

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Social Security: a product of
working-class struggle

— PAGE 7

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ANC paves the way for first 'free and fair' South Africa elections

BY JOHN STEELE
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — An historic International Solidarity Conference organized by the African National Congress here February 19-21 endorsed the ANC's call for rapid elections to a Constituent Assembly to end racist apartheid rule once and for all.

"There are certain moments that capture the essence of life itself," ANC president Nelson Mandela told the 900 participants from almost 70 countries. "Today is such a moment for me. For you are the friends from five continents who kept hope alive. . . . You refused to let the world ignore the tragedy wreaked by apartheid."

"You are here to help us transform all this," Mandela continued, "to help us move from antiapartheid to democracy." The ANC president called on antiapartheid fighters around the world to aid the ANC struggle for "free and fair elections" to a Constituent Assembly.

"We know you will march the last mile with us, will work with us to win a resounding victory in these elections. We know you will help us reconstruct South Africa in the vision of the Freedom Charter as a country that belongs to all its people, Black and white," Mandela told the delegates to enthusiastic applause.

Broad participation

Attendance at the conference — the first of its kind on South African soil — exceeded the expectations of its organizers.

In the vast conference hall at the sprawling National Exhibition Centre complex, a 15-minute ride from downtown Johannesburg, almost every seat was filled throughout the three-day conference. Of those registered, 644 came from outside South Africa and 253 from 106 organizations in South Africa.

Among the participants were youthful antiapartheid activists, as well as those active for decades in the struggle against the racist regime in Pretoria. Trade unionists, church representatives, officials of nongovernmental organizations, and representatives of political parties also participated. They traveled from most western European



Johannesburg workers protest last April to demand end to increasing violence. Broad mobilizations from mid-year onwards forced the government back into serious discussions with ANC on holding elections for Constituent Assembly.

countries, North and South America, the Mideast, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

The United States delegation of more than 70 was the largest. Participants from Britain numbered about 60. Around 35 attended from Sweden.

Representatives of governments, ruling parties, and parliamentarians came from Sweden, China, Britain, Cuba, Russia, Japan, Ghana, Iran, Canada, and others. Among the African countries represented were Zambia, Uganda, Tunisia, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, and the Ivory Coast.

A colorful wall-length mural depicting the struggle of South Africa's oppressed majority formed the backdrop to the conference head table. It was emblazoned with ANC slogans such as "The People Shall Govern," "Housing, Security and Comfort for All," and "Land to Those who Work It."

Solidarity greetings to the conference included those from former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda; Joseph Reed, special representative of the United Nations secretary-general; Jack Cunningham on behalf of the British Labour Party; Japanese Socialist Party leader Takaka Doi; and others. Cleveland Robinson, retired head of United Auto Workers District 65, spoke on behalf of the U.S. delegation.

Cuban representative Eumelio Caballero said, "The day will come when we will celebrate together our victories — the victory of the South African people against apartheid and the victory of the Cuban people against the U.S. economic blockade and its hostility." Pedro Julio Machado, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, headed the delegation.

Chess grandmaster Anatoly Karpov from Russia and world heavyweight boxing cham-

Continued on Page 8

Clinton plan aims to make workers pay

BY SARA LOBMAN

President Bill Clinton, who presented his economic proposals to a joint session of Congress February 17, constantly claims that the rich will bear the brunt of the "shared sacrifice" he is demanding of the nation. But the details show that his plan, far from being the attack on the privileged and wealthy that he claims, is aimed at forcing working people to pay for the capitalist economic crisis.

In reality, the administration is offering working people increased taxes and cuts in desperately needed programs while insuring that tax shelters and loopholes protect the ruling rich. A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* explains how carefully the Clinton team worked to come up with a program that meets the needs of the wealthy, while still being presentable to the rest of society. Only after Clinton, with the help of Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Budget Director Leon Panetta, and others had completed the basic economic package, was it reworked by Clinton's political advisers for public consumption. These advisers added the "populist veneer and pro-middle-class rhetoric," the *Journal* explains.

Tax the rich?

Higher taxes and cuts in spending will have the biggest impact on "those who benefited the most in the past," Clinton said in presenting the economic plan. "I want to emphasize the facts about this plan: 98.8 percent of America's families will have no increase in their income tax rates. Only 1.2 percent at the top."

But income taxes are only a small part of the proposed tax changes. Clinton is also planning a new energy tax that will hit working people hardest. According to the Energy Department, the tax will cost a typical family \$120 a year at the gas pump, oil tank, or electric meter. When these taxes are taken into account, 55 percent of U.S. families, not 1.2 percent as Clinton claims, will see their taxes go up, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. But the tax will also have a ripple effect that will impact on the price of everything from pizza to shoes, as corporations pass on the added expenses to consumers. When these indirect costs are added on, the Energy Department estimates that a family will pay \$320 a year.

Clinton's tax plan also attacks working people who are unemployed and those who have been forced to survive on welfare and other government programs. The proposals, Clinton says, "will cost American families with incomes under \$30,000 nothing, because of other programs we propose, principally those raising the earned income tax credit." But the *Wall Street Journal* points out that this tax credit — which returns part of the tax an individual would normally pay — "draws a sharp distinction between poor people who work and poor people who don't — the credit goes only to those with earned income."

Inroads on health care, social security

"I'd like for us to . . . help people [by shifting] them from entitlement programs to empowerment programs," Clinton said in justifying inroads his economic proposals will make in the various entitlements which previous struggles by working people have won (see article on page 7). These programs, which include Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, and unemployment insurance, are designed to protect workers from some of the ravages of the ups and downs of the capitalist business cycle. They are called entitlements exactly because they were in-

Continued on Page 4

The Frame-up of Mark Curtis

The Stakes for Working People and Youth
in his Fight for Justice and Freedom
BOSTON, Massachusetts



Kate Kaku

Hear:

- Kate Kaku, leader of Curtis's international defense campaign, member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5488, and Curtis's wife.
- Charles Rosenberg, Cuba solidarity activist.
- Maria De Felice, long-time women's rights and antiwar activist.
- Others

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Portuguese gov't threatens to expel immigrant workers

Portuguese interior minister Manuel Dias Loureiro has announced that any undocumented foreign-born worker who did not legalize his or her status through a four-month program that expired February 13, "will have to be expelled."

Immigrants' associations say that because of fear or ignorance tens of thousands of Africans and Brazilians have failed to apply for the amnesty. Some 30,000 to 40,000 undocumented workers from the former Portuguese colonies had applied for the amnesty program, from a total that is estimated to be two to three times that number. Most of the immigrant workers are working in construction or as poorly paid domestic workers.

The Portuguese government plans to set up special detention centers for immigrants served with expulsion orders and new arrivals refused entry and awaiting deportation. Immigrants' associations refer to such centers as "concentration camps," but the Director of Immigration insists they will be more like "hotels."

Cuba offers oil exploration rights

On February 10, the Cuban government made a presentation in Canada to foreign oil companies interested in bidding on oil exploration rights for 11 areas that will be auctioned off next summer. The areas include offshore and inland zones.

It was the first international offering of this type by the Cuban government. A similar meeting was scheduled by Cubapetroleo, the state oil firm, in London.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the island's main source of oil and trading partner, Cuba has experienced severe fuel shortages. New techniques introduced from Canada have helped boost Cuban oil production from 527,000 tons in 1991 to 882,000 tons last year.

Warsaw passes antiabortion law

President Lech Walesa of Poland signed a strict anti-abortion law February 15 that punishes doctors who violate the rules with up to two years in prison.



A ferry traveling to the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince sank February 17, killing most of the 800 to 1,200 passengers on board. The 150-foot boat was the only link between the town of Jérémie and the rest of Haiti, due to bad roads and lack of fuel. The ferry, shown above in an earlier photo, was routinely overpacked with people and goods.

The new law, which reverses Poland's virtually free access to abortion, permits abortion only in cases when a panel of doctors certifies that the pregnancy endangers the mother's life or seriously threatens her health; when a prosecutor certifies that it is a result of rape or incest; or when a fetus is determined by prenatal tests to have serious and irreparable damage.

Public opinion polls indicated that most Poles favor retaining a liberal abortion law. A petition drive by opponents of the ban gathered 1.3 million signatures demanding that the question be decided in a referendum, but the parliament refused to schedule a vote on it.

Honduran unionists win victory

After a general strike of almost 20 days members of the SITRATERCO union at the Tela Railroad Co., a subsidiary of the U.S. Standard Brands Co. in Honduras, won most of their demands against the multinational corporation.

René Ayestas, president of the union, which has around 7,000 members, said that "the company will keep four plantations in production and that way the indirect dismissal of more than 1,000 workers is avoided."

Tela also agreed not to employ day laborers, a practice that jeopardizes union organizing, and to raise the salaries of 1,000 women workers who pack the bananas for \$9 a day plus overtime.

Tela and Standard Brands control about 60 percent of banana production in Honduras, one of the largest banana producers in the world.

New committee to defend Tunisian political activists

Eighteen Tunisian lawyers and university students announced February 2 the formation of the National Committee for the Defense of Prisoners of Conscience. There are almost 8,000 prisoners in jail for their political and religious beliefs in Tunisia, most of them accused of belonging to the Islamic fundamentalist movement.

Two days later, Tunisian authorities arrested Salah Hamzaoui, one of the founders of the organization. There has been no news of him since his arrest. On February 8, another activist, Sadri Khiari, was arrested at his home. A campaign is being organized for their release, including an appeal for the sending of messages to the president of Tunisia demanding that they be freed.

German armed forces to be cut

Speaking on February 6, German chancellor Helmut Kohl indicated that Bonn would seek to reduce the size of the German army to below the already-planned level of 370,000 troops by 1995. Kohl stressed, however, that Germany would retain its compulsory military service, and also called for further modernizing of the army. The German army today has 440,000 troops.

Steelworkers protest in Germany

As the recession deepens in Germany, Bonn continues to come into conflict with working people in eastern Germany who are demanding wages and conditions to match those of workers in the western part of the country.

In the eastern state of Saxony, after metalworking industry managers sought revision of a contract that called for wages in eastern Germany to rise this year to 82 percent of western levels — and 100 percent by next year — the unions insisted on sticking to the original contract.

On February 18, the steel companies responded by unilaterally canceling the contracts, and the union threatened to strike. Protesting the industry's actions, some 20,000 East German steelworkers demonstrated in Chemnitz to demand the previously agreed to wage hikes.

Japan seeks permanent Security Council seat

Japan may well gain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros Ghali, said after a four-day visit to that country that ended February 18. Currently Britain, China, Germany, Russia, and the United States have the permanent seats and veto power on the council.

Boutros Ghali also used his visit to continue to urge the Japanese government to participate more in UN "peacekeeping" missions abroad, while backing off an earlier demand that Japan change its constitution to allow it more latitude to send troops around the world.

German chancellor Helmut Kohl is backing Japan's bid for a Security Council seat but the governments of France and Britain are less sure. Germany and Japan should continue to act "primarily as providers of funds," the London *Independent* suggested in an editorial January 28. Defending Britain's seat on the Security Council, British foreign secretary Douglas Hurd explained that his country's past "imperial role" made it especially well suited for the job.

Antiracist rally on Phila. campus

Three hundred people joined a candlelight march and rally against racism on the University of Pennsylvania campus in Philadelphia February 14. The protesters, the majority of whom were of South-Asian descent, protested the acquittal of three men who had brutally beaten an Indian American, Khaulal Sharan, five years ago in New Jersey. Witnesses said the men shouted "Get the Indian," before attacking Sharan with a baseball bat.

