

## Canada: chauvinist drive harms workers

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — As a result of the reelection of the Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, the "free trade" pact between Canada and the United States will be ratified by the Canadian Parliament before the Jan. 1, 1989, deadline. The Conservative Party swept the November 21 election with a clear majority winning 169 seats.

The trade accord was the central issue in the election campaign. The pact was opposed by the trade union officialdom, New Democratic Party (NDP, the Social Democratic-led party linked to the unions), and the big-business Liberal Party. It aims to eliminate most tariffs and other trade barriers between the United States and Canada over a 10-year period.

A discussion has now begun within the labor movement across the country on what impact Mulroney's victory will have on the lives of working people. The NDP and trade union leaderships, as well as many workers and farmers, see the election results as a major defeat in a two-year battle against the trade deal.

This view was reinforced by three plant shutdowns in Toronto and Montréal in the week after the elections, involving the loss of close to 1,000 jobs. A lot of workers point to the impending trade deal as the cause of the shutdowns.

However, this view is false. The real setback to working people is the disorienting impact of the reactionary, chauvinist, Canadian nationalist campaign against the trade pact waged by the NDP and trade union officials.

Not since World War II have the trade union bureaucrats and Social Democratic politicians led such a poisonous, patriotic, flag-waving campaign. That campaign served to line up working people behind the war drive of Canada's rulers and the inter-imperialist slaughter that redivided the world among the major capitalist powers.

The anti-free trade campaign is serving the interests of the employers by diverting the attention of working people from advancing proposals to defend ourselves against the growing crisis of the world capitalist system and the coming depression that was signaled by the October 1987 stock market crash.

Canada is one of the seven most powerful imperialist countries in the world. It is ruled by 100 or so billionaire and millionaire families whose class interests are linked to those of the ruling rich in the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, and the other imperialist countries. They are part and parcel of the world imperialist chain that dominates two-thirds of humanity.

Superprofits from the exploitation of the labor of working people in the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America flow into the vaults of Canadian banks and corporations. Canada's capitalist rulers are the class enemies of working people in Canada and throughout the world.

Over the past decade, with the continued decline in profit rates, growing instability of the world banking system, and sharpening competition of the imperialist powers for markets, the contradictions of world capitalism have reached explosive proportions.

To increase their competitiveness Canada's rulers have for years been on a drive to restructure industry, cut back expenditures of social services, and to roll back demo-

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## Soviet regime attacks national rights protests

### Gorbachev sends troops against Armenia, Azerbaijan

BY FRED FELDMAN

Soviet military forces opened fire on Azerbaijani protesters December 5, admitting to killing three and injuring 44. The violence came as demonstrations continued in the wake of the use of tanks and troops to disperse a mass rally the day before in the central square of Baku, the capital city of the Soviet republic of Azerbaijan.

Soviet troops were sent into action in Azerbaijan to put a stop to the daily demonstrations — ranging from tens to hundreds of thousands of people — that have been shaking the republic. More than 800 people have been arrested.

On November 25, Soviet military authorities had taken command of Yerevan, the capital of the neighboring republic of Armenia. At least 2,400 Armenians were detained by the authorities.

The military moves in both republics, two of the 15 that make up the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, were aimed at putting a stop to protests that began in February.

On December 7 Soviet Armenia was the center of the most severe earthquake to take place in the region in 80 years. Azerbaijan was also affected. Vast destruction

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Armenians demonstrate in Yerevan, capital of Soviet Armenia.

## Curtis committee responds to slanders

BY PRISCILLA SCHENK

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has released a detailed, point-by-point rebuttal of a slanderous and threatening letter calling on people to rescind their support for the international campaign to win justice for Mark Curtis. The anti-Curtis piece was signed by Keith Morris, father of the woman Curtis is falsely accused of assaulting.

The committee mailed the response by defense coordinator Stu Singer to 4,500 supporters. Singer explains that Curtis' conviction in September on rape and burglary charges was a frame-up, and that Curtis did not receive a fair trial. Singer also responds to the myriad of lies contained in the letter signed by Keith Morris.

Curtis, a packinghouse worker, unionist, and political activist, is serving a 25-

year prison sentence. back to him, "explaining why you decided to take a stand against my daughter and my family, and what your attitude is now after reading this letter."

Bill Leumer, a Curtis supporter and president of International Association of Machinists Local 565 in San Jose, had received the Morris letter and asked the committee to respond. Singer's letter is written to him.

At the heart of Morris' letter is the allegation that Curtis was convicted after "a three-day trial in which overwhelming evi-

dence was presented of his guilt."

Singer responds by explaining that the prosecution was unable to prove Curtis' guilt at the trial. Singer also lists the crucial defense evidence that the judge refused to let Mark Pennington, Curtis' lawyer, put before the jury.

In his letter, Morris charges that his family has been "subjected to a national and international campaign claiming we are part of a police conspiracy to frame up Curtis." After Curtis' arrest last March, says Morris, "the Socialist Workers Party began a

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## Pathfinder Fund tops \$250,000

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Pathfinder Fund drive to raise \$250,000 has ended with a bang. More than \$257,567 has now been collected.

This victory is registered in the final chart and scoreboard printed in this issue. In 22 U.S. cities and five other countries supporters made or went over their goals, in some cases by substantial amounts. Swedish supporters sent in an extra \$1,000 at the close of the drive.

In all, supporters in 32 U.S. cities and eight other countries participated in the drive.

The fund was launched last August to raise the money Pathfinder needs to publish new titles and promote and distribute books about working-class politics around the world. As the drive progressed, Pathfinder expanded its work, which was key to winning the financial support needed.

In September, a launching of the book *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder/Pacific and Asia, took place in Harare, Zimbabwe. Shortly thereafter, launchings of the new Pathfinder title *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87* began. Sankara was the leader of the revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso.

This prompted one 18-year-old African woman, from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, to send a letter to Pathfinder commending *Thomas Sankara Speaks*.

"There are people all over the world, especially in Africa, who now know the real Thomas Sankara because of the book published by you," she wrote. "You have opened their minds and my mind too."

"Now with this book in our hands we will be able to tell the future generations what kind of man Thomas Sankara was. So many children all over the world do not know where their leaders were born, how they achieved their independence. But I think with the help of Pathfinder it will be possible for them to find their roots."

In the United States, meetings to celebrate Pathfinder books were held in 32 cities over the fall. Their success depended on local bookstore supporters getting out to talk about the political ideas contained in Pathfinder books to other working people.

A broad range of political activists spoke on the platforms of these celebrations to express their appreciation for Pathfinder's work.

Speakers at the various meetings came from the African National Congress of

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# Jan. 23 hearing set as city gov't seeks fines on N.Y. mural

BY CHRIS RAYSON

NEW YORK — A hearing was held here November 30 on charges by the city's Environmental Control Board (ECB) of "illegal posting" of handbills by the Pathfinder Mural Project. Administrative Law Judge Louis Sitkin refused to dismiss the charges, which carry a maximum penalty of \$3,500. He did adjourn the hearing, however, until January 23 to hear further testimony.

The Pathfinder mural is going up on the six-story Pathfinder Building in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. It celebrates the role of Pathfinder in publishing and distributing the writings and speeches of the world's outstanding revolutionary and working-class leaders and features portraits of such figures as Nelson Mandela, Che Guevara, Eugene Debs, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, and V.I. Lenin.

The charges stem from December 1987, when ECB agent Sgt. Darren Denemark delivered 35 citations to Alicia Merel who works in the Pathfinder Building. The citations charged the mural project with "unauthorized posting" of 35 handbills.

The leaflets advertised an open house inviting community residents to meet well-known Nicaraguan artist Arnaldo Guillén who painted on the mural.

In demanding that the fines be dropped, mural project representatives point out that they have been singled out due to the political content of the mural. This was made clear in a letter from New York Mayor Edward Koch to New York City project coordinator Meryl Lynn Farber when he spoke scornfully of the mural's "Marxist-Leninist luminaries."

The project was also denied due process because its representatives were never properly served with the citations. Instead of delivering the summonses to project officials, Denemark gave them to Merel, who does not work for the mural project.

At a previous hearing on October 19, Judge Sitkin had refused to hear any testimony that the citations represented political harassment. When Andrea Morell, a mural project spokesperson, testified to some of the planned portraits, he interrupted her, declaring that he was not "interested in your political philosophy." He also refused to place in the record statements from prominent individuals who are convinced that the fines are politically motivated.

Sitkin did agree to hear testimony that the citations were never properly served, adjourning the hearing until November 30 to allow Sergeant Denemark and Merel to appear as witnesses.

Before a group of mural project support-

ers, Judge Sitkin opened the November 30 hearing saying that he had been "informed that Sergeant Denemark was on another assignment" and would not be able to attend the hearing. The judge declared that he would proceed with the hearing anyway.

Attorney Edward Copeland, representing the mural project, made a motion to dismiss the charges. Copeland stated that he had been told by a Sergeant Gallo of the ECB that the reason Denemark did not appear is that he "was not informed" of the November 30 hearing. But, Copeland pointed out, the November 30 date and time had been mutually agreed on at the previous hearing and Denemark had said he would appear.

"There are rules and procedures here that are supposed to apply to everybody," noted Copeland. "If we had not appeared today, this court would not have hesitated to find us in default and uphold the charges." Since the officer had decided "with impunity" not to come, the only proper course was for the judge to dismiss the case, Copeland stated.

Interrupting Copeland's argument, Judge Sitkin rejected the motion to dismiss the charges. However, he did agree to a subsequent motion by Copeland to adjourn the hearing to January 23.

In a similar case, the National Coalition in Support of the Third United Nations Special Session on Disarmament was fined for posting five leaflets. The coalition of over 200 organizations sponsored a New York march and rally of 100,000 people June 11 protesting nuclear weapons and U.S. military intervention.

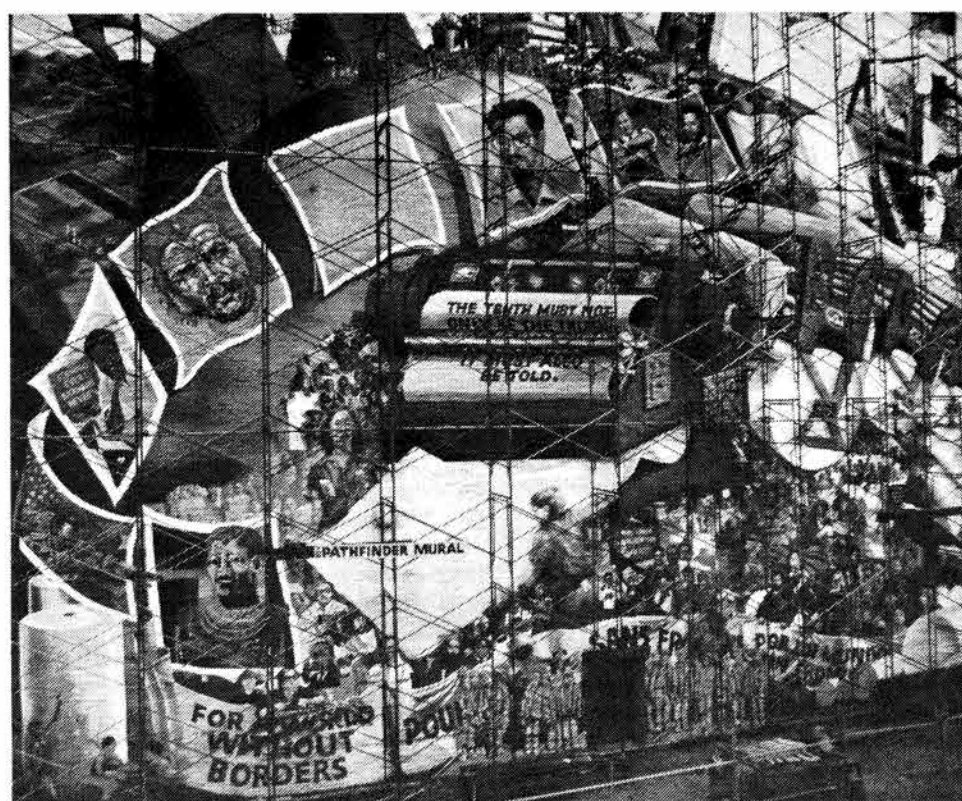
The effect of the law, attorney Copeland told the *Militant*, is to fine "constitutionally protected activity."

"The harassment of the Pathfinder Mural Project is very much a part of attempts by city officials to intimidate legitimate political activity," project director Sam Manuel said.

He noted the importance of the January 23 hearing. "City officials have to decide whether to make it more difficult to complete the mural by pressing these fines," he declared.

"Our supporters should redouble their efforts to protest the fines and demand that the city cease its harassment of the mural."

He recommended that letters and telegrams demanding the citations be dropped be sent to Mayor Edward Koch, City Hall, New York, N.Y. 10007. Copies should be sent to the Pathfinder Mural Project, c/o Pathfinder Books, 79 Leonard St., New York, N.Y. 10013.



Militant/Alicia Merel

Pathfinder mural, after wooden planks were removed from scaffolding. Painting of mural is to resume in spring.

## Ireland: 2,000 protest extradition

BY ANDY BUCHANAN

DUBLIN, Ireland — Led by a republican flute band, more than 2,000 demonstrators braved torrential rain here December 3. They demanded that the Dáil Éireann, the Irish house of representatives, refuse to renew a 1987 extradition act.

Under the act, the government of Prime Minister Charles Haughey has agreed to the extradition of accused Irish republicans to face trial in Britain on charges of terrorism.

At the center of the extradition debate now is Joseph Ryan, a former priest who has travelled internationally to arrange support for Irish political prisoners and their families. The British authorities have sought for several years to capture and pin terrorist charges on him.

Ryan was detained by Belgian authorities this year, but released when they ruled that the British government had failed to make a convincing legal case for extradition.

Ryan is now in Ireland, recovering from the effects of a hunger strike begun while in Belgian custody. The British government is insisting on his extradition.

Rallies and meetings across the country have opposed turning him over to the British government. In Ryan's home town of Tipperary, in a rural region, more than 800 people attended a rally to oppose extradition.

Prime Minister Haughey's Fianna Fáil party is deeply divided on the issue. Speaking at the Dublin rally on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Committee Against Extradition, Richard Breen said that he spoke for "the vast majority of Fianna Fáil members"

who wanted "to make clear their complete and unqualified opposition to political extradition."

"The Irish government should not send Irish citizens to face trial by the oppressor of our country," said Niel Blaney, an opposition member of the Dáil. "There is no possibility for a fair trial in Britain for anyone remotely related to the struggle for freedom in this country."

Joe Ryan, Patrick Ryan's brother, also spoke.

Diedre Whelan, whose sister, Marcina Shanahan, is one of the Winchester Three, contrasted the 25-year sentence her sister had received to the lenient treatment of members of the British occupation forces in the north of Ireland when they are found guilty of murder.

The Winchester Three are Irish youth who were sentenced to 25 years in prison on charges of conspiracy to murder Thomas King, the British minister responsible for Northern Ireland.

In British courts, accused Irish activists have been routinely sentenced to long terms based on vague "conspiracy" charges, confessions obtained under duress, fabricated evidence, and testimony of paid informers.

Commenting in the British Parliament on one recent extradition case, Labour Party Member of Parliament Tony Benn accused the government of attempting to whip up the mentality "of a lynch mob."

Days before the Dublin march, the European Court of Human Rights found that the British government had unlawfully detained four Irish people under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

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# N.Y. rally protests Washington's exclusion of Arafat

BY HARRY RING

NEW YORK — The U.S. government's exclusion of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat was protested at a rally here November 30. The gathering also saluted the declaration by the Palestine National Council of a Palestinian state.

The featured speaker at the Columbia University meeting of 350 was Shafiq al-Hout, a member of the United Nations observer mission of the PLO. He was a participant in the recent Algiers meeting of the PLO-led Palestine National Council, which issued the declaration of a Palestinian state.

The rally also heard Neo Mnumzana, now completing his assignment as chief UN representative of the African National Congress of South Africa.

Mnumzana declared he was speaking in support of Palestinian independence and "to underline the importance of international solidarity."

He added: "I speak not only on behalf of the South African people, but for all the people of the world who are making their own *intifadas* [uprisings] — *intifadas* that are in different stages of progress."

He pointed to struggles in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Namibia, the Western Sahara, and elsewhere.

Scoring Washington's ban on Arafat coming to a UN session here, Mnumzana declared that this reflects that "imperialism is not as strong as it used to be." The battles of the Palestinians and other freedom fighters around the world, he said, have "undermined the confidence of imperialism."

Mnumzana pointed to the victory won earlier this year when Washington was thwarted in its move to shut down the

PLO's UN observer mission. He reminded the audience, however, that the government had succeeded in closing down the Washington-based Palestine Information Office.

"Our challenge," the ANC leader declared, "is to campaign for the reopening of the Palestine Information Office, and to campaign for the opening of many more around the country."

"Let us celebrate the Palestinian declaration of independence by moving from victory to victory," said Mnumzana. "That can be done if we understand who we are fighting against and if we stand united."

PLO representative al-Hout scored the exclusion of Arafat as a reactionary move contrary to the interests of the people of the United States.

Condemning Washington's support for Israeli repression of the Palestinians, the PLO leader urged that those in this country who recognize this — "and their numbers are growing" — should speak out.

Discussing the declaration of a Palestinian state, al-Hout explained that it meant "explicitly" the acceptance of two states — a Palestinian state and an Israeli state. "We are ready," he declared, "to negotiate boundaries on that basis."

Denouncing Washington's smear charge of terrorism against Arafat and the PLO, al-Hout declared that for the U.S. government, "every liberation movement is terrorist."

Sheila Ryan of the Middle East Peace Center also spoke. Petitions were circulated protesting Arafat's exclusion. Sponsored by an ad hoc coalition, the rally was initiated by the Palestine Solidarity Committee.



