

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Washington told to leave
Philippine military base

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Mandela: negotiations mark 'a milestone in our struggle'

Firsthand report on Convention for a Democratic South Africa

BY GREG McCARTAN

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) held here December 20–21 was a watershed event in the decades-long struggle for a democratic republic in South Africa.

Culminating a process that began in 1986 when imprisoned African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela called on the government to begin talks with the ANC, the meeting opened full-scale negotiations between 19 political organizations on dismantling the criminal social structure known as apartheid.

Millions in the country viewed the entire proceedings live on television. The historic turning point they witnessed was in addition an unprecedented event: the South African government and ruling National Party — which both vowed for years that they would never accede to the demands for a nonracial, democratic South Africa advanced by the revolutionary-democratic movement — sitting down on an equal footing with organizations representing the interests and aspirations of the dispossessed majority.

"Codesa represents a milestone in our struggle," Mandela told a press conference at the end of the two-day meeting. The convention "has made a considerable impact as far as our call for an interim government, as well as an elected constituent assembly, is concerned," he said, noting the announcement by South African president F.W. de Klerk that the government was willing to consider various ways in which a transitional authority could be established.

"We reiterate that the central demand of the African National Congress remains," Mandela said, "the full and meaningful participation by all South Africa's people, in-

cluding those in the TBVC states, in the whole process of the drawing up and adoption of the new constitution. For us, this means an elected constituent assembly."

The TBVC states are the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and the Ciskei — four of the ten rural and impoverished Bantustans set up by the regime as "homelands" for the Black population. In a scheme promoted by the government, officials in the four areas accepted the status of "independent" countries.

Mandela gave two speeches to the gathering. In the first, during the formal presentations by a leader of each organization, he explained the continued denial of rights of millions under the "jackboot" of repression and the pressing need to address the deteri-

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Militant/Greg McCartan

ANC president Nelson Mandela speaking to the press at the conclusion of Codesa

GM to cut 74,000 jobs, shut 21 plants

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — Robert Stempel, chairman of General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, announced December 18 that the company plans to close 21 plants and lay off 74,000 workers over the next four years. Stempel said this is necessary to regain profitability in GM's North American automotive operations.

Stempel unveiled the plans in a closed-circuit televised speech to employees at all GM operations. After the speech Stempel gave a press conference that was broadcast live over the radio in many cities where GM owns plants.

The projected layoffs include 54,000

unionized workers along with 20,000 salaried employees. The plant closings will cut production capacity by 22 percent and the work force by more than 18 percent.

The announcement comes in the context of growing competition among the auto giants as sales of new vehicles shrink. Total North American sales for 1991 fell to 12.7 million cars and light trucks, an 11 percent drop from 1990 levels. This figure represents the lowest levels in eight years.

GM's share of the North American auto market fell to 35 percent from 44 percent in 1980.

The auto giant reported losses of \$2.4 billion in 1990 and \$2.3 billion in the first

three quarters of 1991. These figures hide the real losses from auto production because other components of GM have made big profits. Losses in its auto and truck division total about \$500 million a month.

The Big Three — GM, Ford and Chrysler — together with Japanese-owned plants and joint ventures have a combined U.S. capacity of producing 5 million more vehicles than they can profitably sell.

Stempel's announcement was designed to deal further blows to the United Auto Workers (UAW), which represents most unionized GM workers. The GM chairman hopes to drive a wedge between workers at different plants and between the communities where the plants are located.

GM plans to close 6 assembly plants in addition to 4 earmarked for closing last year; 4 engine plants; and 11 parts plants. With few exceptions, Stempel refused to name the targeted plants. He claimed that the final decision on which plants to close had not yet been made.

Competition between GM plants

Stempel did say that GM planned to close either the Arlington, Texas, or the Willow Run Plant, in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Both plants manufacture full-sized cars.

Information leaked from GM made it

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Court orders forced return of refugees to Haiti

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A U.S. court of appeals in Atlanta ruled December 19 that Washington can begin forcibly returning thousands of Haitian refugees. The refugees fled Haiti to escape repression and persecution after the September 30 military coup that toppled the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The following day, federal judge Clyde Atkins in Miami reimposed a temporary injunction for the third time since November 19. Atkins' order holds only until lawyers for the Haitians visit and speak with the refugees currently held at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

In a phone interview, Rolande Dorancy, executive director of the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, termed the U.S. government's moves to forcibly repatriate the Haitian refugees a "discriminatory situation." She urged "all those who believe in human rights and equality to join hands with us to help fight this battle together." Dorancy vowed to appeal this case all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary.

Amnesty International condemned the U.S. government's forced repatriation of

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Militant/Marc Lichtman

Participant in December 13 protest in Washington, D.C. Haitian Refugee Center leader asked "all who believe in human rights" to "help fight this battle."

Political polarization and rising class tensions in North America

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Celebration of Pathfinder Building reconstruction — pages 4-5

Abortion clinics defended in Los Angeles

BY TIM ELLIOTT

LOS ANGELES — Pro-choice forces rallied here December 7 to protect the right to abortion and birth control from actions of the antiabortion group Operation Rescue.

Several hundred abortion rights supporters, mostly students, braved the cold to assemble at 5 a.m. at seven different mobilization sites.

While Operation Rescue supporters gathered in the area, the clinic defenders, many of whom were on the front lines for the first time, practiced how to lock arms and brace themselves to prevent antiabortion thugs from physically blocking clinic entrances.

There are more than 50 abortion clinics in the Los Angeles area. Exactly which clinic Operation Rescue will attempt to disrupt is not known until they actually appear.

This time Operation Rescue hit clinics in Pacoima, Van Nuys, and Sherman Oaks — three different cities in the San Fernando Valley.

Around 5:45 a.m. the Operation Rescue caravan began to roll northward, tailed by a pro-choice caravan of 45 to 50 people. Clinic defenders were dispatched from their mobilization sites to strengthen forces in the San Fernando Valley.

The right-wingers first made a "decoy hit" in Pacoima, but 60 defenders inside

the clinic marched out to turn them away before the clinic's opening hours. Operation Rescue next went to a Van Nuys clinic, only to find both entrances securely defended.

By the time they reached the third clinic, in Sherman Oaks, abortion rights supporters



Militant/Nelson Blackstock
Los Angeles clinic defense, 1989. Pro-choice activists again prevented Operation Rescue from closing clinics in 1991.

were already in place and patients were receiving medical services.

Clinic defenders kept some entrances open while the rightists blocked others. After issuing an order to disperse, police arrested 20 to 25 individuals, including two Operation Rescue leaders.

One clinic defender was arrested when a woman from Operation Rescue claimed he had assaulted her. He was released almost immediately on his own recognizance and returned to help defend the clinics.

When 40 rightists returned to the original

dummy target in Pacoima, police used barricades to secure the corridor which the pro-choice forces had created. Clinic defenders moved out and escorted patients into the clinic.

The Clinic Defense Alliance of Los Angeles, a project of the Feminist Majority, was the central organizer of the actions.

Valerie Berman, coordinator of the Clinic Defense Alliance, estimated that some 250 people defended the clinics against 85 rightists that day. As a result, not one patient was denied her right to medical services.

Court backs U.S. gov't plan to repatriate Haitian refugees

Continued from front page

Haitians as "an act of brutal cruelty." The organization announced it had compiled evidence of "widespread human rights abuses being perpetrated by the military forces" in Haiti.

An opinion poll conducted for the *Miami Herald* in early December reports that 57 percent of Florida voters think Haitians should be allowed to stay in the United States at least temporarily.

Since October 29, the U.S. Coast Guard has picked up more than 7,700 Haitian refugees from boats in international waters. The vast majority are being held at tent encampments on the U.S. base at Guantánamo.

In mid-December, several hundred Haitians, who had already been held at Guantánamo for almost a month, carried out two protests within a week, tearing down tents they were forced to live in and attacking the barbed wire barriers surrounding them.

The U.S. military operation conducted in international waters surrounding Haiti has forced thousands into prisonlike conditions, including some who weren't even planning to leave Haiti.

"I told them I was out making my living and didn't want to go to Miami, but they took us anyway," 28-year-old fisherman Rochelle Israel told the *New York Times*. He and other Haitians who had just returned voluntarily to Haiti described how the U.S. military destroyed their boats and forced them to go to Guantánamo.

'Long live the embargo'

The economic embargo against Haiti, which was initiated by the Organization of American States October 8, is having a deep impact in the country. According to the *New York Times*, economists estimate that more than 60,000 jobs have already been eliminated. While the military rulers and wealthy businessmen condemn the embargo for crippling the country, working people embrace it as an important weapon in the fight to beat back the coup.

"Long live the embargo," chanted a group of workers outside their padlocked factory in Haiti. "We barely get by, even when there's work," Jeanne Nicolas explained to the *Miami Herald*. "You have to pay for the bus, your house, 60 cents for lunch, and the minimum pay is \$3 a day. We should be dead already. Still, I have never said, 'Down with the embargo.'"

The *Times* reported that a tentative agreement had been reached between Haitian legislators and Aristide on naming a new prime

minister: René Théodore, a leader of Haiti's Communist Party. The paper noted that such a step could pave the way for Aristide's return. However, top military officers who carried out the coup in the first place will ultimately decide whether to accept this plan. Aristide, who had put forward a list of more than a dozen suggestions for prime minister, not including Théodore, has made clear that he continues to favor Victor Benoit for the post of prime minister.

Meanwhile, repression continues throughout the country. A clandestine radio station has been appealing to "all serious Tontons Macoutes" to participate in killing those identified as "vagabonds," "Communists," and supporters of Aristide.

In response to reports of massacres and army brutality, Jean-Jacques Honorat, the military regime's current prime minister, has lamely promised to carry out a study of the violence, in collaboration with the armed forces command.

Protests in solidarity with Haitian refugees continue in the United States. A march through downtown Atlanta was organized by the Haitian Ministry, Concerned Black Clergy, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Addressing the protesters, Congressman John Lewis called the internment of Haitian refugees at Guantánamo a case of "pure racism." He stated that Haitians being held at the U.S. base should be allowed to become U.S. residents and citizens, and demanded that Aristide be restored to the presidency.

Rev. Randall Osborne explained that SCLC has launched a national petition campaign on behalf of Haitian refugees and is considering leading a delegation to Haiti.

Salm Kolis, who had also attended the national demonstration in solidarity with the Haitian struggle December 13 in Washington, D.C., spoke on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party. She explained that the U.S. government is afraid that the "fighting spirit of the Haitian refugees is contagious" and might spread to working people in the United States. This is why the Bush administration seeks to keep them from entering the United States, she said.

G. Beliard of the Haitian Ministry expressed the determination of the Haitian community to free the refugees interned at Guantánamo, as well as the 300 Haitians detained by U.S. authorities at Krome prison.

Jim Kendrick in Miami and Marla Puziss in Atlanta contributed to this article.

New Zealand abortion clinic attacked

BY RUTH GRAY

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Some 150 opponents of women's right to abortion gathered December 10 outside the Auckland Medical Aid Center, one of two clinics that provide abortion services here. In an action organized by Operation Rescue, 114 people entered the clinic and were arrested.

The Operation Rescue move followed a court ruling that dismissed a trespass charge against anti-abortion activist Mary O'Neill. She had been charged with trespassing at Dunedin Hospital. Judge Thomas Everitt dismissed the case on the grounds that O'Neill had reasonable grounds to believe that abortions were being carried out illegally at the hospital. O'Neill's actions were justifiable as protection of the mothers, said the judge.

New Zealand law enables a woman to obtain an abortion if she can prove that the pregnancy endangers her mental or physical health. To gain approval she must first see

two certifying consultants. In practice this law has been interpreted very liberally, enabling almost all who want abortions to get them.

The basis of O'Neill's defense was an attack on the right of women to legally obtain an abortion using the grounds of danger to their mental health.

O'Neill's lawyer told the *Dominion* newspaper that the judge's decision took the stance that O'Neill's views were such that any "reasonable man" could well hold.

Following the O'Neill case, a hearing to consider the validity of the abortion license at Dunedin hospital is to be held in the High Court in Dunedin on February 3, 1992.

In response to the court ruling, Federation of Women's Health Councils spokesperson Cheryl Hamilton demanded to know how the judge could say that O'Neill's actions were necessary for the protection of mothers. "What were they being protected from, and had they asked for protection?"

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Cuban Union of Young Communists hosts U.S. Young Socialist Alliance delegation

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

HAVANA, Cuba — A leadership delegation from the Young Socialist Alliance of the United States visited Cuba November 25–December 2. The visit was hosted by the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba.

Roni McCann, YSA national secretary; Chris Nisan, leader of the Africana Student Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and of the Twin Cities YSA chapter; and YSA National Executive Committee members Luis Madrid and Argiris Malapanis took part in the delegation.

Manuel Aguilera, head of the international relations department of the UJC, and other leaders of the Young Communists welcomed the delegation.

The first meeting of the YSA leaders took place at the Museum of the Revolution with UJC members in the Revolutionary Armed Forces. They had all participated in internationalist volunteer missions, mostly in Angola.

Thousands of young Cubans fought in Angola between 1975 and 1991, risking their lives to defend that country from invasions by the South African apartheid regime.

"It's an honor to have fellow revolutionaries here, especially from the United States," said Eduardo Gómez. He is an air force pilot who participated in the 1988 battle at Cuito Cuanavale, a turning point in the fight to defeat the South African army in Angola. Meeting young revolutionaries who see defense of the Cuban revolution as part of the working-class struggle "right in the center of imperialism is for us one of the highest expressions of internationalism," Gómez added.

Many UJC leaders spoke frankly about the challenges and difficulties facing the Cuban revolution today. These economic difficulties stem from the legacy of imperialism, which through decades of domination ensured that Cuba remained a dependent, economically backward country. Moreover, Washington has imposed an uninterrupted trade embargo on the island for more than 30 years.

The current hardships flow "not just from the U.S. blockade, but also because of errors we made," said Miosotis Alfonso, a UJC leader at the Victoria Girón school of medicine. "We depended too much on the Soviet Union," she added.

For example, following Cuba's decision to join the trade alliance of the Soviet-bloc countries in 1972, Cuba abandoned its earlier policy of striving to become largely self-suf-

ficient in food. Many food items were imported from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Wide interest in U.S. politics

Alfonso was part of a group of a dozen students at the Victoria Girón school who met with the YSA delegation. They were members of the UJC and leaders of the Federation of University Students (FEU).

"Tell us what's happening in politics in the U.S.," said Jorge Martín Cordero, one of the medical students. "Can you function openly as communists there?" he asked.

Madrid answered by describing the struggle to mobilize students against the emergence of the White Student Union, a racist, right-wing organization that recently began functioning on the University of Minnesota campus in the Twin Cities.

The YSA has played an important role in mobilizing forces against the White Student Union and demanding that the group not receive recognition as a student organization or any university resources, said Madrid.

"We reject the idea that there is some parallel between the White Student Union and a Black student union, like the Africana Student Cultural Center Chris has been part of," said Madrid. "All-white or all-male organizations are reactionary," he added. This is different from Black or women's organizations which are formed as a defensive reaction to the oppression of these groups by capitalism.

Several students said they had heard about activities of rightist Republican David Duke.

"Duke's bid for the Republican party nomination for U.S. president is an expression of the growing political polarization," Madrid explained. Rightists like Duke and Patrick Buchanan use demagoguery to appeal to fears and insecurities of middle-class layers and sections of the working class. "They scapegoat sections of the working class like immigrant workers from the Third World countries," Madrid added.

Is fascism around the corner?

"Does that mean that fascism is around the corner?" asked Abdul Hernández, one of the medical students.

"No," said Roni McCann, "because the working class has not been defeated." McCann explained that the employers need to drive down the standard of living of working people in order to bolster their sagging profit rates and gain a competitive edge over imperialist rivals in the world market. Along with this come the government-organized



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Union of Young Communists and Federation of University Students members who met with Young Socialist Alliance delegation at Victoria Girón medical school in Havana. Cuban youth were keen to discuss U.S. politics.

assaults on democratic rights and individual liberties, as a means to weaken the ability of working people to defend themselves.

"The billionaire ruling families, however, have not broken the resistance within the working class," McCann said. They cannot simply press forward with concession contracts, attacks on abortion rights, affirmative action and other measures without meeting resistance and unexpected fights.

At this point there is no working-class answer presented by the labor movement, McCann explained. But at the same time there has been increased participation by young people in actions to defend abortion clinics blockaded by rightist forces, and in protests against police brutality and racist attacks, she added.

"The YSA takes part in and helps to mobilize youth for these actions," the YSA leader said. "We seek to convince young people that capitalism is the root of the problems we face. We explain that in order to defeat Dukeism we must build a communist party capable of leading workers and farmers to take away the power from the exploiters and begin the fight for socialism." YSA members function openly on campuses and in the trade unions as communists she added. "We sell our newspaper, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder books on the job and at street corners," she said.

'What has changed since McCarthy?'

"What has changed since the McCarthy period to make that possible?" asked FEU leader Catarina Guarnaluse.

Joseph McCarthy was a U.S. senator who led the witch hunt against the labor movement following World War II.

