

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL 4-PAGE PULLOUT
What the Socialist Workers
2008 campaign fights for
 —PAGES 5–8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 4 JANUARY 28, 2008

Economic crisis marks debate in presidential primaries

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK, January 16—With the threat of a recession looming, the focus of candidates in the Democratic and Republican party primaries has shifted toward the economy.

Democratic senator Hillary Clinton announced her “economic stimulus plan” January 11 to an audience at a training center in Commerce, California, run by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Presenting herself as concerned about the economic squeeze on working people, she promised \$70 billion in “emergency” spending programs and \$40 billion in tax rebates if the economy worsens.

Clinton’s plan would include a 90-day moratorium on home foreclosures, money for “counseling” to help keep low-income homeowners paying on their debts, a tax rebate, doubling of the number of weeks workers are eligible for unemployment insurance, and the expansion of what she calls “green collar” jobs, through a public works program.

Two days later, Illinois senator Barack Obama, Clinton’s main opponent for the nomination, presented a similar plan

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U.S. warplanes bomb Baghdad outskirts in new military push

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—On January 10, U.S. warplanes dropped 40,000 pounds of bombs on more than 40 targets on the southern outskirts of Baghdad. The massive air strike was part of the opening of “Operation Phantom Phoenix,” a countrywide, U.S.-led drive against al-Qaeda forces.

The latest military push is part of the offensive that began a year ago when President George Bush announced he would send in an additional 30,000 troops—dubbed the “surge” by the capitalist media.

In a measure of Washington’s success in its military offensive, the latter half of 2007 marked the lowest monthly casualty rates for the U.S. military in Iraq since the first year of the imperialist war, 2003. U.S. casualties declined steadily last year from a high of 126 in May to 23 in December. Last year also marked the largest number of U.S. troops killed in any single year of the war—899.

Gen. Walter Gaskin—the top U.S. commander in Anbar province, a former stronghold of al-Qaeda—says attacks against U.S. and Iraqi troops there have

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‘Workers need our own political party’

SWP candidates: break with twin parties of capital



Militant/Dan Fein (left) and Ben Joyce (right)

Left, Róger Calero, Socialist Workers candidate for president, campaigns January 13 in Brooklyn, New York. Right, SWP vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy addresses January 11 rally in New York against grand jury subpoenas of Puerto Rican independence supporters.

BY SARAH KATZ AND LUIS MADRID

NEW YORK—“Every time I go grocery shopping, I feel like my disability checks have shrunk,” said Albert Henderson, a Vietnam War veteran, as he stopped to talk to Socialist Workers Party campaigners outside a Pathmark supermarket in Harlem January 13.

Henderson said he was leaning toward Hillary Clinton in the February 5 Democratic primaries because her economic policies might “help people in my boat.” He stopped when he heard the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in that district, Martín Koppel, say that the SWP campaign is for a labor party.

“The billionaire class uses the two-party system to promote the illusion that we have a choice in the elections,” Koppel

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Calero to attend Indiana immigrant rights conference

Socialist Workers presidential candidate Róger Calero will be attending a January 19 immigrant rights conference in Indianapolis. The socialist is a longtime supporter of the fight to stop deportations and immigration raids and for the legalization of all undocumented workers.

N.Y. rally protests grand jury probe of Puerto Rico independence backers

BY MAURA DELUCA

BROOKLYN, New York, January 11—“Today it’s me, in the past there were many, and in the future it could be any of you, so I thank all of you for your support,” said Tania Frontera. She was addressing 300 people who rallied outside the Brooklyn federal courthouse to protest subpoenas issued to her and two other supporters of Puerto Rican independence to appear before a federal grand jury.

The lively crowd, ranging from high school students to long-time Puerto Rican independence fighters, shouted chants such as “Grand jury, FBI, U.S. justice is a lie!” and “FBI and USA out of Puerto Rico!”

Similar protests were held in Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orlando, Florida, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Frontera, a graphic designer, along with

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Roberto Mercado

Some 300 protesters marched January 11 outside federal courthouse in Brooklyn, New York, to protest use of federal grand jury against three Puerto Rican independence supporters.

California health-care plan will benefit insurance companies

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has teamed up with a leading California Democrat, Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez, to draw up and promote a \$14.4 billion health-care plan that is being touted as a possible model for the rest of the country.

The California Nurses Association, among others, opposes the bill, calling it a “boondoggle” for the insurance companies.

In December, the measure passed in the state assembly by a vote of 45 to 31. It will now go before the state senate. The sponsors hope to place it on the November ballot.

About 20 percent of California residents—6.6 million—lack medical coverage. Nationally the number is about 47 million.

News articles and commentators have noted the similarity between the California plan and the health-care proposals being promoted by Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton,

Barack Obama, and John Edwards.

The centerpiece of all these plans is to get everyone who lacks coverage to buy medical insurance or to enroll in Medicare or some other health plan. The California measure requires that residents of the state have insurance by 2010. Supporters of the plan say it’s like the requirement that all drivers who own

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California health plan

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cars purchase auto insurance.

For at least some of those who cannot afford this plan, the California bill provides for government subsidies and tax credits. A new bureaucracy is to be created that will figure out who does and does not have a low enough income to qualify for the financial aid.

In the plans proposed by Clinton and Edwards, the purchase of insurance is mandatory, with means-tested provisions for financial help and tax breaks to those who qualify. Obama says his plan would be mandatory for children only, but he would consider making it mandatory for all under certain conditions. All these presidential candidates say they would end tax cuts passed under George Bush to help finance their plans.

The estimated \$14 billion needed to pay for the California plan is projected to come from a combination of taxes on employers who don't provide health care for their employees and taxes on cigarettes and on hospital revenue.

Andrew Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union, whose membership includes 600,000 health-care workers, is a strong promoter of the plan. "It is precedent setting, because California, the most populous state and diverse state in the nation, can make health care happen, can show this country that it can be done," he said.

"A boondoggle for the insurance companies" is what the leaders of the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee called the measure in a press statement opposing the plan. The insurance companies will continue to control the health care of millions of California residents, the statement noted, adding that patients will continue to

be denied necessary medical procedures and access to specialists while insurance companies will continue to charge whatever they want.

Under the California plan, the cutoff for a subsidy would be a yearly income of \$52,000 to \$60,000 for a family of four. Today the price of market-rate insurance for such a family is \$11,000 a year, not counting co-pays and deductibles.