Shafiq al-Hout from Palestine Liberation Organization's UN observer mission (left) with African National Congress UN representative Neo Mnumzana.

## Ford fires union leader at London auto plant

BY BRIAN GROGAN

LONDON — The Ford Motor Co. has fired a prominent union activist at its Dagenham complex in East London. The company presented a series of trumped-up charges against Mick Gosling, an assembly-line worker in the paint, trim, and assembly plant (PTA) and chairperson of the strongest Ford union local in the country.

"Ford sacks union chief over strikes" wrote the *Daily Telegraph*, explaining the real reason for the firing. "Ford has struck at the heart of the most powerful union branch in the company by sacking the hard left official," the *London Evening Standard* wrote.

Like other auto companies, Ford is on a productivity drive, which means harder,

faster, and longer workdays with safety concerns thrown out the window.

PTA workers have been at the center of resistance to this drive. Hardly a day has passed during the last six months without one section or another in the PTA stopping work.

These same workers played a leading role in the national strike earlier this year when the company attempted to impose a three-year wage deal that included job flexibility, the team-work concept, and other productivity measures.

In the final settlement, a two-year wage deal was combined with acceptance in principle of the productivity changes. The details were to be negotiated on a plant-by-plant basis.

Ford demanded that Gosling sign a statement repudiating "unconstitutional" action; that is, action which bypasses the official grievance procedure.

That would have meant Gosling agreeing to his own dismissal if he were involved in any future actions or if he "encouraged" others to participate in them.

One PTA worker commented, "If the job is unsafe, it has got to be stopped there and then. Putting it into some time-consuming procedure could be extremely dangerous."

The union is backing Gosling's refusal to sign. A meeting of shop stewards has demanded his reinstatement. But the company has not backed off. Ford has instigated a red-baiting campaign against Gosling through the media, describing him as a "mole" and linking him with other activists who have been driven out of the auto industry. This includes workers fired from Ford in 1986 and from the British Leyland's plant in Cowley in 1984. They have also targeted Gosling's support for the Irish struggle.

Attempts to isolate Gosling from the work force and the labor movement are more difficult today. Ford's record of sacking political and trade union activists and its use of agencies such as the Economic League for blacklisting purposes has gained notoriety.

Political activist Paul Davidson was fired earlier this year after a few days on the job. His fight received broad support. "Ford used spying agencies to pry into my life. They attempt to exercise control over how and what we think," Davidson explained. "They are the real subversives, not trade unionists like Mick Gosling who openly fight to promote the welfare of their fellow workers."

This year's Labour Party conference overwhelmingly went on record in favor of outlawing political screening of workers. The Trades Union Congress has formed a subcommittee to investigate the use of blacklisting.

Gosling's union branch has issued a call for a broad based defense campaign. Thirty Labour Party members of Parliament have submitted a motion to the House of Commons as part of the defense effort.

## Pathfinder Fund scores victory

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South Africa; South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia; groups organizing in the Haitian, Cuban, Grenadan, Salvadoran, and Puerto Rican communities in the United States; Black rights groups; Venceremos Brigade; *Areito* magazine; and organizations against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Several university professors spoke.

Workers from packinghouses, airlines, and auto plants were also among the speakers, explaining how Pathfinder books were a tool they reached for as they became involved in politics and defending their class from the employers' assault on wages and working conditions.

Largely as a result of these celebrations, the number of individual contributors more than doubled, from the 620 donors when the Pathfinder Fund began in August, to 1,266 at the close of the drive.

That figure doesn't include the many Pathfinder supporters behind bars who wrote to express their solidarity with the fund effort even though they couldn't make a financial contribution.

As a Texas prisoner wrote, he lives under "circumstances that confine my body but leave my mind free to travel." The book of Nelson Mandela speeches he requested can be sent him free of charge due to the generosity of Pathfinder Fund donors.

A New York prisoner wrote after finishing the book *FBI on Trial: The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying*. He said he concluded it was time for him to get seriously involved in politics after reading the court testimony in the book by Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs, who himself did time for his union and communist activities.

This week we are printing for the final time the coupon to contribute to the Pathfinder Fund. Readers who still have one last installment to pay on their contribution — and those who haven't yet donated — can do so by sending in the coupon with their check right away.

## Pathfinder Fund contributions

UNITED STATES	Goal	Received
Atlanta	5,000	5,055
Austin, Minn.	2,850	3,090
Baltimore	3,000	2,790
Birmingham	7,000	7,055
Boston	9,000	9,367
Charleston, W. Va.	3,500	3,110
Chicago	10,100	9,862
Cleveland	5,400	4,552
Des Moines	3,300	2,188
Detroit	6,100	6,220
Greensboro, N.C.	2,800	2,840
Houston	8,500	9,022
Kansas City	3,700	4,565
Los Angeles	20,000	21,091
Miami	5,500	5,500
Milwaukee	3,000	2,870
Morgantown, W. Va.	4,500	4,440
Newark	12,000	12,000
New York	27,000	27,050
Oakland	13,000	12,890
Omaha	3,800	3,932
Philadelphia	7,000	6,250
Phoenix	3,500	3,500
Pittsburgh	5,000	5,122
Portland, Ore.	4,100	4,131
Price, Utah	2,200	2,215
Salt Lake City	6,300	6,300
San Francisco	11,500	11,922
Seattle	7,000	7,005
St. Louis	8,800	9,073
Twin Cities	11,000	10,900
Washington, D.C.	7,500	7,530
Other U.S.	7,500	4,912
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>240,450</b>	<b>238,348</b>
INTERNATIONAL	Pledged	Received
Australia	820	474
Britain	3,966	2,796
Canada	10,048	10,048
France	200	200
Germany	150	150
Iceland	1,010	402
New Zealand	2,266	2,266
Sweden	1,605	1,605
Other International	1,277	1,277
<b>Total U.S. goals and int'l pledges</b>	<b>261,792</b>	
<b>Total received</b>		<b>257,567</b>



# Chauvinist push on trade deal a blow to workers in Canada

Continued from front page  
cratic and trade union rights.

As a result, today more than a million are jobless; the number of minimum-wage, part-time jobs is rising; and 2 million depend on government welfare. Speedup and forced overtime have caused a drastic deterioration in job safety. Thousands of farmers have been driven off their land, and growing numbers of working people survive on charity food banks and live on the streets.

The Conservative Party campaign centered on the theme of "continuing prosperity through free trade" was a con job designed to mask the reality of the growing capitalist crisis and convince working people to back the drive of the dominant employers to win greater access to the huge U.S. market.

Mulroney's "free trade" proposal has nothing to do with free trade or prosperity for working people. It is a plan to build a protected North American trading block designed to restrict the flow of products into Canada and the United States from imperialist competitors and Third World countries.

The fight over the trade pact has been

Instead, in an almost unanimous vote, the convention lined up behind the anti-free trade campaign of the CLC leadership. The CLC Action Caucus, which for years presented itself as the left-wing alternative to the CLC leadership, fully endorsed the CLC officials' nationalist campaign to "save Canada" from "U.S. domination" through free trade. The Communist Party of Canada is the single most influential political force in the Action Caucus.

The convention also voted to back the New Democratic Party against the Mulroney government in order to block the trade deal.

The CLC and NDP leaders claimed that the elimination of tariffs across the Canada-U.S. border will result in a U.S. takeover of Canada, the loss of Canadian sovereignty and culture, a massive increase in unemployment through plant shut-downs, and the end of social programs, such as medicare and unemployment insurance.

The labor bureaucrats argued for the maintenance of tariffs as a way to prevent "Canadian jobs" from going to U.S. workers and to defend what they call Canada's "sharing and caring society" against the

more dangerous for working people because it came from forces purporting to speak for the labor movement.

"If our economy is shaped so that it is similar to that of the U.S. . . . we haven't got a hope in hell," Ontario Federation of Labour President Gordon Wilson told the 1,600 OFL delegates, pointing to the 18 percent of the work force that is organized in the United States. In Canada the percentage of unionized workers has stagnated for the last couple of years at 37 percent.

"The crusade of our lives didn't start six weeks ago and end on November 21," said Susie Vallance of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, referring to the 51-day election campaign. "The fight [against free trade] isn't over."

Similar sentiments were expressed at the convention of the British Columbia Federation of Labour in Vancouver.

An article published in the December 7 issue of the U.S. weekly the *Guardian* quotes National Farmers Union President Wayne Eastman, who said the pact will lead to declining income for farmers and "will force greater numbers of rural people off the land."

In his address to the delegates OFL President Wilson suggested that the federation establish a so-called Solidarity Fund. This is similar to one set up by the Québec Federation of Labor (FTQ) in 1983, with the collaboration and funds of the federal and Québec governments, and the support of the Québec employers' association.

FTQ General Secretary Fernand Daoust — who is also the secretary of the Administrative Council of the Solidarity Fund — claimed the fund is a "revolutionary" institution that "will change and strengthen unionism. . . . It's the way forward."

To date, the FTQ leadership has convinced 66,000 workers in Québec to buy shares in the fund, which is now worth \$200 million. The fund's resources are used to bail out medium-sized businesses in Québec that are near bankruptcy. The money is then invested in the stock exchange, bonds, mortgages, and loans. The Solidarity Fund is managed by a staff of 50 professionals, and 1,500 union activists are involved in campaigning for shareholders on the shop floor.

The FTQ leadership claims the fund has created 11,000 jobs, teaches workers how to make management decisions, and gives the federation significant weight and leverage in the corporate board rooms of Québec. The FTQ leaders are now campaigning to integrate the fund into union contracts through clauses dealing with employer contributions and payroll deductions by workers to the fund.

Worker-boss joint schemes such as the Solidarity Fund cannot defend the interests of working people. What they do is further tie workers to the fake idea that our interests are the same as those of "our" bosses, "our" company, and "our" country. The reactionary perspective of the Solidarity Fund has been reinforced by the message of the chauvinist anti-free trade campaign, which argues that the jobs and social benefits of workers in Canada are threatened by the "Americans" rather than the world capitalist crisis and the drive of Canada's capitalist rulers to make workers and farmers pay for it.

## NDP shifts to the right

Many union members who worked to bring out votes for the NDP are asking why the party did not make its predicted breakthrough.

In the aftermath of the 1986 strike wave, support for the NDP in the polls rose to 40 percent — its highest point since its founding in 1961.

During the first half of the election campaign, the NDP was substantially ahead of the Liberal Party in the polls. NDP federal leader Edward Broadbent openly speculated about the disappearance of the Liberal Party, and NDP officials talked about making a breakthrough in Québec where no NDP member of Parliament has ever been elected. Some predicted the NDP would become the Official Opposition in Parliament.

During the final weeks of the campaign, however, the NDP lead collapsed to its



Militant photos by Monica Jones  
**Michel Dugré and Margaret Manwaring, Revolutionary Workers League candidates for Parliament in recent Canadian elections.**



**Picket line during strike at Gainers meatpacking plant in Edmonton, Canada, in 1986. Instead of mobilizing solidarity with these and other workers fighting concessions, leadership of Canada labor movement and New Democratic Party promoted chauvinist campaign of opposition to U.S.-Canada trade deal.**

and remains a deadly trap for working people.

The labor movement walked into this trap at the 1986 convention of the 2.3-million member Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), which adopted as its central campaign the fight to stop the trade deal.

The discussion took place in the context of important strikes by thousands of packing-house, government, and other workers who had decided to reject concessions demanded by the bosses. Mobilizing solidarity with these workers and defending them against attacks by the courts and the cops was the challenge posed before the delegates.

## Canada socialists sell 1,000 Action Programs

Revolutionary Workers League campaign supporters sold 1,038 copies of the pamphlet *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*; 477 subscriptions to the *Militant*; 186 copies of the Marxist political magazines *New International* and *Nouvelle Internationale*; 106 subscriptions to the monthly French-language magazine *Lutte ouvrière*; and 141 copies of the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Five activists joined the Young Socialists by the end of the campaign.

"dog-eat-dog" way of life in the United States.

Farmers', women's, cultural, and other organizations, together with the NDP, helped found, fund, and lead the Pro-Canada Network, a Canadian nationalist coalition. The group encompassed not only the NDP and the Communist Party of Canada, but also Liberal Party politicians, and a number of business people. A similar coalition was put together by trade union officials in Québec.

Since the 1986 convention, the CLC and the Québec unions, their affiliates, and the NDP have spent millions of dollars to convince workers to oppose the trade deal. The 650,000-member Ontario Federation of Labour, for example, spent more than \$500,000, its most expensive campaign ever.

## Unions weakened

Discussions at union conventions in the two weeks following the November 21 election concluded that the labor movement came out of the election campaign weakened. This is true. Not due to the reelection of the Mulroney government, however, but because of the impact on working people of the two-year campaign of anti-U.S. chauvinism.

The NDP and union leaders' effort was even more protectionist than that of the Conservative government, because it was centered on maintaining existing tariffs across the Canada-U.S. border. It was also

traditional base of 18 to 20 percent of the popular vote, giving it 43 seats in Parliament. While support in Québec rose from 9 to 15 percent, no NDP member was elected from that province. Instead the Liberals maintained their Official Opposition status, winning 83 seats with 32 percent of the vote. Seventy-five percent or about 13 million eligible voters cast ballots.

At the Ontario Federation of Labour convention, Leo Gerard, Ontario director of the United Steelworkers, claimed that the NDP had made the "fundamental error" of letting the Liberals take the lead in the anti-free trade campaign.

That kind of criticism amounts to an argument for deepening the reactionary Canadian nationalist campaign of the trade union and NDP officialdoms.

The formation of some kind of NDP-Liberal coalition government or even the election of an NDP government committed to tearing up the Canada-U.S. trade pact would not have advanced the interests of working people.

This is because the Canadian nationalist campaign of the NDP leadership and union bureaucrats flows from their defense of the capitalist order and their commitment to managing the coming crisis in collaboration with the bosses at the expense of working people.

In this framework the NDP campaign itself reflected the drift of capitalist politics to the right under the impact of the crisis. The Conservatives, Liberals, and the NDP all campaigned for a "strong Canada." For the NDP leadership this perspective included beefing up Canada's armed forces, maintaining diplomatic relations with South Africa, and support for "fiscal responsibility" and "controlling the deficit" — code words for cutting back on social services.

Like the Liberals, the NDP endorsed the Conservative government's 1987 Meech Lake constitutional accord with the provinces, which opens the door to further attacks on the national rights of the oppressed, French-speaking Québécois. The accord takes as its starting point the defense of Canada against the allegedly divisive demands of the Québécois.

During the campaign Broadbent refused to defend Québec's Law 101 — legislation that outlaws discrimination against those whose mother tongue is French. Since its adoption in 1977, Law 101 has been under attack by the federal government and the

Continued on next page



# Women farm workers meet in Nicaragua

## Conference urges fight against sexual harassment, for low-cost contraception

BY SETH GALINSKY

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Calls for union involvement in the fight against sexual harassment, the advancement of more women to union leadership positions, and access to low-cost contraception were prominent at a recent conference here of women farm workers.

The two-day meeting, held in October, was organized by the Association of Rural Workers (ATC) and cosponsored by the Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE). Five hundred delegates attended from around the country.

Lea Guido, national secretary of AMNLAE, opened the conference. The history of the women's movement and the history of the farm workers' movement are tied together, Guido said. "We marched on the side of farm workers" and together faced the repression of the dictator Somoza's National Guard before the revolution, she said.

Women — whether they are teachers, office workers, housewives, peasants, or farm workers — all have "points in common," Guido added.

Guido told the participants that AMNLAE is campaigning to win support for reforming the Nicaraguan penal code to strengthen the penalties for child abuse, wife beating, and rape. The conference backed this campaign.

Guido also said that AMNLAE wants low-cost contraception to be made available throughout the country. Contraception should at least be as accessible as a quart of milk, she said.

The AMNLAE leader added that abortion should be decriminalized so that "when a woman is pregnant, and for whatever reason wants to have a voluntary abortion, she can have it done in a hospital and not like an animal." Under current Nicaraguan law, all abortions are illegal except when the woman's life is in danger.

Olga Espinoza gave the main report to the conference on behalf of the National Women's Commission of the ATC.

Espinoza took note of the large number of agricultural workers who are women. Thirty percent of year-round farm workers in Nicaragua are women. During the peak harvest times, 45 percent are women.

"We have acquired a better understanding of the meaning of work as the principal means of creating the basis for our emancipation," Espinoza said.

### Sexual 'blackmail'

Espinoza urged a strong stand against sexual "blackmail," that is, sexual harassment on the job. Some women have been fired from their jobs for speaking out against abusive treatment or for refusing the sexual advances of foremen.

On one farm, Espinoza said, women unionists had to "confront sexist positions" on the part of some in the local union leadership after a driver tried to rape a young woman. The driver was finally fired as a result of protests by the local union president.

Espinoza called on the ATC leadership "from the local level on up to the national to combat and denounce this scourge with greater force."

During the conference, delegates formed 20 work groups to discuss the report and make suggestions for demands the ATC should be raising. On the second day of the conference, Espinoza summarized those suggestions from the workshops that were added to the assembly's final report.

To the applause of delegates, Espinoza read the proposal that the "unions incorporate into the contract sanctions against sexual blackmail at work, rape attempts, and any act that violates our dignity."

The conference also proposed a policy of promoting more women to union leadership posts and to administrative positions. Women now hold 28 percent of union posts, compared to 1 percent in 1983.

But this is not sufficient, Espinoza said. Some male union members still discriminate against women. She added that there is still "resistance by some union locals to promoting our integration into the union leadership" and "underestimation of our ability to contribute" to the policies of the union.

This must change, she declared, because "the defense of class interests demands the unity of male and female workers."