McCarthyism reached its peak during the Korean war, Luis Madrid explained. With the U.S. government's turn away from head-on confrontation with the Soviet Union and the extension of capitalist prosperity into peacetime, McCarthy lost his usefulness to the ruling class and his mass support.

"The YSA was founded in 1960 by young people active in the civil rights movement and inspired by the example of the Cuban revolution," said Madrid.

The gains scored for working people through the victory of the civil rights struggle, the subsequent movement against the Vietnam war, and other battles expanded democratic rights and individual liberties, he added.

"The prolonged capitalist economic expansion after the end of World War II that made it possible for broad layers of working people to wrest concessions from the employers," said Madrid, "ended with the 1974–75 world capitalist recession."

Industrial unions were thrust back into the center of U.S. politics. Resistance to the capitalist offensive made it possible again for

communists to begin functioning openly in the unions by the mid-1970s.

Pathfinder Mural

A picture of the Pathfinder Mural sparked smiles and enthusiastic cheers around the meeting table. "I can't believe it's so close to Wall Street" said one of the students.

The six-story-high work of art, painted on the side of the Pathfinder Building in New York, includes portraits of revolutionary fighters from around the world.

One of the FEU leaders said he had seen an article with a picture of the mural in the magazine *Cuba Internacional*.

There was wide interest in the results of the U.S. tour of Cuban economist Carlos Tablada. Author of the book *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, published in English by Pathfinder, Tablada completed a one-month tour of U.S. colleges and universities in December.

"The fact that thousands of students and others came to hear Tablada in over two dozen schools shows the openness among young people to find out about and discuss the Cuban revolution," said McCann.

"What you in the YSA are doing in the belly of the beast," said Alfonso, "is more important to us than getting a shipment of oil. While the oil will be gone in a couple of months, revolutionary work has staying power."

Similar discussions of U.S. politics took place in many of the meetings the YSA leaders attended.

The delegation's itinerary included a visit to El Paraíso, a UJC-led camp where hundreds of students work on voluntary brigades in the fields to help increase Cuba's production of basic food items; a visit to the Vladimir Lenin pre-university school outside Havana where there was a meeting with leaders of the Federation of Secondary School Students (FEEM); tours of hospitals and day-care centers; and meetings with the leadership of the UJC.

The YSA leaders participated in a rally organized by the FEU November 27 to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the killing of eight medical students by the Spanish colonial authorities.

Juventud Rebelde, the weekly paper published by the UJC, interviewed the YSA members.

'Your struggle is our struggle'

On November 30 the delegation attended a UJC municipal assembly at Limonar, a town of 20,000 people in Matanzas province. Roberto Robaina, the UJC's national secretary, among other leaders of the organization, took part in the meeting.

The assembly opened discussions on the municipal level leading up to the sixth congress of the UJC. The national gathering is

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Cuban youth, student groups endorse Mark Curtis defense

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

HAVANA, Cuba — The Union of Young Communists (UJC) and the Federation of University Students (FEU) of Cuba have endorsed the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in its fight to free Curtis from prison.

Curtis, a union and political activist, has now served more than three years in Iowa prisons on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

Manuel Aguilera de la Paz, head of the international relations department of the UJC, and Carmen Elena Herrera, a national committee member, signed up on behalf of the UJC. During a November 25–December 2 trip by a YSA delegation here, Aguilera and Teresa Trujillo, another UJC leader from the international relations department, insisted that the endorsements should be used widely.

"Our support for justice for Mark Curtis means joining the struggle to defend workers who are willing to stand up to capitalism inside the United States," said Trujillo.

"Mark Curtis reminds me of Nelson Mandela," said Salvador Lavielle, first secretary of the UJC in the province of Matanzas. Lavielle was part of organizing the July 26 celebration in Matanzas where Mandela and Fidel Castro addressed a rally of tens of thousands.

During a meeting between YSA and FEU leaders at the Victoria Girón school of med-

icine, many students wanted to know more details about the case.

YSA leader Luis Madrid told the story of how the political frame-up of Curtis unfolded. "There are also those in the labor movement who oppose Curtis's fight for justice," Madrid added. This counter-campaign is based on lies from the cops and Iowa city prosecutor. "Many union officials share the anti-immigrant and pro-cop views of the bosses and their government," the YSA leader said.

Madrid explained that the effort to expose the frame-up helps increase the political price U.S. rulers pay for keeping Curtis in jail and increases the space he has to do communist work in prison.

"Curtis's determination to keep up the fight adds to our resolve to continue to stand up to imperialism," FEU leader Catarina Guarnaluse said.

Felipe Pérez, a FEU leader and former president of the group, has endorsed the case on behalf of the student federation.

The Curtis case has already received considerable publicity in Cuba. This includes articles in the magazine *Bohemia*; the *Granma Weekly Review*, a weekly newspaper published in Havana by the Communist Party; and *Trabajadores*, the weekly publication of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).

Reconstruction at the Pathfinder Building

New offices for 'Militant,' SWP to advance work of communist movement

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — The first stage of the reconstruction of the Pathfinder Building here has been completed, carried out by an international team of volunteers.

The six-story structure houses the business and editorial offices of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder Press. It is also home to the national office of the Socialist Workers Party. The building is best known for the Pathfinder Mural, which is painted on its south wall.

The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* editorial staffs and the SWP national office moved into their new quarters at the end of December.

The new offices are designed to make the work of the communist movement more accessible, open, and efficient. New, bigger windows provide a clear view of the Hudson River — with tugboats, luxury liners, and cargo ships steaming past — as well as parts of Greenwich Village; other areas of Manhattan; and Hoboken and Jersey City, New Jersey.

A comfortable reception room — still to get the finishing touches — awaits the arrival of visitors, while meeting rooms, sound-proof phone booths, and separate work areas help to create a quieter, more productive atmosphere.

Reconstruction at the building began in April 1991. Work on the just completed fifth and sixth floors began in June.

In an interview, Craig Gannon, coordinator of the volunteer work brigade's steering committee, described what is involved in the ongoing project.

An international brigade

Sixty-five volunteers spent anywhere from a few days to several months working on the brigade, Gannon noted. Volunteers from Australia, Britain, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, and Sweden also participated.

Working six days a week, 10 hours a day — sometimes more — the international team first tore down the old walls, ripped out ceilings, and took out light fixtures to open the way for the reconstruction. This also involved some tedious, hard tasks such as removing all the tiles on the floor, which had to be done with the aid of blowtorches tile by tile.

"We also scraped off the layers and layers of paint that had been covering the brick walls," Gannon said. "This took a lot of labor power — hundreds of hours of work."

The sixth floor penthouse provided a special challenge. The elevator goes up only to the fifth floor. Tools had to be carried up and debris taken down the back stairway.

Once the tearing down was complete, reconstruction began.

Although the building is basically sound, "some things had to be upgraded," Gannon noted. "Some of the plumbing wasn't in good shape." Much of the infrastructure had not been replaced since the building was bought 20 years ago.

"We also installed new lighting, with energy-efficient ballasts and bulbs that should reduce our light bill by half," he said. Win-



Militant/Janet Post

Moving into the new offices of the 'Militant' and Socialist Workers Party

dows that had been boarded up were uncovered. New windows were cut through brick walls. Windows that had been partially enclosed were widened to their full width.

The replacement windows are designed for easy cleaning. Their double glass for a thermal seal to keep in the heat in winter and the air-conditioning in summer will mean another money-saving advance.

The result was "a qualitative upgrading of the infrastructure," the brigade leader noted.

The original plan, Gannon said, was to move back the publications and party offices up one or two flights to the reconstructed floors basically as they had been operating.

But after the project was underway, it was realized that the reconstruction and move had to be looked at in a new way to help the communist movement turn its work outward and become more connected to the changing world and developing struggles.

"We kept making changes right up to the last minute," Gannon said, to meet this objective.

A key decision was to buy new desks for the entire staff — desks with less storage space. This helped eliminate duplicate or unnecessary files, force the organization of centralized files, and make each desk an area that allows staff writers and party workers to concentrate on the tasks at hand. Similar desks have also been ordered for immediate use by Pathfinder, months before its new offices will be ready.

In the struggle for quality, reconstruction work that was not done right was often torn down and redone.

"Sometimes we tore down walls after we built them, not because they were done wrong, but because after seeing where they

were we decided that's not what we wanted," Gannon explained.

The Great Pour of 1991

To let in more natural sunlight and open up the offices, it was decided to uncover and replace an old skylight that had been covered up with roofing material. But to meet city requirements the new one had to be smaller.

This led to one of the most memorable moments of the brigade, Gannon recalls, what he named "the Great Pour of 1991."

With the help of a volunteer who is a journeyman millwright, the crew prepared to lay the concrete.

The whole crew, at that time about 20-25 people, worked together to pour concrete for the one-and-a-half-foot thick form. Concrete — 25,000 pounds of it — was mixed in a truck at street level, loaded into wheelbarrows, placed in the elevator, and taken to the fifth floor. There it was shoveled into three-gallon buckets and with pulleys, hauled up by hand to the roof.

"We completed the job in two-and-a-half hours," Gannon said. "And we did it without anyone getting hit in the head and without spilling any buckets."

The brigade members are especially proud of the Great Pour. The company that brought the new skylight checked the concrete hole and found that it measured correctly within an eighth of an inch — perfect by industry standards.

Another big project was the construction of a new staircase from the fifth floor to the sixth-floor penthouse.

Previously the two floors were directly connected only with a narrow, spiral staircase.

The brigade cut a 15-by-7-foot hole through 12 inches of concrete to make space for the stairs with oak steps that are now the centerpiece of the fifth floor.

The other members of the steering committee that helped lead the international brigade were José Alvarado, Ove Aspoy, and Stu Singer.

Aspoy, a millwright and carpenter, "kind of became the crew architect," Gannon pointed out. Aspoy taught himself how to use a computer design program known as CAD. After discussions in the steering committee and with the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, he drew the detailed plans. Consulting architect Maurice Wasserman was hired for the project. He gave advice and drew up plans where needed.

Singer was in charge of purchasing, trying to get the lowest price and best quality for the materials and services needed. This also involved contracting out some work, like the installation of the new windows. Alvarado, a former meat-packer with experience in electrical and maintenance work, headed up the distribution of work assignments each day.

Everyone contributed

While there were other skilled electricians, millwrights, plumbers, and painters, most of the crew members were not skilled construction workers.

"But this was not an apprenticeship program," Gannon said, although many volunteers gained confidence and learned new skills. "Everyone gave their labor power to make a contribution in whatever way possible."

The first phase is over, but a big part in the transformation of the Pathfinder building is still to come.

Reconstruction of the fourth floor to prepare it for the offices of Pathfinder and the library that is used by the editorial and SWP offices has begun. On December 21, 150 volunteers from New York, New Jersey, and Baltimore participated in a "red Saturday" mobilization to tear down the fourth floor and move the socialist publications and SWP offices up to the reconstructed floors.

The work brigade is also helping to complete the Pathfinder Mural Center — Dumile Feni Memorial, which is being built in a room next to the mural.

The reconstruction project is financed by contributions to the Expansion Fund. So far more than \$1.5 million has been pledged. Anyone willing to contribute \$1,000 or more is encouraged to send in the coupon below.

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Forum celebrates construction project victories

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — "If you had looked at this group of people and seen the work we were undertaking, you would have said, no way. This cannot be done. But it could be done and we did it."

These were the words of Anita Erikson, a member of the volunteer work brigade that has been reconstructing the Pathfinder Building. She was speaking here to a December 21 meeting in celebration of the completion of the first phase of the reconstruction project (see accompanying article).

Most of the 200 people in attendance had spent the day helping to remove all the internal walls and fittings from the fourth floor in preparation for its remodeling and move the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Socialist Workers Party national office to the just completed fifth and sixth floors.

"How did we do it? How was it possible" to do such excellent, high-quality

work, Erikson asked.

The volunteers who rebuilt the two floors, for the most part, are "not really construction workers," Erikson said. The key, she pointed out, is that "we are a volunteer work brigade, with a commitment."

"We certainly did not come in for the money. We came here to reconstruct the Pathfinder Building," she said, and to contribute to the fight of humanity against the exploitation and injustice of capitalism.

The brigade included volunteers from around the world. "Some of us are as young as 17, one is over 50," Erikson said. "We are young and old, men and women, skilled and unskilled. Some of us had never held a job. One of the crew members had never used a hammer and nail before."

"We are a cross-section of the working class."

'No one really knew the full scope'

Those involved in the reconstruction proj-

ect "didn't know its scope when we started. But it got bigger and bigger. I don't think anyone really knew the scope."

But by working through the problems and challenges, "we conquered the scope and reconquered the continuity of the communist movement."

Erikson was impressed by the many young and often inexperienced people who joined the brigade. "They didn't get the 'gravy' jobs," she said. "They worked hard and made their contribution."

Working on the brigade was different from any job the volunteers had ever held before, Erikson, a former construction worker, explained.

"We know how it is. On those jobs if you make a mistake you toss it in a corner; you cover it up and hope the boss doesn't see."

"But when we make a mistake on the brigade, we hold a meeting and discuss how are we going to fix it."

"If we had to rip something out and start all over, we did it; that was all there was to it."

In the course of doing this, the brigade members grew more confident. "We took more and more responsibility for each other's work," she said.

The brigade fought to do the best possible job, Erikson said. "We worked hard and we set high standards."

"This wasn't easy," she noted. "Nothing in the original shape of that building was square or plumb or straight. But we worked to have that building come to an eighth of an inch of tolerance! And we succeeded."

Referring to the books published by Pathfinder, to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and to participating in politics as part of the world working class, Erikson said, "We won't really appreciate what we have done until we get out and try to use the weapons that are now being produced from the recon-

Continued on Page 5



Militant

Grinding paint to expose brick walls



Militant

Members of the crew who began the reconstruction project of the Pathfinder Building, seen here after gutting fifth floor.

'A volunteer work brigade with a commitment'

Continued from Page 4

structed building. Only then will we understand the full scope of the project."

Turn communist movement outward

Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, gave the keynote speech of the evening.

The purpose of the reconstruction is not primarily to make a more attractive, beautiful place to work, he explained, although it is true that is being done. Instead the project is linked to what is opening up in the world today and is directly connected to turning the communist movement outward to face the new challenges and opportunities ahead.

"The growing breakdowns, growing polarizations, the radical disruptions in bourgeois politics — these are worldwide phenomena that will continue to deepen," he said.

"For the first time in over a decade, young people are being attracted to the revolutionary movement," Barnes said, "not just because they see it as the moral thing to do or because socialism is something they want to fight for, but because they see it as the only realistic answer."

"Young people see joining the revolutionary movement as the only realistic way to face what the capitalist class is preparing and the methods it will use to maintain its domination."

"The consequences for humanity of the continued rule of capital are becoming clearer," Barnes said.

"The question of which side you are on becomes clearer. Once you decide that, then the only important question that is left is: will you organize your life and organize politically with others not only to face what the capitalists are doing but to end their rule for all time?"

Growing numbers of young people under-

stand this, Barnes said. This was true for the brigade itself.

Youth sustained the brigade

"None of the project's goals could have been met," he noted, "without the capacities, energies, and stick-to-it-ness that only a large number of young fighters could bring to the brigade."

"It's more than the energy they bring," he added. "It's the capacity to sustain the effort needed to accomplish goals."

Bringing young people into the leadership of the communist movement was a bridge that had to be crossed by previous generations, in the 1920s and 30s and in the late 40s and 50s, Barnes said. The challenge is to use the political weapons, the continuity, and the communist program to ensure this transition. "It is because of the real opportunities to do this that we are pushing ourselves to the maximum."

Reconstructing the Pathfinder Building was possible not only because of the participation of youth, Barnes stated. "In fact, it could only be done by an international movement."

"This is true," he noted, "physically and architecturally, and from the standpoint of the political leadership that enabled a crew like this to transform itself into a brigade and to lead each other regardless of nationality or anything else."

Reconstruction poses a challenge

Barnes noted that as the project got underway, "we discovered a horrible thing. All the plans invoked the same thing. They were going to take our work, the way it was before the start of the reconstruction, and simply lift it up a floor or two."

"We had to think what a defeat that would have been for all of us."

"This great physical change in our envi-

ronment provoked a crisis in the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party," Barnes explained.

"When something like this happens you must adjust," the communist leader said. "Everything you do, all your responsibilities, the use of your tools, the use of your time, have to be justified."

"You have to lift your standards to meet the standards of the new fifth and sixth floors of this building."

Barnes described how the reconstructed offices are set up, with fewer interior walls than before, more windows, better lighting. The meeting and reception rooms have glass walls, he noted, "so you can look out at people working, while you are in there holding discussions. This is a wonderful device. There's nothing like watching people working while you're talking to get a sense of perspective and a sense of timing."

The test of the success of the reconstruction will be whether or not it makes the communist movement "more effective, more outward turning, and more knowledgeable about the world and if it makes workers, revolutionists, and communists who visit more comfortable and more drawn in to our common problems," he said.

"This is going to be the most open apparatus of a revolutionary organization that has ever been built," Barnes declared.

The problem of bureaucracy

In the course of carrying through the project, the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party had to face up to problems and challenges.

"We have the responsibility of confronting the problem of bureaucracy that we face in the building," Barnes said. "No matter what our intentions, capacities, and how hard we work, the pressures, problems, and retreats of the last ten years have affected us."

