilkins. For more information call (212) 475-7159.

OREGON

Portland

Malcolm X: El-Hajj Malik el Shabazz. Video showing followed by discussion on the fight against racist attacks today. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2732 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Malcolm X: a Panel Discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2744 Germantown Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (215) 225-0213.

TEXAS

Houston

Malcolm X. The Man and His Ideas. A discussion sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Feb. 20, 3 p.m. 4806 Alameda. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Speakers: James Khyne, Young Socialist Alliance; Carmichael Khan, Union of Black Students, San Jacinto Community College. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

El-Hajj Malik el Shabazz. Video and presentation on revolutionary contribution of Malcolm X. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30

p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Haiti: a People Fighting for Freedom. Speakers: Yanick Moravi, Haitian artist; Matt Munro, Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 5517 Rainier Ave. S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Fight for Freedom in Southern Africa. Speaker: Sam Manuel, *Militant* reporter at the 1987 African National Congress' anti-apartheid conference in Tanzania. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston

Malcolm X: the Struggle for Freedom. A film followed by discussion. Speaker: Maggie McCraw, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 20, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

Prospects for Fighting Racism Today. A panel discussion with Andrew Pulley, Socialist Workers Party National Committee; others. Sat., Feb. 27, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

Morgantown

Palestine: Growing Resistance to Israeli Occupation. Speakers: Sameh Nasser, member of General Union of Palestinian Students and the Palestine Aid Society; John Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 20, 7 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee

Nicaragua: the Deepening Revolution and the Fight for Peace. Eyewitness report. Speaker: Margo Storsteen, participant on recent coffee-picking brigade in Nicaragua, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

Cuba's Example in the Fight Against Racism. Speakers: Tony Prince, Socialist Workers Party leader who has visited Cuba; others. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

Stop FBI Attacks on Political Rights. Speakers: Héctor Marroquín, Political Rights Defense Fund; Ruth Chojnacki, Milwaukee Sanctuary Coordinating Committee; Bob Clark, regional director, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Gil Delgado, board member, Racine-Kenosha Civil Rights Committee, United Auto Workers; Julie Enslow, Mobilization for Survival; Gillam Kerley, executive director, Committee Against Registration and the Draft; Ted Krukowki, president, United Electrical Workers Local 1111; representatives of Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, General Union of Palestinian Students, Central America Solidarity Coalition. Fri., March 4. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; rally, 7:30 p.m. UE Hall, 939 S 2nd St. Sponsors: PRDF, Mobilization for Survival, Central America Solidarity Coalition. For more information call (414) 263-4368.

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Sure, and maybe break a few bones — "I took a broken mirror to a shop over there two months ago, and I can't get it back. I say the police should weld their stores



Harry Ring

shut so they come and beg us to open them." — An Israeli resident of Jerusalem on the Palestinian merchants' strike.

Sounds reasonable — ATLANTA (AP) — Two health physicists who complained about safety at a nuclear reactor at the Georgia Institute of Technology have been dismissed by school officials who said the moves were part of a program to improve safety and productivity.

Not to hurry — In the last 20 years, 300 animal and plant species became extinct while the federal Fish and Wildlife Service pondered whether they should be added to the list of threatened and endangered species.

If the price was right — On

those revelations about Ed Meese's role in the alleged bribe offer to Israeli officials to help put through an Iraqi oil pipeline. One paper says that Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres pledged that if Israel did attack the pipeline, it would use future U.S. aid to pay for the repairs.

He'll appreciate people's problems — Thomas McEnery, incoming chief of New York's Parking Violations Bureau (\$82,000 a year), admits he was a scofflaw for at least six years prior to his appointment. Some of the tickets, he insists, were a bum rap, others the doings of his kids who were al-

ways using his five cars.

Insist on a union label — Bleached steer skulls have become a favorite with interior decorators and designers. They're a "weathered piece of the American dream," explains an artist. The skulls come from the meat-packing industry.

Never entered our head — "It's not that I lack compassion." — Presidential hopeful Pat Robertson, explaining his opposition to government-subsidized housing while en route from a \$1,000-a-head reception to a \$100-a-plate dinner.

What odds are they giving? — "Several analysts said the market is likely to remain skittish until some way is found to resolve the common perception that the market has turned into some kind of casino, where luck outweighs reason and small investors have no chance." — AP.

Spurs individual initiative — "People not knowing what's going to happen to them, they're going to look for ways and means to accumulate some money on the side." — A New York lawyer on the jump in fraud and embezzlement accompanying the surge of corporate mergers and shakeups.

How U.S. govt, employers violate workers' rights

Continued from Page 9

to issue injunctions barring national strikes that he held to be contrary to the national interest. Such federal injunctions have been used against national strikes in the steel and mining industries.

• **The Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959.** This act was adopted as a result of the McClellan hearings, hearings held by a Senate select committee in 1957 and named after its chair, Arkansas Sen. John McClellan. This committee was established on the motion of the notorious Sen. Joseph McCarthy to investigate labor "racketeering."

The real purpose of the hearings was to find popular justification for government intervention in the union movement.

Workers' concern over certain practices and undemocratic behavior by the officials in some unions was used in the hearings to justify interference in internal union affairs.

This intervention was codified in the Landrum-Griffin Act. This act extended the loyalty provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, barring members of the Communist Party, as well as anyone ever convicted of felony charges, from holding union office.