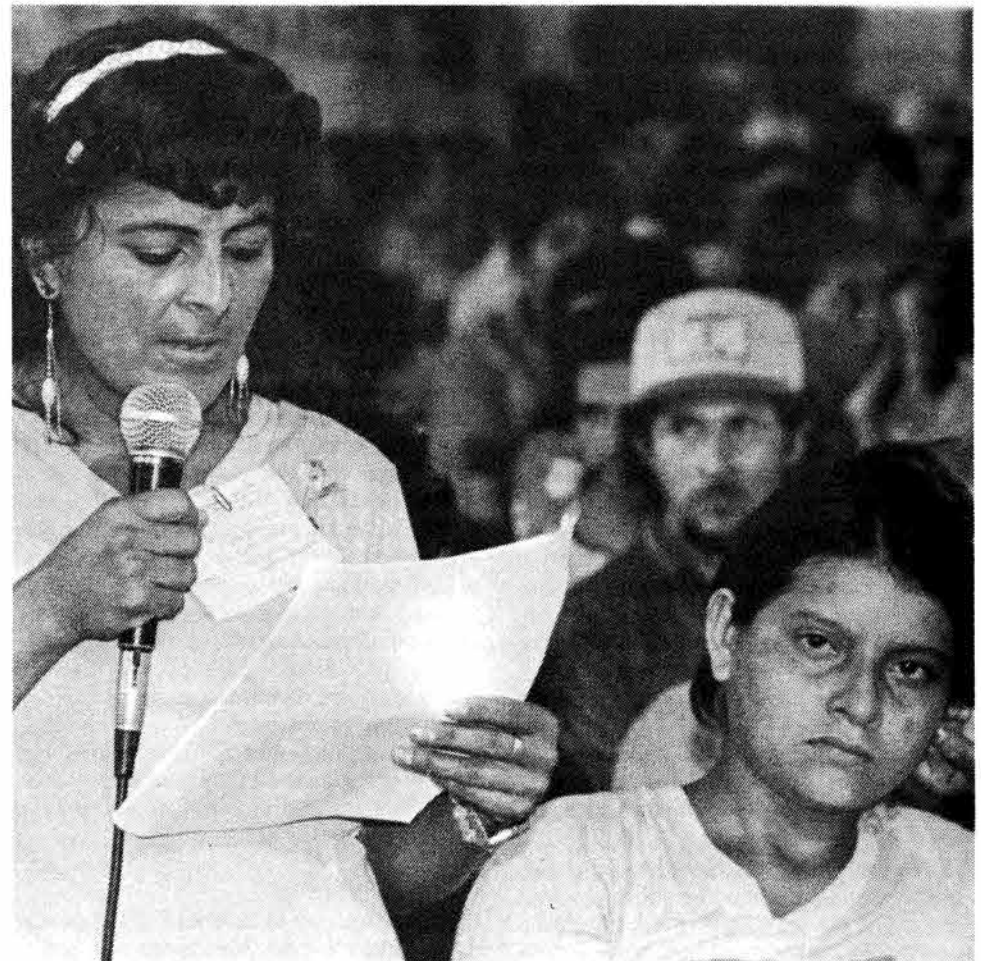
Salvadora Gonzales, a coffee worker, explained in an interview that she is the only woman on her local union's executive board even though the majority of workers at her farm are women. "Some women let their husbands walk all over them," she said. "I'm lucky because my husband is active in the union and he supports what I'm doing."

Gonzales said that many women also find it difficult to participate in the union because of the "double workday."

"Most of the women here have six, seven, even 10 children," she said. "They work all day on the farm, and then have to work taking care of their children when they go home."

### Low-cost contraception

When Espinoza announced that the conference would back AMNLAE's proposal to fight for low-cost, easily available con-



Militant/Seth Galinsky

**Delegate speaking at recent Association of Rural Workers convention in Nicaragua. Women farm workers welcomed proposal that union contracts include "sanctions against sexual blackmail at work, rape attempts, and any act that violates our dignity."**

traception, the delegates broke into applause.

Along with making contraceptives available in the commissaries on the farms, Espinoza reported, the Ministry of Health and the union should organize talks on family planning and sex education for men and women at the workplace.

The conference also approved the following demands:

- That pregnant women be assigned to light duty and guaranteed their job when they return after childbirth.

- That 20 percent of dollar incentives earned by state and private farms for growing certain export crops be used for social projects such as child-care centers, com-

munal laundries, and health care.

- That unemployed workers and their families from around the country be encouraged to move to Region VI, in north-central Nicaragua, to help resolve the chronic labor shortage on the coffee farms there.

- That state and private farms pay 100 percent of women workers' salaries when they take days off work to care for sick children. This is a right that was won in previous contracts but often has not been enforced.

The delegates also approved prioritizing the construction of 39 new child-care centers in the countryside to be built in collaboration with the ATC and farm administrations.

## Canada elections

Continued from previous page

NDP leadership. In violation of Québec's right to decide on its own linguistic policies, a new ruling on the legality of Law 101 is due to be handed down by Canada's Supreme Court on December 15.

As the election campaign unfolded, leaders of the Québec NDP openly clashed with Broadbent on his refusal to support Law 101. And in the week following the election, NDP leaders in western Canada, emboldened by the rise in Canadian nationalist sentiment, declared their opposition to the Meech Lake agreement on the grounds that it made too many concessions to Québec.

### Only voice

The only voice raised against the reactionary and divisive Canadian nationalist campaign of the NDP and union leaders was that of the candidates of the Revolutionary Workers League — steelworker Margaret Manwaring, who ran in the Toronto riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, and garment worker Michel Dugré, who ran in the Montréal riding of Papineau-St. Michel.

"We are not 'Canadians.' We are workers and farmers," Manwaring told the *Militant*. "Our future lies in joining in the struggle of workers and farmers everywhere against the ruling rich who exploit us, and their governments in Ottawa, Washington, and other imperialist capitals."

"We proposed that working people unite around demands that can overcome divisions and bring us together in struggle across borders to defend ourselves against the impact of the coming depression," continued Manwaring. "We have to fight to cancel the foreign debt of the underdeveloped countries; for a legislated shorter workweek without loss in pay to counter unemployment; for affirmative action measures such as a rise in the minimum wage and government measures to lift the burden of job discrimination from Blacks, women, Native people, and others."

"We urged all those who agree with this internationalist working-class perspective and the need to build a leadership of our class that can lead these struggles to join the RWL and the Young Socialists," added Dugré.

## FSLN leader dies in accident

A longtime leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), Walter Ferreti, was killed in a traffic accident in Nicaragua November 1. He was 38.

According to the FSLN daily *Barricada*, Ferreti came from a working-class family and became politically active at the age of 14. Beginning in 1964, he worked with the youth group of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN). But he never became a member of the PSN, said *Barricada*, "because he openly stated his sympathies with the FSLN." The PSN opposed the Sandinistas' perspective of a revolutionary overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship.

Largely self-taught, Ferreti managed to get to the United States to study in 1970. He became active in San Francisco groups organizing solidarity with the anti-Somoza struggle. He was also editor of *La Gaceta*

*Sandinista*, one of the main publications of the FSLN at that time.

In 1977, Ferreti returned to Nicaragua at the request of the FSLN and became a commander of guerrilla units.

Following the 1979 overthrow of Somoza, Ferreti became vice-chief of State Security at the Ministry of the Interior (MINT). In 1981, he became national police chief.

Ferreti was assigned to head the MINT's Special Operations unit in 1984.

In April of this year, he was assigned to head the MINT in Nicaragua's Region 2, the cotton-growing region.

Ferreti was a member of the Sandinista Assembly, the highest leadership body of the FSLN after the National Directorate. He had also served on the Party Leadership Committee of the FSLN at the Ministry of the Interior.



### FEATURED in the DECEMBER ISSUE

#### "Cuba will never adopt methods of capitalism"

Speech by Fidel Castro on the importance of the rectification process in Cuba.

#### The struggle for a shorter workweek

By Doug Jenness. How a worldwide fight to reduce the workweek would help create jobs and unify the working class.

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**Lutte ouvrière**  
a socialist  
monthly  
magazine  
in French



# Soviet gov't uses army against protests in Armenia, Azerbaijan

Continued from front page

and many deaths were reported.

The upsurges of the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples are part of a wave of actions against the oppression of non-Russian nationalities in the Soviet Union.

The struggles are spurred by the social and economic crisis that is taking shape in the Soviet Union and that has been greatly aggravated by deepening economic difficulties in the capitalist countries.

## Struggle over Nagorno-Karabakh

In February, thousands of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh began staging rallies and strikes to demand that the region be incorporated into the Armenian republic. Once part of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh was officially incorporated into Azerbaijan in 1923. About 75 percent of the population is Armenian.

Soviet Azerbaijan's population of 7 million includes 475,000 Armenians. Soviet Armenia has a population of more than 3 million.

The protesters said that Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh were subjected to cultural and economic discrimination in Azerbaijan.

The protesters in Nagorno-Karabakh were backed by demonstrations in Armenia. The government of Soviet Armenia also backed the demand, while the Azerbaijani authorities opposed it.

Many Azerbaijanis were against the proposed separation of the enclave from Azerbaijan, holding demonstrations of up to 100,000 on this theme.

At the end of February an anti-Armenian pogrom took place in the city of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. Thirty-two people were reported killed.

The tensions were heightened by economic difficulties. "There is such a serious housing shortage," a *New York Times* correspondent wrote August 28, "that newcomers to the city — most of them Azerbaijanis — live in shabby worker hostels or in a crude shantytown on the outskirts."

"No one quite says so, but there are hints that these people looked with some resentment on the well-established population of Armenians," the *Times* reported, "many of them merchants and traders, who lived in better housing."

On July 18, the Soviet government rejected the demand to incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia. Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union, denounced Armenian protesters for utilizing "nonstop mass demonstrations, rallies, and finally strikes."

After a lull, actions resumed on September 15, when a general strike in Nagorno-Karabakh shut down industry in the capital city of Stepanakert. Demonstrations also took place in Yerevan, capital of the Armenian republic.

The protests included demands for an end to the influx of Azerbaijanis into Nagorno-Karabakh. Some of the new Azerbaijani residents had come from Armenia, where they said that they had been the targets of threats and attacks.

Round-the-clock protests also gained steam among the Azerbaijanis.

The demand of Azerbaijanis that Nagorno-Karabakh be kept in Azerbaijan became one way of expressing outrage at their oppressed status in the Soviet Union. For the Armenians, the demand for inclusion of the enclave in Armenia had become an outlet for their demands for national rights.

Some of the Azerbaijani protesters, the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestia* reported, had carried green flags representing Islam and portraits of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran.

The great majority of Azerbaijanis belong to the Shiite Muslim grouping while most Armenians are Orthodox Christians. Soviet Azerbaijan borders on Iran, and about 5 million Azerbaijanis live as an oppressed national minority on the Iranian side.

## Violent clashes

The protests were accompanied by violent clashes between groups of Armenians

and Azerbaijanis, which Soviet authorities reported had taken 28 lives between November 22 and December 1.

More than 150,000 refugees are reported to have fled the two republics. The Soviet government charged that officials in Armenia had approved the forced removal of Azerbaijanis, while Azerbaijan authorities had been complicit in the expulsion of Armenians.

A declaration signed by Gorbachev and Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov threatened that officials in both Armenia and Azerbaijan would be dismissed. Last May, the former heads of the ruling party in both republics were removed.

The current protests in Azerbaijan and Armenia, and the nationalist ferment in the Baltic republics of Latvia and Estonia, represent attempts by some among the oppressed nationalities to test how far they can go in demanding changes under Gorbachev's proclaimed policies of *glasnost* (openness) and democratization.

The top government and party bureaucrats in the republics are also testing the leeway that *glasnost* offers them to advance their interests and mobilize some popular support for their rule.

## National oppression

Discrimination against and denial of national rights to both Armenians and Azerbaijanis is at the root of the current clashes.

The Russian monarchy seized the areas of Armenia that now form part of the Soviet Union in 19th-century wars against Turkey and Persia (now Iran).

While denying national and cultural rights to the Armenians, the tsarist regime sought to play the Christian Armenians off against the predominantly Muslim peoples of the region. Russian landlords and capitalists were seeking to strengthen their dominance over the Muslim peoples.

Under the tsar, the Russian Empire was a prison house of many oppressed nations and nationalities.

In 1917 the workers and peasants of the Russian Empire overthrew the tsar and then capitalist rule. They established a workers' and peasants' government. The communist Bolshevik Party, headed by V.I. Lenin, which led the revolution, sought to unify the workers and peasants of all nationalities in Russia.

The government granted independence to nations that demanded it and moved to end the dominance of the Great Russian nationality, which had formed part of the basis of tsarist rule.

Where tsarism had spurred hostilities among some oppressed nationalities by pitting them against each other, the revolutionary government took steps to begin overcoming this by fostering collaboration among the oppressed nationalities in de-

veloping their regions and the country as a whole.

In 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established as a voluntary association of autonomous republics.

The Soviet regime also strongly supported the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples of the Middle and Far East. This internationalist outlook helped forge closer ties between the predominantly Muslim workers and peasants of Soviet Asia and working people in the rest of the Soviet Union.

## Role of bureaucratic caste

After Lenin's death in 1924, however, a privileged bureaucratic caste consolidated power in the Soviet Union. Basing itself on the renewed dominance of the Russian nationality, it recreated many of the conditions of national oppression that had existed in the tsarist empire.

As the bureaucracy violated the rights of the oppressed nationalities over the succeeding decades, national chauvinism, prejudices, and conflicts were reinforced. This included those between oppressed nationalities such as the Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

Self-determination and autonomy have become cynically abused formalities. Wage differentials discriminate against non-Russian workers, who receive on the average 11 percent less than their Russian counterparts. About 86 percent of books are published in Russian, although little more than half the population is Russian.

How has the Gorbachev regime responded to the upsurge of protests by oppressed nationalities in Armenia and Azerbaijan? He has used a massive deployment of military force to halt the mobilizations, arrested hundreds, and made implicit threats to purge party leaders and government officials in the republics.

At the same time, Gorbachev has moved ahead with steps to further centralize the Soviet governmental structure. The Supreme Soviet, the top legislative body, approved a series of laws and constitutional changes on December 1.

Among other things, the measures authorize a new legislature to be elected in March. It will have the power to overrule decisions by the governments of the formally autonomous republics and impose social and economic policies without their approval.

The governments of Estonia, Georgia, and Armenia criticized the changes proposed by Gorbachev as undermining the autonomy of the republics.

Prior to the meeting of the federal Supreme Soviet, the Supreme Soviet of the republic of Estonia, which borders on the Baltic Sea, proclaimed "the supremacy of its laws over the laws of the USSR." The move



was repudiated by the central government and sharply criticized by Gorbachev.

The 1,500-member Supreme Soviet adopted the new laws with five dissenting votes and 27 abstentions from delegates of the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

At the Supreme Soviet meeting, Gorbachev sought both to buy time and lay a basis for negotiations with the officialdom in some of the republics inhabited by oppressed nationalities. He called for a commission to study their grievances and promised future discussions of their rights.

Like Gorbachev's proposals to restructure the economy, which he has termed *perestroika*, these political moves are an effort by the privileged bureaucratic caste that governs the Soviet Union to contain the crisis that is taking shape there.

## Severe crisis

The crisis, Gorbachev indicated in comments to the Supreme Soviet meeting, has "literally blown up the illusory peace and harmony that reigned supreme in this country in the years of stagnation." ("The years of stagnation" is Gorbachev's phrase for the two decades preceding his accession to power in 1985.)

The regime's economic policy aims at decentralizing aspects of economic planning and allowing market forces, rather than administrative command, to play a greater role in determining the course of the economy. The political shifts seek to create a powerful executive authority that can act as a supreme arbiter in a time of growing social and political polarization and clashes.

Neither the constitutional changes nor Gorbachev's economic policies are aimed at overcoming the long history of national oppression against Armenians and Azerbaijanis, which is at the root of the current clashes.

The deepening social and economic crisis will bring further intensification of the struggles against bureaucratic oppression and repression by the oppressed nationalities, as well as conflicts and clashes between them.

# Curtis committee answers slanders

Continued from front page

campaign of vilification against my family."

The committee, responds Singer, has always focused its fire on the police and prosecutor's office. It doesn't pretend to know why Morris' son and daughter falsely accused Curtis of the crime.

And it is Keith Morris who has been conducting a campaign of vilification, and violent attacks, against Mark Curtis and those who support him, writes Singer. In this, he is being aided by the Workers League, explains Singer, a group with a history of carrying out provocative actions against the labor movement.

The Workers League has launched its most poisonous attacks on the Socialist Workers Party, including a 1979 lawsuit giving the courts an opening to infringe on the right to freedom of association. A decision on the suit is still pending in a Los Angeles court. Curtis is a longtime member of the SWP.

In recent issues of its paper, the *Bulletin*, the Workers League has printed names of people it claims are rescinding support for Curtis. One of these was Larry Regan,

president of United Steelworkers Local 1014 in Gary, Indiana.

Regan wrote to the defense committee on December 2:

"I have just seen a copy of the *Bulletin* newspaper, in which it is said that I indicated that I would rescind my support to Mark Curtis. This is not true.

"Local 1014 voted unanimously to support Mark at our August meeting and there has been no change or motion to the contrary since.

"As far as I am concerned, the *Bulletin* newspaper has no credibility whatsoever."

Morris charges that Curtis raped his daughter on his way to buy some illegal drugs. Singer responds that there is "no evidence, no witnesses, nothing even the prosecution could pretend were facts" relating to this charge. It's simply a lie.

Morris also claims that Curtis would have killed his children if the cops hadn't shown up the night of the arrest.

In his letter, Morris presents himself as the voice of progressive Black working people of Des Moines, while whitewashing the cops. "I have seen both ends of 'law and order.' I personally, along with others, fought against the police in the 1960s, and

even afterwards, to win greater respect for people's rights, and in my opinion, conditions in Des Moines have improved greatly since then. Curtis and his followers are using the charge of police brutality as a smokescreen. . . ."