"Everything we do can get a little frayed. Centralization declines and democracy declines," he stated.

Bureaucracy can start, he explained, under "the growing pressures to do what you want in order to do what you think should be done instead of what has to be done — instead of what is decided on in a disciplined way through the democratically chosen bodies."

"The problem of bureaucracy is never solved once and for all. We have to fight against it week after week, month after month," he added.

Much can be learned from the functioning of the brigade, Barnes said. The brigade held meetings to discuss out its work and its errors, in a transparent manner.

"They had to," he said. "Because if a mistake wasn't caught in the morning, concrete could be poured over it in the afternoon."

The leadership of the Socialist Workers Party also learned the value of answering questions with "I don't know. I'm not sure. Let's discuss it, let's work on it together," Barnes noted.

The physical and political transformation of the offices on the fifth and sixth floors is just the first step on the way to meeting even bigger challenges in the rest of the building, Barnes remarked.

After going through this experience, "The brigade members think they can do anything," Barnes said. "What they did was fun, although it was hard work."

"They just look like a group of workers of different generations," he concluded. "This is the way the Bolsheviks have always looked in history. They have always been the women and men from nowhere. They have always been the least likely crew — in the eyes of the exploiters and the pretenders. But they are the ones who conquered power in Russia and in Cuba."



Militant/Janet Post

Installing skylight for fifth floor, bringing light and open space to the offices.



Militant/Janet Post

Before skylight was installed a concrete frame had to be poured to exact specifications.

Debate on land reform and alliance with farmers

(Ninth and final part of a series)

Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!, recently published by Pathfinder, contains the full record of Second Congress of the Communist International, or Comintern, held in Soviet Russia in 1920.

The *Militant* has been serializing the introduction to the book by its editor, John Riddell. These excerpts are copyright © 1991 by the Anchor Foundation and reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

The installment in the last issue covered the debate on the policies that revolutionaries should advance in the trade union movement.

The theses on the agrarian question took up an area of major differences in the international Communist movement. As Ernst Meyer noted in his report on these theses, very little had been achieved by the pre-war Second International in the way of practical experience in the countryside or useful programmatic work on this question. Indeed, its main legacy was pessimism about prospects for an alliance between workers and working peasants. This passivity went hand in hand with a political antipathy toward the peasantry and helped rationalize a deep ignorance of social relations and economic conditions in the countryside.

Lenin pointed to the disastrous error on this question committed the previous year by revolutionaries in Hungary, citing a book by one of their leaders, Eugen Varga. Under the rule of the soviets in Hungary, Varga claimed, expropriation of the landowners' property had been carried out in Hungary in a much superior fashion to that seen in Soviet Russia. Rather than encouraging the peasants to take the land and themselves decide how it was to be used, the revolutionary government of Hungary had legislated a solution, expropriating landholdings of more than 57 hectares (140 acres) and organizing these enterprises as state farms. None of the land, tools, or livestock was given to poor peasants, Varga recounted; "production continued without a break."

This method had led to problems, Varga admitted. Since the peasants had not taken part in these "expropriations," the government had usually to rely on the former owners and overseers to manage the newly proclaimed state farms. For the farm workers, all remained as before. Although Varga still considered this policy correct, he granted that it had a most unfortunate result: very few rural toilers had understood or supported the revolution.

Commenting on Varga's assessment, Lenin told delegates that "there are large latifundia in Hungary, and a semifeudal economy is conducted in large areas. Sections of large estates can and must always be found, part of which can be turned over to the small peasants, perhaps not as their property, but on lease, so that even the smallest peasant may get some part of the confiscated estates. Otherwise, the small peasant will see no difference between the old order and the dictatorship of the soviets. If the proletarian state authority does not act in this way, it will



Humbert Droz Archives

Closing session of Comintern congress. Lenin convinced delegates on need to distribute land to poor and landless peasants in order to forge a revolutionary alliance between workers and farmers. The Russian revolution of 1917 showed the way on this.

be unable to retain power."

Refusal to countenance distribution of any portion of expropriated land to small-scale, exploited peasants had also contributed to the defeat in 1919 and 1920 of revolutionary governments in Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Bavaria. In Italy, the Serrati leadership [of the Italian Socialist Party] denounced the peasant land seizures and lent no support to the massive peasant strikes — a failure sharply criticized by Gramsci.

Errors in Poland

A similar error was made by revolutionaries in Poland during the very days that the congress was in session. As the Red Army fought at the gates of Warsaw, Lenin sent a telegram to Communist leaders in Poland noting that "land-hungry peasants have begun to seize landed estates." Under such conditions, Lenin stressed, "it is absolutely essential to publish a special decision of the Polish Revolutionary Committee making it obligatory to give part of the landed estates to the peasants and at all costs to ensure concord between the land-hungry peasants and the farm hands." This advice was not heeded by Communists in Poland however, seriously undermining the revolutionary struggle for power in that country.

A few weeks earlier the Comintern magazine had printed an article on the agrarian question by [Polish Communist leader Julian] Marchlewski as part of the preparatory discussion for the Second Congress. On July 7 Lenin proposed that Marchlewski be the Executive Committee reporter to the congress on this question.

Lenin drafted a resolution that had a dif-

ferent thrust from that of Marchlewski's article on some important questions, particularly regarding forging an alliance of workers with small-scale and middle peasants. Marchlewski, in turn, criticized Lenin's draft for its proposal to nationalize the land, a demand he thought likely to alienate peasants in western Europe, and for favoring land distribution to poor, exploited peasants. These interrelated criticisms by Marchlewski ran directly counter to the experience of the revolutionary workers' and peasants' government in Russia.

Nationalization of the land had been one of the first acts of the new Soviet government in October 1917. The Bolsheviks recognized that only by abolishing private property in land — that is, abolishing the buying and selling of land, its rental for private profit, or its use as collateral on loans — could working peasants be guaranteed continued use of the land they farmed. Combined with revolutionary policies to guarantee the permanent availability of credit and necessary supplies and implements, land nationalization freed the peasant from the threat of ruin through foreclosure or exorbitant rent payments — both of which are products of the rents and mortgages system endemic to the private ownership of land under capitalism.

Given delegates' limited experience with this question, however, Lenin dropped nationalization of the land from the draft he presented to the congress, in order to remove a barrier to the congress's taking a few steps forward in understanding and adopting the resolution. The draft presented to the congress retained proposals to confiscate landed estates, to grant peasants free use of the land they had rented, and other measures that represented deep inroads against feudal or capitalist landed property.

It was the question of distributing land to poor and landless peasants that became the focus of debate in the agrarian commission. Lenin convinced the commission on the cen-

tral strategic issues involved. There was agreement on the urgent need for the proletariat to forge an alliance with the peasantry to conquer and maintain power. Building this alliance was seen as the only road toward winning the peasantry, on a voluntary basis and over time, to the establishment of collective forms of agricultural labor and production. Lenin consented, however, to substantial editorial changes on land distribution in the resolution presented to the congress.

Included among the draft resolutions submitted to the congress by the Executive Committee were theses on communist work among women and on the Communist Youth International. The congress adjourned without discussing these statements. Both resolutions were referred to the incoming Executive Committee, which adopted and published them. Additional resolutions on both these questions were adopted by the Third Congress.

After the congress

When the congress ended, [U.S. Communist] John Reed set out with other delegates for the congress of Eastern peoples in Baku. There he warned delegates against Uncle Sam, who "comes with a sack of hay in one hand and a whip in the other, and whoever believes his promises will pay in blood."

Serrati and the Italian delegation headed for the Black Sea, hoping to catch a ship home. They missed their ship and finally arrived in Italy by train, just as the great wave of factory occupations was beginning to ebb.

Roy made his way to Tashkent, where, together with other exiled revolutionaries from India, he soon founded the first nucleus of the Indian Communist Party.

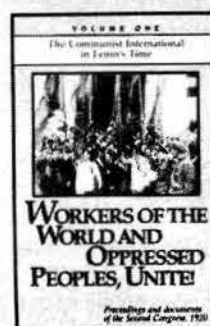
Rosmer and Murphy stayed in Moscow, where they worked with Lozovsky, rallying support for the new international trade union council. Tanner and David Ramsay of the British Shop Stewards had refused during the congress to support this council. After the congress, however, they were finally won over. On their return home, they joined the Communist Party and won the Shop Stewards' movement to affiliate to the revolutionary union council.

The four USPD [Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany] delegates boarded a train for Revel. They traveled in two separate compartments, each pair of delegates laying plans for a debate in the working-class movement in Germany. Two months later they were on opposite sides of the split in their party.

Units of the Red Army, which had succeeded during the first days of August in reaching the Vistula River, were forced later that month to begin a withdrawal from Poland. The revolutionary opportunity opened by the Polish war had passed.

The Comintern staff began editing the congress documents and translating them into the chief languages of Europe and the world. Members of Communist and Socialist parties and syndicalist unions around the world opened up a wide-ranging debate on the Twenty-one Conditions and the other resolutions of the Second Congress. As delegates arrived home, their reports spread confidence that the Communist International would now meet its challenges as a united and fighting world organization.

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Cuban youth host YSA delegation

Continued from Page 3

scheduled to take place in Havana in April 1992.

Chris Nisan gave greetings to the assembly on behalf of the YSA. "Your struggle to defend the revolution and stand up to imperialism is our struggle," said Nisan. "For us, defense of the Cuban revolution is not just a solidarity task, it is part of our blood and bones," he added. "It is an essential part of building a communist movement in the United States."

On the way back from Limonar, Robaina gave an interview to this reporter for the *Militant* newspaper.

Coming out of the visit the YSA leadership is drawing up plans to help organize tours of

Cuban youth leaders in the United States.

During a brief stop in Miami, on the way back from Havana, Nisan addressed, on behalf of the YSA, a rally demanding that the U.S. government give asylum to the thousands of Haitian refugees. Nisan contrasted efforts by Washington to deport the refugees to the Cuban government's open-door policy for the Haitians.

Following the trip, the YSA leaders began speaking engagements on campuses around the country on the challenges facing the Cuban revolution and the need to step up its defense. For information on how to invite speakers to your area write the YSA at: P.O. Box 211, New York, NY 10011 or phone (212)727-8422.

S. Africa negotiations mark 'a milestone'

Continued from front page

orating economic and social conditions of Blacks.

He encouraged the delegates to move rapidly toward the establishment of a constituent assembly, saying the ANC saw no need to delay the adoption of a new constitution beyond 1992.

In the second speech Mandela responded to an attack on the ANC launched by South African president de Klerk. As head of the government delegation de Klerk said the future of Codesa depended on whether or not the ANC dissolved its armed wing and handed over its arms caches to the regime. (See both speeches on pages 8-9.)

Codesa proved to be a great divide for rightist groups and parties, and also for anti-apartheid organizations that oppose the revolutionary-democratic program of the ANC. The Conservative Party, the opposition party in Parliament, along with ultrarightist outfits, condemned the convention as a sellout of the Afrikaner *volk* to the demands of the Black majority.

The Pan Africanist Congress, the Azanian People's Organization, and several other smaller groups opposed to apartheid boycotted Codesa, describing it as a "charade and a farce." They rejected joining with the ANC and those allied with it to broaden the forces pressing for the most rapid possible end to white minority rule.

At the center of the convention was a day of speeches by a representative of each participating organization. Many detailed the social and economic consequences of apartheid on generations of Blacks in the country. Sharply divergent viewpoints were advanced both on how to proceed toward the election of a government on the basis of one person, one vote, and on how to address the lack of housing, jobs, education, health care, and other basic needs of the country's working people.

But the political content of the main document signed by 17 of the 19 organizations, called the Declaration of Intent, and the recognition by nearly all the participants that an interim government representative of the population as a whole must be put in place in the short term registers the initiative that the ANC has gained.

'An undivided South African nation'

Signatories to the Declaration of Intent pledged, "to bring about an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship, patriotism and loyalty... free from apartheid or any other form of discrimination or domination."

"South Africa will be a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist state in which sovereign authority is exercised over the whole of its territory," the document says. Civil and political rights will be protected by a bill of rights and "a legal system that guarantees equality of all before the law." (See page 8 for full text.)

The declaration embodies aspects of the Freedom Charter. The Charter was adopted by a broadly attended gathering of representatives of democratic organizations in 1955 called the Congress of the People. The revolutionary-democratic program concretizes the goals of forging a nation of all who live in South Africa, Black and white: winning full democratic and political rights for all and addressing the burning issues of land redistribution and utilizing the natural and economic wealth of the country in the interests of working people.

Since being unbanned nearly two years ago, the ANC leadership has sought to deepen the organization and mobilization of millions in the country. At rallies, protests, and through the media it has striven to educate the ANC's growing membership and broader layers of the country's population on the central political aims of the Freedom Charter.

In the process, they have forged new allies among trade union, antiapartheid, civic, religious, and other organizations. Leading up to the convention the ANC-led forces not only showed their unity in a Patriotic Front meeting attended by 90 organizations, but their political power as well. The most mas-

sive strike in the history of the country took place in early November, shutting down transport, industries, and most businesses. The action was held to protest the introduction of a new tax that hit working people the hardest and to demand the government cease making such unilateral decisions on questions that affect the entire population.

The success of this course and the place the ANC earned through the struggle waged during the worst years of repression by the regime were registered at the convention in two ways. First was the leadership position the ANC, particularly Mandela, held throughout the meetings leading up to and during Codesa. Secondly was the extent to which other delegations threw their support behind the ANC's proposals and political aims.

Homeland officials

"The universal discrediting and condemnation of apartheid underlines the illegitimacy of the present apartheid government," Maj. Gen. Bantu Holomisa said in his address to the assembly on behalf of the Transkei government.

Holomisa said the Transkei favored incorporating the Bantustans into South Africa and called for the "creation of a new democratic order in South Africa at the earliest possible opportunity" through an elected constituent assembly.

Representing the Inyandza National Movement, based in the KwaNdebele Bantustan, M.C. Zitha said his organization favored a South Africa "where all shall enjoy equal rights and liberties and internationally recognized human rights." Zitha answered calls by some delegations, such as the Inkatha Freedom Party, the Labour Party, Solidarity, and the National Party, for a federation of states that have wide constitutional authority over a weak central government.

"We have a clear mandate from our constituency," he said, "who are committed to a united and unfragmented South Africa." Proposals that go in the direction of stripping the new government of most powers would only perpetuate aspects of apartheid in a different form, he stated.

Policy of forced removals

Brig. Gabriel Ramushwana from Venda centered his remarks on the results of the regime's policy of forcefully moving Blacks from their land to the Bantustans.

"The apartheid system has placed economic constraints on the development of the so-called homelands, independent homelands, and black areas. In these areas development was neglected under the pretext of self-determination. As they had no resources of their own they remained beggars and at the mercy of the South African regime," he said.

President of the Natal Indian Congress George Sewpershad explained the history of struggle against colonial dispossession and apartheid domination by those the regime designated as "Indian."

The Indian leader took up the claims that a democratic South African republic would have to make special provisions for "minority" rights — code words for continuing the entrenchment of special privileges and rights for whites.

Recognizing the "inalienable right of all the people of our country to freely express and practice their beliefs, religions, traditions, languages, and cultures," Sewpershad said that the "logical option for the proponents of minority political rights would be the creation of fragmented, poverty stricken, ethnic states as opposed to a nonracial and united South Africa."

"While the policy of apartheid and ethnic co-option was designed to divide the black communities on racial and ethnic lines, we in the Congress movement have succeeded in building a strong nonracial and multicultural unity," he said. "In the final analysis, minority fears will only disappear once a truly nonracial, multicultural, and democratic state is born."

Position of the government

On the part of the regime, acceding to the demand for an interim government was



Youths protest at convention. Signs in Afrikaans demand a whites-only state.

the major announcement made during the convention. But de Klerk also stipulated that, in the government's view, "we are not prepared to consider the circumvention or suspension of the present Constitution of the Republic." Changes would have to be adopted by Parliament "after a mandate has been obtained by means of a referendum," he said.

In a press conference following the meeting, the state president said that the National Party had won the last elections because it had promised to hold a referendum when constitutional changes were to be made. While short on details, de Klerk and the National Party representatives said that a majority of each population group would have to approve the measures — meaning a racially segregated poll. Government spokespeople told the press an interim government should remain in place for at least six years before elections are held.

Dawie de Villiers, leader of the National Party delegation, concentrated his speech on economic issues. Before that, though, he made the National Party's first-ever apology for apartheid.

"There was a time in the past," he said, "when the National Party felt that a policy of separation would bring peace to the nation. That did not materialize. The policy did not produce the anticipated peace, but greater conflict and increasing injustice. It was not the intention to deprive other people of their rights or to contribute to their misery, but eventually it led to just that. Insofar as that occurred we deeply regret it."

While this admission was strained and also whitewashed the clear intent of the colonial powers in the early part of the century — and the South African capitalist class and the National Party, which codified apartheid after them — it was headline news in the South African press.

'Unrealistic' demands

Not hiding his defense of big business and the interests of the country's capitalist class as a whole, the National Party leader said that "sound economic growth and prosperity" are the key to uplifting the victims of apartheid.