Many unionists had had frame-up felony charges brought against them in past labor battles. These provisions were later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court but advanced the idea of the government's right to censor candidates for union office and police their political views.

The law contained provisions for government supervision over the election of union officers, from stewards to president.

The U.S. Labor Department was empowered to send its agents into union headquarters; inspect membership lists, financial accounts, union files, and other records; and regulate general union procedures, including strike authorization and contract ratification votes.

Under the guise of protecting the union membership from crooked officials, the act actually advanced government penetration of internal union affairs and interference with union business, weakening the capacity of the union movement to develop and organize to successfully combat attacks by the employers and the government.

This entire series of laws eroded the independent strength of the union movement, especially the industrial unions born in the massive organizing drives of the 1930s.

While sometimes passed in the name of union rights and sometimes overtly for regulation over union strength and to intervene in internal union affairs, all of these laws as applied over decades have weakened the ability of workers to organize independently of government interference and defend their interests from corporate attack.

Workers forced on strike today face legal barriers to effective picketing, to picketing in solidarity with or honoring boycotts of fellow unionists, and to conducting their internal affairs free from government interference.

They are subject to strikebreaking intervention by the president and the courts and crippling fines for violating injunctions or no-strike clauses in their contracts.

Federal agencies have numerous legal avenues to intervene in union internal affairs, including removing elected officers and imposing federal trusteeships.

Individual workers who protest illegal or unsafe conditions often have no legal pro-

tection from losing their jobs. If unionists do have legal bases to challenge corporate behavior, they have to confront the red tape of an increasingly antiunion NLRB.

And additionally, in government jobs or jobs under government contract, political police agencies, including the Defense Investigative Service, assert the legal right to spy on individuals, including their personal, political, and union activity, and to cause them to be fired.

In addition to laws stacked against unions and special political police operations targeting workers, unionists face working conditions and safety hazards on the job that imperil their ability to live full lives and devote time to efforts to improve their situation.

The richest country in the world is far behind in guaranteeing health and safety for its workers.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, created by the Occupational Safety and Health Act, is the federal agency charged with policing health and safety conditions in the larger plants covered by the act.

However, this agency is understaffed, restricted by adverse court decisions, and incapable of seriously protecting workers' lives and health.

For instance, a 1978 Supreme Court decision, *Marshall v. Barlow's, Inc.* prohibits OSHA from inspecting a work site for safety violations without either the employer's prior permission or a public court order.

Such restrictions allow employers to be aware of OSHA inspections and temporarily alter or hide unsafe conditions.

Nonetheless, union documentation and OSHA and other government statistics do provide a partial picture of the dire health and safety situation workers face in the United States.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reported in 1987 that 32,342 Americans died at work from 1980 to 1984.

This study showed the industry with the most deaths per worker to be the mining industry, with 315 mining deaths each year over the five-year study, and an annual fatality rate of 30.1 per 100,000 workers.

Farm workers, fishermen, and forestry workers also face high death rates in the United States. The same five-year federal study showed 20.3 deaths per 100,000 workers in these industries annually.

The most hazardous U.S. industry overall is meat-packing.

In 1985, the last year statistics are available, the 100,000 workers in this industry faced an injury rate of 30.4 work-related injuries and illnesses per 100 workers. This staggering figure is rising as line speedup is spreading in the industry.

At the John Morrell plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the hog kill now runs at 1,065 head an hour, up from 365 in 1960. Workers on this line must perform their job every 3.4 seconds. It is not surprising that this spring OSHA levied the fourth-largest fine in its history against this John Morrell plant — \$690,000 — for covering up the seriousness of workers' injuries in its records.

On the beef kill line in this plant, where 175 carcasses are split every hour, the chain moves 84 percent faster than it did in 1979, and over that time the injury rate has increased 76 percent.

Workers in the meat-packing industry,

as in many others where workers are forced to constantly repeat the same motion on an assembly line, increasingly fall victim to a new generation of disabilities caused only by this type of repetitive work, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Iowa Beef Processors, another meat-packing firm, admitted in testimony before the Employment and Housing Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee that it lied to the committee five months earlier when it denied keeping two sets of injury records — one for itself and another for OSHA inspectors.

IBP admitted its own in-house records listed 1,800 workplace injuries over a three-month period in 1985 while it provided OSHA with another list covering the same time period listing only 160 injuries.

While mining and meat-packing are among the most dangerous industries in the United States, workers in all major industries face serious risks and debilitating conditions.

On Oct. 5, 1987, GM agreed to pay \$500,000 in fines for constantly underreporting job injuries. This is the largest such penalty ever paid for record-keeping offenses as opposed to actual job hazard violations.

Among the injuries the company failed to report or recorded improperly were bone

fractures, burns, back injuries, and repetitive motion disorders.

Industries that regularly employ large numbers of undocumented workers, such as farm workers, of course, function in a gray zone of illegality, and are able to impose harshly unsanitary and unhealthy conditions.

Because of the semilegal character of the work force in these industries, the full impact of these conditions on the workers is not documented.

In addition to illegal health and safety violations, many major industries organize work in such a way as to slash workers' free time for personal, political, and union activity and, over the long run, affect workers' health.