The series of scandals revealing the depth of the racism and sexism that permeates the Des Moines Police Department today (see article on facing page) gives the lie to the notion that the Des Moines cops "have improved," says Singer. Black workers, in fact, because of their own experiences with police brutality and frame-ups, have been among the quickest to understand the importance of the fight for justice for Curtis.

Singer concludes by urging everyone to support the defense effort. Copies of the letter from Morris and the committee's response are available from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311; (515) 246-1695.

This publication is available in microform from University Microfilms International. Call toll-free 800-521-3044. Or mail inquiry to: University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.



# Nicaragua Network: injury to one is injury to all

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving 25 years in jail on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international protest campaign to fight for justice for Curtis. To contact the committee, write Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695.

The Nicaragua Network, a major U.S. organization promoting solidarity with Nicaragua, ran

the protests from thousands of supporters that he was being framed because of his political activities. Mark was prevented from presenting vital evidence in his behalf," the newsletter explains, "including any testimony regarding the beating he received when he was arrested. (Police shattered his cheekbone.)"

Noting that "there are thousands of supporters . . . who will raise their voices in protest" against the injustices in these and other cases, the article lists several organizations to contact, including the Cur-

about the "brutal treatment" of Curtis by the police, but also that Curtis "receive a fair trial such as every American deserves, not a kangaroo court like he received."

Griffin described the meat-packing industry Curtis worked in as one that "prides itself in being a leader in work-related injuries" and stated, "Rather than cease these hazardous conditions, they instead try to persecute individuals such as Mark Curtis."

The letter concluded: "We at the CALC urge all unionists to support the efforts to defend Mark Curtis and ask the labor movement to stand behind him. . . . We support all efforts to have the charges against Mark Curtis dropped and support an effort to incarcerate those individuals guilty of the brutality to Mark Curtis."



Militant/Sara Lobman  
Julia Terrell, Curtis' neighbor, and her daughter, Ruth Roberts, at Des Moines office of Curtis defense committee.

## DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

an editorial condemning the conviction of Curtis in its fall 1988 quarterly bulletin *Nicaragua Network News*.

Titled "An injury to one is an injury to all," the editorial notes several cases in which "individuals and institutions who oppose current government policy are being denied their right to free political expression."

- U.S. customs recently confiscated a shipment of humanitarian aid to Nicaragua from the solidarity group APSNICA.

- American Indian Movement leader Vernon Bellecourt was jailed, along with All-African People's Revolutionary Party leader Bob Brown, for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating alleged violations of the trade embargo and travel ban against Libya.

- The FBI recently announced it would answer for its illegal investigation of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) "by slapping the wrists of six low-level FBI officials."

- Mark Curtis, — who the editorial identifies as a union, Socialist Workers Party, and CISPES activist — was convicted "despite

tis defense committee.

People who have contributed money to the defense effort recently received a letter of thanks from defense committee activist Julia Terrell.

"I am Mark's neighbor and did not consider myself a terribly political person," she writes. "However, I could not turn my back on this young idealist who has been so flagrantly victimized."

Terrell explains that Curtis' case "has been a real eye-opener" that has made her "aware of how diligently we must protect our civil and human rights and realize that 'an injury to one is truly an injury to all.'"

Attached to the letter is a poem about Curtis' sentencing written by Terrell's daughter, Ruth Roberts.

Central Arizona Labor Council President R. T. Griffin sent a protest letter last month to Polk County Prosecutor James Smith in Des Moines.

Griffin, on behalf of the 40,000 members of the labor council, wrote of his concern not only

Mexican-born political activist Héctor Marroquín toured Washington State in late November to publicize the victory in his 11-year fight for permanent residence in the United States and to build support for Curtis.

Joining Marroquín on the platform of a November 23 meeting in Seattle were Jose Cervantes of the Committee in Defense of Immigrant Rights, and Marlene Petregrosa from the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes.

Cervantes, a Curtis committee sponsor, described Marroquín's success as an inspiring victory for immigrant rights.

Petregrosa discussed the parallels between the Marroquín, Curtis, and Domingo and Viernes cases. Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, two Filipino American trade unionists, were gunned down in a union hall in Seattle in 1981. They were opponents of the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship and had also been victims of FBI spying and harassment, Petregrosa explained.

Among those who attended the

meeting were Catalina Montero, regional director of the Venceremos Brigade, which organizes work brigades to Cuba; as well as a woman who had read about Curtis in the bilingual newspaper *Las Noticias de Washington*. The paper, which did an extensive interview with Marroquín, had reprinted a full-page article from the *Militant* on the Curtis case. During the discussion period she volunteered to call local media contacts to urge them to give Curtis' defense effort more publicity.

Marroquín also addressed 150 farm workers and other unionists at a fund-raiser for the United Farm Workers of Washington State in the Yakima Valley in central Washington.

speaking about the Curtis defense to the monthly meeting of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 280P at Gainers Meats in Edmonton, Canada.

Thirty of the 40 members at the November 1 meeting signed a petition calling for Curtis' release and the prosecution of the police who beat him. The packinghouse workers told Annis about their experiences during a bitter six-month strike in 1986 against concessions, which were similar to employer attacks on unionists in the United States.

At the Gainers plant gate, 71 workers signed Curtis petitions. Eight bought copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to read more on the case.

Chris Horner contributed to this column.

Roger Annis was invited to

# U.S. gov't probes Des Moines cops' racism, sexism

BY STU SINGER

DES MOINES, Iowa — The U.S. Department of Justice has launched an investigation into allegations of widespread racism and sexism in the Des Moines Police Department.

City Manager Cy Carney said that he and Police Chief William Moulder had asked for the review in response to sharp criticism of the department by the Des Moines Civil Service Commission. The commission recently issued a report accusing the police of condoning anti-Black and antiwoman remarks by on-duty police officers.

The civil service report, which was issued November 17, stated, "When this commission hears from the testimony of 13 out of 27 officers that racially and/or sexually derogatory statements still exist within the Des Moines Police Department, the time has come for a change."

An example of what the commission found is contained in the following excerpt from the testimony of "Officer E":

"Q. Is it your testimony that you've never heard the word 'coon' used in roll call?"

"A. In the roll call room, or — Who do you mean — Who's saying the word?"

"Q. In the roll call room."

"A. I'm sure the word 'coon' has been used in the room before. . . ."

"A. I've heard the word 'coon' used, yes, in the police department."

"Q. And the word 'nigger'?"

"A. Yes."

"Q. And other racist and sexist terms?"

"A. Yes."

"Q. And in fact, it's not unusual . . . for these terms to be used, is it?"

"A. Right. . . ."

"Q. Have you ever used the word 'coon' while wearing that uniform?"

"A. Yes."

"Q. You wouldn't have found the word repugnant, would you?"

"A. Nope."

"Q. And the word 'nigger', have you used that while wearing that uniform?"

"A. Yes."

"Q. And you wouldn't have found that repugnant, would you?"

"A. No."

### Officers clear each other

Civil Service commissioners also accused police internal affairs investigators of attempting to clear their superiors rather than investigating charges raised by Charlie Smith, a police cadet who is Black and female.

The commission ordered the city to reinstate Smith, who was fired after accusing a lieutenant of calling a Black man who was arrested a "coon" in a police roll-call meeting. All but one of the other police officers present denied that they heard the word used.

Charging that the police department's internal investigations lacked credibility, the commission asked, "How can a citizen who lodges a complaint have any faith that it will be dealt with fairly, impartially, and independently?"

The latest police scandal comes on top of previous exposés last summer. Former policewoman Deborah Lynch filed suit against the city for sexual harassment. Testimony in the case revealed a cop who unzipped his pants in public and asked Lynch to perform a sex act, pornographic pictures and cartoons posted in the police station, and an incident where two white cops put on Ku Klux Klan robes over their uniforms in order to terrorize a Black officer.

Police chief Moulder and city manager Carney have denied the new charges and

attacked the commission report. The city is appealing the ruling reinstating Smith.

Ruling circles in this city are concerned that the cops' refusal to acknowledge any wrongdoing is undercutting police credibility among Des Moines residents. The international public campaign condemning the police beating and frame-up of Des Moines political activist Mark Curtis has been a factor in how city authorities have responded.

James Flansburg, editor of the *Des Moines Register's* editorial pages, wrote a major opinion column in the November 27 issue discussing what should be done to salvage the cops' image in light of the Curtis defense effort.

The column was titled, "D.M. police circle wagons." In it Flansburg pointed to three recent events that have blemished the police department's image:

- A former officer sued the city, charging sexual harassment by her fellow officers. The officers admitted doing it, but said it was a joke, that she shouldn't have taken it seriously.

- A female cadet was dismissed from the force for reporting that her superior had used a racist epithet. At least one other person testified he'd heard the remark, but most people in the room said they didn't hear it.

- A socialist organizer charged with attempted rape mounted an extraordinary nationwide campaign to accuse the Des Moines department of a racist frame-up. Mark Curtis has been convicted and given 25 years.

"In my opinion, Mark Curtis' charges are made of whole cloth. Every independent investigator has concluded there was no frame-up. But lots of people across the country have bought the idea that he's a political prisoner and have given money

and have signed petitions supporting him.

"Quite naturally, I suppose, the Curtis case led Bill Moulder and his troops to circle their wagons. Their only defense, they seem to have concluded, is to pretend that they're perfect, that everything is hunky-dory."

"Anything less than that would be to give the Curtis propagandists more ammunition and get more people like actor Ed Asner, the Detroit City Council, and a Washington state senator to condemn the Des Moines department without a shred of relevant evidence."

Flansburg went on to give some advice to his police friends:

"I'm fairly confident an impartial investigation will show that Des Moines police are substantially less racist and sexist than many of their counterparts across the nation. . . . But there have been racist and sexist incidents. A stonewall denial simply doesn't work."

"Until the chief inaugurates an effort aimed at making every officer acutely aware of the sensitivities of our time, he's going to have problems."

"If that gives the Mark Curtis propagandists more fodder for their campaign, so be it."

On March 4, 1988, Mark Curtis, a unionist and political activist, was arrested on phony rape charges. When he was taken to the city jail, police officers beat him, calling him a "Mexican-lover, just like you love those coloreds." Curtis was taken to the hospital with a fractured cheekbone. The police claimed that Curtis attacked them.

After Curtis filed a police brutality complaint, an internal police investigation exonerated the cops. Curtis was charged with assault, but the charges were dropped in October.



# Fidel Castro: Latin American debt immoral, illegal, and unpayable

Failure of region's governments to act against debt has led to worsening of crisis

## Introduction

The following is an excerpt from a speech given by Cuban President Fidel Castro to the closing session of the Third Meeting of the Women's Continental Front Against Intervention, held in Havana October 3-7. The gathering drew 1,200 delegates, mainly from Latin America and the Caribbean. The Second Meeting of the Women's Front was also held in Havana, in June 1985.

Castro's speech centers on the grave economic, social, and political crisis gripping the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, at the heart of which is the region's \$420 billion debt to banks in the United States and other imperialist countries.

Castro refers to the campaign against payment of the foreign debt begun by the Cuban Communist Party leadership in 1985. That effort was launched with the publication of a lengthy interview with Castro in the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*, which received wide international attention. In it Castro explained that the debt owed by Latin America, Asia, and Africa — which now stands at \$1.2 trillion — is

off of the region's human and natural resources.

In the past several years, inflation, which averages 185 percent for the continent as a whole, has hit astronomical levels in Peru, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, prompting government-initiated "shock" austerity plans that squeeze the already impoverished toilers even harder.

In the last six years, Latin American and Caribbean countries have paid out \$160 billion to the imperialist banks in debt service. Half of the region's savings and a third of its export income go to pay the foreign debt.

In response to these conditions, workers in Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, and other countries have stepped up attempts to defend themselves against the growing crisis.

## Fidel Castro

At the Second Meeting, as we said, the foreign debt was a key issue. That year many international meetings took place. I remember it started with the meeting of Latin American women, and whereas then 300 came, this time there are more than

of those debts weren't paid, not because I didn't want to pay them but when the revolution triumphed they didn't want to collect. [Laughter and applause] I might have been able to pay the storekeeper, the butcher, and a few other creditors I had little by little from my salary. We've all gone through things like that.

Curiously enough, I remember that there were even surveys done in some countries about whether or not the debt should be paid, and most people in some countries said yes, of course it should be paid. They viewed it the same way they saw relations with the storekeeper. I think the debt to the storekeeper can and should be paid, for we can't sever relations with the storekeeper. But such relations are very different, and debts to the storekeeper are very different from the debts which developed in our countries.

### The people didn't incur the debt

First of all, the debt with the storekeeper is one you yourself enter into, a person or a family. He's your friend, you know him, and when you don't have a cent he gives you something. Then you pay it back and he gives you something again. But the Latin American debt wasn't entered into by any Latin American people, nor did the Latin American peoples receive anything for it. [Applause]

We said at the time — and I generally recognized that in economic terms it was impossible — the resources to pay it did not exist. Even if we wanted to pay, we couldn't. Politically it was impossible, because the governments that tried to pay would be ruined politically; and the facts are showing it. We said this implied a great risk for the processes of democratic opening because those governments would be worn down and politically ruined.

We said that in legal terms it was unpayable, for debts should be paid by those who enter into them and it wasn't the peoples, as a rule it wasn't the representatives of the people who entered into the debt. It was the governments, even tyrannical and genocidal governments, who got into debt by tens of billions of dollars, hundreds of billions, often to buy weapons, often to pay the repressive forces. Then they would demand at the moment of a democratic opening that the people pay those debts.

I wondered, for example, how they were going to ask the Chilean people to pay the \$22 billion, which is what they owed then — a debt entered into by the tyrannical and repressive military regime responsible for so much crime, disappearances, and torture. When the Chilean people's hour of freedom comes, how is it possible to ask them to pay Pinochet's debts, the money he used to buy weapons and build up a powerful army that has kept him in power all these years. How is it possible!

### Squandered, embezzled, sent abroad

In other cases the debts were entered into by governments. Parliaments weren't consulted. In others, it was the treasury ministers, national banks, and, in many cases private enterprises. And who knows what they did with the money. The people didn't participate in any of the acts leading to the debt. The people received virtually nothing. The money was squandered, embezzled, or sent out of the country. [Applause] Just sent abroad! It didn't reach the people. So it's not the same as what you buy from the storekeeper, which in the end your family consumes. There is no legal basis for payment of the debt.

Where is the money? If we knew how many hundreds of billions of dollars — yes, dollars, not sucres, pesos, or australes — are deposited in foreign banks in the

United States, Europe, Switzerland, etc. — might be as much as the sum we're told we owe.

Not only did they manipulate the interest on the debt, not only did they undertake abusive and unethical operations, they also implemented policies so that the money would leave the country. Amidst the inflation rocking the hemisphere, which is now worse, who was going to keep the money at home? Money goes where there is security, and what security could there be in those countries? Both the ill-gotten and supposedly not ill-gotten money — earnings of companies, transnationals, corporations — was sent out of the country to avoid depreciation or devaluation.

The United States was overvaluing the dollar, paying high interest rates and all the money that could be sent to the United States ended up there. Our countries were left only with the ruins.

We said that for these and other reasons, from a moral point of view it was impossible to pay the debt. It was like a gambler who goes to a casino and runs up a debt a million dollars and then it is demanded that his small children pay the million dollars.

There were so many reasons and arguments. We said that historically we weren't debtors, and you have repeated it, but that we were creditors because it was our blood, our sweat, and our lives — those the men enslaved in Africa, the men and women enslaved in America, the populations that were virtually exterminated in the hardest work conditions — who provided capital for the development of the developed capitalist world.

### They are in our debt

Historically, they are our great debtors. They have plundered us in the past and are still doing so. They have stolen from us before and are still doing so. They stole from us when we were colonies and are probably stealing still more from us now that we are neocolonies.

They steal from us every day, around the clock; they are stealing from us right now. Every time there is a commercial transaction, they steal from us. They are paying us much less for our products all the time, and they charge us much more for our imports, be it industrial machinery or medicine, a semifinished raw material, or a kind of technology.

They charge us more and more for that and for the things you mentioned in the Final Statement, two-bit items from transnationals which, as you insinuated, often lead to the prostitution of Latin American women.

They are constantly stealing from us and the mathematical and statistical data shows how this problem gets worse all the time. They pay us less all the time and charge more. The coffee, cacao, or bananas we grow, or the shoes and textiles we produce and export — because on top of everything they want us to live off exporting shoes, textiles, trinkets, raw materials, and food for them to process and then send back to us at very high prices — are produced at starvation wages.

What is the standard of living of the peasant or agricultural worker who harvests the cacao, coffee, and all the other produce? Does he have electricity? How much electricity does he consume? Does he have a refrigerator, a television set? Does he eat and dress well? Does he receive medical care, retirement benefits, or social security? No, as a rule he has none of these things. He is barefoot and his children die from lack of medicines, otherwise why do a million children die every year in Latin America, children who could be saved ac-



Gianfranco Gorgoni, reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

**Fidel Castro. He spoke on the debt before third continentwide meeting of women earlier this year.**

economically unpayable, politically uncollectible, and morally indefensible, and should be canceled.

In 1985, Castro recalls in the current speech, the Cubans hosted Latin America-wide gatherings of youth, farmers, unionists, journalists, and others to discuss the debt.

Castro compares current conditions faced by the toilers of Latin America and the Caribbean to those which existed before the French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917. The objective conditions that gave rise to the great revolutions in history are accumulating in Latin America, Castro says.

Stark economic decline affects the entire region. In 1987 unemployment stood at nearly 70 million, out of a population of 421 million. In urban areas, per capita income has declined between 30 and 40 percent, and more, since 1980. Rising infant mortality, disease, hunger and malnutrition, illiteracy, and homelessness are the results of the imperialist banks' siphoning

1,000. This is not only due to greater experience, more solidarity, greater contact, it is also because the situation is worse and it aroused very great interest in this meeting.