Turning his fire on the democratic movement and the trade unions he said that "new investments necessary for economic growth and job creation will not take place as long as matters such as the possibility of nationalization, increased taxation, labor unrest, consumer boycotts, and unrealistic wage demands continue to undermine the confidence of business and overseas investors in South Africa."

The signing of the Declaration of Intent followed the session of speeches by party leaders. Three delegations said they could not sign: Bophuthatswana, Inkatha, and the Ciskei.

Lucas Mangope, president of Bophuthatswana, argued that the independence of the Bantustan had allowed him to remold "our people, who were scattered in groups and tribes over a wide area, and forge them again into a nation."

People in the Bantustan, he said, "enjoy wealth and a quality of life that is far advanced of standards achieved in many countries" and that he could therefore not sign agreements that would abolish Bo-

phuthatswana as "a sovereign independent state."

Inkatha's stance

The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) delegation refused to sign the document because it "excludes the possibility of federalism." The IFP submitted a list of changes to the declaration that would bind delegates to "make room for devolution of power from the central government to the regions." They also proposed that sections stating that signatories work to give Codesa decisions force of law

Continued on Page 14

Those who joined Codesa

Nineteen political parties and organizations participated in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa). Each had 12 delegates and will designate representatives for the five working groups set up by the meeting.

- Two are organizations unbanned by the apartheid regime in 1990: the African National Congress (ANC) led by Nelson Mandela and the South African Communist Party led by Chris Hani. The Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress, traditionally allied with the ANC, had a joint delegation.

- The South African government is a full member of Codesa. President F.W. de Klerk headed the delegation.

- Although the Inkatha Freedom Party is a member, its president, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, refused to attend on the basis that Goodwill Zwelithini, the traditional Zulu king, was not accorded member status.

- Five parties in the parliament are represented. The parliamentary arrangement was set up by the regime to try to co-opt those it designated Coloureds and Asians, more commonly called Indians, by extending the vote to them. It is composed of separate chambers for whites, Indians, and Coloureds, with the whites-only chamber having effective veto power over all legislation. This set-up has been overwhelmingly rejected by the dispossessed majority, the Africans, Indians, and Coloureds.

The parties are: two previously whites-only groups, the ruling National Party and the liberal Democratic Party; the Solidarity Party; the National People's Party from the Indian house; and the Labour Party, from the Coloured chamber.

- Representatives of the four "independent" Bantustans: Bophuthatswana, the Ciskei, Transkei, and Venda.

- Parties primarily organized by officials in the Bantustans: the Dikwankwetla Party, the Intando Yesizwe Party, the Inyandza National Movement, the United People's Front, and the Ximoko Progressive Party.

The convention encouraged all other political parties and organizations who have not yet joined Codesa to do so.

Mandela hails conference as historic step in transition from apartheid to democracy

The following address was given by African National Congress (ANC) president Nelson Mandela at the opening session of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa). The head of each of the 19 delegations gave a 15-20 minute speech during the session. Parties were called in alphabetical order. Mandela was the first to speak.

Leaders of political parties and movements:
Distinguished observers from international organizations:

Members of the diplomatic corps:
Venerable traditional and religious leaders of our people:

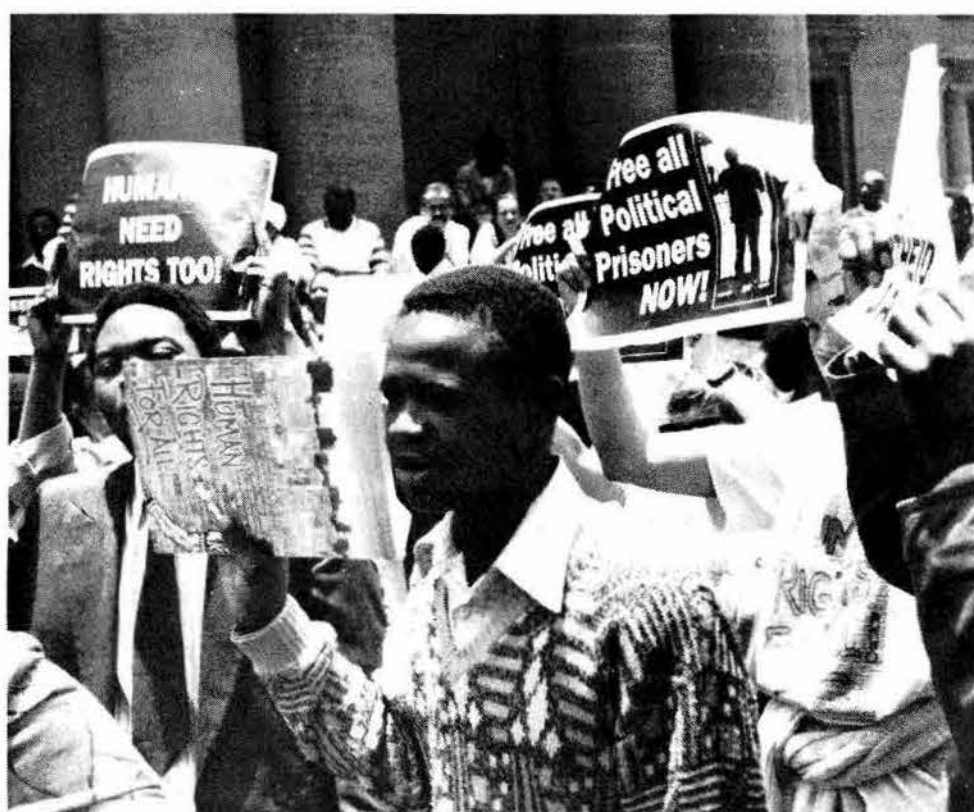
Comrades and friends:

Today will be indelibly imprinted in the history of our country. If we, who are gathered here, respond to the challenge before us, today will mark the commencement of the transition from apartheid to democracy. Our people, from every corner of our country, have expressed their yearning for democracy and peace. Codesa represents the historical opportunity to translate that yearning into reality.

For 80 years, the ANC has led the struggle for democracy in South Africa. Along the route traversed during this period, many sacrifices were made by thousands upon thousands of our people. In the arduous battle between freedom and oppression, positions hardened and polarization developed between the people and the state. Even when, in the absence of any other recourse, the ANC took up arms, our objective was to secure a political settlement in South Africa. In the past few years an environment more conducive to establishing mutual trust has been established.

Fruit of struggle

South Africans of many persuasions recognize that this environment, and its institutional product, Codesa, is the fruit of their sacrifices and struggle. They have a justifi-



Militant/Greg McCartan

December 10 protest in Johannesburg demanding release of political prisoners. Convention called for guaranteeing 'human rights, freedom, and civil rights' for all.

able expectation that Codesa will set our country on the road to democracy.

Inasmuch as apartheid has been declared a crime against humanity and the problems of our country have engaged so much of the attention of the international community over decades, the presence of esteemed observers from key international organizations as guests of Codesa is most appropriate.

We welcome the guests from the United Nations organization, the Organization of African Unity [OAU], the Commonwealth, the European Economic Community, and the Nonaligned Movement. We trust that

they will avail to the process now unfolding their wisdom, insights, and experience gained in many similar initiatives across the world.

All South Africans share the hope and vision of a land free of apartheid, where internal strife will have no place.

The ANC initiated the search for peace in our country. Since 1986 the ANC has intensively campaigned for a negotiated transfer of power. This campaign reached new heights in 1989 when the OAU, the Non-aligned Movement and the UN General Assembly all adopted declarations supporting

this position. All three declarations stated: "that where colonial, racial, and apartheid domination exists, there can be neither peace nor justice."

In keeping with this spirit, Codesa must therefore lay the basis for the elimination of racial and apartheid domination.

It is only by decisive action in this regard that South Africa will be granted entry to the community of nations as a full member.

The strength of the Codesa initiative lies in the range of political parties and persuasions represented here. The presence of so many parties augurs well for the future. The diverse interests represented speak of the capacity to develop consensus across the spectrum and of the desire to maximize common purpose amongst South Africans. Many parties here have already invested so much by way of preparing their constituencies for transformation. Above all else, the investment already made must spur us on to total commitment for the successful outcome of this convention.

[The following three paragraphs were given by Mandela in Afrikaans.]

We regret the fact that there are still parties who exclude themselves from this important process. After Codesa the situation in our country is irreversible. Threats about civil war are irresponsible and totally unacceptable. The time for such talk is long past. If they execute these threats the world will see that they are prolonging the suffering of all South Africans, and poisoning the search for peace in our country.

But one thing stands fast: The process of moving towards democracy is unstoppable. History grants all of us a unique opportunity. To exchange this opportunity for a bowl of lentil soup of the past, and negative bravado, is to deny the future. We continue to call on such parties to join Codesa now, even at this late stage.

The message of the ANC through Codesa is straight forward, clear, and for all South Africans: the time for one South Africa, one nation, one vote, one future is here.

The national convention in 1908 was a gathering of whites representing the four British colonies. It was also a betrayal of black people and a denial of democracy. The Act of Union entrenched colonial practices and institutions constitutionally. In its wake, our country has lived through eight decades of wasted opportunity. Codesa provides the first opportunity since to attempt to establish democracy in our country.

What democracy entails

It is imperative that we also reach consensus on the definition of democracy. From the ANC's perspective, democracy entails:

- That all governments must derive their authority from the consent of the governed.
- No persons or groups of persons shall be subjected to oppression, domination, or discrimination by virtue of their race, gender, ethnic origin, color, or creed.
- All persons should enjoy the right to life.

- All persons should enjoy security in their persons and should be entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions, including the right to acquire, own, or dispose of property without distinction based on race, color, language, gender, or creed.
- All persons should have the right to hold and express whatever opinions they wish to subscribe to, provided that in the exercise of that right they do not infringe on the rights of others.

This quality of democracy will indeed only be possible when those who have borne the brunt of apartheid oppression exercise their right to vote in a free and fair election on the basis of universal suffrage. We can see no reason why an election for a constituent assembly should not be possible during 1992.

[The following three paragraphs were given by Mandela in Zulu.]

When oppression necessitated a struggle in South Africa the ANC never retreated but was in the vanguard. Now that the situation is conducive it is the ANC again that leads

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'Declaration of Intent' adopted at Convention for a Democratic South Africa

The following is the Declaration of Intent signed by the South African government and 17 of the 19 political organizations attending the Convention for a Democratic South Africa. (Codesa) The government of Bophuthatswana and the Inkatha Freedom Party are not yet signatories to the declaration.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

We, the duly authorised representatives of political parties, political organisations, administrations and the South African Government, coming together at this first meeting of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, mindful of the awesome responsibility that rests on us at this moment in the history of our country, declare our solemn commitment:

1. to bring about an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship, patriotism and loyalty, pursuing amidst our diversity, freedom, equality and security for all irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed; a country free from apartheid or any other form of discrimination or domination;

2. to work to heal the divisions of the past, to secure the advancement of all, and to establish a free and open society based on democratic values where the dignity, worth and rights of every South African are protected by law;

3. to strive to improve the quality of life of our people through policies that will promote economic growth and human development and ensure equal opportunities and social justice for all South Africans;

4. to create a climate conducive to peaceful constitutional change by eliminating violence, intimidation and

destabilisation and by promoting free political participation, discussion and debate;

5. to set in motion the process of drawing up and establishing a constitution that will ensure, inter alia:

a. that South Africa will be a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist state in which sovereign authority is exercised over the whole of its territory;

b. that the Constitution will be the supreme law and that it will be guarded over by an independent, non-racial and impartial judiciary;

c. that there will be a multi-party democracy with the right to form and join political parties and with regular elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage on a common voters roll; in general the basic electoral system shall be that of proportional representation;

d. that there shall be a separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary with appropriate checks and balances;

e. that the diversity of languages, cultures and religions of the people of South Africa shall be acknowledged;

f. that all shall enjoy universally accepted human rights, freedoms and civil liberties including freedom of religion, speech and assembly protected by an entrenched and justiciable Bill of Rights and a legal system that guarantees equality of all before the law.

We agree:

1. that the present and future participants shall be entitled to put forward freely to the Convention any proposal consistent with democracy.

2. that CODESA will establish a mechanism whose task it will be, in co-operation

with administrations and the South African Government, to draft the texts of all legislation required to give effect to the agreements reached in CODESA.

We, the representatives of political parties, political organisations and administrations, further solemnly commit ourselves to be bound by the agreements of CODESA and in good faith to take all such steps as are within our power and authority to realise their implementation.

Signed by: African National Congress, Ciskei Government, Democratic Party, Dikwankwella Party, Inyandza National Movement, Intando Yesizwe Party, Labour Party, Natal/Transvaal Indian Congress, National Party, National People's Party, Solidarity, South African Communist Party, Transkei Government, United People's Front, Venda Government, Ximoko Progressive Party.

We, the South African Government, declare ourselves to be bound by agreements we reach together with other participants in CODESA in accordance with the standing rules and hereby commit ourselves to the implementation thereof within our capacity, powers and authority.

Signed by: South African Government

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika. Ons vir jou Suid Afrika.

Morena boloka sechaba sa heso. May the Lord bless our country.

Mudzimu Fhatutshedza Afrika. Hosi katekisa Afrika.

ANC leader takes floor at gathering to answer slanders by de Klerk

The first day of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) was largely taken up by speeches given by leaders of political organizations represented at the meeting. While each was called in alphabetical order, the South African government requested, and was granted, the right to address the convention last.

"The future of every man, woman, and child, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, will be affected decisively by our success or failure," South African president F.W. de Klerk said in his speech on behalf of the government.

"We are prepared to begin negotiating immediately on amending the constitution of the republic to make an interim power-sharing model possible on a democratic basis," he said of the African National Congress's demand for an interim government leading to the election of a constituent assembly.

De Klerk made it clear that the government would insist that any transitional measures would "have to be adopted by Parliament after a mandate has been obtained by means of a referendum" from "the electorates of each of the existing Houses of Parliament." This refers to the widely discredited set-up whereby only those designated as white, Indian, or Coloured are allowed to vote for

dress a matter "of national importance." His address follows.

I am gravely concerned about the behavior of Mr. de Klerk today. He has launched an attack on the ANC and in doing so he has been less than frank. Even the head of an illegitimate, discredited, minority regime, as his is, has certain moral standards to uphold. He has no excuse because he is the head of a discredited regime not to uphold moral standards. It is no wonder that the Conservative Party has made such serious inroads into his power base. You can understand why. If a man can come to a conference of this nature and play the type of politics as is in his paper — very few people would like to deal with such a man.

We have had bilateral discussions, but although I was discussing with him until about 20 minutes past eight last night he never even hinted that he was going to make this attack.

The members of the government persuaded us to allow them to speak last. They were very keen to say the last word here. It is now clear why they did so. He has abused his position, because he hoped that I would not respond. He was completely mistaken. I respond now.

We are still convinced to have discussions with him if he wants. But he must forget that he can impose positions on the African National Congress as I daresay on any one of the political organizations here.

I have tried very hard in discussions to persuade him that firstly, his witness is to look at matters from the point of view of the National Party and the white minority in this country, not from the point of view of the population of South Africa.

I have also had to say to him that no useful purpose would be served by the ANC trying to undermine the National Party, because we want the National Party to carry the whites in this initiative. I have also said on countless occasions that no useful purpose will be served by the National Party trying to undermine the African National Congress. He clearly continues to do exactly that and we are going to stop it.

ANC initiative on negotiations

He has not told you — I say he is less than frank — that it is the African National Congress, not the National Party, nor [former president] P.W. [Botha] that started this initiative. I have been discussing with top government officials since July 1986 when I was still in prison, asking that the ANC and the government sit down to explore a peaceful solution.

As a result of the pressure of the people inside the country and of the international community, and as a result of persuasion from us, they eventually agreed to sit down to discuss with us. We have gone along with the creation of an atmosphere whereby these negotiations can succeed. As part of that process we suspended the armed struggle.

What has been happening on the side of the government? We suspended the armed struggle in spite of the fact that our people were being killed. And the government — with all its capacity to put an end to violence — was doing nothing to stop the slaughter of innocent people. I said to him: "You have got a strong, well-equipped, efficient police force and defense force. Why are you not using that capacity to stop this violence?"

I have pointed out to him that the perception that exists amongst our people is that in the forefront of this violence are elements of the security forces. It is common knowledge that their main task of formations like the CCB [Civil Cooperation Bureau] is to eliminate freedom fighters in this country.

So many activists have been killed without a trace. The killers have hardly ever been traced. And in all those massacres not a single member of the National Party was even grazed by a spear. It is all activists who are in the opposition who are fighting apartheid.

Nevertheless we have told you and done things to show our commitment to the peace process. I have indicated that only last night



Militant/Greg McCartan

Part of the crowd at 30th anniversary rally for Umkhonto We Sizwe, ANC's armed wing. 'Government is talking peace while conducting war against us,' Mandela pointed out in his reply to South African president F.W. de Klerk.

I had a discussion with him about this very Declaration of Intent. There were certain loopholes which, when it was reported to us, we found unacceptable. I was instructed to make sure that those loopholes were closed.

I discussed the matter with him. He then persuaded me, saying that these had already gone through the relevant committees. We must not amend them at this moment. I agreed with him. I went back to my committee, to say it was too late for us to do anything. They accepted that because of our commitment to the peace process and our desire that this peace process should succeed.