The skyrocketing costs of private insurance, as well as lifetime caps and policies that are written in such a way as to make it almost impossible to determine which services and doctors are covered, are reasons why millions of working people who do have insurance still face restricted care and financial crisis when they fall ill.

None of the health-care plans do anything to upgrade or add to actual medical facilities, or to overcome the shortage of doctors, nurses, and hospitals in working-class communities. Between 1990 and 2003, 60 hospital emergency rooms in California were closed.

In the presidential primary debates, Republican Mitt Romney has been lauding a state law he signed as governor of Massachusetts in 2006. Residents of Massachusetts were given the deadline of December 31 to buy insurance or face a penalty of \$219 on their taxes. Under this measure, the penalties for the uninsured increase significantly in the second year and accrue each month.

The authors of the Schwarzenegger-Nuñez bill say it will bring medical coverage to 3.6 million of the 6.6 million Californians now lacking insurance. Undocumented workers are excluded, as they are in the plans put forward by Clinton, Edwards, and Obama. In California, children of undocumented workers would be covered.



CNA/NNOC/Jaclyn Kellye Higgs

Nurses rally September 10 against California state assembly bill at Capitol in Sacramento

In Governor Schwarzenegger's "state of the state" message on January 8, he urged passage of the new health bill, while at the same time announcing a proposal that existing state funding for health care, education, state parks, and other social services be cut "across the

board" to close a projected \$14.5 billion deficit. His proposed budget includes cuts of \$1 billion from Medi-Cal by eliminating some benefits such as dental care. Medi-Cal is a health insurance program for low-income, elderly, and disabled residents.

Puerto Ricans protest grand jury

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social worker Christopher Torres and filmmaker Julio Antonio Pabón, all local residents, were served subpoenas to testify today in front of a federal grand jury. At the rally, organizers reported that the court agreed to the defense's request to postpone the hearing until February 1, allowing more time to challenge the subpoenas.

"Because we are here today, the cases have been postponed. Our presence here today will contribute a lot to getting the subpoenas dismissed," event organizer Ana López said at the rally.

While refusing to speak about the purpose of the grand jury investigation, FBI officials "have made clear that there is an ongoing investigation against the Popular Boricua Army—Macheteros," reported Jesús Dávila in the December 27 issue of the New York daily *El Diario/La Prensa*.

On Sept. 23, 2005, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, a long-time independence fighter and leader of the Macheteros group, was fatally shot by FBI agents, an action that sparked widespread public outrage on the island, well beyond people who fa-

vor independence.

Since Ojeda's death, the FBI has continued its attacks on the independence movement, including heavily armed police raids on the homes of *independentistas* across the island in February 2006.

In practice, federal grand juries have historically been used by the U.S. government to harass and jail independence fighters since the 1930s. They have subpoenaed independentistas to ask them to identify other individuals that might be incriminated. In the 1980s several independentistas were jailed for contempt of court when they refused to testify before grand juries conducting fishing expeditions against the independence movement.

Julio Rosado, an independence activist twice jailed by grand juries, told the crowd at the rally, "Grand juries continue to be used to repress the struggle for independence and sovereignty. They are nothing more than a witch hunt."

Other speakers included city council member Melissa Mark-Viverito, Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential

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THE MILITANT

Independence for Puerto Rico!

For truthful coverage on the fight for Puerto Rican independence, against grand jury harassment, and to free political prisoners, get a subscription to the 'Militant' today.



1999 march in San Juan, Puerto Rico, calls for release of independence supporters.

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U.S. warplanes bomb outskirts of Baghdad

Continued from front page

dropped so low that the province will be turned over to the Iraqi army in March. Half of Iraq's 18 provinces have now been turned over to the Iraqi military.

At a year-end briefing at the U.S. embassy, Gen. David Petraeus, head of U.S. forces in Iraq, said violent attacks, including high-profile assaults, car bombs, and suicide bombs, had declined roughly 60 percent since June.

'Sunni Awakening'

Petraeus cited the shift by Sunni sheiks against al-Qaeda, starting in Anbar and spreading to other majority-Sunni provinces, as a turning point. Wealthy Sunnis in and outside of Iraq have been the financial and organizational backbone of Sunni militias fighting U.S. and Iraqi government troops. They were the base of support for the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein.

Local Sunni businessmen and sheiks, however, grew weary of al-Qaeda's shakedowns for financial support and killings of Sunnis it viewed as traitors. Most of the victims of al-Qaeda bombings have been working people, both Sunni and Shiite. Sunni tribal leaders have helped the U.S. military recruit a force of 70,000—many of whom were recently fighting the U.S. military—to fight al-Qaeda. This force has been dubbed the "Sunni Awakening."

Gaskin said the turnover of Anbar to Iraqi security forces does not mean the 35,000 U.S. marine and army troops in the province, headquartered in Fallujah, will leave.

In 2004 it took a massive ground as-

sault by U.S. Marines to oust a bloc of Baathists and al-Qaeda from Fallujah. Today, the U.S. military says Phantom Phoenix is aimed at driving al-Qaeda from Diyala and Nineva provinces, where the Islamist group's operations are now centered, north of Baghdad.

Al-Qaeda has responded by killing Sunnis who aid the U.S. military. Two suicide bombers killed a local leader of the Sunni Awakening in Azamiyah, a district in northern Baghdad that had been a safe haven for al-Qaeda. The bombing, which also killed 12 others, came a day after a videotape appeared on the Internet of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin-Laden, who denounced those who joined the Sunni Awakening as traitors.

Security in Iraq has also improved due to a cease-fire by the Shiite militia headed by Muqtada al-Sadr.

Iraqi civilian deaths

The monthly rate of Iraqi civilian deaths also declined last year, from a high of 2,155 in May to 691 in December, according to an Associated Press report.

The World Health Organization (WHO) released its estimate January 9 that 151,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in the first three years of the war. It is based on a survey of 10,000 Iraqi households, five times as many as in a disputed 2006 estimate by Johns Hopkins University that said 600,000 Iraqis were killed over the same period. The WHO estimate still far exceeds the widely cited estimate of 80,000 to 87,000 by the group Iraq Body Count.

Another indication of the improve-



U.S. Army photo/Sp. John Crosby

U.S. soldier (left) on patrol with an Iraqi soldier in Diyala province January 10 as part of Washington's new "Operation Phantom Phoenix."

ment in security conditions in Baghdad is the return of thousands of Iraqis who fled to neighboring countries. Many have returned because of tightening visa restrictions in their host countries. But many others cite improved security and economic opportunities in Iraq.