In that year there were also meetings of students and the youth, peasants, trade unions, journalists, and political, scientific, religious, and cultural leaders. Many meetings were held in our country that year, a year which to us seemed really decisive in that battle. That's why in Cuba we spent a lot of time on the problem.

Many of the issues raised then were new. There were a lot of people who were almost scared when we said that the debt couldn't and shouldn't be paid. They saw it in the light of the standards that govern relations between a family and the storekeeper, and we have all had relations with the storekeeper.

I had a lot to do with them when I was a student and just after I graduated, and they gave me a lot of credit for which I was very grateful. I will tell you that in the end some



# Debt is an burden

## Analysis for toilers

According to experts from UNICEF, who could be saved!

Those who produce all those goods don't have money to provide medical care for their children or to buy medicine. They live in hovels with palm-thatched roofs, thatch or mud, or any other material they can get hold of. Often they are paid less than \$50 a month, at the dollar exchange rate. This is the situation in the majority of Latin American countries now. Their wage is \$50 or less, but what they buy is produced with wages of \$1,000, \$1,500, or \$2,000. We finance the big profits of the capitalists.

We even underwrite military expenditures, because the so-called value-added tax includes taxes that cover military spending in the developed capitalist countries.

### Real wages decline

We pay when we buy something in that developed world, even the military taxes, while wages there grow and have grown almost constantly. By chance, do the bulletins reporting on the economic and social situation in Latin America report a growth of real wages? All reports in the last eight years indicate the contrary. They say that real per capita income in Latin America is down every year. Wages are getting worse all the time.

Meanwhile, wages in the developed capitalist world are higher, the earnings, profits of the big transnationals — because wages are only a part — the huge earnings, the huge spending, and luxury of those societies that no longer know what to do with what they have; the so-called consumer society where they don't know where to dump their garbage anymore. Any day now they will bury themselves under the garbage they produce. [Applause]

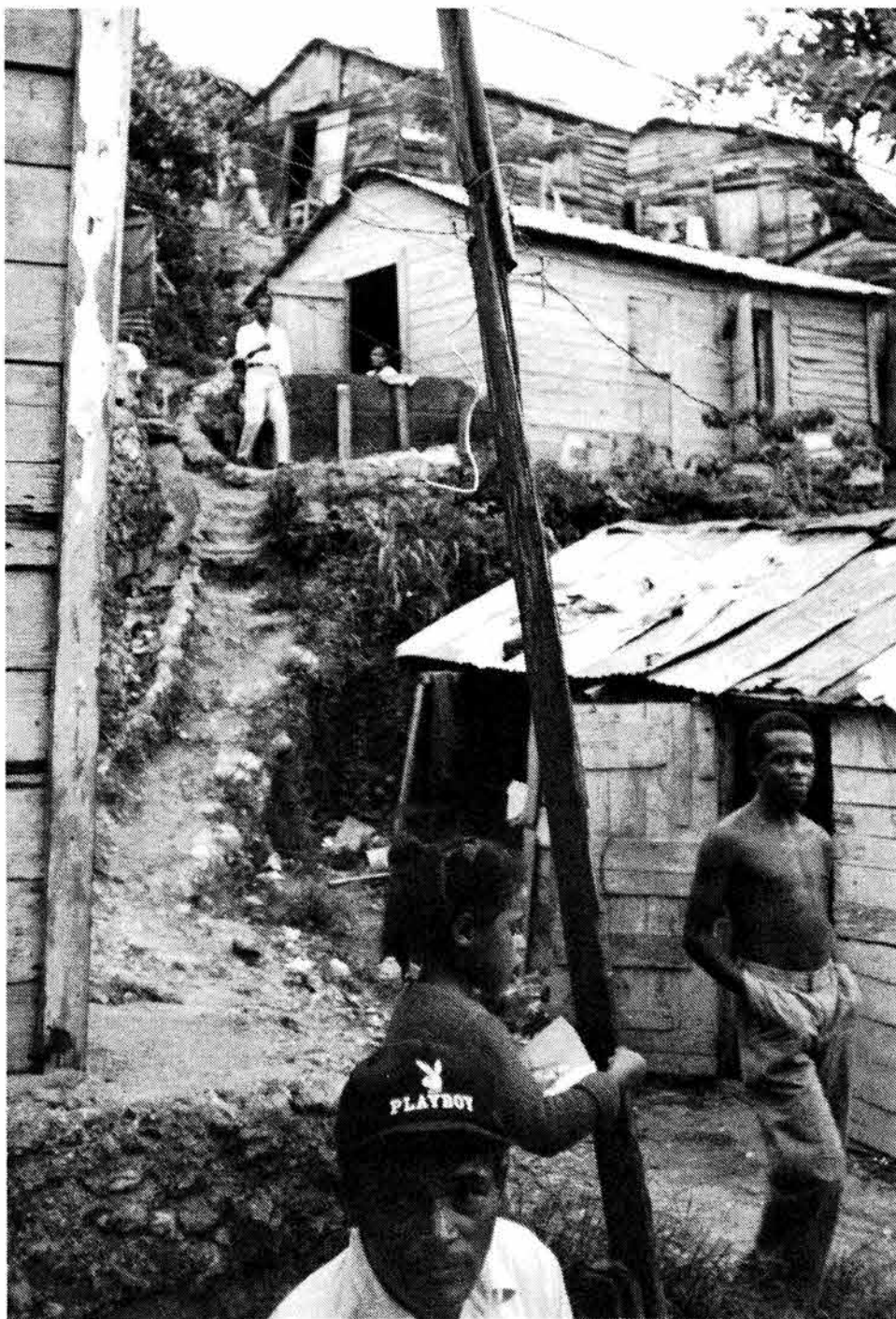
Nearly every day we read about ghost ships sailing the Caribbean or off the coast of Africa with waste from England or the United States — because many industrialized capitalist countries don't want their own garbage and want to dump it on us. They sail to any Third World port and contaminate everything, poison everything.

Not even with all that wealth have those societies solved their own problems! For they have beggars, poverty, unemployment, part of the population goes hungry. There's prostitution in those developed capitalist countries, growing quantities of drugs, neglected children. No, they haven't solved their problems; crime keeps rising in all those societies. They haven't solved their problems in the midst of so much wealth that comes to a large extent from our sweat and our blood.

That's why I say they steal from us every day. With what they have stolen from us, taken away from us just by means of unequal trade, we could pay the debt twice over. So they want us to pay the debt while they go on stealing from us, or, as you put it in the document, that we pay them in shares and in equity-for-debt swaps.

With that debt they can buy the whole of Latin America and their slaves, all of us together. We'd become the property of the empire's banks, yes, with that equity-for-debt system, or turning it into shares. They want to take away from us what little we have left. This was a highly debated subject in 1985 and, as I said then, this problem was not entirely understood.

I think that 1985 was a year of shaping the awareness of our peoples. All those meetings could have yielded more — that's another subject — but at least they produced an awareness of the problem. Today what we claimed then, what we stated then, is universally accepted. Today it can



Barrio dwellers in Dominican Republic. Castro asked, What is the standard of living of the Latin American worker? He is barefoot, lives in a hovel, and his children die from lack of medicine.

be said that our peoples are fully aware of this problem.

It was the governments that didn't become fully aware of the problem, and it was the governments that should have acted.

### Hoped for action

We hoped the Latin American governments would act. We struggled to have international public opinion develop that awareness so that the right conditions could have been created to allow for the Latin American, Caribbean, and Third World peoples to fight together.

We had all that material sent to the governments of all the countries on all the continents, both developed and underdeveloped, for we, too, considered that that was an exceptional opportunity. We even advocated internal unity in those countries to struggle against the debt, and unity between countries to struggle against the debt — unity not just among Latin American countries but among all Third World countries, because we said that this was the most urgent, fundamental, key, decisive problem at the time.

We didn't view the debt problem in isolation but associated with the conditions that created the debt. We viewed it as associated basically with the trade relations between the developed capitalist world and the Third World countries. So we said that we must have the New International Economic Order which had already been approved by the United Nations — a new policy that would really eliminate the causes of the debt that lay in underdevelopment, in all the different ways in which they plunder us, steal from us, sabotage what we produce by resorting to dumping, tariff barriers, and other abusive practices.

We said then that the debt must be the factor that will unite us and enable us to muster the strength to fight for the New International Economic Order and, besides, it must be the forerunner to a true policy of unity and integration between the Latin American countries.

I really believe that 1985 was a decisive year, psychologically speaking, had the

leaders of those countries risen to the occasion.

### Failed to rise to situation

It is my conclusion — and here I'm making no distinction between parties and I don't mean to offend or hurt anybody by saying it, but I do it out of conviction — and it's being proven by history, that the ruling classes in Latin America failed to rise to the situation. [Applause]

We weren't proclaiming anything against governments, we weren't proposing revolution or subversion. We were urging the peoples and governments to become aware of the problem and wage the battle.

We said then that a country, a small country like Cuba, Nicaragua, or Panama could be blockaded; but a whole continent can't be blockaded. [Applause]

We suggested that if one country took a step forward all the others would support it. We were trying to create the conditions for that.

I really think a great historical opportunity was lost, because every situation has its optimum, its crowning point. At that time the developed capitalist countries, the banks of the developed capitalist countries had panicked. We were not proposing that the banks be ruined. We said there was money to write off the debt, there was money to finance the New International Economic Order and it was to be found in military spending. We did our figuring on the basis of the trillion dollars of military spending a year that was spent then and is still being spent. [Applause]

Seek peace, seek coexistence, we said, and the money saved on weapons can be used to solve these problems. This will not lead to the ruin of the industrialized nations. On the contrary, it will mean greater international trade, it will mean jobs for tens of millions of unemployed in those countries, because what with their industrial reconversions, etc. they have tens of millions of unemployed.

The day the Third World countries have purchasing power, the day the Third World countries can buy all the equipment and goods they need for their development, the industrialized countries will also benefit

considerably. The money is there, because the money was and is there.

Of course we weren't going to get it out of charity or for philanthropic reasons. We had to demand it by uniting and saying: "No more plunder!" We could have organized a force strong enough to demand this.

We were not going to sit and pray to the capitalists or the capitalist bankers or the developed capitalist world. That's not what we had in mind. We said that we had the power to demand, to demand! [Applause] But those who had to make the decisions, those who had to get together and unite and undertake the battle — even if only like a trade union when the workers at a factory meet and join together and are capable of going on strike when they want better living conditions, when they have an economic demand to make — didn't do so.

We weren't even capable of acting like members of a union and uniting. It wasn't possible because imperialism didn't want us to unite, it didn't even want us to meet and said no. The developed capitalist countries said, "There mustn't be a debtors' club!" And the first thing Latin American leaders would do before they had breakfast in the morning was to pledge solemnly that they would not set up a debtors' club. [Applause]

This was pledged at every meeting — the international news dispatches can be checked — while they, the big capitalist countries, meet as the Paris Club and the International Monetary Fund, which they control. They met every year, once in Tokyo, another time in Canada and elsewhere, while for Latin American leaders it was: "Meetings are prohibited!"

We didn't even have the rights of a small factory union. We were docile, submissive, obedient to their desires and demands, they frightened us.

What imperialism wanted was to hold talks one by one, case by case. It is as if a big fellow talks to a group of Pioneers one by one, with each one of them separately. If the Pioneers get together they might drive Gulliver to the ground, because I think the little people drove Gulliver to the ground because they got together. In this case, the little people didn't even meet or unite to struggle against Gulliver. It is a historic responsibility, history will have to reflect this and demand a rendering of accounts.

### Our societies would explode

We said that if these problems weren't solved, our societies would explode. I even

Continued on Page 13

for further reading . . .

## Fidel Castro on the Latin American debt crisis

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# Japanese Americans win compensation 46 years after U.S. internment

BY PATTI IYAMA

December 7, Pearl Harbor Day, is an occasion for flag-waving by U.S. government and military figures. The Japanese military attack on a U.S. naval base in 1941 was used to whip up an anti-Japanese hysteria as part of Washington's efforts to build domestic support for U.S. participation in the interimperialist slaughter known as World War II.

Two months later, the White House issued an order to intern 120,000 Japanese

sevelt in February 1942, all persons of Japanese descent living on the West Coast were evacuated and relocated to 10 concentration camps in remote deserts and swamps.

Most evacuees were given five days to pack and dispose of their property. They could take only what they could carry in two bags. Radios, cameras, and anything containing metal (such as belt buckles, earrings, and silverware) were confiscated by the government when they boarded buses and trains.

Under these circumstances, Japanese Americans' financial losses were heavy. Nearly two-thirds of the Japanese American work force directly depended upon agriculture, 45 percent growing crops and 18-20 percent wholesaling, retailing, or transporting food products. They were particularly hard hit by the evacuation.

The agricultural production of Japanese farmers was a substantial percentage of total production in California (where 84 percent of Japanese farms were located).

Japanese farmers controlled 42 percent of the commercial truck crops in California, valued at \$35 million. In 1940 they held a virtual monopoly in the state on such crops as snap beans, celery, peppers, and strawberries, and produced at least half of such crops as cauliflower, cucumbers, spinach, tomatoes, and garlic. And their monopoly on the production of certain fruits and vegetables was strengthened by their control of wholesale and retail outlets for Japanese produce.

Since Japanese farmers were such a crucial part of agricultural production, they were forced to continue farming up to the last possible minute. The government warned that any neglect of crops would be considered an act of sabotage.

## Land, crops, and machinery lost

Evacuees lost sale of their crops, which were harvested and sold by strangers; their farm machinery, which was either sold in a buyer's market for only a fraction of its worth or stored in makeshift warehouses



Los Angeles, April 1942. Japanese American awaits evacuation to World War II concentration camp. Some 120,000 were held up to four years in desert barracks.

where the goods were stolen or destroyed; and their land, which was sold for almost nothing or held by caretakers who abandoned it or sold it as their own. In the wake of the evacuation, white growers and shippers expanded and prospered at the expense of the Japanese who had been forced to leave.

The Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco conservatively estimated in 1942 that the total loss to evacuees, not including lost interest, wages, income, and appreciation, was \$400 million.

In 1948 the government began to adjudicate claims for losses due to evacuation. The payments were stingy — an average of 10 cents per dollar at 1941 values. The average award per claim in one year was \$40.

In contrast to these token reparations grudgingly given to interned Japanese Americans, the government awarded \$213 million tax-free to U.S. companies whose property abroad was damaged during World War II — an average of 75 cents on the dollar as compared to the 10 cents given to the Japanese Americans.

## Racist discrimination

Two-thirds of the evacuees held illegally without trial were citizens of the United States. The others were prevented by law from becoming U.S. citizens.

They were locked behind barbed wire for up to four years. The last concentration camp, at Tule Lake, California, was closed on March 20, 1946, six months after the Japanese government had surrendered and World War II ended.

Japanese in the United States had faced widespread discrimination before World War II. They could not by law become U.S. citizens, buy land (only their U.S.-born children could buy land), marry whites, or enter the United States after 1924.

Ruling-class figures, arguing for mass internment, explained that it was impossible to distinguish "loyal" Japanese from "disloyal" because they all look alike. For example, Gen. John DeWitt, who was in charge of the Western Defense Command of the U.S. Army, commented, "A Jap's a Jap. They are a dangerous element. . . . There is no way to determine their loyalty. . . . It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen; theoretically he is still Japanese and you can't change him by giving him a piece of paper."

U.S. government figures argued that there was a danger of sabotage and espionage by Japanese, and therefore it was necessary to remove this potential fifth column from the "war zone" on the West Coast. No cases of sabotage or espionage were ever proven among the people of Japanese descent living in the United States.

In 1983 the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, appointed by President James Carter, condemned the internment of Japanese Americans as a "grave injustice." It unanimously agreed that "Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity" but had

been motivated by "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." The current law gives a similar explanation.

In signing the bill, President Reagan stated, "The nation was then at war, struggling for its survival. And it's not for us today to pass judgment upon those who may have made mistakes while engaged in that great struggle. Yet we must recognize that the internment of Japanese Americans was just that, a mistake."

But the internment was not a mistake made in the heat of war. It was an important part of the policy of the U.S. ruling class during World War II.

## Interimperialist conflict

The East Asian theater of the war was essentially a conflict between two imperialist powers, Japan and the United States, for control of markets and natural resources in the Far East. The U.S. ruling class appealed to race prejudice against the Japanese to justify the war and disguise its true nature.

The creation of racist hysteria against the "sneaky, dishonest, sly Japanese" was necessary to insure that U.S. workers would fight. It was inevitable that the bigotry whipped up against the Japanese would be extended to those persons of Japanese descent living in the United States.

But the policy of mass evacuation and internment in concentration camps was also part of a policy of stifling the struggles of working people and Blacks under the slogan of "wartime unity." The employers, through President Roosevelt, instituted a wage freeze and obtained commitments from trade union officials for a "no strike" pledge for the duration of the war and compulsory arbitration of all labor-management disputes through the War Labor Board.

The "war against fascism" was a war against U.S. labor's right to strike for unionization, higher wages, and better working conditions. It was also a war against the struggle of Blacks for jobs and equality. Blacks were told that their fight for human dignity was secondary to the "struggle against fascism" and was, in fact, sabotaging the war effort.

Roosevelt curtailed civil rights and civil liberties in the name of the war effort. He imposed media censorship, suspended the right of habeas corpus, and arrested and imprisoned leaders of socialist organizations and unions who opposed World War II.

The mass evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans was an example of what could be done to those who opposed Washington's war drive.

It took more than 40 years before the U.S. government was forced to state that the internment of Japanese Americans should never have happened, and to apologize to the victims of this injustice, including a token payment of money. This is a victory for the rights of all working people.

Patti Iiyama's parents were interned in Topaz, Utah, during World War II.