Examples of such work organization are forced overtime, as in the auto industry; constantly rotating shifts, as in steel, causing workers to shift from days, to afternoons, to evenings, to nights on a weekly basis; and being forced to work irregular or changing shifts, or be on call, as in the rail industry.

These conditions — political police victimization, unfair labor laws, stacked federal boards, agencies unable to do their job, and grim health and safety conditions — combine to paint a bleak picture for workers' rights in the United States.

— 10 AND 25 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
Feb. 24, 1978

February 15 — The events of the past week mark a turning point in what has become the longest national coal strike in U.S. history:

- The ranks of the United Mine Workers refused to have a company-dictated contract rammed down their throats. The power of the membership upsurge quickly prompted the UMWA Bargaining Council to vote down the proposed settlement.

- The energy corporations and state government officials stepped up their campaign to incite public opinion against the miners by threatening blackouts, mass layoffs, and price increases.

- Now, behind a smoke screen of concern over "hardships" caused by the strike, the administration of President James Carter is moving to help the coal operators break the strike.

The strike "cannot be allowed to continue," Carter declared yesterday. He threatened to order the miners back to work with a Taft-Hartley injunction and warned he was readying federal force for "protection of life and property."

The same day, Indiana Gov. Otis Bowen called out the National Guard to "protect" scab coal shipments. He warned strikers they would interfere "at their peril."

THE MILITANT
Published in the Interests of the Working People
Feb. 25, 1963 Price 10c

(The Militant reprinted news reports about a peasant uprising and land seizures in Peru, which had been going on since mid-1962. Socialist Hugo Blanco was a central

leader of this movement. Below is an excerpt from one of the items, taken from the Cuban magazine Bohemia.)

The next day [November 18], another dispatch reported that the commandant of the Civil Guard and Police of Peru, Gen. Humberto Quea, was going to Quillabamba, capital of the province of Convención, in the Department of Cuzco, to "reestablish order."

Quea made the following statement to the press: "I will personally finish quickly with the guerrilla bands in any part of Peru."

Nine days later, Quea himself abruptly left the region of Convención, where he had arrived accompanied by more than 5,000 soldiers, helicopters, and tanks, and returned to Lima, after his operations were a complete failure. . . .

Ten days before the [guerrilla] attack on the police station of Pujyura more than 8,000 campesinos gathered in the capital of the department [Cuzco] to demand agrarian reform, under the slogan of "Land or death."

The police attacked them with bombs and tear gas. The campesinos fought back with stones and clubs, and they held the police at bay for three hours. As a result one campesino was killed, seven were gravely injured, and 43 received cuts and bruises. Fifteen policemen were injured.

The government sent 40 tanks — made in the United States, of course — to that city to reinforce its military units and to prevent by force any demonstration by the people. . . .

Blanco is around 28 years old and he looks much younger. . . . Like the campesinos of the region he usually wears no shoes. He wears a pair of pants firmly tied around his waist, a worn-out shirt and a broadbrimmed hat as well as his inseparable *talega* — a bag made of ordinary material for the carrying of food.

Hands off PLO UN office!

The struggle of the Palestinian people for basic human and democratic rights has thrown a monkey wrench into Washington's plans to shut down the Palestine Liberation Organization observer mission to the United Nations.

It has also given impetus to efforts to reverse the closing of the Palestine Information Office in Washington, D.C.

The threats to close these offices are part of the U.S. government's attempts to prejudice the people of the United States against the PLO. It aims to prevent us from learning the truth about the Palestinians' fight for their land and rights.

As each night's television news shows, Palestinians refuse to be cowed despite the beatings and shootings by Israeli troops. And sympathy for the Palestinian cause grows.

For Washington — without whose financial, political, and military aid Israel could not exist — this is bad news.

On February 10 Justice Department officials postponed announcement of the shutdown of the PLO mission to allow further consultation with White House and State Department officials.

The closing of the offices was mandated by an amendment to a State Department funding bill adopted by congressional Democrats and Republicans and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in December.

The amendment proclaims the PLO a terrorist organization. It bars anyone from opening an office and spending or raising money to publicize the views of the PLO, if the government holds these actions to be "at the behest of the PLO."

The bill was supported by a broad spectrum of politicians ranging from right-wing Republicans such as Rep. Jack Kemp, to liberal Democrats such as senators Edward Kennedy and Paul Simon.

Prior to the passage of the measure, the State Department shut down the Palestine Information Office in Washington, D.C., which was staffed by U.S. citizens. This move is now being appealed in the courts.

The target of the gag order and the "terrorist" smear is not only the PLO, but the entire Palestinian people. It is their decades-long struggle against the Israeli takeover of Palestine that forged the PLO.

The overwhelming majority of the people of the world support the Palestinian struggle. That is why the UN, Arab League, Movement of Nonaligned Countries, and many other international organizations recognize the PLO as the voice of the Palestinian people.

A UN committee voted 100-to-1 December 11 to condemn the legislation to close the PLO mission. The Israeli delegate cast the only no vote.

Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar indicated in a December 7 letter that the move would violate U.S. treaty obligations.

The governments of Canada and the 12 members of the European Economic Community, almost all U.S. allies, echoed his stand.

Opposition to the move has also been fueled by fears that the shut down would set a precedent. The U.S. government would be asserting the right to effectively bar from the UN any government or movement it opposes.