Saad al-Azawi and his family were among 3,000 Iraqis who returned to Baghdad between August and October, AP reported. Al-Azawi has called family and friends still in Syria to tell them "it's safe to come home."

Baghdad taxi driver Abu Ahmed told the *Washington Post* that he now takes passengers to any neighborhood in the city and any region except Diyala.

At the year-end briefing, Petraeus cautioned that the improved security situation is "tenuous" and "fragile" without political and economic progress.

Significant progress was made in that regard when the Iraqi parliament passed

a law January 12 that could reinstate in civil service and military jobs thousands of Sunnis who had been members of Hussein's Baath Party. Senior party members will remain barred from public office but will be given pensions.

In response the main Sunni political bloc said January 14 it would end a nearly six-month boycott of the Shiite-led government of Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki and return to their cabinet posts.

Still, no progress has been made on the bigger issue of dividing up oil revenues. The Iraqi parliament adjourned at the end of the year without coming to any agreement.

The Kurdish government in northern Iraq, which has broad autonomy, continues to defy the central government by signing oil contracts with foreign companies and pressing for control of Kirkuk, which as some of the country's largest oil reserves. Baghdad, Washington, and the Turkish government have also been unsuccessful in dislodging guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) from their bases in northern Iraq. The PKK, a Maoist group, has fought a decades-long war for Kurdish sovereignty in southern Turkey.

Minnesota packinghouse workers fight union decertification

BY CARLOS SAMANIEGO

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota, January 15—Several unionists at the Dakota Premium Foods meatpacking plant here used their breaks and lunch yesterday to distribute and discuss the new issue of the *Workers' Voice*. This action was part of a campaign by Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) to defeat a company-backed effort to decertify the union at the plant. An election on whether to remain in the UFCW is set for January 25.

The *Workers' Voice* is a newsletter produced by workers at Dakota Premium. It was launched during the successful fight in 2000–2002 to organize the union there. Since then, union supporters have put out an issue when there are particular safety problems, unjust disciplinary actions such as firings, or company lies that need to be countered.

A vote to remain organized in the union will send "a strong message" to the company that "we will organize ourselves to win a union contract with better wages, working conditions and dignity on the job," an article in the new issue said.

"Don't be fooled by the company campaign against the union," the newsletter added. "The bosses are united in defense of their interests, which is to get the most they can out of us so they can add to their riches. We have different interests. We want safe jobs with decent pay and we want to be treated with nothing less than dignity. As a union we can stand up to the company and go on to

win a good contract and a better future for ourselves and our families."

The *Workers' Voice* included a sample ballot with an "X" marking "yes" for the union. It published a special announcement inviting unionists and union supporters to join Local 789 in an expanded leafleting of the plant on the next two Thursdays.

When the newsletter was distributed at the lockers, in the hallways, and in the lunch room, workers began discussing it. A few showed their opposition to the union by throwing the newsletter in the trash. Some did not express an opinion. A number said they will vote for the union.

A couple of workers sought out those distributing the newsletter to say they would be at a January 16 meeting where the next steps in the campaign to defend the union will be discussed. Some who defended the union said the line speed was too fast. A few said they were frustrated and they thought that conditions hadn't changed since the union was voted in.

Samuel Farley, a union steward in the cut department, reported that some workers had approached him asking what they should do to support the union, including some who previously did not show interest. Some workers, he said, "see what the company is doing with the workday expanded, the speed of the line, the injuries. Some of them have quit, but many see that having the union is the only alternative."

The day after the *Workers' Voice* was distributed, four union officials and

staff visited the plant. One was Miguel Gutierrez, who had worked at Dakota Premium for many years and been a shop steward there until a few months ago.

Todd Chase from the UFCW international addressed the workers during their lunch break. He raised several issues, including safety on the job and the need for workers to have more access to their representatives during work hours. The majority of workers applauded his remarks.

Rebecca Williamson, one of the pro-union workers, said, "Many have told me they think conditions are so bad that the union has to stay but that there need to be more changes, like more presence of union reps on the floor, raises, and slowing down the line speed."

"We don't know how the vote will turn out," she said. "But it's encouraging that some of the new workers have helped in the recent meetings where we put out the *Workers' Voice*. One helped distribute the *Workers' Voice* today."

Carlos Samaniego is a member of UFCW Local 789 and works at Dakota Premium Foods.

Celebrate the political life of Robert Simms, a communist militant for 38 years

Robert Simms, an internationalist cadre and leader of the Communist League in Canada, died in Toronto December 3. He was 61. Join us in celebrating his life and political contributions to building the communist movement in Canada and internationally, to which Simms dedicated close to four decades.

Speakers: Jack Barnes, national secretary, Socialist Workers Party; Ben Joyce, Young Socialists National Steering Committee; Steve Penner, International Print Project volunteer; Michel Prairie, organizer, Communist League executive committee. John Steele, director of Pathfinder Books in Canada, and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International*, will chair the event.

Saturday, January 19
Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St., Toronto
(One block south of College Street and three blocks east of Spadina Avenue. Parking available)

Reception 3:00 p.m.; program 4:00 p.m., followed by a dinner

Donation: program \$10, dinner \$15.

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ON THE PICKET LINE

New York cafeteria workers press for contract

Cafeteria workers on strike at the New York Life Insurance Co. and 55 Water Street building in New York City have been walking the picket lines to press for higher wages and better conditions.

The 80 striking workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 100, are employed by Aramark Corp., the biggest U.S. food service provider, which runs the cafeterias at both locations. The workers went out on strike November 12 after a year of working without a contract.

“With rent and subways and everything else going up, how can we afford to live in this town without a decent raise?” said Cesar Trinidad, a striker, to the *Daily News*.

Aramark’s contract offer includes only a \$10-a-week raise. It would cut company payments into workers’ pensions by more than 50 percent.

Union contracts at other sites operated by Aramark in New York are set to expire in the coming months, including at the United Nations, Goldman Sachs,

Citibank, and JP Morgan Chase.

On December 20, Aramark workers voted to authorize strikes at the Bank of New York building, Fashion Institute of Technology, and Citigroup.

—Róger Calero

Buenos Aires city workers protest firings

Thousands of city workers in Buenos Aires, Argentina, marched January 4 against the firing of 2,300 municipal employees and plans to cut another 23,000 city jobs.

The demonstration was part of a one-day strike that affected most government operations. It was organized by the city employees unions SUTECBA and ATE, and the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which organizes some 120,000 city workers. CGT garbage truck drivers also stayed off the job in support of the action.