## AS I SEE IT

Americans in concentration camps, accusing them of being a potential fifth column.

More than 46 years after this mass incarceration, on Aug. 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation apologizing for the forced relocation and establishing a \$1.25 billion trust fund to pay reparations to the evacuees and their families.

Under the law, the U.S. government will issue individual apologies for all violations of civil liberties and constitutional rights that occurred. And reparations of \$20,000 in tax-free payments will be made to each individual of Japanese ancestry who was interned (or their designated beneficiary). There are approximately 60,000 survivors today. The bill also provides compensation of \$12,000 to each of the surviving wartime evacuees from the Aleutian and Pribilof islands in Alaska.

In addition, in accepting the money, concentration camp internees must agree to drop all outstanding legal claims against the U.S. government.

The bill was the culmination of a more than decade-long campaign led by organizations such as the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations and the Japanese-American Citizens League.

The spring and summer of 1942 is not a fond memory for Japanese Americans. Under the authorization of Executive Order 9066, issued by President Franklin Roo-

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# Protest condemns Oregon antigay vote

BY JANET POST

PORTLAND, Ore. — Chanting "Civil rights, gay rights," more than 600 demonstrators marched during a rainstorm to protest the passage of Oregon's ballot Measure 8. The march and rally were held on November 9, the evening after the elections, and were built on one day's notice.

Ballot Measure 8 overturned Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's executive order banning job discrimination against state workers on account of sexual orientation.

Preceding the election, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from Oregon's 3rd District, Lisa Hickler, urged a vote against Measure 8. "No worker," she said, "should suffer job discrimination because of their ideas, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other fact about their personal life."

"In opposing Measure 8, working people are also defending the right of every worker to privacy."

The socialist candidate explained, "While Measure 8 is a direct attack on unions that organize government employees, it would also open the door to further such attacks on all unions' ability to defend their members equally."

Leading up to the vote, election polls had indicated that the measure would lose by a substantial margin. Supporters of democratic rights for gay people were surprised by the measure's passage by 53 percent to 47 percent.

The measure had been placed on the ballot by the Oregon Citizens Alliance, which waged a vigorous campaign throughout the state.

The alliance ran ads claiming that the executive order gave "special rights" to homosexuals. The ads implied that workers who are gay could hide behind a "protected status" if their job performance was called into question.

The ads also played on the fears and concerns around AIDS. Some of the advertisements were so reactionary that television stations refused to air them.

With the election over, many activists are now suggesting that the vote indicates that prejudice toward homosexuals is increasing. However, the Oregon State AFL-CIO, Oregon Public Employees Union, American Civil Liberties Union, United Church of Christ, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, and many other organizations opposed the measure.

But the broad support was not mobilized into the type of powerful public campaign necessary to defeat the initiative. Although the measure was widely discussed in workplaces, voters were generally confused about the intent of the initiative. Until the week of the election, the governor himself was barely visible in defending his own executive order.

## Minimum wage initiative scores big win in Washington State

BY CHRIS HORNER

SEATTLE — A measure to raise Washington State's minimum wage — Initiative 518 — passed by a landslide margin of 1,218,378 to 369,902 votes during the November 8 election, carrying all 39 counties in the state.

The new law raises the minimum wage to \$3.85 an hour in 1989, and \$4.25 in 1990, and covers farm workers for the first time ever. Currently, the minimum wage is \$2.30 an hour, 39th lowest in the country.

The fight to raise the minimum wage and include farm workers was initiated by the United Farm Workers of Washington State (UFWWS).

During the spring legislative session, caravans of farm workers crossed the mountains to the state capitol in Olympia a number of times. All-night vigils, lobbying of legislators, rallies on the capitol steps, and other actions received statewide publicity. Attention was drawn to the 60,000 workers in Washington State holding minimum wage jobs, and the tens of thousands of farm workers not even covered by the minimum wage.

After bills to raise the minimum wage and include farm workers under state unemployment compensation law were defeated, supporters of the legislation — primarily in the state AFL-CIO — began discussions on organizing a ballot initiative. The Livable Income Campaign was formed and got backing from union bodies, churches, Democratic Party politicians, including the governor, and other organizations. Most of the petitioning to collect the hundreds of thousands of signatures needed to get the measure on the ballot was organized out of union offices around the state. Hundreds of volunteers participated in the effort, which received major publicity.

During the Livable Income Campaign, the UFWWS explained that including farm workers under minimum wage and other labor-standards law was vital to building unity within the state labor movement and among all workers.

With polls showing overwhelming support for Initiative 518, the state Chamber of Commerce, Association of Washington Businesses, and other opponents of 518 did not mount an advertising campaign against it, limiting themselves to occasional statements in the media.

In the wake of this significant victory for working people, UFWWS President To-

más Villanueva announced at a farm workers rally in Yakima November 25 that the union is gearing up for another public campaign for the next state legislative session. The goal is to win inclusion of farm workers in the state's unemployment compensation, child labor, and other labor laws.

## Motion filed to seek release of jailed Puerto Rican activist

BY SELVA NEBBIA

NEW YORK — "On June 15, 1988, the steel doors of MCC [Metropolitan Correction Center] closed behind 28-year-old Nelson Ramírez for his refusal to cooperate with a federal grand jury conducting secret investigations of the Puerto Rican independence movement."

"Nelson remains incarcerated for the life of this grand jury (September 1989), even though he has never committed nor been accused of committing any crime," states the appeal made by the Committee of Family and Friends of Nelson Ramírez, and his lawyer Colleen McGuire.

At the time of his arrest, Ramírez said, "As a Puerto Rican I have always been for independence of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States."

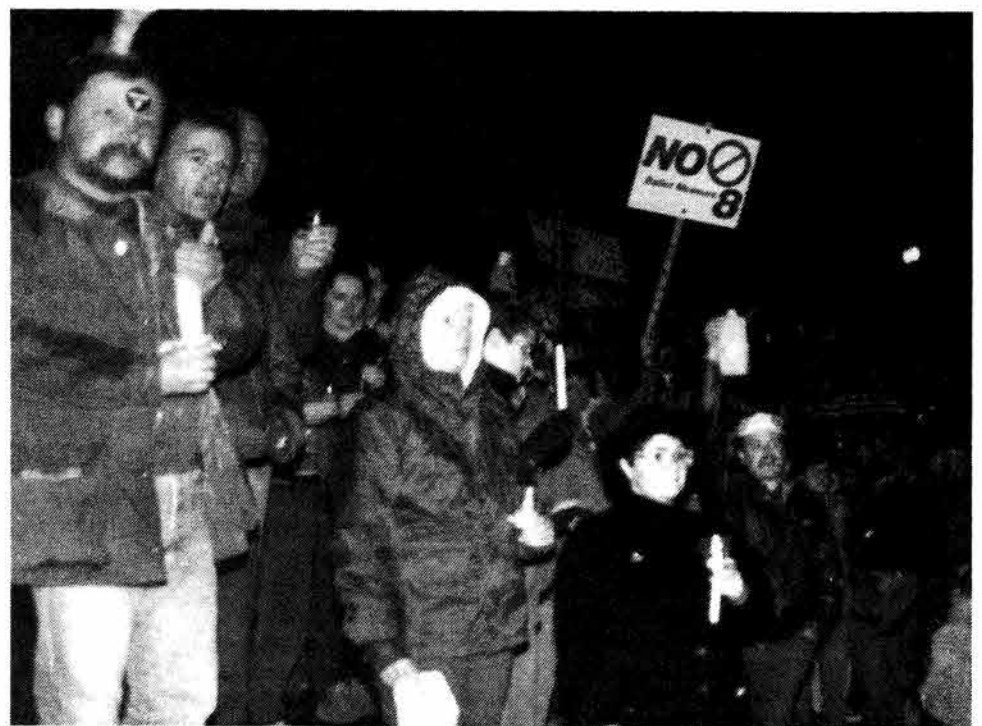
"The United States government has no moral or legal right to ask me or any Puerto Rican questions pertaining to the independence movement," he explained. "I would never cooperate with them in the repression of that movement."

His defense argues that he should be released since incarceration is being used as a "coercive device imposed to secure compliance with a court order," and it's not likely he will change his mind.

The National Lawyers Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights have added their names in support of the motion for Ramírez' release.

The committee is asking supporters of democratic rights to attend Ramírez' December 16 court hearing, publicize his case, and send statements and make phone calls demanding his release to Judge Thomas C. Platt, 225 Cadman Plaza E., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

For more information, contact the Committee of Family and Friends of Nelson Ramírez, % Rafael A. Sención, P.O. Box 20068, New York, N.Y. 10025-1510.



Militant/Janet Post

Rally hit overturn of antidiscrimination executive order

## —WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

### Peru president imposes austerity measures

Peru's toilers were hit with new austerity measures November 23, as President Alan García's government continued trying to gain some control over the country's rapidly deteriorating economic situation.

With inflation expected to soar as high as 2,000 percent this year, the government announced food price increases ranging from 40 to 270 percent, and a 225 percent increase in gasoline prices. Peru's currency, the inti, will be devalued from 250 to 500 per dollar in order to boost exports and bring in dollars. The government also announced an increase in the monthly minimum wage from 15,000 to 24,000 intis — \$48.

There are widespread food shortages in the country, and health workers estimate that chronic undernourishment affects 40 percent of Peru's 20 million people, with acute malnutrition rising rapidly.

Food prices had already been raised in March, and again in September, prompting a wave of workers' strikes. The country's 60,000 miners have been on strike since October 17, demanding higher wages.

Bus drivers and bank, textile, and government workers are also on strike. A general strike December 1, called by the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers and backed by the miners' union federation, was attacked by police. They arrested scores of strikers.

Peru's debt to imperialist banks stands at \$15 billion. After García, a Social Democrat, was elected president in 1985, he moved to limit payments on the debt to 10 percent of the country's export earnings. Peru was then cut off from new foreign loans.

The current austerity moves were negotiated in secret with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, according to a report by *New York Times* reporter Alan Riding.

### Philippine gov't sues Westinghouse over nuke

The Philippine government filed suit in U.S. federal court December 1 against Westinghouse Electric Corp. and a New Jersey engineering firm to regain \$2.2 billion paid for the construction of a nuclear power plant near Manila. Built on the side of a volcano near an earthquake fault, the plant has never operated.

The suit charges that Westinghouse and the construction firm conspired with ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos and one of his relatives to obtain the contract for building the plant. Westinghouse admits paying "commissions" of \$17.3 million to Herminio Disini, Marcos' relative, to gain "access" to the ex-president.

The plant, built between 1976 and 1985, has been the focus of widespread opposition and popular concern over its safety.

The suit charges that the plant is full of defects. Philippine government officials have called the plant's design out of date and its construction shoddy. Originally projected to cost \$1.1 billion, the reactor ended up costing twice that amount. Interest charges on it add \$355,000 a day to the country's foreign debt.

The Philippine debt to banks in the United States and other imperialist countries is \$28 billion. Debt repayments now amount to 29 percent of the country's income from exports.

### Rate of executions in South Africa rising

The hangings of five Black South Africans November 24 brought to 115 the number of people executed by the apartheid regime so far this year. Of these, 79 were Black, 33 were "mixed race," and 3 white; 273 other people remain on death row.

In 1987, the South African government executed 164 people, more than any other country in the world, according to Amnesty International. Since 1983, there have been 638 hangings in the country, with the overwhelming majority of them Blacks.

In September, Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee admitted that 83 of those awaiting hanging had been convicted of "politically motivated" crimes, that is, "crimes" committed in the course of fighting apartheid.

Brian Currin, director of Lawyers for Human Rights, said that Pretoria Central Prison — where hangings have become an almost weekly routine — is "like a little factory where they just process hangings."

### Protesters in Algeria condemn torture

Defying a government ban on demonstrations, some 5,000 protesters marched in Algiers November 24 to condemn the government's use of torture against those involved in the large-scale protests that rocked Algeria in October.

In those demonstrations and strikes against food shortages, lack of jobs, a severe housing crisis, and other effects of the country's worsening economic crisis, as many as 500 youths and workers were killed and 1,000 wounded by the army. Another 3,000 protesters were arrested. They have since been released.

The November march, which called for compensation to the government's victims, was forced to disperse by police.

A week earlier, the Algerian League of Human Rights published a report detailing hundreds of cases of torture against those involved in the October anti-austerity actions. Demonstrations by doctors, nurses, teachers, students, and artists have also taken place demanding that those responsible for the massacre be tried.



## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**Victory for Héctor Marroquín.** Landmark immigration case won after 11-year fight. Speakers: Héctor Marroquín, Mexican-born socialist who recently won permanent residency in the U.S.; Peter Schey, attorney and leader, National Center for Immigrant Rights. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. United Methodist Church, 1010 S Flower. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

### San Francisco

**Live Aid Palestine!** A concert for medical aid for Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Featuring Dance Brigade, Al-tazor Latin American New Song with Lichi Fuentes and Al Awda Palestinian Cultural Ensemble. Sat., Dec. 10, 8 p.m. Victoria Theatre, 2961 16th St. Admission: \$10 in advance, \$12 at door. For tickets or more information call Palestine Solidarity Committee at (415) 861-1552.

**Red, White, and Black Ball.** Benefit party for Nicaragua hurricane relief. Sat., Dec. 31, 9 p.m.—2 a.m. Caribbean Allstars, Diane Amos, DJ music. Longshoreman's Hall, 400 W Point (at Taylor). Donation: \$14, \$15—\$25 at door. Sponsors: S.F. Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Nicaragua Information Center, Community Action, Nest Foundation. For more information call (415) 648-8222.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**Glasnost — Perestroika: Is Gorbachev Democratizing the USSR? Will Capitalist Methods Solve the USSR's Economic Crisis?** Speaker: Thabo Ntweng, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

## GEORGIA

### Atlanta

**Matewan.** Video showing of film on 1920 coal-fields strike. Introduction by Fred White, Socialist Workers Party and member American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 644. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

## MARYLAND

### Baltimore

**Cuba and Angola: "Response to the South African Escalation."** Video showing of Cuban documentary on the defeat of the apartheid army in Angola. Speakers: representatives of United Nations missions of Angola, African National Congress of South Africa, and South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia. Sat., Dec. 17. Video 2 p.m.; reception 6 p.m.; panel discussion 7 p.m. Maryland Institute College of Art, Station Building Auditorium, 1400 Cathedral (near Mount Royal). Sponsor: Pathfinder Bookstore, Maryland Institute College of Art. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Victory Over South Africa in Angola.** Video showing of Cuban documentary "The Response to the South African Escalation," on the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. Sun., Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

## MICHIGAN

### Detroit

**Justice for Mark Curtis!** Speaker: Robert Bruce, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 5019½ Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

## MINNESOTA

### Austin

**Children in Debt.** Film on the impact Latin America's staggering debt has on the children of that continent. Speaker: Craig Honts, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in recent elections. Sun., Dec. 11, 7 p.m. 407½ N Main St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (507) 433-3461.

**South Korea: The Struggle for Democracy and Reunification.** Speaker: Ken Shinya Kawakubo, Socialist Workers Party, member Local 155 Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sun., Dec. 18, 7 p.m. 407½ N Main St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (507) 433-3461.

### St. Paul

**Chile's Dictatorship in Crisis.** Speaker: Hernán Vidal, professor of Spanish and Portuguese at University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, recently returned from Chile. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum, Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

**Classes on Nicaragua.** Two classes by Harvey McArthur, former correspondent with *Militant's* Managua Bureau. "Nicaragua's Land Reform." Sat., Dec. 17, 4 p.m., followed by Nicaraguan dinner. "Ten Years of Revolution on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast." Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. Party to follow. Translation to Spanish. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2 per class, \$3 dinner. Sponsor: Militant Forum, Pathfinder Bookstore, Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

**The Role of Revolutionary Leadership in Africa's Liberation.** Weekly discussion group on developments in Burkina Faso, South Africa, and Angola. Two sessions, 12 noon and 7 p.m. every Monday. Series ends Dec. 19. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Pathfinder Bookstore and Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

## MISSOURI

### Kansas City

**The Palestinian Struggle Today.** A panel discussion. Sun., Dec. 11, 6 p.m. 5534 Troost. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 444-7880.

## NEBRASKA

### Omaha

**The Farm Crisis: What's Behind It?** Speaker: Lee Oleson, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

## NEW JERSEY

### Newark

**Massive U.S. Aid to Nicaragua Now!** Speakers: Jim Moske, Young Socialist Alliance, member United Auto Workers Local 950; Jim Burchell, Northeast organizer for Quest for Peace. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 10,

7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

**Celebrate the Victory of Héctor Marroquín.** Landmark immigration case won after 11-year fight. Speakers: Héctor Marroquín, Mexican-born socialist who recently won permanent residency in U.S.; Connie Gilbert-Neiss, co-coordinator, Essex County National Organization for Women; others. Translation to Spanish and French. Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministries, 404 University Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

## NEW YORK

### Manhattan

**Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Venceremos Brigade and Cuban Revolution's 30th Anniversary.** Fund-raiser party. Salsa, calypso, merengue, funk; DJs Will K. Wilkins and Emory White. Sat., Dec. 17, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Casa de las Americas, 104 W 14th St. (between 6th and 7th aves). Donation: \$7 in advance, \$8 at door. Sponsor: N.Y. Regional Venceremos Brigade. For more information call (212) 349-6292.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Greensboro

**Forging a Fighting Working-Class Leadership.** Video presentation of *Labor's Turning Point*. Sun., Dec. 11, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**The Economic Crisis and Changes in U.S. Politics: The Battles Ahead for Working People.** 1. Forum. Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2. Class: "The Fight for a Shorter Workweek." Speaker: Randy Warren. Sat., Dec. 17, 3:30 p.m. 3. Class: "Cancel the Third World Debt." Speaker: Leona Hershkovitz. Sun., Dec. 18, 11 a.m. Translation to Spanish. 4806 Alameda. Donation: forum \$2, \$1 each class. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

## UTAH

### Price

**Defend Rights of Immigrant Workers. Discuss INS Raid in Southeastern Utah.** Speakers: Pat Fernandez, Socialist Workers Party; Bob Hill, Socialist Workers Party, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 294. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 253 E Main. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 637-6294.