Paris vows to veto oilseed deal

Jean-Pierre Soisson, the French foreign minister, warned the European Community (EC) that France would veto the U.S.-EC accord on oilseeds if it is put to a vote at the EC farm ministers' council in March. The accord, which is an integral part of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks, was signed by EC leaders after Washington threatened to impose a 200 percent tax on \$300 million worth of European exports if the EC countries did not agree to a dramatic drop in their production of oilseeds. — SELVA NEBBIA

THE MILITANT

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New Nova Scotia factory occupation worries Canada's capitalist rulers

BY ROGER ANNIS

MONTREAL — The latest factory occupation in Nova Scotia has capitalist politicians and businessmen concerned about the state of class relations in that province.

The occupation took place February 1 at the Premium Automotive Tanks factory in Port Hawkesbury after the company announced it was closing the factory. Forty-five minutes before the end of day shift, the 43 workers in the plant were escorted outside by a dozen security guards. Company co-owner Alton Toole then read a letter telling them that their jobs were finished. The company immediately began to dismantle and remove machinery.

"It shocked the hell right out of me," said 23-year-old assembly line worker David Phillips.

The closing was part of a merger deal with Spectra Steel Industries of Montreal. The merged company would consolidate operations in Montreal and control 40 percent of the fuel tank replacement market in Canada.

The next morning angry workers occupied the factory. They were incensed that Premium would close the plant after having received some \$3 million in loans, grants, and tax credits from the federal and provincial governments since opening in 1987.

The workers, members of the Canadian

Autoworkers union (CAW), were also angry over the minimum severance pay that Premium intended to pay. They called on the provincial government to keep the plant operating. Feeling the heat, the provincial government suggested it might take legal action against the company.

On February 5, company and CAW negotiators reached an agreement to end the occupation. Workers would receive three months severance pay. The deal was accepted the next day by a vote of 60-2.

"The ideal would have been to be able to get the place reopened," said CAW negotiator Jim Gill. "But we couldn't do that, so this is where we are."

The *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national daily newspaper, berated Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Nova Scotia premier Donald Cameron for publicly criticizing Premium's method of closing. Mulroney had told Canada's House of Commons on February 3, "This kind of conduct — taking off in the middle of the night — is a fly-by-night attitude unworthy of any self-respecting employer."

Better class of companies?

The *Globe* argued that Premium should not be faulted — it made a simple business decision when it closed its plant in Port



Militant/Monica Jones

Strikers and supporters at Clearwater Fine Foods lobster processing plant in Arichat, Nova Scotia, last June. New factory occupation at Post Hawkesbury is part of a series of class confrontations in that Canadian province.

Hawkesbury. The paper said that the blame in the situation rests with the federal and provincial governments who provide finan-

cial incentives for companies to locate in Canada's Atlantic provinces. Without these incentives, it said, "maybe they would attract a better class of companies."

The Atlantic provinces constitute the poorest region of Canada. Since 1988 the federal government Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has dished out \$800 million in grants to 9,000 businesses there and another \$1.1 billion in joint projects with provincial governments. This is called "job creation" spending.

The callousness of companies receiving ACOA money is one of several issues that have led to a series of sharp class confrontations in Nova Scotia recently.

Last June at the fishing village of Arichat, located twenty miles from Port Hawkesbury, striking members of the CAW and hundreds of supporters from other unions stormed through Royal Canadian Mounted Police lines into the Clearwater Fine Foods lobster processing plant and shut down a strikebreaking operation. Company personnel escaped by helicopter from the plant roof. The key issue in the strike was the company's intention to get rid of its women employees.

Other plant blockades

In August, workers at Scotia Rope in North Sydney blockaded that factory when the company went bankrupt and a buyer purchased and attempted to remove the plant's equipment. Workers guarded the factory for months until the provincial government agreed to buy and reopen it. That company had received \$2 million from ACOA.

On February 3, in the midst of the controversy over the Premium plant occupation, 200 laid-off workers staged a blockade at the National Sea Products plant in North Sydney to prevent that company from moving equipment to another of its plants hundreds of miles away.

"So they want to consolidate their operation under one roof in Lunenburg?" said Robert Hawley, president of CAW Local 1162. "Well we say they have an obligation to the workers in North Sydney."

The workers are now maintaining a 24-hour guard over the plant to prevent what they see as the beginning of a plan to eventually close the plant. "We're keeping an eye on it — that equipment is not leaving that plant," said Hawley.

The North Sydney plant has been idled because of the destruction of the northwest Atlantic cod fish stocks caused by the greed and overfishing of large fishing companies like National Sea.

Archie MacKinnon, who has worked for 17 years at the fish plant, told the *Globe*, "People are saying enough is enough. If we have to take this province back ourselves to create our own jobs then to hell with the corporations, to hell with the politicians, we'll do it on our own."

Roger Annis is a member of Canadian Auto-workers Local 1900 in Montreal.

Washington is anxious to transfer Somalia deployment to UN command

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

U.S. government officials are publicly expressing their impatience over the slow pace at which the United Nations is moving to gather a military force and command structure capable of replacing the bulk of the 17,860 U.S. troops still in Somalia.

Robert Oakley, U.S. special envoy to Somalia, accused the United Nations February 20 of stalling its takeover of military operations and criticized Turkish army officer Lt. Gen. Cevik Bir, the UN force's newly appointed commander, for delaying his arrival into the country. Bir is supposed to replace U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston as overall troop commander.

Washington is also pressing for speedy passage of a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the deployment of a 20,000-strong UN force in Somalia. The plan is for the bulk of these troops to come from the roughly 14,500 soldiers from 23 other countries currently in Somalia.

The United States will leave 5,000 troops to provide logistical support, including transportation and communication, for the UN operation. According to the *Washington Post*, these troops will not go on patrols. About 2,000 U.S. marines will also be stationed on Navy ships offshore as a rapid-deployment force.

Because of unease among Pentagon officials about placing U.S. troops under the command of a foreign officer, a U.S. general will be named as second in command of the UN force.

U.S. officials had earlier expressed hopes that the transition to a UN command force could be completed by the end of April. However, difficulties in reaching agreement with several nations expected to participate — France, Italy, Germany, and India — has scuttled this plan. India is supposed to provide 4,000 troops and Germany has promised a 1,500-member construction and engineering unit for noncombat duty.

Expanded UN mission

The UN force is expected to operate under a Security Council mandate that allows the same aggressive use of military force that U.S. troops currently use. In addition, the UN mission would be considerably broadened. While U.S. troops have been stationed only in southern Somalia, the UN forces will be deployed throughout the entire country, including in the northern territory of Somaliland, which has declared itself an independent state.

The UN force would also be responsible



U.S. marine points pistol at head of 15-year old boy in Mogadishu February 14. U.S. troops are being viewed more and more as occupation force in Somalia.

for "resettling refugees and reestablishing national and local government bodies," according to the February 21 *Washington Post*. UN officials have spoken out against U.S. efforts to organize a police force in the capital city of Mogadishu, fearing this will conflict with UN plans for building a national police unit.

In mid-February, Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston announced that 3,000 U.S. troops would begin withdrawing from Somalia. The completion of this pullout will bring U.S. troop strength down to about 15,000 by early March.

Shootings of Somalis mount

The U.S. government is anxious to transfer military command to the United Nations as rapidly as possible because the longer U.S. troops remain, the more they kill and injure Somalis, and the more they are viewed as an occupation force rather than the bearers of humanitarian food aid.

U.S. military spokespersons have admitted the individual killings of more than two dozen Somalis, but refuse to release information on the total number of deaths associated with U.S. military actions.

According to marine Col. Fred Peck, U.S. forces are trained to shoot to kill "whenever

they judge there is a threat. We wouldn't want them thinking they're going to face a tribunal if they have to pull the trigger," he said.

After a marine shot in the back and killed a 13-year-old Somali boy who was casually pointing at the U.S. soldier's truck February 6, U.S. military officials refused to tell the boy's family how he was shot, why, or by whom. Instead, they had a translator follow the boy's family home to see whether they had been involved in any "clan fighting."

In another instance, two marines aimed their guns at a child who happened to have his arms folded across his chest as if he were hiding something. Fortunately, before the marines unloaded their weapons, they noticed that the child had no hands.

U.S. troops have been involved in policing Somali workplaces as well. In Mogadishu on February 20 a marine fired his M-16 rifle killing a Somali worker who was said to be armed with a knife and approaching the foreman. The worker was part of a group of 20 protesters attempting to stop production at the worksite.

Canadian troops on patrol in the town of Belet Huen February 17 shot at protesters hurling rocks, killing one demonstrator and injuring three others.

'Militant' well received by striking coal miners

Militant supporters have been stepping up their efforts to introduce the paper to members of the United Mine Workers of America, 7,000 of whom are currently on strike against the Peabody Coal Co. in West Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky.

Stu Singer, reporting from south-

interested in coverage on the miners' strike," continued Ostrow, "but in discussions about Clinton and the attacks on working people around the world."

Salesperson Bill Scheer reports on the response at one of these portal sales. "We brought eight papers and sold seven to about 10 cars



Militant/Stu Singer

Sales team introducing the *Militant* to striking Peabody coal miners in Shawneetown, Illinois.

The 'Militant' gets around

em Illinois, writes, "In the first three days of our coalfield sales team, we have sold 25 copies of the *Militant* and three subscriptions. All were sold to UMWA miners, including one subscription and nine papers to Peabody strikers on the picket lines and in strike headquarters."

"The *Militant* has been well received at a number of portals visited by the team. Miners wanted to discuss the Clinton administration's threats to Social Security, the general depression conditions that exist, and Somalia," said Singer.

"Yes, we are in a depression," one miner who bought a paper commented. A truck driver going into the mine who did not buy a paper, stopped on his way out to thank us for getting out news about the miners' struggle," stated Singer.

"Two older miners took subscription blanks when we talked about the propaganda against older workers who are being accused of ripping off younger workers through Social Security. They said that they had been involved in exactly those discussions," said Singer.

In Shawneetown, Illinois, UMWA strikers took team members on a tour to all the picket sites in the area. A subscription and a number of additional copies of the paper were sold.

* * *

Militant supporters in Pittsburgh have been regularly visiting coal mine portals during the past several weeks. "At five different portals we have sold 30 papers and one subscription," reports Sheila Ostrow. "People are very friendly. A number of miners remember the *Militant* from when they were involved in solidarity activities in support of the Pittston Coal and Eastern Airlines strikes a few years ago."

"UMWA members were not just

going in. We had to hold our last paper for the person coming off shift who was planning to buy a subscription."

* * *

The four-week renewal drive that runs from February 20-March 20 has begun. Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are organizing to reach the 3,300 individuals who took out subscriptions to these two publications last fall. The aim is to sign up at least 10 percent of these readers as long-term subscribers.

Those readers signing up to renew their subscriptions during this one-month drive can also purchase the new Pathfinder pamphlet, *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today: Cuba Confronts the World Crisis of the '90s*, at the discounted price of \$2.

In New York City, where supporters have gotten an early start with the renewal campaign, three *Militant* renewals and one *Perspectiva Mundial* renewal have already been obtained. "The response has been great," reports Juliette Montauk. "I love the paper; I read it cover to cover every week," responded a Bronx Community College student when asked to renew his subscription to the *Militant*. A high school student on Long Island said he likes the paper and has been clipping articles for use in his classes."

Supporters in New York City have adopted a goal of getting 30 *Militant* and 10 *Perspectiva Mundial* renewals over the course of the month-long campaign. This amounts to 15 percent of the *Militant* subscriptions and 20 percent of those sold to *Perspectiva Mundial* during the course of the October to December circulation drive.

"The biggest part of our effort will be teams every Saturday and

on weekday evenings to phone subscribers," stated Montauk. "We'll always have one person available to pick up the renewals that day."

Renewal drive plans in Vancouver, British Columbia, include organizing teams at least two evenings a week to phone and visit *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* readers. In addition, sales and literature tables are being set up on campuses as part of the effort to reach student subscribers. A special team to Victoria, on Vancouver Island, is also planned during the March 15-19 antiracism week activities.