Buenos Aires mayor Mauricio Macri, who comes from one of the richest families in the country, took office last December and said he would cut what he



Militant/Róger Calero

Cafeteria workers on strike against Aramark Corp. at New York Life Insurance Co. building walk the picket line to demand improved wages and benefits.

called patronage jobs from the previous administration. Elected last year on the conservative Republican Proposal ticket, Macri has vowed to follow through on the rest of the firings. “I was chosen to make changes and this means making decisions,” said Macri. He also moved to take over union-run health services that provide medical care to city employees.

Union officials said the firings will

affect child-care centers, senior citizens homes, cultural centers, parks, and the local radio and television stations. Before Macri took office, on his initiative, the city’s legislative body approved a proposal to increase by 40 to 250 percent the fees paid by homeowners for street lights and street cleaning.

—Róger Calero

Washington presses N. Korea to dismantle nuclear facilities

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. government charged January 10 that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) failed to live up to an agreement to dismantle its nuclear facilities and give a “complete and correct” accounting of them by Dec. 31, 2007.

Last February, following a years-long, U.S.-led campaign of economic sanctions and political threats, north Korea agreed to end its nuclear program and begin decommissioning its facilities. The agreement was made in the course of talks between the governments of the DPRK, United States, Japan, south Korea, Russia, and China. In exchange, the five agreed to provide north Korea with one million tons of fuel. Washington also said it would start the process of normalizing diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, remove it from the U.S. list of “terrorist” organizations, and end some sanctions.

North Korea shut down its one nuclear reactor in July, and Washington sent a team of “experts” to north Korea in October to disable it.

In a January 4 statement, the DPRK said it needs 100 more days of work to finish disabling the reactor. But Pyongyang said it had given Washington a full accounting of its nuclear programs in November. It also reported that the U.S. government and other parties to the agreement had failed to deliver fuel oil and other promised aid, and that because of this, it had slowed down the process of dismantling its nuclear facilities.

Christopher Hill, U.S. assistant secretary of state, went on a tour of south Korea, China, Japan, and Russia in early January to get those governments to put more pressure on north Korea. Hill warned the DPRK that on February 25 Roh Moo Hyun will no longer be president of south Korea. Roh had favored more active engagement with north Korea than newly elected president Lee Myung-Bak, who calls for “stricter” monitoring of south Korean aid and economic investments in north Korea. Hill demanded the DPRK comply with the agreement by February 25.

At the same time, the U.S. official said, “There’s no reason why we can’t finish the job in ’08. Throughout the six-

party process, we’ve had these bumps in the road. We have had these missed deadlines but... ultimately we have been able to continue with the progress.”

Chinese troops to north Korea?

Three days after the December 31 deadline imposed on north Korea had passed, two U.S. capitalist think tanks released a “working paper” called “Keeping an Eye on an Unruly Neighbor: Chinese Views of Economic Reform and Stability in North Korea.” The paper, issued by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the U.S. Institute of Peace, was widely reported by the U.S. media. Its authors say it is based on discussions in 2007 with “Chinese specialists on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.”

Some of these discussions, according to the paper, took place with unnamed individuals in China’s People’s Libera-

tion Army (PLA), and laid out “contingencies” for sending Chinese troops into north Korea should “instability” arise in the DPRK.

“In the event of instability in North Korea,” the paper said, “China’s main priority will be to prevent a flood of refugees by assuring supplies of food and strengthening border controls. PLA officers maintain that they would attempt to close the border, but admit a lack of confidence that they could do so successfully, since the border extends 866 miles and can be easily penetrated.”

The think tank report added, “If deemed necessary, PLA troops would be dispatched into North Korea. China’s strong preference is to receive formal authorization and coordinate closely with the UN in such an endeavor. However, if the international community did not react in a timely manner as the internal order in North Korea deteriorated rap-

idly, China would seek to take the initiative in restoring stability.”

It stated that “according to PLA researchers, contingency plans are in place for the PLA to perform three possible missions in the DPRK. These include: 1) humanitarian missions such as assisting refugees or providing help after a natural disaster; 2) peacekeeping or ‘order keeping’ missions such as serving as civil police; and 3) ‘environmental control’ measures to clean up nuclear contamination resulting from a strike on North Korean nuclear facilities near the Sino-DPRK border and to secure nuclear weapons and fissile materials.” The French news agency AFP reported January 8 that a spokeswoman for China’s foreign ministry “said she was unaware of any Chinese strategy to send troops into north Korea to secure nuclear weapons, but did not outright deny that such a plan existed.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

35 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEK/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 28, 1983

As we go to press President Reagan is about to go before Congress once again to certify that the human rights situation in El Salvador is improving. He will ask for more than \$200 million in economic and military aid for the dictatorship there.

U.S. working people have no interest in sending a single cent, helicopter, or adviser to prop up the killers Washington is desperately trying to keep in power in El Salvador.

Arturo Rivera y Damas, Interim Archbishop of El Salvador, denounced Reagan’s intention to certify the regime, pointing to continued “illegal imprisonments, the discovery of mutilated corpses, and of people ‘disappeared.’”

The Salvadoran Human Rights Commission, meanwhile, reported that 5,840 people had been killed and 788 “disappeared” in the last year.

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January 27, 1958

The Ku Klux Klan was chased out of Robeson County, North Carolina, by Indians against whom it had been threatening racial violence. Of a population of 95,000 in Robeson County, some 40,000 are Lumbee Indians and 25,000 are Negroes.

Two fiery crosses had been burned on Indian property. Then the KKK announced a public rally and cross-burning.

Simeon Oxendine, son of the mayor of the nearby predominately Indian town of Pembroke, gave the New York Post the following account of the battle:

“We were pretty riled up and we started moving in. Some of the boys set off a few firecrackers. The Kluxers didn’t seem to get much calmer when they heard the bangs. They seemed to want to leave. In fact they ran off at every angle. They started loading up in their cars and—I don’t know—seemed like somehow most of the cars came up with flat tires.”

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

January 28, 1933

On Sunday, January 2, tens of thousands of Fascists made a demonstration in Germany. In clashes with workers and Communists one worker was killed and a hundred were wounded.

In Berlin the Fascists invaded the heart of the proletarian districts to assemble in front of Communist party headquarters.

In the mind of every worker questions will arise: Why was the party not able to arouse the masses of workers to resist this hostile demonstration in its stronghold? Why could it not call on the social democratic workers to join with it against their common foe?

The reason is to be found in the false theories of the Thaelmann-Stalin leadership which harnessed the party to the yoke of social-Fascism and erected barriers across the line of march to the unity of the working class. That is why the party had to suffer the humiliating insult of a Fascist demonstration in front of its windows.