### Salt Lake City

**Political Perspectives in the U.S.: Into the 1990s.** Speaker: William Arth, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Reconstructing Nicaragua.** Speakers to be announced. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

**Why the Minimum Wage Should Be Raised.** Speaker: Deborah Lazar, Socialist Workers

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Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 14287. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Charleston

**Palestinians Rebel Against Israeli Terror.** Speakers: Jim Altenberg, Socialist Workers Party; Palestinian activist. Sat., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

**Defend Abortion Rights.** Speakers: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party; others. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

## WISCONSIN

### Milwaukee

**Nicaragua Today: Rebuilding in the Wake of Hurricane Joan.** An eyewitness report. Speaker: Harvey McArthur, former correspondent with *Militant's* Managua Bureau. Translation to Spanish. Sun., Dec. 11, 3 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

**Welfare "Reform": An Attack on Working People.** Speakers: Sandi Sherman, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers union; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

## CANADA

### Montréal

**A Year of the Intifada: The Palestinian Struggle Today.** Speaker: Abdullah Abdullah, representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Canada. Translation to French and Spanish. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 4274 Papineau, Suite 302. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte ouvrière. For more information call (514) 524-7992.

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**The near perfect system** — "Sure it's raw greed that drives leveraged buyouts... But the genius of capitalism, when it works, is to channel private greed



**Harry Ring**

into socially redeemable activities." — A *New York Times* edit on the virtues of such deals as the RJR Nabisco takeover.

**Scare hell out of them** — The

*SS Marine Electric* sank in 1985, drowning 31 crew members. Recently, the company pleaded guilty to letting the ship sail with such defects as warped, rusty hatches and a hole in the ship's side. It was fined \$10,000, which was described as a precedent and a warning to other shipowners.

**Life Buoy or Ivory?** — In a mishap at the Wolf Creek nuke plant in Kansas, seven workers were sprayed with radioactive water. A company spokesperson said the contamination was immediately washed off with soap and water.

**Traveling light** — It will take

14 giant air cargo liners and a record \$4 million in tax money to move the Reagans to their new California home — a \$2.5 million pad provided at an undisclosed rent, by a group of "financially independent" cronies.

**Getting sensitive** — If you want to send the Reagans a happy retirement card, get the address right. It's 668 St. Cloud Rd., Bel Air. It was legally changed from 666 because the Reagans were concerned it could be read as the sign of Satan.

**Don't leave home without it** — Joan Quigley, astrologer to Nancy Reagan, is offering horo-

scopes for the masses. Send your date, time, and place of birth, plus 45 bucks, for a taped reading. "It will be my voice on the tapes," Quigley assures. "Just the way I talk to Nancy on the phone."

**And eat some cake?** — Health care cutbacks are taking an increased toll in Britain. In response, the Thatcher government offers free advice. Like health official Edwina Currie. She tells the elderly — some of whom die of winter cold — to knit themselves scarves and gloves.

**Imperial stocking stuffer** — A reproduction of a Chinese porcelain bowl depicting the *hongs*, or

foreign trading quarters in 19th-century Canton. \$1,750.

**Well qualified** — When Bush indicated he might appoint John Tower defense secretary, it was suggested that the ex-senator could use a strong administrative assistant. But he seems pretty together. Like, he's a consultant to six war contractors, pocketing an estimated \$75,000 to \$100,000 from each.

**March of technology** — Xmas dolls include one that will kneel and pray. Another has magical qualities. Apply cold water and makeup appears; warm water brings back the "natural" look.

## Castro: debt is immoral, illegal, and unpayable

Continued from Page 9

said I'm not thinking so much in terms of a return of military rule as of the possibility of major social eruptions because the countries are in such ruins as to be ungovernable. The fact of the matter is that when countries became ungovernable, popular pressure was more effective. When those military governments were no longer able to manage their countries because they were so deep in debt, then they were more inclined to leave government and, if possible, to do so without having to account for their crimes. Leave government and hand it over to civilians saying, "Here you have it, now see what you can do."

But since there's no money now, there's no business, no loans, and no nothing. Generally speaking, the theoreticians of military coups are not tempted to take over the government, for what will they take over, a problem, a headache, an unmanageable and ruined country?

We warned the ruling classes of Latin America that the danger lay elsewhere, the danger of great social eruptions.

Now we see how the problems are piling up and there is more and more irritation, more humiliation because there are many things that not only hurt us, they also subject us to physical and tremendous moral suffering...

And we weren't promoting what they call subversion. We were saying how these problems affect all sectors, the entire society, the state, political processes. We logically expected the governments to assume their responsibility at the right moment.

**Support for elected governments erodes**

Well, attrition has occurred, that's undeniable. Governments that won a lot of votes during elections, that had great popular support, in a matter of a few years, sometimes in a matter of months, are wearing down, losing prestige, losing trust, losing the support that put them in power. This process of attrition is taking place, and in some cases quickly because the governments feel helpless. In all truth, they

have gotten into helpless situations because a government alone, in isolation, can't get out of this helplessness.

A government may have good intentions, it may be aware of the problems, it may want to solve the problems. But it has no way of starting to solve them, it has nothing with which to solve them if the factors that are weighing so heavily on our countries are not solved: if the problem of the debt, of the New International Economic Order is not solved, if these countries do not find better ways of cooperation, if we do not free ourselves from this internal dependence.

How long does it take a government that has been elected for five years, for four years, to wear down nowadays? A government that has been elected fairly, in free elections in which everyone participates — how long does it take this government to wear down in Latin America today? Then it's not a circumstantial problem, it's a

structural one, there's a crisis of the system. We might say that the system is incapable of solving the problems, the system makes them progressively worse, the system is more and more helpless. That's a fact.

And arriving at this conclusion is not promoting subversion. I wish it could be solved without violence! What we were saying in 1985 was, let's take measures to avoid the circumstances that give rise to explosive situations, the ones that lead to violent change.

Even now, on visiting Ecuador, when we answered some journalists' questions, we said that violence is the last recourse. It occurred to me to say — and I think that those who have studied the history of these events will share my opinion — if there had been wise kings, perhaps the French revolution would not have taken place. [Applause] And I said more: if there had been wise tsars, perhaps the Russian revo-

lution wouldn't have taken place, or at least it wouldn't have been as violent as it was. [Applause]

I told the journalists in Ecuador it pained me to tell them that I feel that the objective conditions that gave rise to the great revolutions in history are accumulating, and I feel that they are accumulating in Latin America. That's what I was referring to, the objective conditions that in the past led to the great historical revolutions. And we don't see governments that are wise enough, capable of taking measures that will lead to evolution, to reforms or changes to avoid those classical revolutions. We don't see that wisdom anywhere! We don't see it in the governments of the developed capitalist countries, even less in the United States. They have no conscience, all they want is more military power, more economic power, more propaganda, more repressive power, and more violence to avoid change.

## Guyana leader: Caribbean economy worsens

BY NORTON SANDLER

NEW YORK — The economic situation in Guyana and other countries in the Caribbean has worsened considerably in the last few years, Cheddi Jagan told a November 20 meeting here.

Jagan is the general secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana and president of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America.

The meeting at Casa de las Americas was attended by 50 people. Sponsors included the Association of Concerned Guyanese-U.S.A. and the Coalition for Caribbean and Central American Unity.

Jagan said the drop in world oil and bauxite prices, and Washington's cutback in sugar import quotas, are having a devastating impact on the economies of Caribbean countries.

Real wages of Guyanese workers dropped

48 percent between 1977 and 1987, he said, and a steep devaluation of the Guyanese dollar led to an increase in inflation of some 37 percent last year.

"Third World countries are in this colossal problem where between 30 and 45 percent of their export earnings go to pay the debts to imperialist banks," Jagan emphasized.

"If you pay all this money out in debts, then you don't have money for the people's needs, for social needs, such as medicine, health, and education," he continued. "You don't have money to develop industry and agriculture."

This year, he said, 57 percent of Guyana's budget is going to meet interest payments on the foreign debt.

In response to a question during the dis-

cussion period, Jagan mentioned the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America. He was elected president of the organization at a meeting in Panama earlier this year. The coalition includes 38 parties and political organizations in 23 Caribbean and Central American countries.

Jagan urged the audience to support the work of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations. He said the coalition's plan to put out a regular bulletin is being hampered by a lack of resources.

Other speakers included Richard Hoyen from the Jamaica Democratic Association and Roderick Thurton from the Coalition for Caribbean and Central American Unity.

## —10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
Dec. 15, 1978

The Chinese government moved on November 30 to try to halt the nightly rallies that had been going on for a week at "Democracy Wall" in Peking, and to prescribe political limits for the content of the hundreds of wall posters being put up by citizens in the country's capital.

The December 1 *New York Times* reported that a broadcast on Peking's loud-speaker system called on people to stop participating in demonstrations demanding democracy and to stop putting up wall posters criticizing Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng.

The wall-poster campaign began on November 19 with a sharply worded blast at Mao Tse-tung, accusing him of having supported the now-disgraced "gang of four" — purged members of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo — and of having helped to impose a dictatorship over the Chinese people during the Cultural Revolution.

A central focus of the wall posters has been support for Vice-premier Deng Xiaoping and praise for 1976 antigovernment demonstrators.

### THE MILITANT

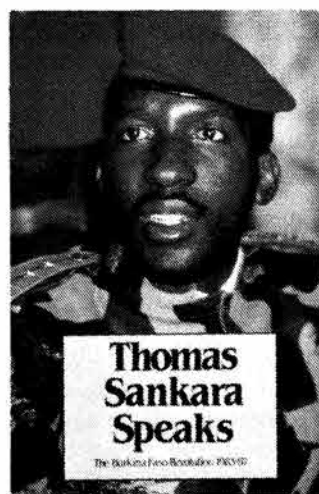
Published in the Interests of the Working People  
Dec. 16, 1963

Price 10¢

Malcolm X, prominent spokesman of the Black Muslims, was indefinitely suspended from making public statements by Elijah Muhammad, leader of the movement.

Elijah Muhammad explained the suspension, according to the *New York Times*, as due to Malcolm X's remarks at a December 1 meeting not accurately reflecting the Muslim attitude toward the death of President Kennedy. "With the rest of the world we are very shocked at the assassination of our president," Elijah Muhammad said.

Malcolm X had described Kennedy's death in the context of anti-Negro violence as "chickens coming home to roost," according to newspaper reports. The suspended Muslim leader was critical of the *Times* news story about his speech. "It took all the salt out of the bread and presented only the salt," he said. "But the salt should never have been there," he added.



from **Pathfinder**

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## Sponsor drive for Curtis defense

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has launched an international effort to sign up sponsors for the Des Moines-based committee.

Curtis, an Iowa packinghouse worker, was arrested and beaten by Des Moines cops on March 4 last year. He was railroaded to jail on trumped-up charges of rape and burglary and is currently serving a 25-year sentence for crimes he didn't commit.

The defense committee, whose single purpose is winning freedom for Curtis, has already received signed sponsor cards from 500 union officials, political figures, prominent activists for Black and Latino rights, leaders of women's rights organizations, civil libertarians, religious figures, and student leaders.

One of the most recent sponsors is Jaime Vázquez, a city councilman in Jersey City, New Jersey. Vázquez also introduced into the Jersey City council a resolution condemning the violation of Curtis' rights and urging the Iowa attorney general to conduct a full investigation into his arrest and conviction. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Another important new sponsor is Eddie Carthan, former mayor of Tchula, Mississippi. Carthan, the first Black mayor of that Mississippi Delta town, was himself the victim of a frame-up on murder charges in the early 1980s.

An indication of the support that can be won from unionists is shown by the letter R.T. Griffin, president of the Central Arizona Labor Council, sent to Polk County attorney general James Smith, whose office prosecuted Curtis. The letter urged "all Unionists to support the efforts to defend Mark Curtis and ask the Labor Movement to stand behind him to illustrate solidarity for a Brother."

We ask all of our readers to join in the drive to sign up sponsors for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Sponsor cards can be obtained in bulk from the defense committee.

To help win support for Curtis' defense, the committee has published some new literature, which can also be ordered in quantity. This includes the statement made by Curtis in court November 18, just before he was sentenced; a letter from farm leader Merle Hansen, who attended the September trial; and the motion for a new trial, which details how Curtis' democratic right to a fair trial was violated.

In addition, the committee has published material answering the slanders that have been leveled against Curtis as part of the campaign to counter the support the defense committee is winning.

For sponsor cards and literature write to: Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311. Tel (515) 246-1695.

## A jury that didn't toe the line

The New York City jury that acquitted Larry Davis November 20 of attempted murder of nine police officers has been the target of bitter denunciations.

"I am shocked," Mayor Edward Koch said. "Every policeman in New York . . . must be horrified." Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward declared, "It seems as if justice is beginning to stand on its head."

Bronx District Attorney Paul Gentile, whose office prosecuted Davis, complained, "When I started in this office 20 years ago, the strongest case you could have as an assistant district attorney was when all your witnesses were police officers. Now, sadly, it's the weakest."

"When before has a defendant in New York," the *New York Times* editors protested, "won his freedom by asserting that he shot uniformed police officers in self-defense?"

The outrage of the officials and the major media is a response to the victory for the democratic rights of defendants that was won in the Davis case. They want to try to intimidate prospective jurors to prevent a repetition of such verdicts.

More than 20 cops were involved in a Nov. 19, 1986, raid on Davis' Bronx apartment. Six cops were wounded in the exchange of gunfire. Davis said that he was targeted because of his knowledge about the cops' role in drug trafficking.

By highlighting the murderous violence of the police, the verdict took some of the air out of the recent campaign waged in New York by Koch and others for reinstituting the death penalty. Massive demonstrations by cops in the wake of the killing of two police October 18 helped fuel the campaign.

Much of the attack on the jury has focused on the fact that it was made up of Blacks and Hispanics.

The jury rejected the officials' stand, echoed in the

*Times*, that those assaulted by cops have no right of self-defense. As the *Times* conceded, "Jurors putting themselves in [Davis'] shoes found his fear of the police to be reasonable."

There is a long list of victims of brutal police violence in New York — including Michael Stewart, killed after being arrested for writing graffiti in the subway; Eleanor Bumpurs, gunned down while being evicted from her apartment; and many others. None of the uniformed killers has spent a day in jail.

Working people know that the police are up to their necks in drug dealing and other criminal activities, lending credibility to Davis' story.

Workers have long experience with the cops' use of frame-up techniques, including perjuring themselves on the witness stand. Frame-up methods are utilized to railroad workers and farmers to jail not only in trials of political and union activists, but in countless "routine" police investigations.

Instead of taking the cops at their word and dismissing the claims of the working-class defendants out of hand — as the authorities expect jurors to do — the jurors in Davis' trial were willing to consider evidence indicating that the police opened fire first, forcing Davis to defend himself.

In contrast, Koch, Ward, and the *New York Times* editors demand and expect that juries will presume working-class defendants to be guilty — and not be swayed when the facts don't prove it.

The jury did not reject all charges against Davis. He was convicted of six counts of illegal possession of firearms, and faces a possible sentence of up to 20 years for this "crime." The case against him should be thrown out. Larry Davis should go free immediately.

## End harassment of mural project

Defenders of free speech have a big stake in opposing harassment of the Pathfinder Mural Project by New York officials.

As Project Director Sam Manuel explains, "The harassment of the Pathfinder Mural Project is very much a part of attempts by city officials to intimidate legitimate political activity."

Environmental Control Board (ECB) officers slapped potential fines of \$3,500 on the project a year ago. They claimed handbills advertising an open house for well-known Nicaraguan artist Arnaldo Guillén, who was working on the project at the time, constituted "unauthorized posting." A hearing will be held January 23 to determine if the citations were properly served.

New York Mayor Edward Koch has defended the city's harassment of the mural.

The enforcement of the 1986 law against posting, under which the mural project is being cited, has nothing to do with protecting the environment, despite its enforcement by the Environmental Control Board.

The real intent of the law was spelled out in an article by reporter Scott Ladd in *New York Newsday* last sum-

mer. Ladd explained that the city enacted the law "primarily as a defense against an explosion of political leaflets." He quotes Sanitation Department spokesperson Vito Turso as saying posters are "visual pollution." Turso adds that "as much as we hate handbills," leafleting is preferable to posting.

The targets are invariably political organizations and others who rely on posting to help get out the word about their events. The law is deeply class-biased, discriminating against those with the least financial means.

At the time of the *Newsday* article the city had already raked in \$200,000 from the 16,000 summonses it had served. Use of the law to victimize activists is spreading. An example is the recent fine levied against the National Coalition in Support of the Third United Nations Special Session on Disarmament. The American Civil Liberties Union is defending the coalition in this case.

The fight against harassment of the Pathfinder Mural Project is, therefore, a fight for everyone's right to free speech. Between now and the January 23 hearing, Mayor Koch's office should be flooded with letters and telegrams protesting the mural project fines.

## 'Africa remains an underpopulated continent'

BY DOUG JENNESS

A few weeks ago the *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page article headlined, "Population Bomb — North Africa's Cities, Full of Jobless Youths, Cast Shadow on Europe."

Subheads worriedly announced that "Rioting Already Hits Algeria," and warned that "Emigration to Find Work is Likely to Keep Rising."

"North Africa's burgeoning population and economic

## LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

stagnation," the article asserted, "make it Europe's Mexico, seething with tensions that periodically erupt as they did last month in Algeria, ripe for religious radicalization and full of people anxious to leave. More than 3 million North Africans have already spilled into Europe."