Los Angeles supporters plan to organize brief "renewal drive educational" on major political articles appearing in the *Militant* each week so that those doing the phone calls and visits are prepared for political discussions with subscribers.

The *Militant* business office has also been receiving renewals from our readers behind bars. "I'm writing this letter to renew my subscription to your newspaper and to thank you for the schooling your paper has given me," writes a prisoner from Westville, Indiana.

* * *

An important aspect of the renewal campaign will be expanding

the readership of *Perspectiva Mundial*. This monthly political magazine is particularly attractive to the growing number of working people in the United States whose first language is Spanish. The February issue contains feature articles on: Clinton's planned attacks on social benefit programs won by working people; the discussion within the African National Congress on the struggle for political power; and how lessons from the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso are relevant to Somalia today.

Perspectiva Mundial is also mailed to subscribers in dozens of countries throughout the world. Recently four participants in an international youth brigade in Cuba signed up for subscriptions to the magazine.

* * *

A subscriber imprisoned in Louisiana recently wrote to express his appreciation for *Perspectiva Mundial*. He also explained that a group of Spanish-speaking prisoners has been collectively reading and studying the first issue of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*, particularly the article "Opening Guns of World War III."

From behind bars he writes, "I always believed this system was the

best one in the world, and as a result I undertook an adventure in 1980, like many other ignorant people, and came here without having any family in this country. Since then I've suffered hell and only now do I realize that I have been a victim of this system. Now I understand what Malcolm X meant when he said: 'We don't have any friends in Washington, in the ruling class.'"

* * *

Library subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* help expand the readership of these publications. The *Militant* was on display at the January 23-26 American Library Association conference in Denver, Colorado, attended by approximately 5,000 librarians.

Representatives from eight libraries signed for copies of the paper and further information about subscriptions. Among those sending in requests were librarians from the University of Florida in Gainesville, the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras, Arizona State University in Tempe, the New York public library, and the public library in Menasha, Wisconsin. A one-year library subscription to the *Militant* costs \$80.00; for *Perspectiva Mundial* the rate is \$30.00.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

Clinton plan aims to make working people pay

Continued from front page
tended as rights, not charity.

The Clinton plan will squeeze \$55.6 billion from Medicaid, which provides health care to poor families, and Medicare, which is for the elderly. But, contrary to his earlier claims, Clinton is not proposing that this money be used to extend medical insurance to the uninsured.

After Clinton advisers floated many trial balloons to figure out the most palatable way to attack Social Security, the current White House economic plan rejects a freeze on cost-of-living increases and instead proposes increasing taxes on the benefit. The higher tax means that couples receiving Social Security with annual incomes of more than \$32,000, and individuals with incomes of more than \$25,000, will now pay taxes on 85 percent — up from 50 percent — of their Social Security check. This takes another step in trying to establish Social Security as a charity for the poor, not as a right for all working people.

Loopholes and tax shelters

While attacking working people, Clinton

has been careful to leave enough loopholes so that his economic proposals will not seriously damage the rich. For example, a seeming attack on the paychecks of corporate executives that would limit the tax deductions that companies can currently claim for these salaries turns out to be a fraud. The *Wall Street Journal* points out that "a big loophole in the proposal could let most of the executives escape." A little-noticed catch in the plan will allow companies to

keep their full deduction as long as they link the executives' pay to performance. Clinton had hinted at this loophole during his meeting with business leaders earlier in the week.

While Clinton made much of his proposals to raise income tax rates for the richest part of the population — the top rate will go from 31 percent to almost 40 percent — this doesn't mean they will actually pay more. "The higher the [income tax] rate goes," Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey said,

"the greater the incentive to avoid full taxation" through various tax shelters.

Clinton is leaving an open invitation to the wealthy to use such shelters by not raising another form of tax that affects them — the capital gains tax. This tax on income from the sale of assets such as buildings or machinery will remain significantly lower than the income tax, allowing individuals and corporations to reorganize their finances to avoid the higher income tax.

Communist League candidates in Australia call for shorter workweek with no cut in pay

BY PAUL GREY

SYDNEY, Australia — "The labor movement should fight for a shorter workweek of 30 hours work for 40 hours pay, as a way to unite working people to fight unemployment," said Marnie Kennedy, the Communist League candidate for the House of Representatives seat of Grayndler, at a February 15 press conference here to launch her campaign. Official unemployment figures in Australia just topped 1 million for the first time ever.

Kennedy, who is 24 years old, explained that "the socialist alternative will take up the most important world political issues —

like the mobilizations against racist attacks in Europe and the mass democratic movement led by the ANC to overthrow apartheid in South Africa. We point to the example of how workers in Victoria have mobilized against the Kennett government's attacks on union rights."

"Both the Liberal opposition and ruling Labor parties are parties of war and depression," said Ron Poulsen, the Communist League candidate for Senate from New South Wales. "The Labor Party appeals to the employers, insisting that it can better police the struggles of the industrial workers and provide a less confrontational approach

to driving down the living standards of working people than the Liberals. Ours will be the only campaign which explains that workers and farmers need to fight for a government independent of the employers."

The news conference was attended by reporters from student newspapers from the University of Technology in Sydney (UTB) and the University of Sydney, and from the *Globe and Western Weekly*, a local paper. The candidates also conducted interviews with national and local radio and Australian Associated Press.

In response to questions, Poulsen ex-

Continued on next page

Labor news in the *Militant*

The *Militant* stays on top of the most important developments in the labor movement. You won't miss them if you subscribe. See the ad on page 2.

Filipino workers in 'strike free' zones are under attack

BY RUTH GRAY

MANILA, Philippines — When Fidel Ramos was elected president in June 1992 he promised a commitment "to realizing the democratic aspirations of Filipino workers — to their rights to self-organization, collective bargaining and concerted non-violent action . . . and commitment to the economic well-being and social uplift of all workers."

But after only his first 100 days in office, the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights documented 12 cases of repression against 157 workers. These included arbitrary arrest, detention, assault on the picket line, harassment, and murder. The report identified police and privately hired security guards as being responsible for carrying out these acts of intimidation and brutality.

Under the Ramos government, the development of special industrial zones to attract foreign investment is continuing. These zones are being promoted as strike free. In Cavite, the province which has had the most success in attracting industry, workers are screened for their union views and activities when they apply for jobs. This information is then sent to the mayor and governor. Anyone pro-union is blacklisted.

Cavite's governor, Juanito Remulla, in an interview with the *Filipino Entrepreneur* in March 1992, said that it was important that "any adverse situation that

threatens the harmonious relationship between labour and management reaches us in the shortest time possible." To facilitate this, a network of company agents spy on the workers. Anyone suspected of union activity is visited by local government officials and given a warning. The local government advertises the province as a "zone of peace and productivity."

Nationally, the Labor Code gives the secretary of labor the power to end strikes on the grounds of defending the "national interest." In practice this law is interpreted very broadly. Last September it was used against a strike at the Barney's Food hot dog factory. In January it was used against workers at the Atlas mine in Cebu when they struck over the company's proposals for massive layoffs.

Minimum wage laws are ignored in the industrial zones. In southern Tagalog, the site of one of these zones, workers receive as little as 75 pesos a day (US\$1 = 25 pesos). The minimum wage in the region is 113 pesos a day. According to Henri Halawig, a member of the legal staff of the Organised Labor Association in Line Industries and Agriculture (OLALIA), an affiliate of the KMW union federation, the average family needs 218 pesos per day to live.

In an interview, Halawig described the growing use of temporary workers. By law, an employee must be made permanent after six months service. To avoid this require-

ment, employers often lay off workers after five months and then rehire them.

Companies usually pay neither sick leave nor vacation leave. While many deduct social security from their workers' wages, often the money is not passed on to the government.

According to the November-December issue of *KMU Correspondence* there were 633 political prisoners at the time of Ramos's election. Among them were more than 100 unionists. Following his election victory Ramos took steps to grant an amnesty to those prisoners who were charged with political crimes. He also repealed the law making it a criminal offense to be a member of the Communist Party.

Political prisoners and human rights organizations have criticized the government's amnesty program. They say it fails to deal with the majority of political prisoners, who have been framed up on criminal charges. According to framed-up peasant leader Jaime Tadeo, only one of the 85 political prisoners in the national penitentiary at Muntinlupa is eligible to

apply for the amnesty.

An open letter issued by trade unionists at the national penitentiary explains that they were framed up because "many of us here . . . came from organizations espousing genuine trade unionism, advancing national freedom and democracy." The letter appeals for support in their fight to win freedom.



Militant/Russell Johnson
Filipino paperworkers demonstrate in 1989. The Ramos government is trying to attract foreign investment by creating "strike free" industrial zones.

Washington farm workers rally for union rights

BY ANNA SCHELL
AND HARVEY MCCARTHUR

OLYMPIA, Washington — Hundreds of farm workers rallied here at the state capitol February 4 to support a bill giving them a procedure for winning union recognition.

"Farm workers are excluded from existing labor laws and are denied the right to organize," Tomás Villanueva told a legislative hearing. "The balance of power is one-sided, with the result that farmworkers face permanent discrimination, are the poorest of the working class, and lack basic health and safety protection on the job."

There are an estimated 130,000 farm workers in Washington, including fulltime residents of the state and migrants who come from other states and Mexico. The state Employment Security Department reports their average earnings amount to only \$5,845 a year.

Villanueva, a leader of the United Farm Workers of Washington State (UFWWS), said the union has 2,000 members. They face stiff opposition from big growers and ranchers, however, and have not won union recognition or contracts anywhere.

The proposed law would cover any employer of eight or more agricultural workers. It would establish a board to oversee union recognition elections if 50 percent or more workers at a company requested one. The board would also dictate the terms of the first contract if the union and management could not reach an agreement. The UFWWS

supports this provision as a way to end employer stalling in negotiations. The bill stipulates that such a contract must include a union shop, grievance procedures, and a no-strike clause.

Villanueva said he supported the provisions of the bill except exempting employers of fewer than eight workers. All farm workers should have the right to union representation, he said.

"We support this bill and our union," farm worker Martín Ríos told the legislators. He works in the vineyards of the Chateau Ste. Michelle winery where the bosses have repeatedly denied workers' petitions to recognize and negotiate with the UFWWS. "We need union support," Ríos continued, "to defend our rights, better wages, job security, equality between men and women, pensions, and an arbitration system."

"We want the right to join the union without fear of losing our jobs," said María Rosa Cuevas. "I went to a UFWWS demonstration once and my boss fired me for that. I have worked in the fields here for 20 years. There are very, very few employers who treat us well. We have the right to a better future. Long live the union!"

Pepe López told of being fired from a large orchard three years ago for asking for a wage increase. He joined a successful strike concerning wages at another orchard last year, but said strikers were not hired back this year.

"This is the most radical, unbalanced la-

bor law in the United States," declared growers' representative Doug Stockwell. "The bill is unnecessary and employer-employee relations are currently working very well. I see no groundswell of support for the union among employees."

Frank Ochoa, the owner of farms raising asparagus, wheat, and other crops, said that union contracts guaranteeing wage increases for all workers "would take away the incentive to advance." Agribusiness was doing well in Washington at a time that other major industries, such as aerospace, were in a crisis, he noted. However, the growers "couldn't live with the bill or the threat of strikes at harvest time."

"I have good people who come back to work for me year after year," he boasted. "Workers come to me, we bargain over wages, and they can either take it or leave it."

The growers bused dozens of farm workers to the hearing and several spoke against the union. Their comments reflected sharp competition among workers for the available jobs and the powerful pressure wielded by bosses who promise steady work to "good" workers.

"I don't know how this union would work," said Refugio Cabazos. "We don't need it in Washington now. I'm working now, no problems. I have a house and I don't get into trouble."