What the Socialist Workers 2008 campaign fights for

Working people in the United States and around the globe are bearing the brunt of a world capitalist economic crisis still in its early stages. We face rising unemployment and accompanying inflation, spreading wars, social breakdowns, and attacks on workers' rights.

In their profit-driven competition for markets and resources around the globe, the billionaire ruling-class families in the United States and their imperialist rivals are compelled to launch more and more murderous wars, like those in Iraq and Afghanistan today. Under the bloody banner of the "global war on terror," Washington's armed forces fight in Pakistan, the Philippines, Colombia, the Horn of Africa, and many other places. The U.S. government maintains tens of thousands of troops across Europe and Asia. What imperialism has in store for millions in the future can already be seen in the U.S. rulers' rationalization of torture against those they brand "enemies" and lock away in their prisons from Europe to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. As the rulers

do so, they take away more and more rights from all of us.

In their assault on working people at home, U.S. employers are increasingly pressing to hold down wages and shed medical and pension plans. Workers are maimed and killed on the job every day as a result of speed-up, "productivity" drives, job combinations, the bosses' refusal to provide and maintain safety equipment, and other "cost-cutting" measures. This goes hand in hand with capitalists' reckless plunder of nature and callous disregard for the health and safety of working people.

Working people today confront sharply rising costs of food, fuel, medical care, rent, and interest payments on loans. We face ongoing cuts in real Social Security benefits as annual raises are rigged to fall further and further behind inflation. This grinding offensive hits hardest the most oppressed layers of our class, especially workers who are Black. It comes down heavily on working women, who disproportionately bear the brunt of child-care and domestic responsibilities.

The Socialist Workers platform offers a course of action for workers and farmers to advance our historic class interests and defend ourselves from efforts by the bosses, their political parties, and their government to shift the burden of capitalism's accelerating economic disorder onto our backs.



Left: Militant/Guillermo Esquivel Róger Calero and Alyson Kennedy are the Socialist Workers Party candidates for U.S. president and vice president.

Top: Calero (standing, on right) with fellow inmates in Houston federal immigration jail in 2002. Backed by the SWP, he waged a successful campaign against a U.S. government move to deport him to Nicaragua. Left: Kennedy (kneeling, on right), a leading militant in the 2004-06 battle for a union at the Co-Op coal mine near Huntington, Utah, with fellow strikers in May 2004, as they picked up food donated in solidarity with their struggle.



- **Above all, the working class needs our own political party, a labor party based on fighting unions,** to contest against the Democrats and Republicans and all other capitalist parties. The billionaire class rules through a two-party system to maintain the illusion that workers have a choice. Building a labor party independent of the two parties of capital offers working people a fighting alternative. Every fundamental question posed in trade union and social struggles has to be fought out and won in the political arena.
- **Working people need to establish a workers and farmers government.** We must build a revolutionary movement of millions to fight to replace the state power and class rule of the tiny propertied minority and begin organizing society in the interests of the vast majority.
- **Support workers' struggles to organize unions** and to mobilize union power to defend working people from the bosses' assaults. Workers need unions through which we can take control of our own

struggles for dignity on the job, improved wages, and health and safety. We must transform the unions into organizations that throw their weight into movements of social protest launched by working people.

- **Stop immigration raids and deportations!** End Social Security "no match" letters. Immediate legalization for all undocumented workers, with no conditions.

- **Defend and extend affirmative action** in employment, education, and

Continued on page 6



California Nurses Association and National Nurses Organizing Committee rally in Sacramento, California, Sept. 11, 2007, to protest a proposed state "health-care" law that would line the pockets of the insurance companies at workers' expense.

Socialist Workers Party

The working-class alternative

Continued from page 5

housing. Expand programs forcing companies to end “last hired, first fired” practices toward Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, and women. Such programs cut across divisions fostered by the bosses to undermine workers’ ability to fight.

- **For a sliding scale of wages and hours to combat inflation and unemployment.**
 - **Cost-of-living increases in the wages and benefits of all workers.** End government rigging of statistics that understate rising costs of food, fuel, health care, housing, and college education, designed to

“We need to honestly and directly address and rectify the enormous product cost and capital cost disadvantage that currently burden the domestic automakers.”

—Mitt Romney, Jan. 13, 2008

“I represent Wall Street and I’m proud to do that because there are a lot of things that come out of there that raise wealth and give people opportunity.”

—Hillary Clinton, Jan. 11, 2008

“The Democrats and Republicans serve the bosses. Working people need our own political party, a labor party built out of a fighting union movement. We need class independence in the political arena to fight for solutions to the mounting assaults we face—from racist and sexist discrimination on and off the job, to rising inflation and stagnating wages.”

—Róger Calero, Jan. 7, 2008

keep wage hikes and Social Security payments low. The unions need to initiate committees of workers and farmers to take determination of the Consumer Price Index into our hands.

- **Shorten the workweek, with no cut in pay, to spread the available**



U.S. Air Force/Shawn Weismiller

U.S. soldiers bust into a house in Khatoon, Iraq, Oct. 19, 2007. The socialist candidates call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and “coalition” troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

work to all. Put millions to work at union-scale wages through massive public works programs to repair and expand affordable, spacious, and comfortable housing, safe and reliable public transportation, quality schools, government-financed child-care centers, recreation facilities, and much-needed infrastructure improvements in and around our neighborhoods and workplaces.

- **Open the capitalists’ books. For workers’ control of industry.** The bosses try to blackmail us into “choosing” between jobs and safety, health care and wages, pensions for older workers and two-tier pay scales for new hires. The labor movement must say “no” and demand the capitalists open their financial ledgers to committees of workers for public scrutiny. Uncovering the truth about bosses’ “business secrets” goes hand in hand with workers taking control over the speed of production, job conditions, organization of work, use of resources, and protection of the surrounding environment. Along this road we can gain experience needed to manage and plan the economy under a workers and farmers government.

- **Nationalize the energy industry.** The owners of the oil and coal monopolies display utter disregard for the millions afflicted by their running of this vital industry, including those who labor in the mines, refineries, and power plants. Take the energy industry out of private hands! Make all its transactions transparent and run it under workers control in order to enforce job safety; halt the poisoning of the air, water, and soil; and make electricity, heating, and air conditioning affordable and safer for working people.

- **Government-guaranteed health care and pensions,** ensuring lifetime coverage and retirement income for all. No cuts to present or future Social Security, Medicare, or workers compensation. Roll back the rising eligibility age. Eliminate mandatory retirement.