Agreements on armed wing

Now he is attacking us because we have not dissolved MK. We had discussions in Cape Town and Pretoria on Umkhonto we Sizwe. We had an agreement in terms of which we had to hand over our weapons for joint patrol by the government and ourselves.

But we linked this to the development of the political process. We said that when the process reached a certain stage which would ensure that we would have an effective control and say in government, then it would be easy because that would be our government. The army would be our army.

I met with him about this before the signing of the peace accords when he was threatening to do there what he has just done now. I said to him: "You are asking us to commit suicide. When your government is unprepared to intervene and stop the violence; when the perception amongst our people is that it is elements in the security forces that are killing our people; when our people are demanding to be armed, then what political organization would hand over its weapons to the same man who is regarded by the people as killing innocent people. Then I ask you not to insist on this because we will never agree."

I told him that we should discuss the matter and see whether we could reach a solution. I met him Thursday, last week. He raised the same point. I again emphasized to him that he is asking us to do something that is absolutely ridiculous and we wouldn't do so. We could never give our arms to a government which we are sure either has no control over the security forces or the security forces are doing precisely what you want them to do. I can't see any head of government who would allow such a culture of violence to take root without interfering.

We have discussed certain mechanisms and agreed that these mechanisms should be applied in terms of setting up the peace accord.

Nevertheless, in spite of those mechanisms, violence still continues in this country. He has presented many new statistics to show how many new policemen have been employed, what agencies have been created. He does not relate that to what has happened because in spite of what you have done the incidents of violence are increasing.

I regret very much that he should try to take advantage of this meeting for petty political gains. It concerns what we have been saying all along: that the National Party and the government have a double agenda.

They are talking peace while at the same time conducting a war against us. They are

busy doing certain things that are unacceptable, using taxpayers' money. They are funding certain organizations through the police, and he comes forward and says he doesn't know about it. If the head of the government does not know when as much as 7 million rand is spent, he doesn't know about it, then he is not fit to be head of the government.

He is calling on us to disband Umkhonto we Sizwe, yet the hit squads are operating freely in this country. When we had a funeral of a prominent activist, Sam Ntuli, who was gunned down by the same hit squads, 18 people were killed in broad daylight as the mourners were dispersing, and the police were in the vicinity.

It was clear that these were killers who were carrying out their job in the knowledge that the law enforcement agencies would not interfere with them. They walked away freely, without fear of any detection. You can make your own inferences from that.

If Mr. de Klerk promises to do his duty as the head of government — to put an end to the violence, to restrain his security services, to clean the country of hit squads and other elements who are responsible for killing innocent people — then he can come to us and say: "I want you to hand over your weapons to us for joint control." But as long as he is playing this double game he must be clear that we are not going to cooperate with him on this matter. He can do what he wants. We

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Militant/Greg McCartan

Farmers in KwaNdebele homeland. 'Our country has been reduced to an economic wasteland by apartheid,' said Mandela in speech to convention.

respective representatives in segregated parliamentary chambers.

De Klerk then launched an attack on the African National Congress (ANC). "There is one major obstacle in the way of rapid progress within Codesa," he said. The South African president claimed the ANC had not lived up to previous agreements to "terminate what it itself has defined as the 'armed struggle.'" The ANC's armed wing is called Umkhonto we Sizwe, or simply MK.

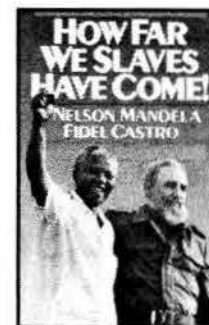
De Klerk attack on ANC

"The stipulation in the peace accord that no political party shall have a private army places a question mark over the ANC's participation in a convention which, essentially, is taking place among political parties," he said.

"An organization which remains committed to an armed struggle cannot be trusted completely when it also commits itself to peacefully negotiated solutions," he said, demanding that the ANC submit to government demands before Codesa participants "enter into binding, legitimate, reliable and credible peaceful agreements."

After de Klerk's speech the government and 17 of the 19 political organizations attending the convention signed the historic Declaration of Intent (see page 8). Mandela then requested the floor to ad-

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Mandela hails opening of 'historic convention'

Continued from Page 8

the way in the effort to bring peace to the land of our ancestors.

If there are people who need freedom in South Africa it is the black people. They need it now because their economic situation and welfare deteriorate daily.

The right to vote is the essence of the struggle for freedom. Nineteen ninety-two is the year that must bring the first democratic elections in South Africa.

Codesa, on its own, will not deliver democracy. In recording this fact, there is no attempt to demean Codesa. Even absolute consensus during the life of Codesa will still leave an apartheid constitution in place. We need to be reminded that this very constitution was declared null and void by the UN Security Council in 1983.

The invalidation of the prevailing constitution is the most persuasive argument in support of the view that the incumbent government is unsuited to the task of overseeing the transition to democracy. Its oft-stated commitment to democracy must now compel it to make way for an interim government of national unity to supervise the transition.

This is the only cogent outflow from our deliberations at Codesa. The consensus which we arrive at will certainly have far-reaching implications for the birth of a new nationhood. None of us could be satisfied with circumstances where the consensus struck at this meeting is not translated into full legal force.

An interim government, important as it may be, is but the product of agreement between ourselves as political parties and organizations. It will not be the outcome of full participation by the people of our country. Negotiations, to be successful, must be owned and supported by the majority of South Africans.

In the absence of full participation, we must commit ourselves to open negotiations to ensure that notions of secret deals do not arise. This process will also hinge on the confidence by each participating party that the communication of developments be absolutely nonpartisan. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the immediate establishment of the necessary mechanisms to ensure that the state-controlled media accurately and fairly represents the views of all participants. The means of establishing an interim government will not be participatory. Therefore the consensus at Codesa should curtail both its mandate and its lifespan.

The ANC remains fully committed to the installation of a government which can justly claim authority because it is based on the will of the people. This reality will have to be underpinned by a constitution which both engenders respect and enjoys legitimacy. There is a compelling urgency about this task. It is inconceivable that such a democratic constitution could be reached in any way but through the portals of an elected constitution-making body, namely a constituent assembly.

It is tragic that our country, so well-endowed with natural resources, has been reduced to an economic wasteland by the system of apartheid, based on greed and mis-

management. It is also distressing to note that the deplorable violence has reached such alarming proportions, and others threaten still more. These features are a direct consequence of the determination of a minority to maintain the power and privileges accrued by apartheid. There are large parts of our country where free political activity is still not possible, where law and order is still rule by the jackboot, and a large number of political prisoners remain incarcerated. In the spirit of our convention, we call upon the government to proclaim an immediate Codesa amnesty before Christmas for all remaining political prisoners throughout the country.

Nothing could be more irresponsible than for those of us gathered here to deny our people the right to peace and freedom of association and to deny our country its due economic growth.

As everybody here is aware, the ANC and the government have been involved in bilateral discussions since May last year. There are still some matters dealt with in these

bilateral talks which have not been finalized. We will continue these discussions, among other things, seeking to resolve the question of the control of all armed formations in the country, including Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We can only reverse the current situation if we set our sights on establishing true democracy. The national interest is far, far more important than the sectional interests represented by any party here.

Everybody wants a place in the sun of a post-apartheid South Africa. No delegation here could possibly have been mandated by its constituency, however small, to attend Codesa in order to annihilate itself.

Recognizing this, however, we want to make a strong appeal to everybody present to place the compelling national concerns above narrow sectional interests.

History will judge us extremely harshly if we fail to turn the opportunity, which it now presents us with, into common good. The risks of further pain and affliction arising from violence, homelessness, unemployment, or gutter education, are immense. No

country or people can afford the extension of this anguish, even for a day. The approach which we adopt at Codesa must be fundamentally inclusive. The price of Codesa's failure will be far too great.

We must not trample on the confidence which our people have placed in the successful conclusion to these negotiations. It would be foolhardy to spurn the world for its efforts in assisting to secure peace and prosperity for South Africa. Our people and the world expect a nonracial, nonsexist democracy to emerge from the negotiations on which we are about to embark.

Failure of Codesa is inconceivable, so too is consensus without legal force. There is absolutely no room for error or obstinacy. The challenge which Codesa places before each one of us is to unshackle ourselves from the past and to build anew.

Codesa can be the beginning of reconstruction. Let our common commitment to the future of our country inspire us to build a South Africa of which we can all be truly proud.

ANC leader admonishes de Klerk

Continued from Page 9

are not going to disband Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We are not a political party. We are a political organization, perhaps with more support worldwide than he has. We have used Umkhonto we Sizwe to help in the exertion of pressure on the government to change its policies. We have no illusions. It was not the operations of Umkhonto alone which have brought about this development. But Umkhonto has had a very significant contribution. We cannot hand over that instrument to the National Party.

Appeal to work seriously

I must appeal to him to work harmoniously and seriously with the African National Congress. This is our initiative. He has tried to undo what his brothers have done to us. Through the policy of apartheid they have created misery beyond words. Nevertheless we are prepared to forget. He has made a contribution towards normalizing the situation, because without him we would not have been this close.

I ask him to place his cards on the table face upwards. Let's work together openly. Let there be no secret agendas. Let him not persuade us that he would be the last speaker because he wants to abuse that privilege and attack us in the hope that we won't respond. I am prepared to work with him in spite of all his mistakes.

I am prepared to make allowances because he is a product of apartheid. Although he wants these democratic changes he has sometimes very little idea what democracy means. Many people regard his statement here where he threatened us, where he says this cannot be done, as very harsh.

He is forgetting that he cannot speak like a representative of a government which has both legitimacy and which represents the

majority of the population. These are statements that can only be used by somebody who represents the majority of the population of the country. He doesn't represent us. He can't talk to us in that language.

Nevertheless I am prepared to work with him, to pursue the democratic changes I

introduced in the country. We can only succeed if we are candid and open with one another. This type of thing, of trying to take advantage of the cooperation which we have given him willingly, is something that is very dangerous and I hope that this is the last time he will do so. Thank you.



Militant/Ruth Haswell

Firebombed house in KwaMashu outside Durban. Mandela denounced the government's role in encouraging political violence against opponents of apartheid.

Judge absolves HIV victim of attempted murder charge

BY NOREEN McNULTY
AND VALERIE LIBBY

CINCINNATI, Ohio — In early September, Steven O'Banion was stopped by the cops after leaving a downtown gay bar here and accused of jaywalking. He was violently thrown to the ground and handcuffed. He was charged with disorderly conduct and assault of the cop who threw him down.

At the Hamilton County Justice Center things only got worse for O'Banion. While being treated by the center's nurse for the cuts and abrasions inflicted on him by the arresting cops, O'Banion informed the nurse that he had the HIV virus. Later in court O'Banion explained he felt it was his moral obligation to inform health care workers treating him of his infection.

O'Banion said that police officer Robert Bowman, who was present in the cell, began to choke him, causing him to gag and cough.

Some of his spit hit the nurse, who became hysterical and went running from the cell yelling for disinfectant.

Bowman beat O'Banion, hitting him more than four times in the face. O'Banion's nose started to bleed profusely, causing hysteria among the cops because of their fear of AIDS. With a battered face and broken nose, he was sent to University Hospital for treatment.

During the trial it was discovered that Bowman had been disciplined for using excessive force at the jail the year before.

As O'Banion was returned to his jail cell, the cops yelled, "AIDS victim coming through." All night he was harassed by cops walking by the cell, hitting the door and yelling things such as, "I hear there's a queer in here."

To cover up their brutality, the cops charged O'Banion with attempted murder and felonious assault with a deadly weapon.

The prosecution claimed he was using his blood as a lethal weapon.

O'Banion's swollen and bruised face was seen on the TV news as he was arraigned the next day. There was an immediate, angry response to this case of police brutality. Two gay rights groups — ACT-UP and Gay and Lesbian March Activists — immediately began organizing public support for O'Banion. A teach-in on discrimination against gays in the prison system was organized at the University of Cincinnati.

On December 16, the opening day of the trial, a demonstration of 150 people demanded that charges against O'Banion be dropped. Participants marched from the Justice Center to the County Administration building shouting, "Blood is not a lethal weapon, drop the charges now!" and "Gay, straight, Black, white; same struggle, same fight." Speakers at the rally included representatives of several gay rights groups, the

American Civil Liberties Union, Rainbow Coalition, and Coalition for Choice. Participants came from as far away as St. Louis, Pittsburgh, New York, and Illinois.

After the prosecution rested its case December 17, Judge Gilbert Bettman dismissed the four counts of attempted murder.

On December 23, the judge also dropped the felony assault charges, but let stand the three misdemeanor charges — jaywalking, disorderly conduct while intoxicated, and assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest. Sentencing on these charges is scheduled for February 12. O'Banion could be jailed for up to 180 days and fined \$3,000.

"At no time did I try to inflict bodily harm on anyone," commented Steven O'Banion after the judge's verdict. "I pressed this issue because I wanted the court to make a statement on what constitutes transmitting the AIDS virus."

South African Communist Party holds 1st open congress since start of 40-year ban

BY GREG McCARTAN

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The South African Communist Party (SACP) held its eighth congress here at a conference center outside the Black township of Soweto.

Four hundred delegates, representing 21,500 members of the party, attended the gathering, the first open congress of the SACP inside the country since it was banned 40 years ago. Unbanned by the South African apartheid regime in early 1990, the party has worked closely with the African National Congress, the vanguard political organization of the revolutionary struggle for a democratic South African republic. All SACP members are also members of the ANC.

Most delegates had joined the party since membership was opened up and branches were formed in August, 1990. Also present were party leaders who had been imprisoned by the regime or forced into exile in the early 1960s after the regime banned the African National Congress.

Among the delegates were a large number of workers who are members of trade unions in the mining, steel, auto, and other industries. Only a few women were elected as delegates to the congress. The big majority of delegates were in their late 20s and early 30s.

Observers from the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the ANC Women's League, and Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's armed wing, attended the meeting.

The congress also attracted representatives from a range of political parties from around the world. These included the Cuban Communist Party, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua.

Representatives of a number of current or former Communist Parties from Italy, France, Britain, Israel, Portugal, Brazil, Austria, Spain, and Germany, attended the meeting. These groups, like the SACP, had formerly adopted the political positions of the Soviet CP.

Parties from Africa included Frelimo from Mozambique and the Communist Party of Réunion. A delegation from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States attended as well.

Congress sessions were organized around three main documents made available to party members prior to the meeting: a draft political manifesto, the party's constitution, and an organizer's report. Commission meetings, where aspects of these reports were discussed and revised, were the only sessions not open to guests and the press.

One change made to the agenda during the meeting was the addition of a point on the negotiations underway with the South African government and the party's policy approach to the December 20-21 Convention for a Democratic South Africa. Delegates urged a report be given to the meeting, since the SACP is one of the parties involved in the talks.

After greetings from leaders of the ANC and COSATU, outgoing general secretary Joe Slovo presented a report that reviewed the main themes of the meeting.

Among the achievements of the party since the 1920s that Slovo pointed to were pioneering "the first truly nonracial political organization in our country" and having "come out boldly with a demand for majority rule even before the liberation movements. We laid the very foundations of political democracy and nonracialism in our land," he said.

"There is no political force in this country which has done as much as our party to pioneer black industrial unionism," Slovo said. He pointed in particular to the 1946 miners' strike, of which SACP leader J.B. Marks was a leader, as "one of the main watersheds in the political and trade union history of our country. It was the biggest single inspiration to the emerging group of ANC Youth League radicals — among them Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu — in their successful drive to transform the ANC into a militant revolutionary force."

Events in the Soviet Union

Over the past several years the SACP has been shaken by the crumbling of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet

Union, and the disintegration of the former Communist Parties in each of those countries.

The SACP used to portray the Soviet Union as the "motherland of socialism," Slovo said. In contributions on the convention floor and discussions among delegates to the meeting, three points of view were expressed.

One view is that the party should adopt a more social-democratic outlook, rejecting the course opened by Russian workers and peasants in October 1917 under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

Others argued that the policies pursued by Soviet premier Joseph Stalin from the 1920s through the 1950s, although at times brutal, were in general necessary and led to the building of a powerful bastion of working-class power.

The third view, expressed by Slovo in his report, was that enemies of the working class "raise their champagne glasses to celebrate the funeral of socialism," but the "corpse they are trying to bury is not true socialism. It was weakened and succumbed through self-in-



South African Communist Party leadership. Chris Hani seated second left of podium.

flicted wounds. It succumbed because it was drained of the very lifeblood of socialism, which is based on real participatory and economic democracy."

Slovo, who had looked to the policies of Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev as an attempt to restore democratic practices in the USSR, said, "It is saddening that some of those in the Soviet Union who helped diagnose the disease have now allowed themselves to be pushed into a treatment which addresses the disease by killing the patient. Gorbachev himself has completely lost his way."

Communists should identify with the Russian revolution, he said, noting that not all of the developments since the rise of Stalinism were negative. "The record of Soviet internationalism, despite a number of Stalinist perversions, was a shining inspiration to every struggling people," he said.

The SACP Manifesto adopted at the congress adds that, "despite serious weaknesses, positive results were achieved in the socialist countries," citing steps forward in education, health care, "full employment and subsidized holidays for workers and their families," and women's equality.