"We're scared about this organization," Jorge Valencia told the hearing. "We've never had problems about jobs or housing between workers and farmers. The union will just lead to fighting between farmers and workers and the union."

A UFWWS supporter, Martín Ríos, took up these arguments in his testimony. "To my brothers who are speaking against their own future interests," he said, "don't be fooled. The best tactic the bosses have is to keep the workers divided. Job security and benefits will come only if we're united in the union."

Challenge for the labor movement

Several church leaders and a representative of the state AFL-CIO also spoke in favor of the bill. The newly elected legislature has a Democratic majority for the first time in years and some workers hoped this would mean easy approval for the measure.

However, as the February 5 *Seattle Times* reported, "majority leader Marc Gaspard says there is no guarantee that items some considered a routine part of the 'Democratic agenda' in past years — including gay rights and farm workers' protection as well as an

increase in the minimum wage — will pass this session."

The UFWWS is planning further support activities, including a benefit concert at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union hall in Seattle and a regional conference in Olympia March 13 that will include leaders of farm worker unions from Ohio, California, and Oregon.

Anna Schell and Harvey McArthur are rail workers and members of United Transportation Union Local 845 in Seattle.

Australia campaign launched

Continued from previous page

plained that the overthrow of the Stalinist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had "deepened our conviction that there has not been a collapse of communism or socialism, but of Stalinism, and that this has removed a totalitarian obstacle that had pushed working people in these countries out of politics for decades."

Poulsen, who is 40 years old, is a machine operator at Streets Ice Cream and a member of the Food Preservers' Union. He is scheduled to be interviewed by ABC local radio outside the Streets factory. One coworker has already contributed \$20 to the election campaign fund appeal. Also in attendance at the conference was campaign chairperson Manuele Lasalo, an immigrant worker from the Pacific island of Tokelau.

In response to a question about the road forward for women's rights, Kennedy explained that her campaign would advance

the fight for affirmative action and that the "ongoing fight to defend abortion rights in the United States is an example of young women and men gaining experience in independent political action."

In an election statement presented to the conference, the candidates demanded the withdrawal of Australian troops recently deployed to Somalia and Cambodia.

Damien, a student at the University of New South Wales who became politically active during the 1991 Gulf War, attended a campaign open house and explained that he was attracted "to a campaign that doesn't support the system, but uses the elections to foster discussion and to spread ideas."

The candidates and campaign supporters are planning to take the campaign to workers participating in a one-day general strike that has been called for March 1 to protest the assault on union rights by the Liberal state government.



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Suicide rate rises for workers injured by Chernobyl cleanup

BY JON HILLSON

The list of unknown thousands who have died from radioactive contamination produced by the meltdown and explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in 1986 now officially includes at least 1,250 soldiers and engineers who killed themselves rather than face slow, tortuous death as a result of their exposure to radiation in the massive clean-up that followed the disaster.

For many, suicide was apparently preferable to perishing unattended from fallout-induced diseases, which has been the fate of some 6,000 other veterans of the military-civilian operation in April-May 1986.

That effort, launched under the leadership of then-Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, lacked the most elementary safety precautions.

Shirtless Soviet soldiers, for instance, removed radioactive debris bare-handed from the blast site under intense sun with no protective gear.

Unbeknownst to Soviet citizens, the highest body of the ruling Stalinist Communist Party — which included current Russian president Boris Yeltsin — ordered a cover-up on the scope of the meltdown and the spread of deadly pollution. It reduced already minimal health standards on radiation, limited the scope of evacuation and treatment, and mixed contaminated meat and milk into the national food supply, further endangering even more people than the millions just affected by fall-out.

Because of continuing bureaucratic secrecy and deceit, figures for death, cancers, and other serious illness as a consequence of the Chernobyl explosion can only be estimated, the latter in the hundreds of millions.

The grim announcement on suicides was issued by Stanislav Troitsky, spokesperson of the Russian government's Chernobyl committee, in January and published by the *Moscow Times*.

Troitsky noted that the suicide figure, accounting for 18 percent of the now-authorized figure of 7,000 dead among the clean-up participants, is the highest of any category in the country, including veterans of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The rate, Troitsky stated, is 20 times higher than the Russian national suicide average of 15 per 100,000 population.

Since the clean-up ended, almost seven years ago, those who engaged in it have been killing themselves on an average of more than one every two days.

For years, the only state-sanctioned figure on deaths released by the now-defunct Soviet government was that 32 people died in the Chernobyl reactor explosion and its immediate aftermath.

New studies on samples of workers in-

involved in the clean-up indicate that 80 percent suffer from serious psychological problems stemming from nerve damage, physical disease and stress.

More than 40 percent of those seeking medical assistance suffer from mental illnesses, including permanent memory loss.

According to government policy, clean-up workers are entitled to free medical care, food assistance, and 50 percent discounts on rent and electricity.

"Unfortunately, the state has no money to finance this law," stated Troitsky, who was heavily irradiated while covering the clean-up as a reporter.

Boris Gerasin, who flew helicopter missions to the exploded shell of the Chernobyl reactor during the operation, suffers from blackouts, jangled nerves, and sleeplessness.

"I can't stand to knock on anymore closed government doors," he said, "I have been given no medical aid. We suffered for the state, but now they have turned their backs on us."

"In many respects," Troitsky said, "the Chernobyl disaster has only just begun."

Despite this reality, late last year the Russian government approved a vast construction plan to build a minimum of 30 nuclear power plants, doubling the nation's nuclear energy capacity by 2010.

Among these plants will be at least one similar in design to Chernobyl.

While there is no such thing as a stable, safe nuclear reactor, the accident-fraught, Chernobyl-style, graphite-core structure further increases the likelihood of calamity.

Today in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 15 such reactors are operating, including the three remaining units at



More than 7,000 of the workers and soldiers who participated in the cleanup operation after the 1986 meltdown and explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in the Ukraine have died. This includes 1,250 suicides.

the Chernobyl plant in the Ukraine.

The Russian government's decision to push ahead on new reactor construction created a Christmas Eve tiff in President Boris Yeltsin's cabinet.

Ecology adviser Alexei Yablokov termed the government decision "unacceptable

from the legal, ecological, economic, and political points of view."

Yevgeny Reshetnikov, deputy minister for atomic energy, stated that a moratorium on the proposed expansion would be a "catastrophe" for the targeted regions, calling Yablokov a "dilettante."

Texas forum condemns death penalty

BY CHUCK GUERRA

HOUSTON — The February 13 Militant Labor Forum here featured a discussion among opponents of the death penalty in the United States.

The forum took place shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision in the case *Herrera v. Collins*. This decision eliminates the right of a condemned prisoner to appeal to federal court when new evidence supporting his or her innocence comes to light. Moderator Michael Chamberlain opened the meeting by reading correspondence printed in the *Houston Chronicle* between Texas death-row inmate Robert Drew and his attorneys Ronald Kuby and William Kunstler. The attorneys explained that the *Herrera* decision would

block Drew's efforts to appeal his conviction to federal court.

The Supreme Court upheld a Texas law that bars all claims of innocence based on evidence discovered more than 30 days after sentencing. Drew has no right to appeal his conviction, because the new evidence didn't come out until 72 days after the trial — even though someone else has confessed to the crime for which Drew was convicted, and a key witness against him has recanted damaging testimony. With the *Herrera* decision blocking any possibility of appealing to federal court, Drew's only hope is to ask the Texas governor for clemency. Unless the governor grants clemency, Drew faces execution within months.

The first on a panel of speakers at the

forum was Clarence Brandley, a victim of a police frame-up, who spent 10 years on death row before an international campaign involving mass marches, rallies, and messages of protest from all over the world won his freedom. He is now a minister and a leading activist against the death penalty.

Brandley denounced the *Herrera* decision, pointing out that if that decision had been handed down while he was on death row, he would have been quickly executed since the frame-up against him didn't begin to crumble until several years after his conviction. He noted the increasing use of the death penalty, and recalled several people he knew when he was a prisoner on death row who have since been executed.

Brandley urged support for frame-up victims such as Robert Drew and Ricardo Aldape Guerra, a Mexican worker whose conviction on phony charges of killing a Houston cop has put him on death row for the last 10 years. Brandley called for united protest action against use of the death penalty, similar to the campaign that won his freedom.

Another speaker on the panel was Rose Floyd, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in the upcoming special election and a member of the International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 12. Floyd explained that her campaign opposed the death penalty because it is a weapon of terror used by the capitalist government against working people. There is a conscious effort, she said, to increase use of the death penalty, apply it to a greater number of crimes, limit the right of those condemned to appeal, and reduce the amount of time elapsed between conviction and execution. Floyd connected this to the drive by the capitalist class to create an atmosphere of intimidation as it seeks to force working people to bear the burden of the economic crisis.

Floyd hailed Clarence Brandley as a "living example" that working people can fight these attacks through independent mobilization.

Protests condemn racist cop attack on dance

BY KENNETH MORGAN

BALTIMORE — On January 25 the Denton, Maryland, cop force used dogs, night sticks, mace, and fire hoses to disperse Black youth at a racially mixed teen dance.

The dance, which attracted about 200 youths, of whom 45 were Black, abruptly ended when several fights broke out among white youth. People were asking for their money back when the adult volunteer fire fighters sponsoring the dance at the firehouse ushered all the Blacks out of the building. The fire fighters' organization, like the Denton police, is all white. The cops and fire fighters were then called in. Denton is a rural town of about 3,000 people on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Blacks comprise 30 percent of the population.

According to Denese Williams, whose two sons were victimized by the cops, and other Black residents of Denton, the cops singled out the Black youth. Williams, a cook at the local nursing home, explained that "several had to be taken to the hospital and a couple were arrested without explanation. They pushed our kids out on the street

and treated them like dogs."

The night of the incident Williams was summoned to the dance site when one of her sons who had been maced and hosed came home to tell her that his brother was being beaten by the cops. At the scene Williams jumped out of her car, ran to the first police officer she saw, and asked, "Where is my baby?" The next thing she knew, she said, "the officer pulled out his gun" and told her to leave. After finding out that they had arrested her son she went to the police station, but they would not open the door. She was only able to get into the station when the police brought another arrested Black teen through the door.

Gloria Peet, another angry parent, reported that her daughter came home screaming and angry after she was sprayed with mace by police. She told of a white youth who was at the dance who had commented on television that the police were prejudiced in their actions.

The next day, Williams organized a march of Black parents and other Black residents aimed at town officials to protest the inci-

dent. The 75-80 marchers, most of whom were young people, were told that they had to have a written complaint. That Monday evening, 200 people gathered at a church to a meeting called by the president of the local board of education, George Fisher, who is Black. The mayor showed up but the police chief failed to appear. "Nothing came out of the meeting," said Williams. Fisher has called for another meeting.

Williams then organized another demonstration the following Saturday. Nearly 90 parents and youth protested. Their demands were for "the dismissal of the police officers involved and for justice."

The week after the march, several Black youth were suspended from school for defending themselves against harassment and attacks from some white youth.

Williams commented, "We have no rights when it comes to the law. They think these problems just exist in the big cities, but it's going on in these little towns today too."

Both Williams and Peet said they would continue to organize residents to protest and march "until justice is served."

How labor battles of the 1930s helped win the right to Social Security for all workers

BY NAOMI CRAINE

A major target of U.S. president Bill Clinton's calls for "sacrifice" is Social Security. Clinton is taking steps against Social Security by imposing steep taxes on it for workers with higher incomes. Such measures move in the direction of transforming Social Security from something to which everyone is entitled, to a form of charity for the "poor."

The president and those who support his attacks portray entitlement programs such as Social Security as "getting something for nothing" and "borrowing from our future." This view hides from working people the fact that these programs were fought for by social movements over the decades as a way to protect the working class from the effects of capitalism.