- **For the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and “coalition” troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Korea, the Philippines, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and everywhere else they are stationed in Europe, the Mideast, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas.** No to threats and sanctions against Cuba, Iran, and north Korea! Hands off

Venezuela!

- **Oppose government spying and harassment.** Repeal the Patriot Act and all witch-hunting and “gag” legislation. Fight cop brutality, government frame-ups, and assaults on the rights of the accused and convicted. Abolish the death penalty. Shut the Guantánamo Bay and

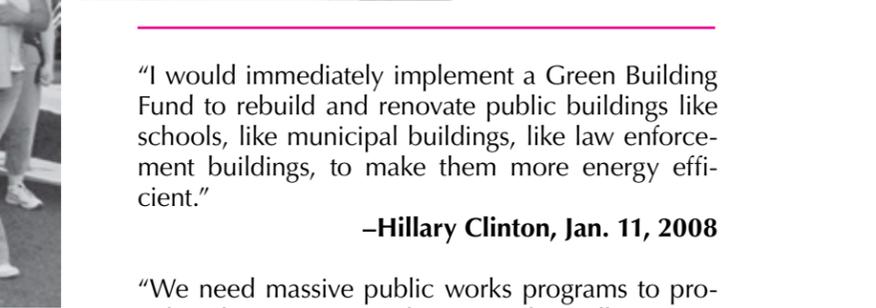


The Socialist Workers campaign joins struggle by workers and farmers around the world. Clockwise from top: May Day 2007 march for immigrants’ rights in Chicago; students in Conakry, Guinea, study in airport parking lot because of lack of electricity in homes; striking shipyard workers picket Northrup Grumman in Pascagoula, Mississippi, March 2007; march on Washington against Iraq, Sept. 29, 2007; Teamsters fighting for contract picket Graniterock headquarters in Watsonville, California, October 2007; student walkout in New Jersey, demands justice for the Jena Six, September 2007.

campaign platform active in the 2008 elections

other U.S. "detention centers" and halt the denial of elementary legal protections to all those in custody.

- **Oppose the drive by Washington and its allies to prevent nations oppressed by imperialism** from developing the sources of energy they need, including nuclear power, in order to expand elec-



"I would immediately implement a Green Building Fund to rebuild and renovate public buildings like schools, like municipal buildings, like law enforcement buildings, to make them more energy efficient."

—Hillary Clinton, Jan. 11, 2008

"We need massive public works programs to provide jobs at union-scale wages for millions. We could build convenient and inexpensive public transportation workers can rely on, subsidized housing workers can be proud to live in, and meet other needs for our class—not promote the bosses' latest money-making schemes—'green' or otherwise."

—Róger Calero, Jan. 12, 2008

trification, bring much of humanity out of darkness, and make possible economic, social, and cultural advancement.

- **Cancel the Third World debt.** Lift all U.S. tariffs and other obstacles to trade and travel, including "anti-dumping," "fair labor," and "environmental protection" regulations, which have devastating consequences for peoples of the semicolonial world.
- **The government must guarantee the costs of production to working farmers,** including inexpensive credit. Halt farm foreclosures. Guarantee farmers the right to use the land they rent or hold title to, without fear of eviction.
- **Defend a woman's right to choose abortion!** Oppose all restrictions on access.
- **Independence for Puerto Rico!** Free those jailed for their actions opposing U.S. colonial rule.
- **Normalize relations with Cuba!** Lift Washington's restrictions on U.S. residents visiting the island. Free the Cuban Five!

The Socialist Workers candidates are campaigning for a workers and farmers government. We join in workers' struggles in this country and

around the world. We are part of building a revolutionary movement that can follow the road taken by Cuba's working people nearly five decades ago: to take power out of the hands of the ruling rich and establish a workers and farmers government that will abolish capitalism and join in a worldwide struggle for socialism.

Tell us about activities, events, and struggles by your unions or other organizations, so we can join you!

Join us in campaigning!

"I have been one of those involved in one of the most important changes that could have ever been made, and that is to reverse a losing strategy in Iraq... And now we have a new strategy, and we are succeeding."

—John McCain, Jan. 10, 2008

"Once we had our troops two years into a war [in Iraq], it was important that we try to do the best possible job on it."

—Barack Obama, Jan. 13, 2008

"The 'surge' in Iraq is working for the U.S. rulers, but the only course in the interests of workers and farmers is to bring all the troops home now. Not one penny should be spent, not one soldier should be deployed to fight the imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan."

—Alyson Kennedy, Jan. 10, 2008

I want to help the Socialist Workers 2008 campaign!

- I want to invite the candidates to come join my struggle.

Please tell us about what you're involved in: _____

- I want to join local campaign teams.
- I want to invite the socialist candidates to speak at my union, school, or organization.
- I want to organize a fund-raiser or house meeting for the campaign.
- Enclosed is a donation for:
 - \$750 \$500 \$250 \$100
 - \$50 \$25 Other _____

(Make check or money order payable to:
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Young socialists campaign for Calero and Kennedy

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018; tel. (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY BEN JOYCE

NEW YORK—"The Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy are reaching out to working people in working-class neighborhoods, at factory gates, and on the job to win support for the Socialist Workers Party candidates," said Ben O'Shaughnessy, speaking at an SWP campaign event here January 11.

"We invite all youth attracted to the struggles of workers and farmers to join us in campaigning for the 2008 Socialist Workers ticket." Róger Calero and Alyson Kennedy are the SWP's presidential and vice presidential candidates.

O'Shaughnessy, a spokesperson for the Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy, reported on activities of the young socialist campaigners, from street teams across New York to introducing the campaign to co-workers and other youth. He said the candidates are going where workers and farmers are engaged in struggle, from fights to organize unions to protests against immigration raids.

Earlier that day, young socialist campaigners joined Kennedy and 300 other people at a rally at the Brooklyn federal courthouse to protest grand jury subpoenas targeting three Puerto Rican independence activists.

"We call for the release of Puerto Rican prisoners jailed for their pro-independence activities, just as we join in actions for the release of five Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. pris-

SWP campaign

Continued from front page

pel said in reply to Henderson's inquiry. "But the capitalists have two parties—Democrats and Republicans—and working people have none."

Koppel added, "All major questions facing workers are decided in the political arena. That's why we need a labor party, based on a fighting union movement, that is dependent on working people and our struggles, not on the bosses and their organizations." The veteran replied, "You've got some good points there," as he took some socialist campaign literature to read.