The targets could range from the missions of the African National Congress of South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia to those of Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Vietnam, and others U.S. officials frequently label "terrorist."

Washington should rescind the closing of the Palestine Information Office and drop its threat to close the UN mission.

Government can't deport Randall

Officials of the Immigration and Naturalization Service announced February 4 that they were dropping efforts to deport author Margaret Randall because of the political views expressed in her books. This marks an important victory for democratic rights.

The Bureau of Immigration Appeals still must rule on her application for permanent resident status.

The U.S.-born author of 40 books gave up U.S. citizenship in 1967 while living in Mexico, which she did in order to facilitate getting a job there. Since then she has lived in both Cuba and Nicaragua. Randall returned to the United States in 1984.

The INS had denied her request for permanent resident status and ordered her deported on the grounds that her writings advocate the "doctrines of world communism," making her subject to deportation under the McCarran-Walter Act.

Judge Martin Spiegel upheld the INS, citing books such as *Sandino's Daughters* and *Women in Cuba* as examples of the forbidden "doctrines of world Communism."

This put Randall in the center of the fight against the INS's right to refuse someone entry on the basis of his or her political ideas and writings.

According to attorney David Cole of the Center for Constitutional Rights, who represented Randall, INS officials conceded that legislation adopted by Congress in December effectively bars further deportation proceedings against her.

The measure enacted in the closing days of 1987 imposes a one-year ban on the exclusion of noncitizens because of "past, current, or expected statements, beliefs, or associations" that would be protected by the Constitution if they were citizens. It suspends for one year several provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act, adopted during the peak of the reactionary witch-hunt in 1952.

Prominent writers who protested the order to deport Randall included Arthur Miller, Kurt Vonnegut, Alice Walker, Norman Mailer, and William Styron.

Broad protest has also greeted other attempts to exclude people from the United States because of their political views — such as the seven Palestinians and one Kenyan in Los Angeles who are threatened with deportation because of their support to the Palestinian struggle; Mexican-born socialist Héctor Marroquín who is fighting for permanent residency rights; and Cubans and others invited to attend conferences or speak at gatherings in the United States but barred by the U.S. government.

As Margaret Randall told the *Militant* the INS officials' move toward dropping deportation proceedings "is a victory for many more than just myself." It is a victory for every immigrant and visitor to this country, and for the rights of all to think, read, and discuss political ideas.

"The struggle won't be over," Randall pointed out, "until my permanent residency rights have been granted."

Gays, soldiers win rights victory

A San Francisco appeals court ruled February 10 that the army's discharge of Sgt. Perry Watkins because of his homosexual orientation was unconstitutional. This is a victory for democratic rights, especially those of gays and soldiers.

The army's discriminatory treatment of Smith was brutal and blatant. He enlisted in the army in 1967, stating on his enlistment forms that he was gay.

In 1981, the army changed its rules to bar all admitted homosexuals — not just homosexual acts, which had been prohibited by previous undemocratic regulations. Three years later, Smith was discharged because of his admitted homosexuality, four years before he qualified for military pension.

By a 2 to 1 majority, the appeals court ruled that the army regulation and Perry's discharge violated the right of all citizens to equal protection under the law because it "illegitimately cater[ed] to private bias."

The court ordered the army to consider Watkins' application for reenlistment "without regard to his sexual orientation."

The army brass had defended the ban by claiming that it prevented clashes with soldiers who "despise" homosexuals. The majority decision dismissed the claim,

pointing out that the same argument had been used decades ago to justify segregation and other discrimination against Blacks in the army.

The majority decision also highlighted the invasion of privacy, as well as discrimination, implicit in the army's actions. "Laws that limit the acceptable focus of one's sexual desires to members of the opposite sex, like laws that limit one's choice of spouse (or sexual partner) to members of the same race, cannot withstand constitutional scrutiny absent a compelling governmental justification."

The ruling in Smith's case is a weapon in the fight to win equal rights for gays and lesbians in immigration, governmental employment, housing, and other areas where they are discriminated against.

And the decision strengthens the fight for full constitutional rights for members of the armed forces. The military brass have always attempted to enforce the idea that workers and farmers give up these rights when they put on a uniform, thereby justifying a myriad of unconstitutional restrictions on freedom of speech and other liberties.

The Justice Department seems poised to appeal the decision. All supporters of democratic rights should rally to defend it.

A discussion with readers on the Palestinian revolt

BY DOUG JENNESS

On the facing page we publish two letters by readers on the *Militant's* coverage of the Palestinian revolt in Israel.

Raquel Hecht thinks that it's too bad that Israel has held on to the West Bank and Gaza Strip for so long, but she sees no alternative to continued Israeli rule there.

Tom Mauer, on the other hand, questions why the *Militant* hasn't raised the demand for "Israeli withdrawal

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

from the occupied territories." He explains why he thinks this is a good proposal and links it to the idea of forming "a Palestinian government in the areas liberated."

I disagree with Maurer's argumentation. Perhaps one of the problems is describing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as "occupied territories."

We've also used this term sometimes in our pages, which may even have contributed to Maurer's thinking that logically we should be calling for Israeli withdrawal.

But referring to these parts of Israel as occupied areas gives a wrong impression about the relationship between Israel and Palestine.