The Social Security Act encompasses several different programs. The best-known aspect is social insurance for the elderly. This program, which is funded by both a payroll tax and taxes on employers, provides benefits to workers after they reach age 65. Workers who become disabled, and surviving spouses and children of workers who die, also receive Social Security payments. Medicare, a medical insurance program for the elderly and disabled, was added to the act in 1965. Unemployment insurance was initiated under the Social Security Act, but is currently administered separately by state governments.

Certain other federal social programs are also run by the Social Security Administration. These include supplemental security income, which augments Social Security

payments; the federal portion of public assistance programs administered by the different state governments; and Medicaid, which provides some medical insurance for the poor.

These programs have their origins in labor battles and social struggle. The initial Social Security Act was passed in 1935. Far from being a gift from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the law was enacted in response to actions by millions of working people.

In the 1930s, workers and farmers in the United States faced a deep depression. Millions were unemployed, and many of those who did have jobs worked for starvation wages. Government and private relief programs were inadequate and humiliated those who were forced to rely on them.

Many workers began to organize to combat these conditions, both in trade unions and in unemployed organizations. These groups fought for unemployment compensation and other social security measures to protect those most affected by the capitalist depression.

A "workers security bill" drafted by the National Unemployed League in 1934, for example, called for a 30-hour workweek and a public works program to provide "an up to date, fully equipped county hospital in every county; modern libraries and recreational centers in every city and county; rural electrification" and other social needs. Those employed by the works program should be paid the prevailing union wage, explained the proposal. The Unemployed League also called for unemployment and social insurance to be "extended to workers and farmers without

discrimination because of age, sex, race, or color, religious or political opinion or affiliation ... for all time lost."

National hunger marches took place in 1931 and 1932, demanding unemployment payments, a shorter workweek, social insurance for illness, accident, old age, and maternity, and other measures. In the same period, numerous local actions across the country demanded relief. These protests were often met by resistance from the employers and the police. In Detroit, for instance, 3,000 laid-off Ford auto workers rallied in March 1932 to demand jobs. Four demonstrators were killed by the police and Ford security guards who broke up the rally.

In 1934 union struggles began to pick up. That year saw massive strikes by truckers in Minneapolis, auto workers in Toledo, Ohio, and longshoremen in San Francisco. These fights took on a much broader social character than simply demanding better wages and working conditions. The strikers drew organizations of unemployed workers into the struggle, supporting their demands for relief and jobs. Unemployed workers took part in picketing and helped win those strikes.

It was under these pressures that Roosevelt signed the first Social Security Act, which included unemployment benefits for some workers, in August 1935. It was a watered-down version of a bill that had been proposed more than a year earlier.

In subsequent years, workers fought to extend unemployment compensation and other provisions of the Social Security Act



1932 hunger march in Washington

to more layers of the working class. As the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) grew in the 1930s and 40s, unionists continued to fight for social programs for all workers. After World War II, working people won broader unemployment insurance and higher Social Security payments for the elderly. These gains were important in order to combat continuing unemployment and increased living costs.

The Medicare program was added to the Social Security Act in 1965, the same year Medicaid was instituted. These programs were put forward as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society." Like the previous social gains won by working people, this expansion of Social Security did not fall from the sky. Rather, it was one of the results of the tremendous pressure placed on the rulers and their government by the advancing civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s.

Today workers and farmers once again face a worldwide depression. The gains of past generations represent a social wage that is needed to protect working people from the impact of the current economic crisis. It is more important than ever for the working class to defend and extend programs like unemployment compensation and Social Security that were won through earlier struggles.

Rightist youth group targets retirees

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With U.S. president Bill Clinton seeking to drum up support for his economic proposals of spending cuts on social programs and higher taxes, a new rightist organization called Lead or Leave has felt encouraged to more aggressively advance its ideas.

This group picks up on the themes raised by Ross Perot and by Clinton and adds a sharper edge to them, openly focusing on bashing the elderly for the social crisis and mounting government deficit and calling for stiff cuts in Social Security.

It was founded in 1992 by Rob Nelson, 28, whose former line of business was direct-mail advertising, and Jon Cowan, 30, who performed duties for politicians as a Capitol Hill aide. According to the *U.S. News & World Report*, both "walked away from political jobs in Washington and entry into law schools last summer to start Lead or Leave."

A February 16 Lead or Leave demonstration targeting the elderly was held outside the offices of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in Washington, D.C., and drew 80 people. "We are here to join Clinton in his call for fair sharing of sacrifice," stated Cowan. "The debt and the deficit is our generation's Vietnam."

"Unless we get this deficit under control," added Cowan, "we'll never get the jobs or the homes or the educations we want. Ours will be the first generation to be less well off than our parents."

Lead or Leave claims to have more than 100 chapters across the country as well as support and financial backing from former U.S. presidential candidate Paul Tsongas, former senator Warren Rudman (R., N.H.), and Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca. "These kids are telling it the way it is," stated Rudman in praise of the Lead or Leave group.

Cut Social Security

In mid-February Lead or Leave founders Cowan and Nelson were featured on the ABC television network's program "Nightline" and on "CBS This Morning." In addition they got another big piece of free publicity on the front cover of the February 22 *U.S. News & World Report*, which painted the rightist group positively as, "The Twentysomething Rebellion: How It Will Change America."

Lead or Leave applauds Clinton's proposal to raise taxes to 85 percent of Social



Demonstration February 16 in Washington, D.C., by Lead or Leave group. This anti-working-class organization demands deep cuts in Social Security.

Security benefits for individuals earning above \$25,000 a year or couples earning \$32,000. They also demand even deeper cuts. They want the retirement age for which one qualifies for benefits lifted from 65 to 70, elimination of cost-of-living increases for all Social Security recipients during the next 10 to 15 years, and the reduction of benefits on a sliding scale as income rises.

In a *New York Times* opinion column February 11 Cowan and Nelson elaborate on their political perspective of blaming retired workers and others on Social Security for the economic and social problems facing youth.

"Social Security is a generational scam. Today's retirees get their benefits directly from the paychecks of working Americans," they claim. "Older voters and politicians be warned: Younger Americans aren't going to let you continue destroying our country."

Taking their cue from Clinton's arguments in motivating his recently proposed federal budget cuts, Cowan and Nelson assert, "We must eliminate the deficit in the next eight years — at a minimum cutting it in half by the end of 1996."

In the 1992 elections, Lead or Leave asked candidates for national office to promise to leave office in 1996 if the deficit was not cut in half by then. More than 100

politicians, including Ross Perot, took "the Pledge." Clinton at the time dismissed it as a gimmick.

Anti-working-class program

"Young people should actively protest against reactionary organizations like Lead or Leave," said Estelle DeBates, Socialist Workers national campaign chairperson. "Their call for pitting youth against the elderly is anti-working class and part of the capitalist rulers' drive to deepen the divisions among working people along generational lines."

"The ruling rich of this country," continued DeBates, "seek to gut programs like Social Security and Medicare won by working people in past battles. They want to transfer a greater portion of the social wage of the working class into their own coffers, hoping in this way to resolve the employers' profits crisis."

"Calls for 'shared sacrifice' are the real scam working people face today. Working people — young and old — should be calling for extension of the Social Security system to include health care and education for all generations," said DeBates.

David Anshen from Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

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ANC paves way for 'free and fair' elections

Continued from front page

pion Riddick Bowe were special guests of the ANC. Bowe donated \$100,000 to the ANC, as well as giving a pair of boxing gloves to ANC president Nelson Mandela, himself an amateur boxer in his youth.

Seated on the platform the opening day were ANC leaders Oliver Tambo (national chairperson), Cyril Ramaphosa (secretary-general), Joe Slovo (member, National Executive Committee), Gertrude Shope (president, ANC Women's League), and Thabo Mbeki (head of the Department of International Affairs); Sam Shilowa, assistant general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), as well as Bowe, Karpov, and Kaunda.

In the plaza just outside the conference hall, tables selling everything from books, pamphlets, and newspapers to posters, T-shirts, and umbrellas with ANC slogans and insignia were set up by the ANC, Ravan Press, Phambili Books, and Pathfinder Press.

Historic watershed election

"It would perhaps have been right for us to meet in Pretoria, firmly to make the point that soon the country will be under new management," said Oliver Tambo in his opening address.

Hailing the contribution of the international solidarity movement, Tambo told participants that "it is not the visas you were issued which enabled you to enter the country. It is your steadfast opposition to racism and racial domination which opened the gates at the frontiers, so that you who stand for justice could be here today."

Tambo said he was "especially pleased to see so many women here who, by their presence and participation, further the common struggle for the emancipation of women."

During the past several decades, he said, "the brutality of the Pretoria regime grew more bestial, as though reason and justice could be expunged by the baton, the gun, and the hangman's noose."

But "hopefully before the end of the year,



ANC president Nelson Mandela July 1991 in Durban, South Africa.

the people of South Africa — all the people of South Africa — will participate in an historical and watershed election which will mark our break with the past and the beginning of transforming our country into a non-racial and nonsexist society.

Tambo predicted that the ANC "will emerge from the elections as the largest political force in the country."

The ANC, he said, "carries with itself the people's aspirations for human dignity, underwritten by freedom from hunger, disease, joblessness, homelessness, and ignorance."

"But the ANC also bears on its shoulders the responsibility to liberate the oppressors — to liberate them from fear of democracy and the future, to free them from a guilt-driven fear of retribution, and to dissuade

them from any foolhardy temptation to seek an ephemeral security by imprisoning themselves within an armed laager....

"What we can certainly never be is Black racists who turn their backs on the philosophy which has inspired the ANC since its birth — the sacred undertaking that the cause we serve is the emancipation of all humanity."

"As our task will not end with the election of a democratic government," he told the delegates from around the world, "so do we believe that your task will also not end at that point. We believe that we must stand together in creating the new South Africa."

The plenary sessions of the conference heard reports from ANC leaders on South Africa's transition to democracy (by Jacob Zuma); the ANC's election campaign (by

Popo Molefe); the fight against government-instigated violence (by Sydney Mafumadi); and the foreign relations of a democratic South Africa (by Aziz Pahad).

Zuma explained the ANC proposal for multiparty negotiations to set the date for South Africa's first one-person, one-vote election. "The constituent assembly elected in that vote would draw up a democratic constitution, elect a new president of South Africa, and install an Interim Government of National Unity," he said.

Popo Molefe explained that the ANC's strategic objective remains "the national liberation of the oppressed and exploited majority" and "the creation of a nonracial, nonsexist, democratic South Africa. The election of a Constituent Assembly is [a] crucial step along the path to a democratic state," he said.

"For this reason, the ANC cannot afford to lose. An ANC victory will mean the beginning of a process of creation of peace, jobs, and the opening of educational opportunities to all children regardless of race and class."

The ANC, Molefe said, will form an electoral front composed of candidates from trade unions, Black and white business groups, political parties, church organizations, sports bodies, and educational institutions.

Molefe said that some 70 percent of the 18 million Blacks in South Africa currently don't read or write. A minimum of 210,000 volunteers will be needed, he said, to reach out to, educate, and draw these millions into the election fight.

Molefe appealed to the international anti-apartheid forces to help mobilize massive moral, financial, and material aid to help the ANC counter F. W. de Klerk's National Party, which is backed by vast government resources and dominates the schools, big business, and most of the media.

Sydney Mafumadi said that the pro-apartheid forces facing electoral defeat can be expected to step up their violent assaults as the elections near. He urged opponents of apartheid throughout the world to counter the Pretoria regime's lies about "Black on Black violence" and its false claim that the source of the violence is political competition between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Supporters of a democratic South Africa, he said, must help expose the responsibility of the police, security forces, and the army for the violence that has resulted in thousands of deaths and maimings over the past few years and that continues today.