Two days earlier, at a Militant Labor Forum featuring the New York Socialist Workers campaign, Koppel noted that official unemployment jumped in December to 5 percent from 4.7 percent a month earlier, and that the number of full-time workers whose hours have been cut to part-time has increased by 9 percent from a year ago.

Proposals by Clinton and Barack Obama like "emergency" housing aid, extensions of unemployment benefits, job training, and subsidies to pay heating bills "are at best temporary measures that won't protect working people against growing unemployment and inflation, which are endemic to capital-

Continued on page 9



Militant photos by Tom Baumann (left), Ben Joyce (right)
Rebecca Williamson (left) and Ben O'Shaughnessy are national spokespeople for Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy, which has already begun campaigning.

ons," he said.

In Minnesota, young campaigners have helped bring the socialist campaign to workers fighting a union decertifica-

tion drive at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Rebecca Williamson said in a phone interview. A worker at Dakota, Williamson is the other spokes-

Socialist Workers 2008 national campaign director and chairperson

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—The Socialist Workers 2008 campaign has Olympia Newton as its national campaign director and Sam Manuel as its national chairperson.

Newton, 29, is the editor of the *Militant* and a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. She joined the Young Socialists in 1997 in Washington, D.C.

As Socialist Workers candidate for California secretary of state in 2002, Newton traveled to Venezuela shortly after popular mobilizations overthrew a U.S.-backed coup against the government of Hugo Chávez. Previously she ran on the Socialist Workers ticket for Washington, D.C., City Council in 1998 and for New York City Council in 2001.

In 2003 she was state spokesperson for the Young Socialists for Britton, which organized young people campaigning for the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of California, Joel Britton. That year



Olympia Newton, campaign director.

Newton also helped organize nearly 300 young people to travel to revolutionary Cuba for a Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. In 2004, living in Price, Utah, she built solidarity with coal miners fighting for union representation at the

nearby Co-Op mine.

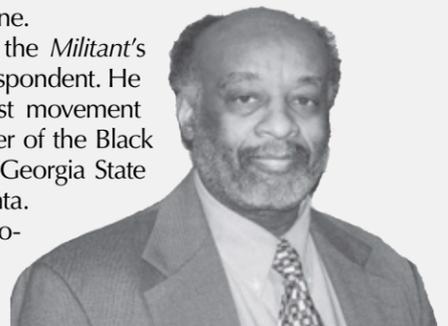
Manuel, 58, is the *Militant's* Washington correspondent. He joined the socialist movement in 1970 as a leader of the Black Student Union at Georgia State University in Atlanta.

A longtime opponent of imperialist war, he was a staff member of the National

Peace Action Coalition Against the War during the Vietnam War. In the 1980s he traveled extensively in southern Africa as a *Militant* reporter and was part of the U.S. delegation to a 1993 international conference against apartheid held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Manuel has been active in the labor movement, working as a steelworker, railroad conductor, and meat packer. In 2006 he traveled in West Virginia and Kentucky reporting on the consequences of the coal bosses' profit drive for the safety and lives of miners. A year earlier he led *Militant* reporting teams in Alabama, Mississippi, and New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Manuel has run for office on the Socialist Workers ticket numerous times since 1973. In 2006 he was the party's candidate for mayor of Washington and is currently running for city council at-large in that city.



Sam Manuel, campaign chairperson.

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person for the Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy, and the SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Minnesota's 5th District.

"Our campaign explains that the only way workers can effectively enforce safety and resist speed-up on the job is to forge fighting unions," she said. "We also need to organize in the political arena by breaking with the Democrats and Republicans and building a labor party, based on the unions, that can fight for the interests of all working people."

The Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy is joining SWP candidates on the streets, at plant gates, and on campuses. We are helping organize meetings and debates for the socialist candidates and will petition to get them on the ballot.

Get involved! Contact us at ys4calero-kennedy@mac.com, through the information in the introduction to this column, or the nearest *Militant* distributor listed on page 8.

Stop FBI, grand jury harassment!

All supporters of democratic rights should oppose the latest FBI and federal grand jury harassment of the Puerto Rican independence movement. This probe is part of a stepped-up campaign of disruption by the political police against supporters of independence for Washington's colony in the Caribbean.

Demonstrations were held in several U.S. and Puerto Rican cities January 11 to protest subpoenas issued to three independence supporters—Tania Frontera, Julio Pabón, and Christopher Torres—to appear that day before a federal grand jury in New York. In an initial victory, the court postponed the hearing to February 1. Independence activists say the grand jury probe is part of an harassment campaign Washington is carrying out under the guise of searching for members of the underground pro-independence group Macheteros.

Macheteros leader Filiberto Ojeda was killed by FBI agents on the island in September 2005. In February 2006 heavily armed FBI agents raided the homes of independence supporters across Puerto Rico, supposedly looking for connections to the Macheteros. The U.S. government failed to pin charges on anyone.

The use of grand juries to victimize the Puerto Rican independence movement has a long history. In 1936 a U.S. grand jury framed up Pedro Albizu Campos and other Puerto Rican Nationalist Party leaders

on charges of "seditious conspiracy." In the 1970s and '80s, several *independentistas* in Chicago and New York were jailed for refusing to testify before grand juries.

U.S. authorities have used the extraordinary powers of grand juries to conduct fishing expeditions and lock up political activists. Grand jury deliberations are secret. The jury can force witnesses to testify, and individuals are often denied the basic democratic right to be represented by an attorney at the interrogation. Those questioned have been asked to give the government names of other political activists. When they refuse, many have been jailed for contempt of court.

The current case is an affront to political rights. Cops from the FBI/New York Police Department Joint Terrorist Task Force showed Julio Pabón photos of several people, asked him to identify them, and then issued him a subpoena to appear before a grand jury.

Working people in the United States have a stake in opposing these government attacks on political rights. Like the expansion of FBI wiretapping and spying, they are intended to intimidate and victimize opponents of U.S. government policies. They will continue to be used against union militants and other working-class fighters. That's why a quick response, like the January 11 demonstrations, is so important.

'Workers need their own political party'

Continued from page 8
ism," Koppel said.

Republican Michael Huckabee's "Fair Tax" proposal to replace the federal income tax with a national sales tax of at least 23 percent "will disproportionately burden working people," who will pay a much bigger share of their income than the wealthy, Koppel explained. As for other Republican candidates, Mitt Romney's calls to "invest in U.S. manufacturing" and Rudolph Giuliani's proposed tax cuts are also geared at further enriching the capitalists, "which is always at the expense of working people."