The specter of the region's population doubling in 30 years alarms the *Journal*. The big-business paper said that, according to "sociologists," poorer North Africans "have lots of babies, because they like them, because of a misreading of Islam, which in fact doesn't bar birth control, and because of the lack of recreation."

Without blinking an eye, the *Journal* quoted a doctor who claimed the high frequency of blackouts has contributed to the baby boom in Algiers. After all, he said, that's what happened in New York nine months after the electrical blackout there a decade ago!

The alleged population boom is getting attention in other quarters too. In September, World Bank President Barber Conable admonished governments in Africa, Latin America, and Asia to curb population growth to combat poverty. Speaking to delegates at the joint World Bank-International Monetary Fund conference in West Berlin, he said aid is wasted if a country's population grows more rapidly than its economy. Bank officials spotlighted the East African country of Kenya as a glaring example of this sin.

The African continent, particularly, has been the target of those who blame unemployment, hunger, and other social ills on overpopulation. An editorial in the *Washington Post* a couple of years ago asserted, "In sub-Saharan Africa entire countries are being pressed backward into greater poverty and hunger by the weight of excessively rapid population growth. . . ."

"The World Bank, estimates," the editors stated, "that the region's present population of 460 million will expand to 730 million in the next 15 years. If Africa remains on its present track, those 730 million at the turn of the next century will be living even less well than Africans live today."

This view prevails among government officials and academic figures and permeates the news media and other opinion-molding forces. Thus, when Thomas Sankara, who was then Burkina Faso's president, declared to an environmental conference in Paris in 1986, "I assert that Africa remains an underpopulated continent," many participants must have thought he had just arrived from outer space or was a mad man.

But neither was the case. Sankara was stating a simple truth.

There isn't any hue and cry about a population explosion in Western Europe. Yet, the population density there is considerably greater than in Africa. And that's true even if the relatively unpopulated and uninhabitable Sahara Desert is not counted.

In 1987, the number of inhabitants per square mile in the five most densely populated countries in Western Europe was: the Netherlands (910), Belgium (835), West Germany (635), Britain (617), and Italy (493).

On the African continent, the five most densely populous were: Rwanda (669), Burundi (465), Nigeria (305), Gambia (196), and Malawi (162).

Algeria, which drew fire from the *Wall Street Journal* for its supposed out-of-control baby boom, has only 26 residents per square mile, and Kenya, which aroused the ire of World Bank officials, has 100. Burkina Faso has 69.

These figures help show that the devastating conditions facing the toilers in Africa are not the result of their birth rate.

The problem is that in all capitalist countries a part of the working people is transformed into unemployed or semiemployed — a surplus population. That's a law of capitalist society.

In Africa, which has a legacy of colonial domination and is today subjected to imperialist oppression and superexploitation, this "surplus" is particularly immense. Tens of millions, who have been uprooted from their lands and are unable to find jobs, are destitute, hungry, and diseased.

Only by getting rid of imperialist oppression and taking their destiny in their own hands will working people in Africa be able to eliminate the horrors of capitalism's population laws and begin constructing a society where everyone on the continent and the many more to come can have enough to eat and live as human beings should.



# Chicago packinghouse workers approve contract

BY DON DAVIS

A contract covering more than 1,700 unionized meat-packers at several plants in Chicago was approved November 11. It calls for bonuses totaling \$1,500 in exchange for a three-year wage freeze and a slightly lower third-tier wage for new hires.

Members of Local 100-A of the United Food and Commercial Workers voted by a margin of nearly 4-to-1

## UNION TALK

to accept the contract, which also includes some improvement in hospitalization coverage. Less than one-third of the eligible workers voted in the mail-in ballot.

Just two weeks earlier, on the eve of the October 31 expiration date of the old contract, union members had overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike. The strike vote had been called by the union leadership when the employers refused to budge from their demand that the workers accept a flat three-year wage freeze.

Local 100-A members have received only token increases over the last nine years, and many were determined to strike if the bosses refused any raises. However, when the bosses offered the bonus package calling for

\$500 when the contract is ratified and \$500 more in each of the next two years, many felt it was as good as we could get right now.

Several workers feared that the company would hire unemployed workers to replace us if we went out on strike. Some knew that many strikes had been defeated in recent years, sometimes leaving the strikers without jobs.

And there was little confidence that union officials, who had provided little information during the negotiations and who called for approval of the contract offer, would lead an effective strike. "We don't have any leadership," said one worker. "If we go on strike, the union won't help us," said another.

At my plant, there was a noticeable difference in the attitudes of workers who had been there many years and are making \$9.50 to \$10 an hour with three to five weeks vacation a year, and workers hired since the last contract. They make \$6 to \$8 an hour with no more than one week of paid vacation.

The workers with more to lose were more cautious. The newer workers tended to be more ready to put up a fight. As one young Puerto Rican worker hired in the past year said, "Now is the time to fight. We've got to start somewhere."

Those of us who opposed the contract had several reasons for doing so. For one thing, \$1,500 in bonuses

over three years is not much, and it will leave us at the same starting point when we begin negotiating next time. For another, the contract will deepen the divisions in the union, which already are a big obstacle to uniting to put up a fight.

Whereas workers hired since the last contract make \$6.35 once they get into the union and advance to a top wage of \$8.33, workers hired from now on will have a pay scale ranging from \$6.05 to \$8. And the new hires, in addition to working side by side with people who may be making 50 percent more than they are, will also not get any bonuses until they've worked for a year.

This contract also advances the meat-packing bosses' aim of lowering wage rates and will weaken other packinghouse workers as they try to fight for higher wages.

Many of my coworkers are angry about the contract, especially after our \$500 bonus check turned out to be only \$349 after taxes. "We got screwed" and "The union sold us out" are frequent comments.

Other workers are more resigned. "You've got to take what the company will give," said one. Another observed, "It's the best we're going to get until we're ready to walk out."

Don Davis works at the Vienna Beef Manufacturing Co. in Chicago and is a member of UFCW Local 100-A.

## LETTERS

### Québec student strikes

A recent mobilization of college and university students throughout the province of Québec culminated in a two-week strike of some 50,000 students. This struggle has won strong public support for demands for major improvements in the government system of loans and monetary grants.

Up to 100,000 students from 50 of the province's 80 centers of higher education participated in the actions. Students on 32 campuses began the movement with a three-day strike October 26-28. Since then there has been a steady stream of meetings of hundreds and often thousands of students, picket lines, occupations of administration offices, and local and regional demonstrations.

The movement came to a head with the shutting down of 25 campuses October 31-November 13, and a provincewide student demonstration in front of the provincial legislature in Québec City November 10.

Current government criteria mean that many students who need loans or bursaries to go to college do not receive them. Many others have to work fulltime jobs or eventually drop out of college because the financial strain is too great. Students from working-class families are particularly hard hit.

The students are demanding that they become eligible for more assistance as soon as they leave their parents' home, that the amount parents are expected to pay toward their children's education be reduced, and other changes.

To date, the government has taken a hard-line stance against the demands. Antipicketing injunctions have been served. Picket lines at the University of Québec in Montréal were attacked by the police riot squad, and several leaders of the student association face contempt-of-court charges for defying the injunction.

The government's threats that striking students would lose the school year led to the strike being called off November 13. But the student central council noted that tens of thousands of determined students had won broad public support, including the backing of the province's teachers' union and major union federations.

Bob Braxton  
Montréal, Canada

### Rape

Once again we have witnessed the charge of rape used as a cover for political persecution. Mark Curtis joins a long list of men who have faced false charges of rape.

Southern racists have long used

the charge of rape to justify committing heinous murders against Black men, and the government has used rape charges to destroy organizations such as the Black Panther Party.

Despite this history, however, the fact remains that rape is a massive scourge that pervades this society and that terrorizes millions of women. Rape has a devastating impact on its victims. To my mind its appalling brutalization and destruction of personal integrity makes rape perhaps the most serious crime a person can commit next to murder.

Unlike many of the other problems of capitalist society that communists have presented extensive analyses of and proposed remedies for, I have not seen such an analysis as far as rape is concerned.

What are the roots of male violence against women? What can women do to combat this violence? Will pay equity, affirmative action for women, and universal day care by themselves solve this problem? What is the role of the working class in ending the brutalization of women?

I for one feel powerless to protect the women whom I care about, and I don't have a clear perspective on how to fight back.

I would like the *Militant* to begin to address the issues of rape, sexual assault, harassment, etc. more directly.

Neil Callender  
Huntington Station, New York

### The coming crisis

My income has dropped to \$60 from \$150 a week. I am barely able to make rent and utilities. I like very much the coverage of Mark Curtis and the socialist analysis of the coming economic crisis. For me, it's already here.

R. R.  
Dubuque, Iowa

### Racism

In response to racial attacks at California's educational institutions, protests occurred at San Francisco State and Stanford universities, informal meetings were held at state and city colleges, and a Black Student Union chapter was formed at San Francisco's Washington High School. These events show a sharp and growing awareness among workers and students of racism and how to fight it.

The defeat of the South African regime shows how weak racism, as a weapon and ideology, truly is. The combined Cuban internationalist and Angolan forces defeated the South African troops at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola. This forced



South Africa out of Angola and to the bargaining table to negotiate the independence of Namibia.

The people of South Africa, with the leadership of the African National Congress, have shown the world that racism can be eliminated.

Malcolm X's ideas run strong in the minds of international combatants against racism. He showed us that we have dignity and must seek out and destroy racism whenever, wherever it breeds and by any means necessary.

Thomas Sankara, involved with the people of Burkina Faso, proved that inferiority can and must be wiped out. Every human being has a duty to fight for equality and has a place in the human race.

These events and revolutionary leaders are important for workers and farmers in the United States to understand. It will enable them to arm themselves against racism, to fight against exploitation and oppression, to fight against barriers and divisions within the working class, and to unite our class for the fight that is to come against imperialism.

The *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, published by Pathfinder, is a perfect tool for workers, farmers, and youth to use to explain all

class realities and as a weapon to fight for the equality, justice, and democratic rights that rightfully belong to the vast majority of humankind.

John Wolfe  
San Francisco, California

### If you're a fighter

I shop at the local Smith's Food King. A checker there recently told me Christmas was a hard time for her kids since she made only \$5.50 an hour and Smith's didn't employ any full-time checkers. She had no medical insurance or benefits. The union had been busted years before.

When I stopped next at Shopco to buy a pair of Levi's, the checker there said he made \$3.37 an hour and that there were only a few full-time workers among the 1,000 employees of this huge store. He had no medical insurance or benefits. I recalled reading in the *Salt Lake Tribune* how Shopco was given a tax incentive for locating in Utah and creating these "prosperous" jobs.

I drove to downtown Salt Lake to attend a meeting and passed the Crossroads Urban Center. I saw hollow-eyed people standing in line for canned food.

If you're a fighter for human rights, or a would-be fighter, pur-

chase two books from Pathfinder: *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* and *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87*. They're worth the investment. If you care about working people, the time to make a stand is now.

John-Michael Eggertsen  
Salt Lake City, Utah

### Racism and sexism

On reading the article, "Mark Curtis sentenced to 25 years in prison" in the December 2 issue, I noticed that you accused the system of racism and sexism.

While white men aren't the victims of racism and sexism, unless you're talking about "reverse discrimination," which I don't think exists, I do believe that the frame-up was politically motivated.

Also, I would like to know more about the "free trade" agreement between the United States and Canada.

Gary McIntire  
St. Paris, Ohio

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.



## El Salvador union holds congress

### FENASTRAS meeting demands 'negotiated solution' to civil war

BY IKE NAHEM

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — The 20th congress of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) took place here November 11-12. Some 500 workers, representing more than a dozen industrial and other unions, participated in the sessions of the congress each day.

The workers met in an auditorium recently completed through the voluntary labor of union members, an addition to a two-story building in a working-class neighborhood purchased by FENASTRAS with funds provided by the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions.

FENASTRAS organizes some 20,000 workers in industries including textile and garment, transport, construction, telecommunications, electric and water utilities, coffee-processing and production, and fishing. FENASTRAS is an important component of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), the broad-based coalition founded in 1986 that registers the growing unity of the Salvadoran labor movement against the employers and the U.S.-backed regime of President José Napoleón Duarte.

Like all Salvadoran working people, FENASTRAS members have suffered ferocious repression over the years at the hands of various military and civilian regimes propped up by Washington. According to union figures, more than 800 FENASTRAS members and leaders have been assassinated by right-wing death squads since the early 1980s.

The day before the congress a member of the Association of Telecommunications Workers was kidnapped from his home outside San Salvador. Three days later his body was found on a sugar plantation with a bullet through the head.

Under these conditions, one FENASTRAS leader told the *Militant*, "an important part in helping us conquer the political space to function openly is the role of international solidarity."

The congress was attended by 15 trade unionists from Norway, the United States, Canada, and Guatemala. Also present was a delegation of former U.S. GIs and ex-CIA officers opposed to U.S. intervention in Central America. It was led by Vietnam veteran and antiwar activist Brian Willson.

Willson gave solidarity greetings after being introduced by Francisco Acosta, the Washington-based U.S. representative of FENASTRAS. "This brother, Brian Will-



Militant/Ike Nahem

Recent FENASTRAS congress condemned U.S. military intervention in El Salvador

son, fasted on the steps of the U.S. Capitol with three other veterans to protest U.S. aid to the contras of Nicaragua," Acosta told the meeting. "He lost his legs sitting on railroad tracks trying to stop a train filled with weapons for the contras and Salvadoran military." The audience gave Willson an enthusiastic ovation, chanting "Long live international solidarity" and "If Nicaragua won, El Salvador will win!"

There were presentations from labor, farmer, human rights, and political organizations that FENASTRAS has close relations with, including the Committee of Fired and Unemployed Workers of El Salvador; COMADRES, a women's organization of relatives of victims of government repression; and the Federation of University Students of El Salvador.

The congress also heard from Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) leader Rubén Zamora, who is participating in the

presidential elections scheduled for March 1989.

A representative from the Committee for the National Debate distributed posters and leaflets and urged participation in a November 15 march in the capital for a "political solution to the war." (See accompanying article.)

The main business of the congress was discussion of the current political situation in El Salvador, which is marked by open and growing demands that the government negotiate with the revolutionary forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) for a negotiated political settlement of the eight-year-old civil war.

The platform approved by the congress demanded talks with the FMLN and a "government of national consensus," which is projected as including all sectors who are for a "political, negotiated solution" and oppose U.S. military intervention and aid to the Salvadoran military.

## 20,000 march in San Salvador

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — More than 20,000 Salvadorans marched here November 15 against the war policies of the U.S.-sustained regime. It was one of the largest antigovernment protests since the early 1980s, when massive repression and death-squad assassinations were set in motion against working-class and democratic organizations.

The action was called by the Committee for the National Debate, a coalition of dozens of labor, farmer, student, religious, professional, and human rights organizations. The committee demands that the government respond to the initiatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and negotiate a political settlement of the civil war through the establishment of what is called a "government of national consensus."

The march route was several miles long, from the outskirts of working-class neighborhoods through the downtown commercial area, ending in a park near the capital's most affluent section.

Thousands lined the streets and watched as protesters filed past. Contingents of trade unionists and students were the largest components of the action.

Union banners read "Down with institutional repression" and "No more elections with repression." Among the more popular chants were "For peace with social justice, we demand dialogue and negotiations" and "More repression, more struggle; more Yankee intervention, more patriotism!"

According to reports by march organizers, up to a dozen buses filled with demonstrators from the countryside were turned back by military and police units.

As the protesters gathered for the afternoon rally one of the many military helicopters monitoring the march during the day repeatedly descended to near-ground level, causing hundreds to flee the intense sand and dust storm created. This eventually succeeded in dispersing the peaceful but determined crowd.

—I.N.

## New York officials demand Washington send Nicaragua hurricane relief aid

BY JON HILLSON

NEW YORK — A six-week, citywide effort to collect material aid and raise financial support for hurricane-battered Nicaragua was capped by a spirited rally demanding that the U.S. government dispatch massive relief to that Central American nation.

Congressman Theodore Weiss and Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins both demanded that Washington reverse its refusal to provide emergency relief to Nicaragua.

The December 3 event brought out more than 100 volunteers — young and old, Black, Latino, and white — to a Harlem warehouse where the aid was readied for shipping. Activists applauded representative Weiss, who said, "People want their government to respond" to Hurricane Joan's destruction "with assistance. Make sure the White House gets that message."

David Dinkins, who visited the ware-

house earlier, stated in greetings read by an aide, "It is unconscionable that six weeks after Hurricane Joan devastated their country, our government still refuses to send U.S. disaster relief to the Nicaraguan people."

"Nicaragua was a poor country before Hurricane Joan," the message continued, "long before the Sandinistas came to power. The Somoza dictatorship and its 40 years of economic and political domination was supported by our government. Somoza robbed and pillaged Nicaragua's national treasury, leaving its economy in shambles when he fled."

"Therefore," stated Dinkins, "our government has an added responsibility to the people of Nicaragua. Whether one supports the Sandinistas or not, our humanism should not hinge on our political beliefs. We must continue to press Reagan to send U.S. disaster relief and raise the supplies and monies the Nicaraguans need."

Mike Friedman of the Hurricane Relief Fund described the activities of scores of activists mobilized by a coalition of more than 50 New York-area solidarity, peace, religious, and labor organizations. These included the Nicaragua Network, Madre, and several Nicaragua-New York sister city projects, along with campus-based Central America groups.

New Yorkers responded to the local relief campaign with nearly 20 tons of food and clothing, while contributing \$55,000 in direct financial aid. Both figures surpassed initial goals.

Street corner tables, union halls, church basements, campus meetings, and fund-raising dances were sites for collecting clothes, food, and money.

Barbara Omeir, an Atlantic Coast resident who is currently a member of Nicaragua's mission at the United Nations, saluted the volunteer effort.