The present regime, said Aziz Pahad, is "an instrument of counterrevolution" both inside South Africa and beyond its borders. The foundation for the foreign policy of the new South Africa, he said, will be its transformed domestic policy. Among other things, "The fate of South Africa is connected to the rest of Africa. It will have a foreign policy centered on peace and democracy, human rights, and the development of the economies of other African countries."

The conference also discussed the ANC's revised policy on sanctions against the apartheid regime (see article page 2). Workshops focused on various aspects of reconstruction and economic and social development in a democratic South Africa: arts and culture, education, health, investment, land and the environment, housing, women, and youth and the protection of the child.

Debate and discussion

Following each of the reports, delegates lined up at eight floor microphones to ask questions and express their points of view. The ANC reporters then took up the questions and answered criticisms of their policies.

The prospect that de Klerk's National Party will have seats in the Interim Government of National Unity is "a blind spot in the ANC's strategy," argued Silvas Cerqueira from the Portuguese Anti-Apartheid Movement. Cerqueira said the ANC had not sufficiently exposed the regime's responsibility for the violence in the country.

"We are faced with a complex problem of negotiating while violence is being used to destabilize the process," replied Jacob Zuma. "Apartheid itself is a violent system, and we can't eradicate violence before ending apartheid."

"The National Party should be in the interim government," Zuma explained.

African National Congress resolution on negotiations and national reconstruction

The following resolution was adopted by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the African National Congress at its February 16-18 meeting.

Further to our adopted document "Negotiations, a Strategic Perspective" this meeting of the NEC decides as follows:

1. We reject the National Party's power sharing proposal either for a permanent or fixed period.

2. In the interest of reconstruction and peace and the need to minimise the potential threat to democratic advance from divisive forces in the period immediately following the adoption of the new constitution, we declare our support for an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) which would exist up to the point of the adoption of the new constitution. After the adoption of the new constitution the IGNU would continue in the same form as a Government of National Unity and Reconstruction in order to phase in structures provided for in the new constitution.

The GNUR would exist for a specified limited duration, whose term would come to an end by the first election under the new constitution, which would be held no later than five years after the elections for the CA [Constituent Assembly].

3. Such a GNUR shall be governed by the overriding principle that minority parties shall not have the powers to paralyse the functioning of the executive or to block the process of restructuring, more particularly:

(a) It shall be made up of an executive in which there will be proportional representation of all the parties elected to the CA subject to a minimum threshold of 5% of the seats in the Constituent Assembly.

(b) The President shall be elected by a simple majority of the Constituent Assembly.

(c) Representatives of minority parties in

the cabinet shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the leaders of each party in question. The President shall have the right to insist on an alternative if the person proposed by such leaders, for specific reasons, unacceptable.

(d) In general the President shall exercise his or her executive powers after consultation with the cabinet.

(e) In the case of certain specified powers the President shall exercise his or her powers in consultation with the parties represented in the cabinet. In the event of a disagreement the President's decisions shall require support from 2/3 of the members of cabinet.

(f) The specified powers mentioned in (e) are still to be negotiated and before an agreement is reached in this regard a detailed mandate will have to be obtained from the NWC [National Working Committee] sitting with either the chairperson or secretary of each region.

4. The meeting further reaffirms its positions concerning the Constituent Assembly that the Constituent Assembly shall be a sovereign constitution-making body which will be bound only by agreed general constitutional principles. It should be composed of representatives elected on the basis of national and regional lists. It would take decisions by a two thirds majority. Matters pertaining to the powers and functions of regions would also require an additional two thirds majority of the regional representatives sitting as a whole. The Constituent Assembly should complete its work as quickly as possible and not later than nine months after its election.

The NEC will continue to negotiate the issue of an effective deadlock breaking mechanism which would be used in case the Constituent Assembly is unable to conclude its work within the specified time frame.

5. The meeting of the NEC resolved that work should continue to build a national consensus on the question of future regional government, through discussions with other parties and organisations. All decisions concerning the powers, functions, boundaries and structure of regional government should be decided by the Constituent Assembly. Any Commission on Regions that may be established by a multi-party forum would, apart from delimiting electoral regions for the Constituent Assembly elections, only make recommendations to this Assembly.

6. Programme of Reconstruction and Development.

In endorsing the package concerning inter alia a Government of National Unity, the NEC affirmed that such arrangements must, during the transition period itself, be reinforced by an effective programme of reconstruction and democratic transformation.

The ANC immediately needs to embark on a process to consolidate its ranks, supporters and those of the broad democratic forces around a transitional strategy to empower the oppressed majority.

This will entail:

(i) identifying these key sections of the organs of state that require restructuring as a matter of priority.

(ii) evolving an affirmative action programme, with definite time frames, to reconstruct the organs of state in conformity with a democratic society;

(iii) a far-reaching programme of social and economic reconstruction to address the pressing needs of the majority of South Africa;

(iv) a process of consultation and mobilisation of mass democratic forces and the convening of a conference on reconstruction and broad strategy. Such a conference to be held within four months.

"Some think you can do everything if you have mass support, but others with power can intervene to stop" change.

"We think our approach should be inclusive. The National Party and its supporters... have to be part of a lasting solution."

A letter from South African Bishop Trevor Huddleston, a longtime antiapartheid activist and founder of the International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, was read to the conference. He expressed "foreboding... that, somehow, during the past three years the political will for radical, absolute change has been eroded and must be speedily rekindled."

In replying to the view expressed by a conference delegate that the ANC's support for the struggles of other oppressed peoples had weakened, Aziz Pahad stated that the ANC "is totally committed to the struggle against racism globally, and struggles for national independence." He cited as examples the struggle of the people of Angola, Mozambique, the Palestinian people, and the peoples of Somalia and Yu-

goslavia. Pahad committed a democratic South African government to the fight to end the U.S. embargo against Cuba, as well.

"No future democratic government of South Africa can survive without an international perspective," Pahad said.

Declaration and program of action

The conference ended with the unanimous adoption of a declaration and program of action centered on building worldwide support for the ANC election campaign. Conference participants have until March 1 to submit proposals for changes to the final draft.

A resolution of solidarity with the struggle of the Angolan and Mozambique peoples was also adopted.

In his concluding remarks, conference chairperson Thabo Mbeki pointed to the significance of the interaction of the "entire South African democratic movement" — represented by 106 organizations at the conference — with participants from five continents.



10,000 members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions marched to the government buildings in Pretoria July 1992 as part of ANC-led mass action campaign.

"This conference is unprecedented," he said. "We have met legally and openly in an unliberated zone, showing we have the strength to do so."

"We have stayed together over decades to fight apartheid," he said. "Now we will stay together to fight for a democratic South Africa and to fight for a just world."

ANC charts course toward nonracial elections

BY SAM MANUEL
AND STEVE CLARK

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The National Executive Committee of the African National Congress has unanimously adopted a resolution on negotiations with the ruling National Party to pave the way for this country's first democratic elections later this year or in early 1994. The three-day ANC leadership meeting was held February 16-18 in Soweto, a large Black township just outside this city.

"We reject the National Party's power-sharing proposal either for a permanent or fixed period," the resolution said, referring to the ruling party's call for a multiparty government in which each party would have veto power. The resolution affirmed the ANC's demand for elections to a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution for South Africa. (The full text of the ANC resolution appears on page 9.)

At a February 18 press conference in Soweto, Pallo Jordan, who directs the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, said that the government of national unity the ANC calls for "is not a deal struck between political parties, but the outcome of the preferences of the South African electorate as expressed in the first democratic elections."

The National Party's veto proposal would "paralyze the effectiveness" of an interim government, said ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa. "Our idea of an interim government means majority rule should not be sacrificed in any way."

The interim government would preside over the elections, the drafting of the constitution by the Constituent Assembly, and a transition period until the first elections are held under the new constitution. The ANC NEC resolution proposes that the interim government include an executive in which there will be proportional representation of all parties elected to the Constituent Assembly, "subject to a minimum threshold of 5% of the seats" in the body.

National Party, Inkatha response

In response to the ANC resolution, government minister Roelf Meyer claimed to see no difference between the National Par-

ty's power-sharing proposal and the ANC's call for a government of national unity. A week earlier, following talks February 10-12 between the ANC and the National Party, leaders of the ruling party were forced to back down from their initial claims that the ANC had agreed to a five-year power-sharing accord.

Meyer also announced February 20 that following three days of bilateral talks between the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party, Inkatha leaders said they would consider participating in a multiparty planning conference to begin finalizing agreements on the interim government and Constituent Assembly elections. The conference was initially scheduled for February 25-26 but has been postponed until March 5-6 at the request of Inkatha leaders to permit them to raise the issue in their Central Committee. Just a week earlier, Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi had denounced the results of the ANC-National Party talks as "a recipe for civil war."

Inkatha has used the postponement to press for the conference to settle the powers of regional administrations under a new government. The ANC insists that this be decided by the Constituent Assembly, along with all other constitutional matters.

Inkatha and the National Party are demanding a weak central government, with broad powers turned over to the administrations in various provinces and in the so-called Bantustans or "independent homelands" established by the apartheid regime to justify its disenfranchisement of the Black majority in South Africa.

The NP and Inkatha hope to weaken an ANC-led government in this way. Inkatha wants no challenge to its terror-imposed domination over the KwaZulu homeland and the influence it expects to gain from its opportunistic wooing of rightist opponents of the ANC in Natal province, which surrounds KwaZulu.

Thousands of South Africans have been killed or maimed in recent years as a result of violent attacks systematically organized through collusion by forces in the National Party government and state security apparatus and Inkatha-instigated gangs. The ANC's efforts to expose this murderous cooperation before world public opinion bore fruit in mid-1991, when secret government funding of Inkatha hit the headlines in South Africa and worldwide.

In the wake of "Inkathagate," the ANC issued its call for an interim government of national unity as the only way to ensure even minimal conditions for democratic elections to a Constituent Assembly.

The ANC's political campaign to force the National Party to the negotiating table culminated in a massive, two-day general strike on November 4-5, 1991. While this was called by the Congress of South African Trade Unions with ANC backing to protest the government's imposition of a regressive value-added tax, it had wider implications. The democratic movement's display of power among millions of urban and rural

workers and youth struck a blow at the apartheid regime.

Codesa multiparty talks

On December 20-21, 1991, the first session of the multiparty Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) was held. The F. W. de Klerk regime had finally been forced to the negotiating table for talks that could lead to its demise through the country's first democratic elections.

The National Party and Inkatha, while participating in Codesa, did all they could to undermine it in the first half of 1992. Above all, they escalated violence against ANC supporters and innocent working people in the townships. In May, the ANC leadership called off the negotiations and launched a mass action campaign to respond to the regime's bloody assaults. Through a series of massive and disciplined demonstrations and strikes, the democratic movement forced de Klerk back into negotiations by September.

The course approved by the ANC National Executive Committee this month has now opened the way to the resumption of

the multiparty Codesa talks, with the prospect of rapidly setting a date for elections.

While the vote on the National Executive Committee was unanimous, NEC member Harry Gwala, an ANC leader in Natal province, told the *Sunday Times* of Johannesburg that he opposed the resolution. Gwala left the meeting prior to the vote, saying he had to return to Natal to lead a march. Gwala said he also opposes the ANC leadership's decision to press ahead with plans for a meeting between Mandela and Buthelezi to discuss the negotiations and steps that can be taken to reduce organized violence and create conditions conducive for a nationwide election campaign.

The *Sunday Star* of Johannesburg reported February 21 that two South African organizations that rejected participation in the 1991 Codesa talks, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and Azanian People's Organization (Azapo), "said yesterday [they] would consider attending the [multiparty] conference if and when they received formal invitations." Both organizations oppose the

Continued on Page 11

Mandela: 'We know that you will march this last mile with us'

The following speech was given by Nelson Mandela to the ANC International Solidarity Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, on February 20.