"We remain absolutely convinced," Slovo said, "that despite some of the horrors of Stalinism, it is socialism and only socialism which can, in the end, assure every individual and humanity as a whole freedom in its true meaning."

Democratic socialism

Because of these developments, Slovo urged the delegates to "give special emphasis to the word democratic" when talking about socialism. The term "democratic socialism" was included throughout the draft Manifesto, a designation that provoked quite a bit of debate at the congress. Some people whom SACP members try to win to the party question whether, "in the light of East European practices, socialism can ensure real democracy, and whether we, as earlier supporters of these practices, can be trusted to respect real democracy," Slovo said.

In the discussion most delegates said that because socialism is "inherently democratic," adding the word "democracy" was redundant. While some spoke from the floor

in support of Slovo's position, the overwhelming majority approved dropping the word from most places in the Manifesto.

In a similar vein the delegates rejected the proposal of the drafters of the Manifesto to no longer designate the party as "Marxist-Leninist." The term was added into the final draft of the document after delegates argued that the party needed to identify with both the contributions of Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International in the early 1920s.

The social and economic crisis in the Soviet Union has led to the collapse of the "two-bloc world system," the Manifesto says. "The imperialist world, led by the United States, has emerged more powerful and confident. Generally, these developments are not favourable for progressive forces within our own country, and, indeed, internationally," it states.

Opening of negotiations

Because the congress took place just weeks prior to the start of full-scale negoti-

ations between political organizations in the country, an assessment of the next steps in the fight against apartheid and of the place of the SACP in it as an independent organization was the other central discussion at the meeting.

As one of the 19 parties participating in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, the SACP has joined in the call for the installation of an interim government followed by the election of a constituent assembly on the basis of one person, one vote.

"Our participation in negotiations does not rule out the use of any forms of struggle," the Manifesto says, "if negotiations do not offer a path to the transfer of power to the people."

Slovo said that while negotiations proceeded, continuing to build the "tripartite alliance" of the ANC, COSATU, and SACP was of utmost importance. Rejecting the government's warnings that the ANC should break its ties with the SACP, Slovo said that South African president F.W. de Klerk's "sudden concern for the good reputation of his main political enemy can only make us laugh. On the contrary, what really concerns him is the fact that the reputation of the ANC among the black oppressed is heightened by the Alliance."

Because the ANC is a "multi-class" organization, the SACP needs to advance the interests of the working class in the struggle against apartheid, reports at the meeting said. One section taken out of the final draft of the Manifesto noted that the party "must guard against other class forces hijacking and curtailing the process of national democratic transformation." In the "search for a compromise as part of the negotiating process," the deleted section said, the party needs to insure that "working-class aspirations do not end up at the bottom of the pile" and that there is not "a surrender of the workers' cause."

"It is crucial that the national democratic transformation is not limited within a narrow legalistic and constitutional framework," the Manifesto says. "These important democratic measures will only mark the very first steps in the long and difficult path of national democratic transformation."

To address these needs of working people,

the SACP says it will fight for "growing popular control over economic planning, production, and distribution." Putting the economy on a "new growth path" will help address unemployment and promote "greater international competitiveness." In the long term, the complete socialization of the means of production will be necessary, the Manifesto notes, but this will follow a long-term period of a "mixed economy."

Resolution on Cuba

A number of resolutions were passed on the final day of the meeting. These included the need to recruit women to the party, saluting the contributions of Umkhonto we Sizwe to the struggle against apartheid, the need to raise funds in order to finance the activities of the party, and promoting the establishment of peace committees in communities as a means to help stem the violence in the country.

A central campaign decided on by the congress was in defense of the Cuban revolution. The party noted the special contribution Cuban internationalist forces in Angola played in defeating the South African invasions of that country and the resulting shift in the relationship of forces in the region against the apartheid regime.

The resolution condemned Washington's economic blockade of Cuba and its unremitting hostility to the island. The congress decided to launch an educational campaign on the Cuban revolution, encourage the importation of Cuban sugar, and organize a solidarity fund for the benefit of the Cuban people.

Elections for national officers and a new Central Committee were conducted by an independent electoral commission. Chris Hani was elected general secretary and Slovo was elected national chairperson. Of the 25 members of the Central Committee, nine are central leaders of COSATU or its affiliated unions. Four are women, six are white.

In his address to the meeting, ANC deputy president Walter Sisulu saluted the contribution that members of the SACP have made in the struggle. He noted that the bond between the two organizations was "forged and tempered in the crucible of a common resolve to rid our people and our country of the scourge of institutionalized racism, national oppression, and exploitation." He added, "Our bond was not forged overnight. It took a long time before the ANC and the Communists overcame suspicion of one another." Each organization "contributed to each other's political and ideological development," Sisulu said.

'Beyond traditional alliances'

Due to the victories scored in the struggle, "our common efforts have produced a qualitatively new situation, a situation which demands a much broader unity that extends beyond the traditional revolutionary forces," the ANC leader told the delegates. The alliance of the ANC, COSATU, and the SACP can help ensure that the broadest possible forces are drawn into the new stage of the revolutionary democratic struggle, he said.

"Ours is a national liberation struggle whose main objective is not only the attainment of formal political freedom. We in the ANC and indeed in the entire alliance recognize that the freedom of our people will mean little if they have the vote but have no houses nor land," Sisulu explained.

"To deepen national liberation beyond purely political rights is a shared principle of the entire alliance," he said. "True to the Freedom Charter, the ANC, SACP, and COSATU are committed to ensuring that all our people share in the wealth of our country. It is our combined efforts that will determine whether or not the liberation of our country has any meaning for ordinary people."

In wrap-up remarks at the close of the congress Chris Hani said the party was determined to "assert our own independence" within the alliance. "Since we have been given a mandate to guide the party for the next three years, we shall work hard to deepen the process of accountability to the regions and branches" of the party, he said.

He encouraged the delegates to "engage the enemy in battle and involve the masses in the midst of the negotiations. Let us not allow de Klerk and his allies to delay the process to democracy."

GM to cut jobs, shut plants

Continued from front page

clear that similar competition is being fueled between five plants in the United States, Mexico, and Canada that build mid-size cars. These "leaks" are designed to scare workers into accepting more concessions.

Members of UAW Local 276 in Arlington, Texas, voted on the day of the announcement to offer to reopen their local agreement to allow work rules changes and rotating shifts — four days a week, 10 hours a day — to enable the company to run the plant seven days a week, with little or no overtime.

The Arlington City Council called an emergency meeting to discuss what it would offer GM to keep the plant in town. The Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce and some local elected officials plan a January 6 meeting to discuss concessions to the auto manufacturer.

The Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) have also been meeting with GM to discuss cutting costs and increasing flexibility in scheduling overtime.

CAW president Robert White said at a press conference following Stempel's announcement that because cuts are so severe "there will be some impact in Canada." But he added that the CAW will "fight like hell" for Canadian jobs.

GM aims to reopen UAW contract

Besides plant closings and the resulting job loss, GM wants to reopen the UAW national contract. The company also wants to force unionized workers to use vacation time during a two-week system-wide shutdown in July. Ford workers have already been forced to take vacations during similar shutdowns. GM wants to end the current requirement of hiring one new worker for every two that leave. There is also speculation among auto workers that GM seeks to cut cost-of-living raises.

Stempel made it clear that if North American auto sales do not pick up by mid-1992 GM will announce more layoffs and plant closings.

UAW president Owen Bieber and vice president Stephen Yokich denounced GM's plans in a press release. They claimed GM's policies shifted work to Mexico and helped Japanese automakers. The statement attacked President George Bush and GM for capitulating to Wall Street's "short-sighted and greedy marching orders." The union officials said that they will not reopen the national contract at this time.

Discussions among auto workers

The latest moves by GM are fueling discussion among working people on how to respond to the deepening social crisis and layoffs. In Pontiac, a city hard hit by past plant closings and facing more, there is shock, bitterness, and anger. One person suggested that instead of the company giving former GM chairman Roger Smith a big retirement bonus, he and other executives should take a pay cut.

Workers at the Willow Run plant expressed a range of opinions. While one said, "I'll relocate if I need to," another stated, "I won't relocate, and I won't make concessions."

Kim Kleinman, a member of UAW Local 2250 and an assembler at the Wentzville, Missouri, plant, reports that many of his coworkers feel that "they've dodged the bullet this time," and that the plant will stay open. The local's financial secretary, Stan Reasons, believes the plant will be kept open because "we build quality cars." Plant management is using the threats of plant closings to demand better quality and a reduction in the number of union grievances filed.

This discussion of what auto workers face is not limited to GM. A painter at Ford's Michigan Truck plant said, "If they reopen the contract at GM, we're next."

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 and works at Ford's Michigan Truck Plant.

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CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Frame-up of Leonard Peltier. Speakers: Yvonne Swan, Leonard Peltier Defense Committee; Josie Tamez, Native American activist, Mohawk Nation representative. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. Translation to Spanish. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$5. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

San Francisco

Celebrate the 33rd Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution: How Far We Slaves Have Come. Speakers: Bernardo Garcia-Pandavendez, National Network on Cuba, U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition; Roxanne Sanchez, member Service Employees International Union Local 790, participant in international conference of trade unionists held in Havana; Natasha Terlexis, Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$3. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Puerto Rico: Revelations by Puerto Rican Senate committee of U.S.-organized death squads in Puerto Rico targeting pro-independence supporters and political activists. Speakers: Socialist Workers Party representative, others. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

Political Polarization in U.S. Politics and Rising Class Tensions. Speaker: Karen Ray, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MISSOURI

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Eyewitness Report From South Africa. Speaker: Mary Zins, member United Mine Workers of America. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 1622 S Broadway. Donation: \$3. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Asylum for Haitian Refugees. Open the Borders! Speakers: Dr. Bernier Lauredan, Caribbean African Alliance-Irvington; Ernst Olibrice, executive director, Caribbean Haitian Council; Erna Letemps, Haitian Students Association, Mont-

Labor news in the Militant

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clair State College: Martha Pettit, member Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

In Solidarity with the Haitian People: The Fight for Democracy. Speaker: Mike Shur, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 973-9867.

U.S. Death Squads in Puerto Rico: Revelations of U.S. government's involvement in killings of pro-independence fighters in Puerto Rico. Speakers to be announced. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 973-9867.

BRITAIN

London

The Asylum Bill, Racist Attacks and Police Brutality: Challenges for Working People. Speaker: Communist League representative. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £2. Tel: 71-928-7993.

Manila says U.S. must close bases by end of '92

BY DEREK BRACEY

The Philippine government has told the United States to withdraw from the Subic Bay naval base by the end of 1992. The December 27 announcement comes after the breakdown of negotiations on a new treaty.

The administration of U.S. president George Bush expressed disappointment at the decision and said it was seeking alternative military sites in the Pacific. One American official said that Washington had not aggressively fought for its continued use of the base as it wanted to avoid giving the impression that "we were muscling those guys."

The decision represents a setback for Philippine president Corazon Aquino, who had campaigned vigorously for a renewed base treaty.

Subic Bay is the largest U.S. naval base outside the United States. It is home to more than 7,000 GIs and civilian workers.

The base is one of several established in the Philippines after the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War in 1898. The Philippines remained a direct U.S. colony until 1946. One condition for Washington's acceptance of Philippine independence at that time was approval of the Military Bases Agreement, which forced the lease of the stations until September 16, 1991, with an option to extend another year.

Subic is the last U.S. base in the Philip-

Manchester

The Maxwell Affair: Lessons for Working People. Speaker: Communist League representative. Sat., Jan. 4, 7:00 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Tel: 061-839 1766.

Soviet Union: New Setup Keeps the Bureaucracy in Power. Speaker: representative of Communist League. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:00 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Tel: 061-839 1766.

South Africa: New Stage in the Struggle to End Apartheid — An Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Pete Clifford, recently returned from trip to South Africa promoting Pathfinder books. Sat., Jan. 18, 7:00 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Tel: 061-839 1766.

Sheffield

South Africa: New Stage in the Struggle to End Apartheid — An Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Pete Clifford, recently returned from trip to South Africa promoting Pathfinder books. Sat., Jan. 25, 7:00 p.m. 1 Gower St., Spital Hill. Donation: £1. Tel: 0742-765070.

CANADA

Montreal

How To Push Back Violence Against Women. Speaker: Brenda Greene, member Young Socialists. Sat., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 6566, boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

ines. Washington previously turned over four other bases, including the massive Clark Air Base, which was evacuated in June 1991 after several volcano eruptions.

The U.S. and Philippine governments reached a tentative agreement in mid-1991 that would have extended the lease to the bases for at least another decade. But this was met with strong opposition by the Filipino people and in September the Philippine Senate rejected it.

Many demonstrations, some involving thousands of Filipino workers, students, and peasants, have expressed opposition to the presence of the U.S. bases in recent years.

In response to the Senate move Aquino announced that she would seek a referendum on the treaty, but eventually backed down in the face of the determined political opposition. She has maintained that jobs and revenues generated by the bases are vital to the islands' economy.

Negotiations between the governments continued on a plan for a three-year phased withdrawal even after the Senate rejection, with Washington clinging to the possibility that a new Philippine government in 1992 might let them stay longer. However, the talks reached an impasse over the U.S. government's reluctance to commit to a firm schedule for troop withdrawals and its refusal to unequivocally declare it would not bring nuclear weapons into the port.

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Capitalism's bright future — "According to the Mexican Center for Children's Rights, 400,000 children quit mandatory primary school last year to seek work to help their



Harry Ring

struggling families. The number is expected to swell to 6.6 million by 1995." — News item.

No yachts in sight — The scheme would attract people who would come here on yachts, not

rafts. Congress set aside 10,000 permanent residency visas for those ready to invest \$1 million in U.S. enterprises. So far, 177 people have applied and the investment requirement has been reduced to \$500,000.

A dog — Harold Ezell, a former Immigration official, was in early on the "yacht people" deal, offering car washes and Der Wienerschnitzel hot dog stand franchises. "I've been disappointed," he confides. "People aren't jumping out of windows to join this program."

Hurts him more than you — "Nobody suffers more than George over the economy." — Barbara Bush.

Malcolm X fans — *Forbes*, the

business magazine, saluted Clarence Thomas, the now right-wing Supreme Court justice. It asserts that early on, Thomas was attracted to "Malcolm X's self-help philosophy." "Self-help" aside, the crude attempt to link Thomas with Malcolm X reminded us of what Malcolm used to say about "house Negroes" and "field Negroes."

Move over, Hertz — If you're ready to sign a three-year lease, you can now rent a Rolls Royce. U.S. sales of the luxury limo have dropped 50 percent.

Rights partisan — After 108 years, the last of Yale University's all-male societies voted to accept women into membership. The deci-

sion of Wolf's Head was welcomed by Yale President Benno Schmidt, who said, "I'm sorry it took so long, but I'm glad it finally happened." The prexy is a member of Wolf's Head.

News of the week — "A study of seriously ill newborn babies in California has found 'a consistent pattern' of uninsured newborns receiving fewer medical tests and procedures than those covered by insurance, even when their medical problems were comparable." — *Los Angeles Times*.

Shop early for Xmas — We understand that this year's shopping season will begin right after Lincoln's birthday. For openers, a kit

for building a model of a nuclear power plant. Perhaps intended for morbid youngsters, it's "based on Three Mile Island."

Don't lock the rear exit — A software entertainment item: "Interplay Castles: Design the layout of your medieval dream castle. You must then defend your castle against the angry, overtaxed peasants."

Start the year right — Marxist greetings for the New Year, and a reminder. Other things equal (e.g. postage), Great Society items should be sent care of Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Clippings sent to New York are forwarded, but it takes longer.

Boston meeting celebrates life of Rich Cahalane

BY KAREN RAY
AND GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

BOSTON — More than 60 people packed the Pathfinder Bookstore here November 16 to celebrate the life of Richard Cahalane and his contributions to the working-class movement for more than 20 years as an active fighter for socialism.

Cahalane, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, died October 27 at the age of 42 from consequences of the AIDS virus. Cahalane contracted the virus from contaminated blood products used to treat his hemophilia.

"The record of Rich's accomplishments shows that the truest meaning of his life is not as a victim of capitalism," Andrea Morell, a leader of the SWP in Boston, told the meeting. Rather, she said, Cahalane was "a fighter whose deeds will have helped to prepare the eventual victory of our class."

"He knew history didn't begin with capitalism and it wouldn't end with capitalism," Morell observed. It was Cahalane's "unshakeable confidence in the revolutionary capacities of working people to put an end to class-divided society and its horrors that gave purpose and joy to his life."

As a youthful fighter Cahalane came into political life during tumultuous class battles, Morell explained. These included the worldwide struggle to oppose Washington's war against the people of Vietnam and the historic fight to end Jim Crow segregation and advance Black equality.

Participants in the meeting included friends, family, and coworkers of Cahalane.

Some came from hundreds of miles away. Others sent messages. Many had been participants in these battles with him. These included two people who, with Cahalane and others, helped organize a chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1969.

Cahalane joined the YSA because he was convinced it was the most effective way to be part of the fight against Washington's war in Vietnam. He had already been drawn to anticapitalist conclusions through learning about the ideas and example of Malcolm X.

Subsequently Cahalane moved back to the Boston area where he had grown up. In 1974 he joined the Socialist Workers Party.