"We call for cost-of-living increases for all wages and Social Security, unemployment, and other benefits, pegged to the real inflation rate," the socialist candidate said. "And a shorter workweek with no cut in pay is a demand the labor movement can fight for to combat increasing joblessness." It goes hand in hand with a massive, government-funded public works program to build schools, quality public housing, public transportation, and other social needs, he said.

Defending working women

Speaking on the same panel, SWP national campaign director Olympia Newton spoke about Clinton's win in New Hampshire, noting that many attribute it to her emotional response to a campaign supporter on the eve of the primaries, which enabled her to edge out Obama. Clinton has played up the fact that she would be the first female president, Newton said, but her record is against women's rights, including her support for the William Clinton administration's dismantling of aid to families with dependent children in 1996.

To unify workers in struggle, the SWP champions affirmative action to force companies and government institutions to increase the number of women, as well as Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, in housing, education, and employment, Newton said. "As fewer better-paying jobs become available in times of layoffs, real affirmative action is needed so women are not pushed out of these jobs." She also explained that a public works program could build day-care centers so more working women could get and maintain jobs.

Norton Sandler, director of the SWP's 2004 presidential campaign, said Republican John McCain's electoral gains in the New Hampshire primary were based to a large extent on his identification with the U.S. troop "surge" in Iraq, which has widespread support due to its military successes over the past year.

Ben O'Shaughnessy, a spokesperson for Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy, pointed to the activities of young socialist campaigners and invited members of the audience to help campaign for the working-

class alternative (see article on this page.)

BY CHAUNCEY ROBINSON
AND JOEL BRITTON

SAN FRANCISCO—Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 8th district, addressed a meeting here January 11 on the election campaign and the working-class alternative offered by the socialist candidates.

The day before, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a "fiscal emergency" and called the legislature into a special session to consider \$14.5 billion in cuts, including \$1 billion from the state Medicaid program, Medi-Cal.

Sherman condemned this move as part of the bipartisan assault on the social benefits won in struggle by working people. She explained that the SWP campaign also opposes the California health-care plan recently passed in the state assembly, which would make it mandatory for all to have insurance by 2010.

"The California plan, like the proposals by Democrats Clinton and Obama or by the Republicans, puts the burden of health care on individuals. The main beneficiaries will be the big insurance companies and hospital corporations," Sherman said.

What working people need, she said, is a fight for "government-guaranteed medical care and pensions, ensuring lifetime coverage for all." She called for cost-of-living increases in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other social benefits that keep up with the real increases in the cost of living.

Addressing the U.S.-led war in Iraq, she noted that incumbent congressional candidate Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, votes for hundreds of billions in war appropriations as she says she wants "to end the war and responsibly redeploy our troops out of Iraq" and concentrate on Afghanistan, "where the war on terrorism is." Republican candidate Dana Walsh is a supporter of the U.S.-led troop "surge" in Iraq. Peace activist Cindy Sheehan, also running in the 8th C.D., says she is for bringing the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan "to a swifter conclusion."

Sherman said, "The only course in the interests of working people at home and abroad is to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and 'coalition' forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, and all other fronts of Washington's 'war on terror.'"

"We oppose the Democrats, Republicans, and other capitalist parties and candidates," Sherman said. "Sheehan, who says she is running as an 'independent,' is not independent of the capitalist two-party system." The SWP campaign points to the need to build a labor party, based on a fighting union movement and independent of all capitalist parties, Sherman said.

Primaries

Continued from front page

that relies more heavily on temporary tax breaks.

Clinton's emphasis that her spending proposals are "short-term" and "fiscally responsible" is a reminder of her support of the record of the William Clinton administration, which eliminated federally guaranteed Aid for Families with Dependent Children and cut off food stamps and Medicaid for many workers.

As a state senator in Illinois, Obama backed a similar bill to gut welfare, and said, "conservatives—and Bill Clinton—were right about welfare."

The worsening U.S. economy was a feature of Mitt Romney's campaign in the Michigan primaries, where he gained over Sen. John McCain. Romney said that by helping the auto companies' profitability he would relieve unemployment, which in Michigan is officially at 7.4 percent. He called for cutting federal regulations and taxes on the auto industry.

At a January 10 Republican presidential debate in South Carolina, McCain said he would cut government spending, finance education and job training, and make permanent the Bush administration's 2001 tax cuts. Rudolph Giuliani and other Republican contenders also called for tax reductions.

Former Arkansas governor Michael Huckabee said the Republican Party needs to "communicate that our party is just as interested in helping the people who are single moms, who are working two jobs, and still just barely paying the rent as we are the people at the top of the economy."

The centerpiece of Huckabee's plan is the "Fair Tax" scheme, which would eliminate income taxes and establish a federal sales tax of at least 23 percent. He says it would end tax paperwork, abolish the Internal Revenue Service, and allow "American workers to keep their entire paycheck." Those living on incomes under the poverty line would get a tax rebate that would cover the costs of the sales tax. The sales tax would fall more heavily on those with lower incomes.

War question

McCain continues to appeal to the public support that exists for the U.S. "surge" offensive in Iraq, which is accomplishing its short-term goals of reducing deaths of U.S. combat troops and Iraqi civilians and isolating al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Two days after his victory in the New Hampshire primary, the *Wall Street Journal* published an opinion piece by McCain and Connecticut senator Joseph Lieberman titled "The Surge Worked." They wrote that in Iraq "the forces of Islamist extremism are facing their single greatest and most humiliating defeat since the loss of Afghanistan in 2001."

McCain, who was critical of the way the war was being led before the surge, is in the best position to reap the benefits of the current results in Iraq. His Republican competitors are scrambling to paint themselves in a similar light.

In New Hampshire, most polls predicted that Obama would carry the Democratic primary. Instead, Clinton won by two percentage points.

Clinton's victory was due to "an unexpected absence of young voters, Sen. Hillary Clinton's late get-out-the-vote effort and especially her teary-eyed quavering-voice moment Monday at a breakfast for undecided women," the *Wall Street Journal* noted.

Clinton beat Obama among Democratic women voters by 12 percentage points.

Grand jury

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candidate Alyson Kennedy, and Ramón Díaz and Martín González, both members of the Puerto Rico-based pro-independence group La Nueva Escuela (The New School), among many others.

"They can say, 'Come back on February 1,' but we'll come back every time and bring more people with us!" said Ben Ramos of the local group ProLiber-tad, which campaigns for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners locked up in U.S. prisons.