For many years Palestinians, and the other Arab peoples of the Middle East, fought bloody battles to win independence from colonial rule. While some Arab peoples won independence after World War II, giving further impetus to the struggle for national liberation, the imperialist powers intervened in 1947 to help set up the Israeli settler state on Palestinian soil. It was an imperialist beachhead in the midst of the Arab revolution.

At first Palestine was partitioned by the United Nations into two states — one Israeli and one Palestinian. But in 1948-49, Israel seized much of the rest of Palestine. The West Bank was incorporated into Jordan and the Gaza Strip into Egypt.

In the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel seized these remaining parts of Palestine.

Through military conquest, it has brought all of Palestine under its political rule. And it has increasingly incorporated the Palestinian toilers into the Israeli economy.

If we call for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, shouldn't we also call for it to get out of the areas it took in 1947 and 1948? But to do this would mean Israel dismembering itself — something it's obviously not about to do.

What's different about the West Bank and Gaza is that they have not been formally annexed into Israel and remain under martial law. But this does not mean that they haven't been made part of Israel. It is the form of rule that has best suited the Israeli capitalists' needs.

In the parts of Palestine Israel conquered earlier, it had attempted to establish a Jewish majority through encouraging Jewish immigration and expelling Palestinians.

But Israeli expansion into the West Bank and Gaza was driven by the need for more labor power, which wasn't being met by Jewish immigration. This need was met by depriving the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza of their land and forcing them into the Israeli labor market. Military rule was a necessary part of accomplishing and maintaining this.

What would happen to the West Bank and Gaza if Israel "withdrew," as Maurer proposes? Should Jordan get the West Bank and Egypt Gaza? But these areas are not historically part of Jordan and Egypt. They are part of Palestine, and Palestinians don't want to be brought under the domination of those governments.

Maurer suggests a Palestinian-run government in these areas. But how would it maintain its independence wedged in between Israel (which has a massive military force), Jordan, and Egypt?

Moreover, these two areas are economically intertwined with the rest of Israel as clearly shown by the tens of thousands of workers who are bused from the West Bank and Gaza into factories, construction sites, and farms in other parts of Israel. Under these conditions no real autonomy could exist.

Maurer contends that this demand does not "imply acceptance of the State of Israel within its pre-1967 borders." But despite Maurer's intentions, it does imply this. And most of those who advocate "autonomy" proposals of this sort think so too. That's why they support them. And that's one of the problems.

Proposing an "independent" Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank is an obstacle, not a stepping stone, to the democratic struggle of the Palestinian people for full independence in their homeland. This requires uniting all workers and working farmers in Israel — both Arab and Jewish — into a powerful fight to establish a democratic, secular Palestine.

A revolutionary struggle that can overturn the Israeli state is needed to do this. This, and not utopian calls on Israel to dismember itself, is the road forward.

The fight against military rule in the West Bank and Gaza and for democratic rights and land to those whose lands have been stolen is an important part of mobilizing the forces that can carry out this democratic revolution.

U.S. invasion of Grenada: no great military feat

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The October 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada was hailed by President Ronald Reagan as one of his finest political and military triumphs. A television show entitled "Operation Urgent Fury," which was the code name for the U.S. invasion of Grenada, argues effectively against Reagan's version of these events. It was part of the PBS series "Frontline" and was aired February 2.

The program, which is based on former *New York*

IN REVIEW

Times correspondent Seymour Hersh's investigative reporting, highlights the deep political hostility of the Reagan administration toward the Grenada revolution led by Maurice Bishop.

"It's not nutmeg at stake in the Caribbean but U.S. national security," charged Reagan. He furthermore described Grenada as "a Soviet-Cuban colony being readied as a military bastion to export terror and undermine democracy."

The program fails to adequately describe the tremendous social and political gains won by the Grenadian

masses during the 1979-83 revolution. However, excellent film footage shows Prime Minister Bishop warning and helping organize Grenadian workers and peasants against the threat of a U.S. invasion. U.S. troops are shown practicing for such an invasion in 1981 on an island off the coast of Puerto Rico.

A faction within the ruling New Jewel Movement led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard overthrew the workers' and farmers' government and murdered Bishop and other central leaders in mid-October 1983. A 24-hour shoot-to-kill curfew was imposed on the country.

These actions gave Washington the political opening, which it otherwise would not have had, to invade Grenada on October 25.

Cuban President Fidel Castro explained that Washington's invasion was nothing more than an attempt to destroy a symbol by attacking a corpse. This invasion by the mightiest imperialist power of one of the world's smallest islands was no great military feat. In fact, the U.S. invading force faced political, military, and morale problems.

Several days prior to the invasion, a 10-ship U.S. naval task force on its way to Lebanon was diverted to the waters off Grenada. U.S. military bases from Florida to

the state of Washington were put on alert.

The pretext for this 9,600-troop invasion was to rescue 600 U.S. medical school students studying on the island. However, military commanders of the invasion didn't even know where all the students were located. Tourist maps of Grenada from 1978 provided to the troops for use in the military operations listed only one campus, when there were actually two different campuses, and other sites where students lived.

"I was shocked, stunned," explained Lt. Gen. Norman Schwartzkopf, the chief military commander of the invasion, upon learning about the three other campuses.

The invasion itself represented the biggest danger to the safety of the students, explained medical student Lucy Painter.