Dear friends and colleagues,

Allow me to apologize for not being with you yesterday. However, it was fitting that our national chairperson, Oliver Tambo, spoke in my place. He is the one who spearheaded international mobilization for all those years, and to whom all South Africa is deeply indebted for making it possible for us to reach this stage in our struggle.

There are certain moments that capture the essence of life itself. Today is such a moment for me. For you are the friends from five continents who kept hope alive. You took the plight of our people, our hopes, our dreams, and our struggle, to your hearts and made it your own. You have forged bonds of friendship that are unbreakable. You refused to let the world ignore the tragedy wreaked by apartheid.

And today you are here with us, many of you for the first time. While you are here you will see what I saw coming out of prison after 27 years:

- that our people are still the hewers of wood and the drawers of water;
- that our people know only hunger, disease, poverty, and violence;
- that in the decades of apartheid rule, we were reduced to beggars in our own land.

You are here to help us transform all this, to help us move from antiapartheid to democracy. We are on the eve of great changes that place enormous responsibilities on all our shoulders.

These are complicated and difficult times, for which there are no pat answers. Before we have even attained our freedom we are experiencing an incipient counter-revolution. After so much sacrifice by so many, we have the obligation to prevent disintegration into a Yugoslavia.

And one of the ways to do this is to hold free and fair elections, where every South African will vote, for the first time, for a government of their choice.

We know that you will march this last mile with us, will work with us to win a resounding victory in these elections. We know you will help us reconstruct South Africa in the vision of the Freedom Charter, as a country that belongs to all its people, Black and white.

We know you will go back to your countries and begin work on the enormous tasks that lie ahead. Together we cannot fail.

My doctors have given me a clean bill of health. In order to prepare for the strenuous tasks that lie ahead, I will now begin my two weeks of complete rest. Your love sustained me throughout my prison years. Your concern for my well-being now overwhelms me. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

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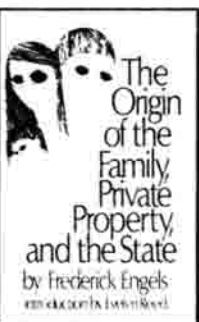
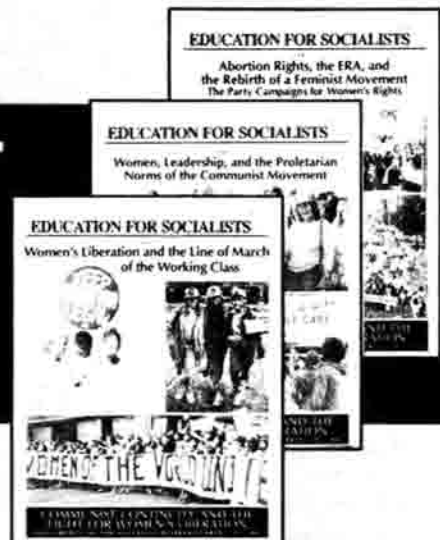
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Canada farmers discuss collapse in agriculture

BY BRIGITTE GROUX

LUCKNOW, Ontario — One thousand farmers participated in a rally here February 4 to discuss the "imminent collapse" in agriculture. This public forum was organized by Line in the Dirt, a farmers' organization in southern Ontario.

Representatives of several farmers' organizations spoke at the rally, as did members of federal and provincial parliaments and the federal minister of agriculture, Charles Mayer.

Paul Frayne, a farmer and spokesperson for Line in the Dirt, explained that "the disastrous weather conditions of 1992 have accelerated the crisis in agriculture. Ontario farmers alone have lost \$1 billion in 1992. Farmers with crop insurance might not have been as devastated as those without, but many producers simply have no insurance."

In 1992, approximately 50 percent of the corn producers in Ontario either chose not to get or could not afford insurance because of high premiums. Farmers have been told by the Crop Insurance Commission that premiums will rise by over 50 percent for the 1993 corn crops.

"Fifty-eight percent of the average farm family income comes from off-farm jobs," reported John Moore, a farmer from Goderich. He explained that while consumer prices increased between 15 percent and 235 percent for many farm products in the last decade, the prices that farmers receive have either increased modestly or in some instances declined substantially. Since 1971, farmers' costs for diesel fuel and fertilizers have increased by 625 percent and 425 percent respectively.

"Yes, there are farmers going to food banks, farm families without heat or hydro, and children going to school with empty lunch boxes," said John King, member of the Huron Emergency Agricultural Response Team, a local farmers' aid organization.

Line in the Dirt is demanding immediate action by the government to come up with cash payments for farmers. It is demanding \$60 per acre for farmers as well as changes in the crop and income insurance programs.

One farmer explained to applause, "We have to have social dignity and we shouldn't be talking about agriculture only, but also fishery and forestry."

Pathfinder Mural depicts Chinese peasant struggle

This monthly column features the working-class leaders and fighters for social justice from around the world who are depicted on the Pathfinder Mural.

The six-story mural was painted by an international team of 80 artists from 20 countries. Included in the mural are portraits of revolutionary leaders such as Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, and Karl Marx, whose speeches and writings are published by Pathfinder Press.

BY SARA LOBMAN

A painting on the Pathfinder Mural by New York artist Phyllis Yampolsky depicts Chinese peasants burning the landlords' deeds during the agrarian reform of 1951. These actions in China were not the first time that the peasants had organized to fight for land.

For many centuries the Chinese peasantry had been oppressed and exploited, first by a landed aristocracy with close ties to the emperor and then by imperialist powers operating through a network of warlords. Peasants were plundered by the imperialists and warlords, local capitalists, landlords, merchants, and tax collectors.

A big revolutionary upheaval of workers and peasants took place from 1925-1927. With its defeat the dictatorship of Chiang Kaishek was established. Throughout the next decade peasant armies, led by Mao Zedong's Communist Party, continued to operate in parts of the country.

Under the pressure of an invasion by Japan, tensions mounted between Chiang Kaishek and the Communist-led forces. By the late 1940s a situation of civil war existed. In 1946 the Communist Party announced a limited land reform as part of its preparation for a struggle with Chiang. The land-reform movement rapidly gathered momentum and within the next three years 178 million peasants had received land as a result of the redistribution of the property of the big landowners.

It was this peasant movement, combined with mounting outrage against imperialist domination and the corruption and repression of the dictatorship, that led to a revolutionary



Mural scene shows Chinese peasants burning landlords' title deeds.

victory in 1949 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

When the Chinese Communist Party and its peasant-based army came to power, China was a country of some 450 million people. More than 85 percent lived in rural areas, the vast majority as peasants and agricultural workers. A new agrarian law was passed in mid-1950. The government hoped to carry it out gradually, under the tight control of Communist Party members. But, once again, the peasants had a different idea.

Under the impact of the Korean War, in which thousands of Chinese peasants joined Korean troops

in pushing back the imperialist forces, peasant committees were reorganized into representative bodies. During the winter of 1950-51 land reform swept through most of the country, often going far beyond what the government had intended.

During the next several years, growing numbers of peasants sought to consolidate the gains they had won by collaborating with each other. Small-scale, voluntary co-operatives sprang up, through which peasants shared tools, animals, and resources.

Unfortunately, the Mao-led government did not really represent the interests of the peasant masses. Its central concern was its own power and privileges. It viewed the workers and peasants as objects to be manipulated in the interests of a small bureaucratic layer, not as the makers of history that they had proven themselves to be. Fearing the independent initiatives and mobilizations of the peasants, the government launched a campaign of forced collectivization that soon destroyed many of the gains the peasants had fought for.

The Pathfinder Mural and the Pathfinder Mural bookstore are located at the corner of West and Charles Streets in New York City. The bookstore offers a complete selection of Pathfinder books and pamphlets as well as postcards, posters, and T-shirts depicting the mural. Contributions for the promotion, development, and preservation of the mural can be sent to: Friends of the Pathfinder Mural, 191 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10011. Telephone: (212) 727-8421.

Pamphlet has 'lessons from the real Che'

The following review of the Pathfinder pamphlet "Cuba Confronts the World Crisis of the '90s: Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today," appeared, under the headline "Lessons from the real Che," in the January 7 issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, publication of the Irish political organization Sinn Féin.

BY NEIL FORDE

Thirty years of economic sanctions, political destabilisation, the economic collapse of your allies and former trading partners is a recipe for disaster. A consensus is forming that time is running out for Cuba. This is based on the belief that Cuba like the former Soviet Union and other centrally planned East European economies has no option but to eventually succumb to market capitalism.

Believing that it is 'only a matter of time' ignores the ongoing struggle within Cuba to ensure its long-term economic survival. A revolution is still ongoing in Cuba, its objective is to ensure the successful transition from capitalism to socialism. Over the last six years there has been within Cuba a concerted attempt to reexamine the economic and political theory which guides the implementation of policy.

There is no blueprint for a people's revolution. However the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship in Cuba in 1959 has become a much studied and idealised revolution. The subsequent attempts at transforming a capitalist economy run in the interests of a few families, bankers and capitalists to that of a people's economy has been a difficult and largely ignored process.

Che Guevara's *Guerilla Warfare* is a widely publicised text and his subsequent assassination in 1967 by US trained troops in Bolivia created a legend. However the narrow focus on Guevara as a rebel army com-

mander and military tactician has prevented study of his contribution to the economic and social development of Cuba in the aftermath of liberation from the Batista regime.

Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today is the title of a Pathfinder pamphlet which discusses the ideas of Che Guevara on how to organise workers and farmers to make the transition to socialism. Written by Mary-Alice Waters, the pamphlet examines the years since December 1986 when Fidel Castro called for an examination of failure of the soviet model of economic planning to deliver economic security and prosperity to the Cuban people. Castro called for the reaffirming of "the essential concepts about what socialism is and how it can be built."

"A system worse than capitalism" was how Castro described the possibility of the failure of the Cuban revolution. In 1987, on the 20th anniversary of Guevara's death Castro called for a renewed emphasis on the economic thought of Che Guevara.

Waters introduces the elements of Che



Agricultural brigade in Cuba in 1991. Che Guevara emphasized the importance of voluntary work in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Guevara's economic and political work while discussing the attempts since 1987 to implement an economic and social policy that would "expand political participation and revolutionary consciousness. The door is opened for working people to cease being the objects of blind economic laws that determine their living and working conditions

and instead to begin placing society's productive forces under their own conscious control."

The open door involved for Guevara a rejection of the market, the price mechanism and competition. He rejected the "capitalist categories of 'profitability' in judging social costs and benefits. He envisaged a changing function for money, banking, and prices. The banking system would be nationalised. The workers would participate in the management of their economy.

The years since 1986 have seen the dismantling of the economic policies borrowed from the Soviet Union. The reliance on bonuses and individual material incentives in place of housing, health, education and day-care facilities was abandoned and replaced with a resurgent scheme of voluntary labour projects. Workers built the much needed social resources in their own areas.

The planning of industry and the economic performance of state enterprises is now measured by their social usefulness rather than pure profitability and cost accounting techniques. Cuba has returned to Che Guevara's objective of self-sufficiency in food production. This has been hastened by the ongoing US orchestrated economic isolation of Cuba.

Waters' pamphlet is a good introduction to the economic thought and work of Che Guevara and its implication for Cuba today. The Left in Europe is engaged in endless navel gazing and soul searching over its tacit acceptance of so-called market realities. It could do no better than look up and examine Guevara's economic theory rather than wallowing in his myth.

Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today is published by Pathfinder Press at \$3.50/£2.00.

ANC charts course toward elections

Continued from Page 9

ANC's perspective of a unitary, nonracial republic in South Africa. ANC leader Cyril Ramaphosa has stated that the ANC will meet with representatives of the PAC and Azapo to "ensure that they are represented at the planning conference."