Boston desegregation fight

In the fall of that year, the fight to desegregate the Boston schools and defeat the racist mobilizations aimed against it burst into national politics. Cahalane jumped into the fight along with the entire membership of the SWP and YSA.

The fight revolved around enforcing a federal court-ordered plan mandating the use of busing to ensure that Black students achieved equal access to education. It devel-

oped into a massive social struggle in the streets of Boston. Over a two-year period, violent racist assaults against Blacks were met by a sustained response by supporters of black rights.

"The racists were mobilized with the support of the city government, the cops, and the sympathy of the White House," Morell recalled.

Cahalane and others in the YSA and SWP were among the first to urge and help organize effective countermobilizations against the racist violence. They participated in founding the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR), one of the organizations that led the fight to defend busing.

The SWP and the YSA also gave high priority to getting out the facts and perspective about the struggle through sales of the *Militant*. In a message to the meeting Susan Lamont, who served as the organizer of the SWP branch in Boston through much of the busing fight, recalled that *Militant* sales sometimes numbered 500-600 copies a week. The *Militant* Labor forum was an important part of the political life in the city at the time and required defense monitors to ensure that the meetings were not broken up.

These were the activities in which Cahalane was immersed. Like others who were part of this fight, he was transformed by it and developed an even deeper commitment to the struggle for socialism.

In her message, Lamont explained the challenge that was posed to build and strengthen the Socialist Workers Party branch and its institutions as the party participated in the mass struggle.

"Rich was one of the cadres who make that possible," she wrote. "He was a deeply political comrade and understood the importance of the Pathfinder Bookstore, the branch finances, of having a regular educational program and forum series. Without these the branch would have disappeared and Rich knew that."

"I also remember him as being one of the calmer comrades on the scene — a quality you learn to value in the situation we were in," Lamont added. "His sense of humor didn't hurt either."

Contribution as educator

Mac Warren, 1991 SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago, was a leader of NSCAR and of the SWP and YSA in Boston during the busing fight. In a message to the meeting he recalled Cahalane's contribution as an educator in the communist movement.

In the midst of the fight Pathfinder published *Woman's Evolution*, by Evelyn Reed, a landmark contribution on the origins of women's oppression. "Rich was one of the first comrades to read and study the book," Warren wrote, explaining that Cahalane also presented classes on it. The classes led Warren to read the book and to approach Cahalane for more discussion about it.

"I always thought of Rich as one of the comrades who took education seriously," Warren continued. "He was one of the first educators in the party who was my age, who showed by example that we 22- and 23-year-old YSAers had a very important role to play in educating ourselves and others."

In the years following the Boston busing fight, as the capitalist economic crisis sharpened, the employers deepened their attacks on the rights and living standards of the working class. The industrial unions were thrust more and more to the center of U.S.

politics. In 1978 the Socialist Workers Party decided to organize its membership to become part of these unions in order to participate effectively in the battles that were shaping up.

This decision inspired Cahalane. He tried to get a job in industry but was unable to find one given his hemophilia and the harsh conditions of capitalist production. Nevertheless he took a deep interest in the political discussion and activity SWP members were finding as part of the industrial working class. He participated in many ways in this new stage of the party's political activity, from selling regularly to workers at plant gates to walking strike picket lines.

Paperworkers' strike

Margaret Pucci, now a YSA National Executive Committee member, was one of the young people who Cahalane helped win to the SWP. In a talk at the meeting she related Cahalane's participation in the 1987-88 strike by paperworkers in Jay, Maine.

"Rich went to Jay as often as possible," Pucci said. "He tried to organize solidarity from his coworkers at Harvard University who were part of a union-organizing drive," she continued. A year or two later, when Pucci herself went on strike along with thousands of other workers at Eastern Airlines, Cahalane again joined the picket lines, often helping to distribute the *Militant*.

Cahalane worked at the Harvard University School for Public Health where he threw himself into the battle to win recognition and a contract for the Harvard University Clerical and Technical Union. He was proud of the victory that the organizing drive scored against Harvard after

more than 17 years of resistance by the university's management.

In discussing other aspects of Cahalane's life, Morell explained that, like many communist workers, he had a wide variety of interests. These included a love for music. He played the guitar and was a founding member of the Boston Blues Society.

Cahalane had three brothers, all of whom joined the socialist movement. All had hemophilia. Morell explained that they were among a generation of hemophiliacs who benefited from the development of new blood-clotting drugs in the 1970s. These drugs liberated hemophiliacs from the worst effects of the disease and resulted in improvements in the quality of life.

With the advent of the AIDS virus, however, the U.S. blood product supply became infected. By 1981 the blood bank industry knew that the AIDS virus was transmitted through blood transfusions, such as those often required by hemophiliacs. Yet the industry refused to take the necessary steps to test and remove infected blood products.

"The blood bankers caused the death of Rich and of thousands of other hemophiliacs of his generation, including two of his brothers, John and Dave," Morell told the meeting.

"It is the capitalist government that is allowing this scourge to progress," she continued. "This is what the system of medicine for profit means. Rich understood this and it deepened his hatred for the brutality of capitalism and his resolve to fight for a socialist society where such disregard for the lives of human beings will not exist."

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



One week after *New York Times* correspondent Harrison Salisbury exploded the Washington lies about the nature of bombing attacks on north Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson still refuses to face up to the truth. "I have followed our activity in Vietnam very closely," Johnson stated. "It is the policy of this Government to bomb only military targets."

The bombshell which shattered this myth once and for all was exploded on Christmas Day with the first Salisbury release [from Hanoi]: "This correspondent is no ballistics specialist," he wrote, "but inspection of several damaged sites and talks with witnesses make it clear that ... damage certainly occurred right in the center of town."

[U.S. officials still insisted:] "You can't tell the difference many times between civilian buildings and military structures. In addition to the problem of the structures themselves looking alike in aerial photographs, the Communists put anti-aircraft sites between houses."

In this version, you see, the "military targets" in north Vietnam are "anti-aircraft sites." Why are there anti-aircraft sites in residential sections of north Vietnam? It must be because those tricky Communists just want to have their civilian populations bombed, get it? If you think that version is far out, the front headline in the Dec. 28

Washington Post read, "Hanoi Seen Exploiting Its Civilian Casualties."



January 10, 1942

Is the British government fighting against fascism? Or is it fighting only against a threat to its hold on the Empire?

Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, in a broadcast on Jan. 4 announcing the results of his recent conference with Stalin, made it quite clear.

"The trouble with Hitler," he said, "was not that he was a Nazi at home. The trouble with him was that he would not stay at home."

Eden has no complaints because Hitler smashed the democratic rights of the German people, destroyed the German labor movement, intensified the exploitation of the workers, conducted anti-Semitic pogroms. That was not "the trouble" with Hitler because it was no skin off the back of the rulers of Britain.

The aims of the British masses and the British ruling class in this war are not the same. The masses want the destruction of Hitlerism, the ruling class wants only the elimination of Hitler's threat to its own interests. Eden's speech made it clear that if the masses want this war to end with the destruction of Hitlerism, they will have to establish the kind of government in Britain which has the same anti-fascist aims they have.

'Militant' Prisoner Subscription Fund

The *Militant* special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Historic moment in South Africa

A historic turning point has been crossed in South Africa. After years of relentless struggle, the African National Congress and other democratic organizations have compelled the apartheid regime to sit down and begin negotiations.

Having forced the white minority government into a retreat, the revolutionary-democratic movement is now pressing to realize its historic aim: the establishment of a nonracial, democratic, and nonsexist South African republic.

Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and other leaders of the ANC explain that the goals of the struggle are to create a society where oppression and domination are a thing of the past and where working people can be masters of their destiny.

As such, the revolutionary struggle they are leading is a source of inspiration, education, and politicization for millions — not only in South Africa, but around the world as well. Working people, students, and others have staged massive strikes, rallies, and boycotts, and rebuilt into effective political instruments of struggle their organizations, which the apartheid regime tried to obliterate.

Those fighting in South Africa are showing the ability of the "men and women from nowhere" to bring down an entrenched social structure that is backed by a massively armed state, thus changing the course of history.

Speeches by a number of organizations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa testified to why working

people and all democratically minded individuals the world over should join in backing the struggle in this — as ANC leaders have described it — the last and possibly the hardest mile in the battle to overturn and uproot every vestige of the criminal apartheid system.

Violence against antiapartheid fighters, in which government security forces are implicated; millions still living under the jackboot of repression, denied the most basic democratic rights; widespread hunger, illiteracy, joblessness, and lack of adequate housing; subminimum wages; and forced removals of Black farmers from their land are simply a few of the ongoing manifestations of apartheid. The trade unions, the ANC, and others are fighting to bring this to an end.

ANC leaders point out that winning a government that represents the majority will open the door to a broader struggle against the legacy of apartheid and the devastation caused by the crisis of the South African economy today.

Unionists, students and other youth, working farmers, and democratically minded people can continue to be a part of this struggle by holding educational forums, helping to get the *Militant* and Pathfinder books into the hands of other fighters, and by demanding that Washington keep the pressure on Pretoria to end its complicity in the violence and end all measures that block the ability of working people to engage in politics.

A blow to U.S. imperialism

The announcement that Washington must evacuate the naval base at Subic Bay by the end of 1992 is a significant blow to U.S. imperialism. When the last forces pull out, it will bring an end to one of the central staging grounds for Washington's assaults on working people in the Asian and Pacific region in this century.

Subic Bay is the largest U.S. naval base outside of the United States. It, along with Clark Air Base — another large U.S. base in the Philippines, which closed earlier this year — played a major role in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the war against Iraq.

The U.S. military presence began in 1898 after the United States defeated Spain and took control of its colonies: the Philippines, Cuba, and Guam. As with the "agreement" to lease Guantánamo Bay in Cuba, the United States demanded lease agreements for the bases as part of the ransom the Philippines had to pay for formal independence in 1946.

Since their creation, the bases have been an affront to the sovereignty and dignity of the Filipino people. Tens of thousands of workers serving the bases live in sprawling

adjacent slums and work under inhuman conditions. Drugs, prostitution, and forms of indentured servitude are a common part of the way of life of thousands.

The bases have also played a part in the Philippine government's repression of the population. Washington's lease payments have been mostly in the form of military aid.

"The bases symbolize America's vital and strategic interests in this country and in this region," the Jose Diokno Foundation wrote in a letter to President Corazon Aquino in 1988. While the bases remain, it added, "no government in this country can possibly serve the interests of our people over that of the United States."

As social tensions increase in many parts of the world, the imperialist rulers' need for a military option will grow more acute. But Washington faces severe difficulties finding replacements in the region for these massive military bases. The blow dealt by the closing of Subic Bay weakens Washington as the pressure grows for diminishing the U.S. military presence in the whole region, especially in Korea.

GM layoffs pose need for fight

The plans announced by General Motors to close 21 plants and lay off 74,000 workers over the next four years poses the need for a program for workers to stand together and resist such attacks.

The December 18 announcement by GM chairman Robert Stempel is part of the relentless employer offensive against the living standards and union organization of working people that was initiated with the 1974-75 recession.

The layoffs are not unique to GM. Thousands of other industrial workers have lost their jobs in the last several months. The offensive has put many working people one paycheck away from being unable to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads.

One of every 10 people living in the United States relies on food stamps. Families with young children now make up at least one third of all workers who are homeless. Those hardest hit are Black, Latino, and immigrant workers.

The announced layoffs at GM are not the result of some natural disaster. They are the result of conscious decisions by a handful of superrich families to defend *their* interests, *their* profits. These billionaire families drive to make working people pay for the crisis of capitalism.

In the face of this onslaught, the solution proposed by the trade union officialdom is to identify with "our" company, "our" plant, or "our" country.

The absurdity of this approach can be seen graphically in the case of GM. Workers in the same union are led by union officials into the trap of competing against each other for fewer jobs between different plants and towns. Some are offering to reopen local contracts and give more concessions to GM to save the plant in their town.

Meanwhile Canadian Auto Workers president Robert White is offering to fight for "Canadian jobs," pointing with pride to the lower wages in Canada. UAW president Owen Bieber pledges to try harder to spend the workers' union dues to put Democrats in the White House. That is to tie us

more to the same politicians that have fully backed the bosses' offensive. This perspective will lead only to more blows against working people.

To effectively fight the employer-government assault the labor movement must break out of the dead-end framework of what "our" company cannot afford. Instead, working people must start with a different framework: the needs of *our class* and what it will take to defend and advance those needs regardless of the profit demands of big business. Any moves to reopen the UAW contract and offer concessions to GM would be a blow against the workers.

The labor movement should aim to unite and mobilize all working people to fight for the workweek to be cut to 30 hours with 40 hours pay. A shorter workweek would open up jobs for millions in cities across the country.

Labor should also fight for a massive public works program to improve the living conditions of the working class. Schools, hospitals, streets, housing, highways, and bridges need to be repaired and rebuilt. Unemployment compensation at union wages should be extended to all those without jobs.

Capitalism breeds competition among working people and reinforces inequalities and divisions that weaken the labor movement's ability to fight back. Labor must fight for affirmative action measures to defend those layers of the working class hardest hit by the crisis — Blacks, women, and other targets of discrimination.

Such a fighting perspective can help to forge unity among working people, including across borders.

The bipartisan support for the offensive by GM and the rest of the billionaire bosses demands a response on the political level as well.

Through the struggles that develop, working people will see the need to organize a labor party based on the unions that would contend for governmental power with the parties of the ruling rich.

S. Africa talks 'a milestone in our struggle'

Continued from Page 7

be dropped and be submitted to a referendum instead.

The IFP spokesperson had earlier spent most of his speech motivating why the traditional Zulu king should be accorded equal status with other delegations. Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi raised this demand in the weeks leading up to the convention and ended up not attending. An ANC-proposed compromise, that all traditional leaders be given observer status, was rejected by the IFP.

The IFP delegate told the meeting that the "Zulu nation is being excluded" as a result of the decision.

The Ciskei government, which originally indicated it would sign the declaration, said that it had reservations about one section of the accord. The delegation added its name to the document the following day.

After hearing the reservations by the three delegations, Mandela rose and asked all the delegations who had no reservations with the agreement to join him in endorsing the pact. Thanking the parties that raised reservations for doing so, he said that it was clear a big majority of participants supported the declaration and the convention should proceed to adopt it.

After the signing Mandela said he had a matter of "national importance" to raise and requested the floor. He then rebutted de Klerk's claims that the ANC was not living up to agreements to disband its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Pressed by right wing

De Klerk took a hard line in his Codesa speech, reflecting continued pressure from conservative and right-wing organizations. These groups waged a systematic propaganda campaign against the convention in the weeks prior to the meeting. Threats and acts of violence, such as the bombing of a nonracial religious school and the offices of the Congress of South African Trade Unions in Pretoria, have taken place.

The Conservative Party made some electoral gains in National Party strongholds in recent months. Conservative leaders, such as Andries Treurnicht, have hammered away at fears of some whites that they will be dominated by Blacks in a post-apartheid South Africa.

In an article in the *Citizen*, Treurnicht described the ANC as an organization "which does not have the right to claim the Afrikaner's fatherland, and which does not have any right to co-rule over the Afrikaner folk." Afrikaners are descendants of the original Dutch settlers in South Africa and speak Afrikaans.

Outside the convention several right-wing groups mounted a picket line to protest the proceedings. One group of Afrikaner students from the University of Pretoria held up signs that read, "We only want our own state. We're like any other nation." The students had broken up a meeting at the university addressed by de Klerk earlier in the year.

The Conservative Party and other rightist forces use the call for a whites-only area to cover their real aims of arresting the erosion of the power of the apartheid state. They seek to prevent giving over even an inch of South Africa to the control of a democratic government. Playing on the desperate fears of some whites, they win support for their reactionary policies with the notion of setting up such a white homeland.

Having to defend the government from the right, de Klerk opened himself up to the stinging rebuttal by Mandela. Reports from Black townships in the area indicate spontaneous celebrations broke out in the streets when Mandela concluded his dressing-down of the state president. Such a scene had never before been witnessed in the country.

True to his word that he does not want to politically bury the National Party, Mandela quickly struck a conciliatory note at a press conference at the end of the day's session. The following day he told the convention that while he had to respond to de Klerk, he considered the matter behind them.

Next meeting of Codesa

On the second day of the meeting, delegates adopted a series of procedural rules and established five working groups charged with coming up with proposals on "creation of a climate for free political activity;" drawing up general constitutional principles; reviewing the constitution-making process and various interim government arrangements; the future of the "independent" Bantustans; and implementation of Codesa decisions.

It was decided that the working groups would convene in late January and the next full session of Codesa will take place no later than March 1992.

Summing up the historic convention at a press conference the following day, Mandela welcomed the fact "that the government has acknowledged the legitimacy of various points we have raised," including the demands for the establishment of an interim government and an elected constituent assembly.

The ANC leader rejected any attempts to "hold racially based referenda" or the "establishment of an interim government which finds its form in a glorified tricamera parliament with an indefinite time span."

Striking Pennsylvania steelworkers win support

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

Working people around the world are involved in skirmishes over speedup, forced overtime, layoffs, and attacks on health and safety benefits. Some unionists

Solidarity has also come from other unions in the area. Teamsters have brought regular donations of food. UAW Local 1069 at the Boeing helicopter plant in Essington, Pennsylvania, gave \$1,600 from a plant-gate collection. Many small businesses in Coatesville display signs supporting the USWA and give strikers discounts.

form an organization and called it Women of Steel. The meetings are open to wives of Local 1165 members only.