The invasion was spearheaded by the 82nd Airborne Division—the army's premier fighting force. The troops, who were stationed in the United States, weren't told until the last moment what country they were going to invade. When they actually arrived in Grenada, they were more confused than ever.

"We didn't know what we were fighting for," explained a soldier. "Even senior officers didn't know what we were doing."

LETTERS

Palestine

I've been wondering why the *Militant* hasn't raised the demand for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The massive Palestinian revolt seems to pose the question of who is to rule the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of the Jordan River.

While the demand falls short of full national liberation—as all of Israel, not just the areas seized in 1967, is occupied Palestinian territory, as the *Militant* editorial of January 15 pointed out—its fulfillment would be a big step in that direction.

There is enormous potential for mobilizing the vast majority of Palestinians—in the territories, within the borders of Israel, and in exile in various countries of the region—in struggle to force the Zionists out of the West Bank and Gaza.

The Arab governments of the Mideast would have a hard time trying not to support such a struggle. And some degree of support could even be won among Israeli Jews, who have been demonstrating increasing war-weariness and opposition to expansionism.

It should be emphasized that this demand does not imply acceptance of the State of Israel within its pre-1967 borders. It simply relates directly to the fact that the struggle for Palestinian national liberation today is focused on and taking place in the occupied territories.

The situation calls for trying to force the Israelis out, and the formation of a Palestinian government in the areas liberated. With even a small portion of Palestine under Palestinian control, I think we will see a powerful impetus to further struggle.

Tom Mauer
Dallas, Texas

Pro-Palestinian action

On February 3 more than 75 people demonstrated in front of the Law School of Columbia University to protest the visit of Brig. Gen. Amnon Straschnow, judge advocate of the Israeli Defense Forces.

In that capacity, he is responsible for administering the legal system in Gaza and the West Bank, where violations of the Geneva Convention abound, including the murder of at least 43 Palestinian civilians, the arrest of at least 2,000 more, and the subjection of at least 250,000 to 24-hour curfews in collective punishments.

Straschnow was invited by the Council of Jewish Organizations and Columbia Students for Israel, and the invitation was acquiesced to by the Columbia administration and faculty.

Headed by the Arab Club of

Columbia and supported by a variety of individuals and organizations, the demonstrators held signs reading, "It is not a crime to be a Palestinian" and "End U.S. Israeli occupation."

Ali el Amir
New York, New York

Israel

Your coverage on Israel is not only extremely biased, but also very badly informed.

Your articles do not inform your readers of the underlying problems occurring in the occupied territories.

I think it is a mistake for the Israelis to have occupied the territories for so long. However, the Israelis feel threatened by the many forces in the Middle East that are trying to overthrow them.

The real problem lies in being able to return these territories to someone.

The Gaza Strip, which was taken by the Egyptians during wartime, is not wanted by them in return, and does not have an economic structure that could support an independent government.

The West Bank could be returned to the Jordanians, but they claim they will not accept it without Jerusalem as well.

Furthermore, the Palestinians who had left their homeland before it became Israel in 1948 are in a much worse situation under the cruel treatment of their "brother" Arabs in neighboring countries.

As to your underlying insinuations that the land of Israel should be run by the Palestinians, I think you have failed to rationalize the reality of the Arab form of government. You have allowed your emotions for the "underdogs" to slant your view of reality and to fantasize a nonexistent form of government.

Raquel Hecht
New York, New York

New world

We look forward to receiving the *Militant*.

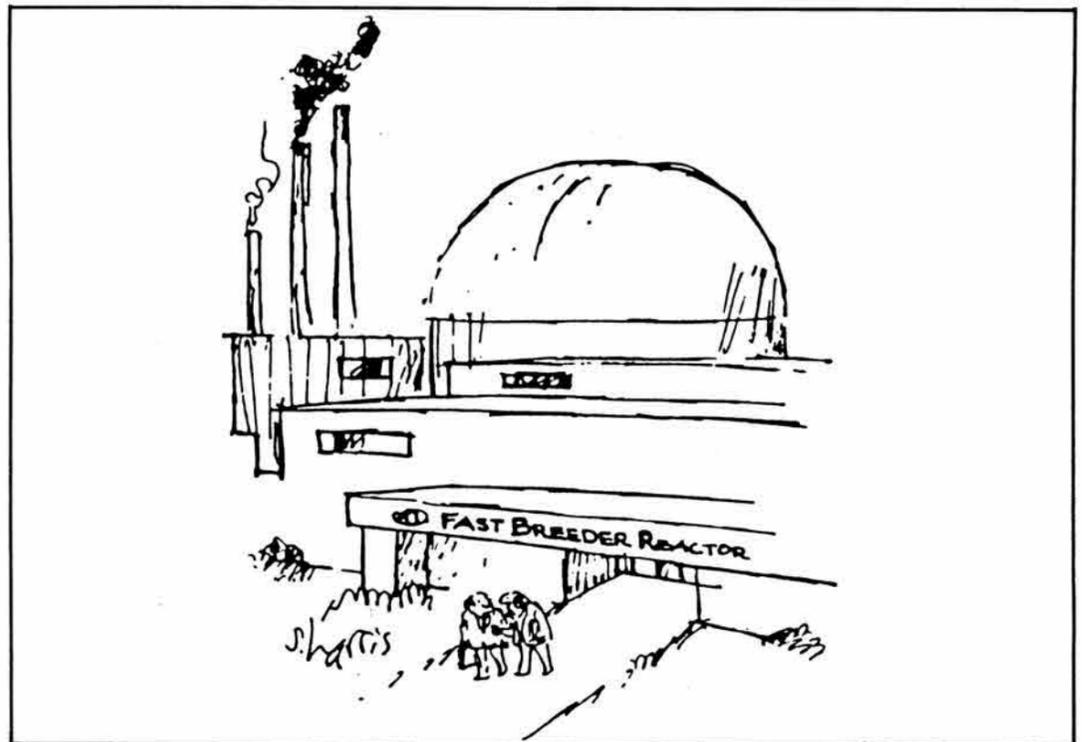
We really enjoyed Castro's speeches—that is truly unique coverage of how the world is. There are 6 to 10 of us who read your newspaper here, though staff members frown.

We smile, for this is the news of the new world.

A prisoner
Milan, Michigan

Can do no wrong

The *Militant* reported on February 5 that one of the legal bases upon which the Justice Department was appealing the decision of Judge Thomas Griesa against govern-



Current Contents

"What we must decide is, if there is an accidental nuclear explosion that wipes out this entire part of the country, do we pass the cost on to the consumer?"

ment spying on the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance was the Federal Torts Claim Act's "discretionary function" exemption.

It was the FTCA "exemption" that the federal government also invoked to recently cheat the victims of nuclear weapons testing in Nevada.

Hundreds of people downwind of the test site received high doses of radiation, causing cancer, genetic birth defects, and death. When the survivors claimed compensation, despite the shocking unmasking of a 35-year government cover-up, it was able to avoid paying just compensation through the FTCA discretionary function exemption.

One antinuclear activist commented that this is the 20th century equivalent of the old feudal law "The king can do no wrong."

In these cases, as in others, the U.S. government thinks it can do no wrong if what it does is in the "national interest"—translated, the interests of the rich and powerful economic kings of finance and industry.

Scott Breen
Salt Lake City, Utah

Colt strike

About 1,000 trade unionists and their supporters rallied outside the Colt Manufacturing Firearms plant in Hartford, Connecticut, last month in solidarity with United Auto Workers members who have been on strike for two years.

After Colt refused to budge on demands for major concessions,

1,100 members of United Auto Workers Local 376 struck Jan. 24, 1986. Colt is trying to force givebacks despite huge profits.

The company has hired hundreds of scabs since the strike began.

The strikers have been receiving weekly benefits of \$100 for the last two years. Many are now sleeping in shelters and have joined the growing number of homeless workers in Hartford. One worker told me about a striker who sleeps under a bridge each night and still joins the picket line each day.

The highlight of the rally was solidarity from striking paperworkers from Jay, Maine, and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. The crowd cheered when one of the Jay strikers said, "We can't bring money today to aid you in your strike, but we can learn from you and your experiences. We want what you want. Scabs out, union in."

Contributions and messages of solidarity can be sent to UAW Local 376, P.O. Box 9131, Wethersfield, Conn. 06109.

Betsy Soares
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Meat-packers

Recently meat-packers suffered setbacks in their efforts to reorganize the union at Armour packing plants in Kansas City, Missouri, and Nampa, Idaho.

These Armour plants used to be organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). That's before the company was sold twice. The plants ended up

being reopened by ConAgra Inc. in 1983 as nonunion operations.

Prounion meat-packers lost a representation election in Nampa last November by 14 votes. The next month we lost a close vote at the Kansas City plant with 98 workers voting "no union" and 88 for the UFCW.

I was fired by the company a week before the election for being active in the union's in-plant organizing committee. I was working as a ham boner.

The company tried to cover up the real reason for the firing, saying I wasn't as productive as boners who had been on the job several years.

Workers on the boning table responded to the firing by stopping work and demanding meetings with management. The in-plant committee distributed 250 leaflets protesting the firing as a blow to the union-organizing effort and demanding that I be rehired.

The UFCW challenged the firing by filing an unfair labor practice suit with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). These efforts resulted in my being rehired on January 4.

Raúl González
Kansas City, Missouri

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.

British Ford strikers ratify pact

Auto giant's European-wide operations hit hard by walkout

BY TONI GORTON

LONDON — As we go to press, Britain's 32,500 Ford workers approved a new contract. They have been on strike since February 7.

Ford officials from Detroit intervened to try to get the strike at its 22 British plants settled because it was having a serious impact on production at the company's other European operations.

In the proposed new agreement, the giant auto company accepted a two-year contract, backing down on its original demand that the workers take a three-year contract. Ford also dropped its demand for inclusion of sweeping work-rule changes in the national contract. Instead, the proposed changes are to be taken up in local negotiations.

The settlement includes an immediate wage hike of 7 percent retroactive to November. In the second year of the contract workers will receive another 7 percent raise or an increase of 2.5 percent greater than the rate of inflation, whichever is higher.

The contract also includes increases in pension benefits and in benefits for workers laid off in the future.

Most of the workers are members of the Transport and General Workers Union. The rest belong to other unions.

The company's plan for its British plants included complete flexibility to assign workers to jobs. This would have meant skilled workers being put on the line and semiskilled workers being assigned to light maintenance work without having their pay increased.