Women of Steel president Linda Houston explained, "It helps the wives to go to these meetings, to blow off some steam from the pressure of being on strike. It's hard to have your husband home all the time with the bills piling up."

Local 1165 president Harry Haines attends the Women of Steel meetings to bring the women up to date on the strike and answer any questions they may have.

For most of the women who spoke with the *Militant*, this is the first time they have participated in any kind of political activity. One said, "We are doing this for our children and grandchildren. We have to fight now so things will not get worse in the future."

Women of Steel has helped in obtaining donations of food, diapers, and other necessities and distributing these items to union members in need.

In December Women of Steel caroled at the home of Robert Schaal, president of Lukens. Schaal has bodyguards staying in a camper in his driveway, but that did not deter Women of Steel from singing their pro-union Christmas carols there.

UAW pickets Detroit department stores

Hundreds of United Auto Workers (UAW) members and other unionists picketed Hudson's department stores in Detroit November 29 to December 1. The picketlines were in support of store workers trying to organize a union.

This was the major component of the "Anyplace But Hudson's Thanksgiving Weekend" campaign launched by the UAW. Lead-up activities included store leafletings, press conferences, and newspaper ads. The actions were carried out to pressure the chain, owned by the Dayton-Hudson Corp., to negotiate with the workers.

Hudson's workers began a union-

organizing drive in 1989. They have in-house organizing committees in six stores and a UAW local at the Westland, Michigan, store.

The organizing drive grew out of deteriorating conditions for the workers at the stores. In 1989 the company slashed many workers' wages by up to 20 percent by changing the compensation plan and raising sales quotas.

The workers began to meet and decided to contact the UAW because it is the largest union in the area and other unions that organize retail workers had failed in an earlier organizing attempt.

As the workers began to organize, the company launched a harassment campaign against them. The company brought in a union-busting security outfit to videotape workers and union supporters. Workers report being spied on. As one worker said, "When I went to the john, they went to the john."

The UAW has organized other activities to aid the drive. Eight hundred UAW members protested at Hudson's in Oakland Mall in July. Hudson's workers have reported on their drive and raised money at many local union meetings in the area.

New Zealand nurse wins victory against gag rule

A victory for the right of free speech was scored November 28 when the Area Health Board in Auckland, New Zealand, announced that it had removed a disciplinary warning from the employment file of nurse Teresa O'Connor.

O'Connor, a nurse at Auckland's Middlemore Hospital, was the author of an article critical of the cutbacks to public health services being carried out by the government and Area Health Boards. The article was published some months earlier in the *New Zealand Listener*, a widely circulated magazine.

Following publication of the article, O'Connor had been disciplined for contravening the board's policy that only its designated spokespeople are permitted to comment to the

news media on such matters.

This policy was announced in connection with the layoffs of hundreds of health workers a year earlier. On that occasion, the board said that laid-off workers who spoke to the news media might lose their claim to redundancy [unemployment] compensation.

The action against O'Connor was met with opposition from unions of health workers and professional organizations, particularly at Middlemore Hospital itself. Just a few days before the board backed down, 150 people rallied outside the hospital carrying placards with slogans such as "Support freedom of speech" and "Say no to the board's disciplinary action."

The board's decision to back down comes in the context of mounting public criticism of the government's dismantling of New Zealand's public health system. In recent weeks, most public hospitals across the country have been paralyzed by strikes by resident doctors protesting the attempt by Area Health Boards to impose drastic cuts in their pay and working conditions.

Meanwhile the *New Zealand Herald* reported December 5 that Eric Hobbs, a sanitation worker employed by Auckland's North Shore City Council, was fired for writing letters critical of the council to his local newspaper.

While acknowledging that they have no complaint with Hobbs's 23 years' work as a sewer patrolman, a council spokesman said Hobbs had breached an implicit contractual duty to be a "good" employee by not being openly critical of his employer.

Henry Hillenbrand, member of United Transportation Union Local 300 in Philadelphia; Helen Meyers in Philadelphia; John Sarge, member of UAW Local 900 at Ford in Detroit; and James Pearson in Auckland, New Zealand, contributed to this week's column.

ON THE PICKET LINE

faced with sharp takeback demands, lockouts, and union-busting moves by the employers have gone on strike to force the bosses to back down.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines to let other *Militant* readers know about what is happening at your workplace or in your union. If there is an interesting political discussion going on at work, we would like to hear about that too.

After almost three months on strike, the members of United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Local 1165 remain solid in their battle against Lukens Inc., a major specialty steel rolling and finishing mill in Coatesville, Pennsylvania.

On October 25 they voted 842-302 to reject what Lukens Steel said was its "final offer." The local has 1,300 members.

A court injunction has limited union picketers to two at the side of each gate. However, the pickets are being reinforced by spouses organized by Women of Steel, who are not covered by such restrictions.

Strikers held a Christmas party of more than 500 strikers and their families December 15. Three hundred presents were donated by United Auto Workers Local 435 at the General Motors plant in Wilmington, Delaware.

After nine years without a pay increase, and other union concessions, Lukens is offering only a 15 percent pay increase over three years. The union wants to bring wages up to the level common in basic steel.

The company wants to take the monthly payments for dependents' medical insurance directly from workers' paychecks. The union seeks increased pensions with the right to retire after 30 years in the plant and a halt to the company's practice of contracting out work to nonunion workers.

'Women of Steel' aid Lukens strikers

Women of Steel is the organization of the wives of USWA Local 1165 members who are on strike against Lukens Inc. in Coatesville, Pennsylvania.

The organization was started by wives who wanted to support their striking husbands. Debbie Houston, vice-president of Women of Steel, explained that when her husband went out on strike, "I felt helpless; can't I do something?" So she got the idea of wives joining the picket lines. Houston approached the union, which agreed to the idea, and then sent a letter to the local Coatesville paper, the *Daily Record*, calling on workers' wives to participate in the strike. A few wives began picketing October 6 for the first time.

In November a meeting of the wives was held. They decided to

LETTERS

Historical lessons

The "Discussion with Our Readers" column is a particularly attractive new feature in the *Militant*. It deepens and clarifies the paper's coverage and analysis in an exciting way.

I particularly appreciated the use of the column to direct readers to Trotsky's 1937 writings about Butenko, a Soviet diplomat who defected to Mussolini's Italy and made semi-fascist statements. That background reading helped the *Militant* staff recognize that today the remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the eastern part of Germany could be a breeding ground of fascist currents and participate in attacks on immigrant workers.

Could you continue to use the column to direct readers to similar source material? Are there, for instance, particular parts of Trotsky's Balkan War correspondence that illuminate the Yugoslav situation today? Or, selections from Marx and Engels from 1848 or Lenin and/or Trotsky in both 1905 and 1917 that provide lessons for the fight for a constituent assembly and interim government in South Africa today?

Kim Kleinman
St. Louis, Missouri

Lively paper

I share Baxter Smith's praise for the recent changes in the *Militant*. In the past few months it has become a more lively paper than ever, taking up many of the discussions and debates that are occurring in a very refreshing way, from the right to die,

AIDS and the Magic Johnson case, the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyages, and so on. The *Militant* has utilized events like the publication of Oliver North's book or the Gates hearings to make important comments on the nature of this system. Keep up the good work. The paper is more attractive and useful than ever. The practice of beginning 4 or 5 articles on the front page helps show the variety of coverage in the paper.

Here are two discussions that are worthy of analysis by the *Militant*. One is the question of racial polarization in the U.S. What is the impact of the 15-year or so retreat of the civil rights organizations, the lack of fightback, on race relations in the U.S.? Some say they are worse than ever and offer solutions such as Black-male-only schools to address the crisis. The other important issue, in Pennsylvania at least, is "school choice," or the voucher system, which the legislature is discussing. An article on the importance of free, universal public education as an acquisition of struggles of working people would help arm us to explain why this is not the answer to the crisis of education in the country's public schools.

Sandi Sherman
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Food 'overproduction'?

At a recent *Militant* forum, there was a discussion on why the U.S. should send food to hungry workers in the Soviet Union. The idea that solidarity among workers was in the interest of all of us and that we



should not allow ourselves to be divided by artificial man-made borders was well developed. However, the availability of food was not discussed.

Some 20 years ago, I read in *Scientific American* that if American production worked at 100 percent capacity — no idle factories or idle farm lands — the U.S. could feed the world 25 times over. With technological development, in spite of increased world population, this probably remains a fair estimate. So there's plenty of food in the U.S. In fact in developed capitalist countries (Canada included) there is so-called overproduction and food often rots, is destroyed or artificially underproduced to insure profits. Farmers are forced into this mode of operation by quotas and food and grain pro-

cessing companies. So the argument that sending food to workers in other countries takes away from hungry Americans or Canadians does not hold water.

We would still have the capitalist system of rationing — those green coupons called dollar bills — if you have lots, you eat well; if you have none, you starve in the middle of plenty.

Bea Bryant
Ontario, Canada

Soviet articles

The *Militant* needs more articles on the current changes in the (formerly?) Soviet Union; any possibility of a Moscow bureau? Need more analysis of the political tendencies over there, as well as the rest of

eastern Europe. Are any of the political documents of Trotsky and other Left Oppositionists coming to light, etc.? An analysis of the current state of the CPs around the world (especially in the U.S.) would be interesting.

Articles on current artistic and cultural events (at least occasionally) would be interesting as well.

Elliott Caine

Los Angeles, California

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.

Icelandic unions strike for contracts

BY SIGURLAUG GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Strikes paralyzed different areas of the economy here in December. The general workers' union, Dagsbrun [Dawn], one of the largest unions in the country, authorized strikes by various sections of its membership. First, workers closed down gasoline stations and oil transport for three days. Next, a three-day strike hit domestic air freight. Then, transport of goods at the harbor was shut down. Finally, a planned three-day strike in dairy production and distribution was called off when a contract was reached.

The series of strikes was called to pressure management to settle contracts during negotiations that should have been concluded by September. Two strikes had occurred in No-

vember. A union of 200 dairy workers in the northern part of the country struck for several days demanding an extra payment, to which they were entitled after having completed a training course. The strikers won their demand.

The Sailors' National Union also struck for four days and won a 3 percent raise. During the strike, unions in Sweden and Norway refused to load or unload Icelandic ships.

At the same time, the government is preparing the coming year's budget. Last fall it announced plans to make drastic cuts in the public health system and introduce charges for education following the 10 years of basic education, which is now free for children between the ages of 6 and 16. High school students responded by organizing citywide

protests in October demanding equal access to all education. Some university students participated, although their organization did not take part.

The cuts in public health service are a serious threat. The government plans to close down two hospitals in the capital city area; demand payment for every family doctor visit, which used to be free, and impose higher fees for seeing a medical specialist. It has already cut out subsidies for medicine, which patients now have to pay for in full.

These measures will lower the living standard of workers of all ages. According to the National Economic Institute, negative economic growth of 8 percent is expected in 1992. Unemployment is expected to rise to 2.5 percent compared with the level of less than 1 percent that existed for decades. In 1991, unemployment was 1.5 percent.

For many years, the Icelandic government has had a perspective of expanding the country's economic base to include different industries, with less emphasis on fishing, which still today accounts for 75 percent of exports. These plans have been repeatedly frustrated, most recently when the multinational Atlantik Group cancelled its plan to build an aluminum plant in Iceland. This plant would have been supplied with energy from a new hydroelectric plant to be built next year. That project has also been cancelled.

During the current contract negotiations, the Iceland Federation of Labor (ASI) has called on the government to lower interest rates before it negotiates a contract. With this call, ASI supports a similar demand by the employers in the fishing sector. The National Bank and other capitalists oppose this.

Indonesia rule of East Timor is 'crime against humanity'

BY TERRY LYNCH

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — The massacre of more than 100 protesters by Indonesian troops in the East Timor capital of Dili was "not an isolated incident," Francisco Pang, a representative of Fretilin in Australia, told a Militant Labour Forum here December 7.

East Timor was invaded by Indonesian forces in December 1975. Prior to that it was a colony of Portugal. Fretilin (Timorese National Liberation Front) led the successful struggle against Portuguese rule and is now fighting Indonesian occupation.

Pang labeled the 16-year occupation of East Timor "a crime against humanity." According to Amnesty International, 200,000 have died at the hands of the Indonesian military.

There have been calls for an independent inquiry into the November 12 massacre, Pang said. "But for economic reasons the Australian and New Zealand governments bypass every principle they claim to uphold. New Zealand and Australia have strong commercial links with Indonesia. East Timor's oil reserves make it a potential Kuwait. The hypocrisy of New Zealand and Australia is shown when they condemn Iraq's invasion of Kuwait but stay silent about Indonesia's occupation of East Timor."

Pang reported on new support for the struggle of the East Timorese people from

inside Indonesia. The Student Senate of the University of Java issued a statement calling for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops and self-determination for East Timor. "This shows the courage of the students under the jackboot," he commented.

At the end of the meeting Pang showed video footage of the massacre and told of the comments of the local Indonesian military commander. "He said that given that the crowd numbered 3,000 and that the firing lasted 10 minutes, the death toll was not excessive."

Demonstrations such as the one that was ended by the massacre and another at the time of the visit by Pope John Paul II to East Timor in October last year are part of a new strategic approach by Fretilin, Pang explained. "Armed struggle in the countryside was not enough to achieve our goal, so it was the right time for young people in the cities to stage mass actions."

Pang spoke at public meetings in Auckland and Christchurch and took part in a wreath-laying protest outside the Indonesian Embassy in Wellington. New Zealand Foreign Affairs minister Don McKinnon and Defense Minister Warren Cooper refused to meet Pang during his visit.

The day before Pang arrived in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, 40 people demonstrated outside Parliament under the banner "Free East Timor!"

Swedish government steps up detention of refugee children

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Children of refugees are being detained here in increasing numbers, despite the fact that the law prohibits imprisonment of people under the age of 16.

New regulations were adopted in July 1990 on detaining refugees. According to Maj-Lis Lööv, the immigration minister in the previous Social Democratic government, the purpose of the new rules was to lessen the number of refugee children in prison. But the opposite has happened.

Before the new regulations, 181 refugee children were taken into custody in the first half of 1990. In the second half of that year 294 children were arrested and held. In the following 10 months, 587 children of asylum-seekers were locked up.

Between 5 and 10 percent of these were

jailed for more than 10 days, either in rooms at refugee camps or under supervision of a security guard.

When the extent of this became known, the Social Democratic government ordered a report on the situation. The minister of immigration in the current Liberal government is still awaiting the report.

Almost half of the refugees who are allowed to stay in Sweden are children. In 1988-90, for example, 25,000 people under the age of 16 years were permitted to stay. In January 1991 there were 9,000 children under 18 staying in Swedish refugee camps.

Up to December 1989, 80 percent of the asylum-seekers were allowed to stay. The figure is now 40 percent, due to the government's decision two years ago to restrict the right to asylum.

New Zealand farmers face crisis

BY MALCOLM STEWART

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — The wool, hides, lamb, and beef produced by New Zealand's sheep and cattle farmers account for two-thirds of this country's export trade.

But figures released here recently show that more than half of sheep and cattle farmers are struggling to survive a tide of encroaching debt. One researcher, Gerald Frengley, writing in the *Christchurch Press*, put the country's agricultural debt at N.Z.\$8 billion, up from N.Z.\$3.5 billion in 1980 (N.Z.\$1=US\$5.54).

"More than half of all New Zealand sheep and beef farmers have lost \$18,200, on average, every year since 1985," he wrote. In the coming year, if present meat and wool prices and current costs continue, "The av-

erage incomes of beef and sheep farmers could fall by more than \$8,000 below 1990-91 figures, making this potentially the worst year since the 1930s depression."

Pita Alexander, a farm adviser, agrees predicting that a typical sheep farm will face a cash deficit of more than N.Z.\$18,000.

Fifty percent of sheep and beef farmers pay 35 percent or more of their gross revenue in interest payments to the banks.

Big-business dailies like the *Press* are urging the sort of government rescue operation last seen in the 1930s and in soldier resettlement schemes after World War II.

"However," a November 4 *Press* editorial concluded, "there is no evidence that this government, or any other likely government is prepared to offer today's beleaguered farmers more than sympathy."

Angry unionists and parents protest Stockholm city budget cutbacks

BY DAG TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Some 2,600 angry unionists, parents, and others marched to city hall November 25. They were protesting cutbacks in the city's budget that will hurt children, disabled people, and the elderly.

The cuts were disguised under a new administrative system that would give the child-care centers and other local units full financial responsibility and allow them to decide what cutbacks to make in their activities.

Jeers and boos met the president of the city council when he told the protesting

crowd that he hoped those present who were employed by the city would show "the same dedication on the job when you implement the decisions that we will adopt here in a democratic way."

Banners in the demonstration carried slogans such as: "No cutbacks and privatization," "The elderly and the disabled have the right to security," and "The future sits at the school desks."

The demonstration was organized by the unions of teachers, municipal workers, and parking wardens, together with the association of the parents at child-care centers.