Management also wanted the increased use of employee-management cooperation schemes such as the "team concept" or "quality circles."

Ford wanted the longer three-year con-



British Ford workers picket at Dagenham plant in East London. Striking unionists reached out for solidarity worldwide in strike against giant auto company.

tract so it has time on its hands to drive through the changes.

The vast Ford empire in 38 different locations in Europe was hard hit within hours by the stoppage of production in Britain. The company has tried to keep an edge over competitors and increase profits by cutting back on the amount of capital invested in parts. Ford calculates production schedules so parts produced at its British plants get to other European operations "just in time" to be assembled on the cars

and trucks as they pass along the assembly line.

The company's Genk, Belgium, plant came to a standstill within the first few days of the strike because it could not get the engines normally produced at Dagenham in East London. Production at the Saarlouis plant on West Germany's western border was also quickly cut in half.

A shortage of diesel engines produced in the Halewood plant in Liverpool led to sub-

stantial production cuts at Ford in Valencia, Spain.

The national union negotiating committee appealed to the International Metal Workers Federation for support.

Messages of solidarity came in from many union bodies. A statement from workers at German plants read in part, "We decided to avoid any kind of work which could endanger your dispute. We are well aware of the possible consequences (for us) such as a cessation of production or the reduction of our wages."

The large Transport Workers Union local at Dagenham reached out for support to workers in Britain and internationally. They contacted unions and shop stewards committees throughout Europe and in Brazil, Canada, the United States, South Africa, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

By and large, Ford has been able throughout Europe to impose its demands for three-year contracts with job combinations, changes in work rules, and quality circles and other employee-involvement schemes.

Miners face challenge at Pittston Coal

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

NORTON, Va. — Route 63 in the southwest corner of this state is dotted by small mining communities.

Many mines here are owned by Pittston Coal Group. On February 13, Pittston announced that it refused to sign a contract similar to the national agreement reached with most coal companies February 8.

A four-person *Militant* reporting and sales team has been traveling through this area talking to miners and their families.

Two thousand United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members work at Pittston's 20 metallurgical coal mines, some of which are located in Kentucky and West Virginia. The company employs another 1,000 workers at its nonunion operations. Four thousand more workers are on layoff from Pittston.

The company cut off health benefits to pensioners, surviving spouses, and disabled former workers just as its old contract with the union expired January 31.

The UMWA leadership instructed its members at Pittston to remain on the job past the contract expiration while negotiations with the company continued.

In the wake of Pittston's refusal to sign the national contract, the local press says Virginia State police are dispatching special units to the state's seven coal-producing counties.

UMWA Vice-president Cecil Roberts has been quoted in coalfield newspapers as saying Pittston is "looking for a strike." Roberts said the union has decided not to strike and that it will keep union members

on the job and continue "to bargain in good faith."

Pittston has also hired Vance Security, a union-busting outfit notorious for its role in the 1984-85 strike at A.T. Massey mines. Pittston officials have given these gun thugs the polite name of "asset protection teams." Vance Security is owned and operated by the son-in-law of former U.S. president Gerald Ford.

"The miners want to work. It's the company that is causing all the problems. They destroyed our environment, took all the natural resources, and want to leave us with nothing," a miners' wife told us.

"If Pittston broke the union here, it would hurt everybody," another woman said. Her son-in-law is a disabled Pittston miner.

"Miners here face losing everything. It took years to get what they had. Pittston wants people to strike," a laid-off miner stated.

A few miners said they were unhappy about the idea of staying on the job after the old contract expired. But several emphasized that they are willing to stand up to Pittston's attack. "We're not intimidated by the company's threat to hire Vance Security," said one.

"The company will eventually be forced to sign a contract," said another.

"What we want people to know is that we are stronger than Pittston thinks we are and more together," a third union member emphasized.

We also found that union miners were confused about what working without a

contract means. "I don't know anything about what's going on," one miner told us. Another miner said foremen are stepping up harassment. "They are telling us that we are only making \$80 a day," he said. That would be far less than under the old contract.

Others said they think they are working under the terms of the old contract, but would only know for sure "when we get our paychecks next week."

Ohio: 7,000 GE workers strike to protest job combinations

BY VAL LIBBY

CINCINNATI — On February 16 the giant General Electric jet engine plant here was shut down solid by a 5:00 a.m. walkout of members of United Auto Workers Local 647 and International Association of Machinists Lodge 912. Their membership is about 7,000 workers.

Picket lines of 25 to 100 workers at each of the more than dozen plant gates protested a job-consolidation plan that GE management is trying to ram through. Union members know this plan will force more work on less workers, and result in increased layoffs. About 350 workers were already laid off in January, despite billions of dollars in new contracts for jet engines.

The unions are also protesting millions of dollars in work being contracted out to nonunion shops.

Four months before the current national contract expires, GE management is trying to rip up the agreement with the UAW, announcing a February 22 implementation date for job combinations, whether the union agrees or not.

The sweeping job consolidations will affect 80 percent of the UAW members at GE. It will combine over 80 job classifications into about 30. As bait, GE has said that some workers would get a wage increase. But 7 percent of the job classifications would suffer wage cuts.

As one worker said, "Sure, they said I'd get a raise. But if I don't fight this now, I won't have a job in three months."

Val Libby is a striking member of UAW Local 647 at the GE plant.