Reconstruction and development

During the transition period of a government of national unity, the NEC resolution said, this arrangement "must be reinforced by an effective programme of reconstruction and democratic transformation."

"The ANC immediately needs to embark on a process to consolidate its ranks, supporters, and those of the broad democratic forces around a transitional strategy to empower the oppressed majority."

Such measures, the resolution says, must include priorities on restructuring parts of the state apparatus, an "affirmative action" program to begin transforming these state institutions, a program "of social and economic reconstruction," and "a process of consultation and mobilisation of mass democratic forces" to advance these goals.

ANC election campaign launched

The ANC National Executive Committee meeting also launched the organization's election campaign for the Constituent Assembly. Leaders of the ANC are scheduled to address rallies throughout the country in coming months.

The ANC leadership meeting, says the press statement, called on "all levels of our organisation to gear themselves for that campaign, which we will wage under the slogan 'Now is the Time' 'Ke Nako Sekunjalo' 'Nou is die Tyd.'"

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has announced that its central committee has decided to make NUM leaders available to run as candidates on the ANC ticket if they are asked to do so. The February 19 *New Nation* reported that leaders of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), of which the NUM is the largest affiliate, are also expected to run on the ANC election ticket.

Meanwhile, de Klerk made his initial election campaign moves this week. For the first time, he appointed three members who are not white to full positions in the National Party's cabinet. Two of the three are "colored" under apartheid's racial categories, those who are mixed African and

white, and one is Indian.

The February 16-18 ANC National Executive Committee meeting adopted a resolution outlining the conditions under which it would call for a further lifting of sanctions against South Africa.

The resolution reaffirmed "that international sanctions against apartheid have played a critical role in the struggle for a united, democratic, nonracial and nonsexist South Africa."

Sanctions in the areas of diplomatic relations, gold coins, trade and trade credit, new investments, loans, and other financial links, the ANC resolution stated, should be lifted on the announcement of a date for the elections to a Constituent Assembly and the establishment of a Transitional Executive Council and related bodies to begin organizing them. The resolution also said that "no representatives of the white minority regime" should be accredited by any government or international organization, saying that such action should be reserved for when an Interim Government of National Unity has been established. The ANC also called "on the international community to ensure strict observance of the arms and oil embargoes until a democratic government has been installed."

The African National Congress, the resolution says, will need in the next period "to do everything in its power to address the burning questions of poverty, unemployment, racial inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income, and the social imbalances that are a result of the system of apartheid."

Right now, these long-standing social ills are being greatly exacerbated by the impact on South Africa of the world capitalist depression. The national unemployment rate is 48 percent, running as high as 80 percent in some townships, according to the *Sunday Times*.

Solidarity with Angola

The ANC National Executive Committee also adopted a resolution condemning "in the strongest terms the criminal war being waged by UNITA, under the leadership of Jonas Savimbi, against the people of Angola and their democratically elected government."

When Angola achieved its independence from Portuguese colonialism in late 1975, the counterrevolutionary UNITA launched a war against the new government with the backing of Washington and the apart-

heid regime. Cuban internationalist volunteers responded to the Angolan government's request for help, and after more than 12 years the combined Angolan and Cuban forces defeated the South African regime and UNITA in 1988.

UNITA continued its armed operations against the government until a peace agreement was signed in 1991. When UNITA leader Savimbi was defeated in presidential elections in September 1992, however, UNITA resumed its war against the newly elected government. Thousands of Angolans have been killed or wounded in fighting since then.

The NEC pointed to the role of the apartheid regime in continuing arms supplies to UNITA and called for an immediate halt to all such assistance.

"The NEC recorded our indebtedness to the Angolan people and their government for years of solidarity with the South African struggle at great cost to their country and themselves," said the ANC statement on the NEC meeting.

"Accordingly, the meeting resolved to launch a national campaign of solidarity and support for Angola, including demonstrations and other manifestations."

Keen interest in France for books on Cuban revolution

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — Books and pamphlets on Cuba and Che Guevara are drawing increased interest at Pathfinder book tables, organized regularly here on the streets, in universities, and at political actions by workers and youth.

On January 23, for example, when 10,000 people rallied in Paris to demand more democratic rights for youth, the Pathfinder table attracted much attention.

Six copies of the French edition of *Che Guevara and the Struggle for Socialism Today* were sold, raising to 35 the total number of these pamphlets sold by Pathfinder here in the first six weeks they have been available.

In addition, four copies of the new French edition of Cuban economist Carlos Tablada's *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* were sold at

the January 23 action.

A leaflet announcing Tablada's March 3-13 speaking tour in France was widely distributed at the action and brought several phone inquiries.

The initial order for 50 copies of the book by Tablada is almost exhausted, and Pathfinder supporters here have ordered 75 more. Several orders have come by mail in response to a leaflet announcing publication of the French edition of the book.

During 1992, the most popular Pathfinder title here was the French edition of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* with 98 copies sold. Sales of *New Internationalism* in its French, English, and Spanish editions totaled 49 copies; the best seller was the special issue on the Gulf war, *Opening Guns of World War III*. There was also considerable interest in Pathfinder books by Malcolm X.

Miners dig in for hard fight

Continued from back page

Eagle #2 mine in Shawneetown this translated into a loss of 200 jobs since 1982, when continuous miner machinery was introduced. Since then, production has actually increased.

Conditions at the Eagle #2 mine are difficult, as in all coal mines. The miners work about 400 feet underground in work areas that average five and a half feet high, but are sometimes as low as 42 inches. They load coal onto an underground belt more than five miles long. Recently a rock fall from the roof of the mine hit one miner, who may lose a leg.

But a number of the strikers pointed to the safety protection the union fights for as one of the most important advantages they have over nonunion miners. Some nonunion mines actually pay a little more than the \$16 an hour the union miners average. At Eagle #2, Peabody recently tried to start an incentive safety program. After a discussion, the union members unanimously voted to reject it, because it would jeopardize, not help, safety.

In addition to hazardous working conditions miners also pointed to black lung, the respiratory disease from breathing coal dust that many miners suffer from. Steve Jones pointed out that spraying water to keep down the dust makes a difference, but after decades working underground all coal miners suffer from black-lung disease. And the companies still fight hard to deny benefits to black-lung victims. The joke among miners is that the only proof Peabody accepts of black lung is your dead body.

As we go to press . . .

BOONVILLE, Indiana — Peabody Coal brought two busloads of strikebreakers into the Lynnville mine here February 22. Striking miners blocked the buses at one entrance, but they got through at another gate. UMW Local 9926 president Bill Neff reported that a truck and van loaded with luggage also entered the mine. "They're getting ready for the long haul," Neff said. Strikers also report that a large tent and propane heaters were brought into the Squaw Creek Mine.

Peabody officials told the press the buses carried management personnel from other mines and that the company will start mining coal at both mines soon.

Peabody also started moving stockpiled coal from the Marissa, Illinois, mine to a nearby power plant. UMW official Bill Brumfield said in an interview, "They've turned the foremen into scabs."

Special Offer to Striking Coal Miners

\$5

The Eastern Airlines Strike
(Regular price \$8.95)



When you buy a \$10 introductory subscription to the *Militant*.

This book explains the valuable links that were forged between the striking airline workers and coal miners during the 1989-90 strike against Pittston Coal. It tells the story of the 22-month fight of Machinists at Eastern Airlines against union busting, and draws the lessons of that fight for working people today. 91 pp.

Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on this page or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Please include \$3 handling for the first book and \$.50 for each additional copy.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

The Militant Labor Forum is a weekly free-speech meeting for workers, farmers, youth, and others. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation should attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

At the Militant Labor Forum you can express your opinion, listen to the views of fellow fighters, and exchange ideas on how to best advance the interests of workers and farmers the world over.

FLORIDA

Miami

Socialist Campaign Rally. Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers candidate for Dade County Commission District 3. Sat., March 6, 7 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Incident at Oglala: The Frame-up of American Indian Movement Activist Leonard Peltier. Film. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 172 Trinity Ave. SW. Donation: \$3. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

By Any Means Necessary: A Day of Politics on Lessons for Fighters Today of Civil Rights Fight and the Political Evolution of Malcolm X. Sat., Feb. 27. "Victory of Civil Rights Movement," 11 a.m. Lunch, 1 p.m. "Malcolm X," 3 p.m. 545 W. Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$5. Tel: (312) 829-6815 or 829-7018.

IOWA

Des Moines

The Clinton Presidency Demands Working People and Youth Pay for the Capitalist Crisis. Speaker: Maurice Williams, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

Support the Miners Strike — A Reportback from the Coal Fields. Speaker: Shirley Peña, member, United Auto Workers Local 242. Sat., March 6, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

The Housing Crisis: Who is to Blame? Speakers: Jeff Singer, Healthcare for the Homeless; Patricia Leamon, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2905 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (410) 235-0013.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Revolutionary Cuba Today: An Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Barbara Graham, recently returned from youth brigade to Cuba. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Tel: (201) 643-3341. Translation to Spanish and French.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Coal Miners on Strike against Peabody. Speaker: Steve Marshall, member, United Transportation Union Local 1428, recently visited striking miners in West Virginia. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212)

675-6740.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Clinton's Economic Policy: An Attack on Working People. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

The Fight for Gay Rights Today. Sat., March 6, 7:30 p.m. 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

OHIO

Cleveland

Open the Borders to Haitian Refugees! Speakers: Mary-Beth Moylan, law student director of National Haitian Asylum Project, president of Case Western National Lawyers Guild; representative, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Feb. 28, 4 p.m. 1863 W. 25th St. Donation: \$3.50. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Malcolm X: His Revolutionary Ideas and Legacy for Today. Speaker: Garnez Parks, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Feb. 28, 3 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS

Houston

Rising Attacks on Immigrants: How Scapegoating Keeps All Workers Divided. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$3. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

Clinton's Closed Door and the Rights of Haitians. Speaker: Harvey McArthur, *Militant* correspondent. Sat., March 6, 7 p.m. Special presentation on Guantánamo, 3 p.m. 147 E. 900 S. Donation: \$5. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

Abortion Rights Today. Panel discussion. Sat., March 13, 7 p.m. 147 E. 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

How Can Labor Fight Layoffs and Unemployment. Speaker: Anna Schell, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Transportation Union. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Translation to Spanish.

The Famines in Africa: Who Is Responsible? What Can Be Done? Speakers: Francis Njubi, investigative reporter for the *Skanner*; Scott Breen, Socialist Workers Party, member, International Association of Machinists Local 286; Mat Whasson, Campus Greens, University of Washington. Sat., March 6, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Translation to Spanish.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Panama Deception. Video. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 523 8th St. SE. Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 547-7557.

WEST VIRGINIA

Morgantown

Malcolm X: His Legacy for Youth and Working People. Speakers: Steve Redd, West Virginia University (WVU) Board of Governors; Garnez Parks, Socialist Workers Party; Elvage Murphy, WVU Black Law Students; representative,

07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK: New York: 191 7th Ave. Zip: 10011. Tel: (212) 727-8421; 167 Charles St. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro: 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St. Zip 27406. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

OHIO: Cincinnati: P.O. Box 19484. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 221-2691. **Cleveland:** 1863 W. 25th St. Zip: 44113. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

OREGON: Portland: 2310 NE 8th #1. Zip: 97212. Tel: (503) 288-0466.

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8196. **Pittsburgh:** 4905 Penn Ave. Zip 15224. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS: Houston: 4806 Alameda. Zip: 77004. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

UTAH: Salt Lake City: 147 E. 900 S. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 523 8th St. SE. Zip: 20003. Tel: (202) 547-7557.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

WEST VIRGINIA: Morgantown: 242 Walnut. Mailing address: P.O. Box 203. Zip: 26507. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 19 Terry St., Surry Hills, Sydney NSW 2010. Tel: 02-281-3297.

BARBADOS

Bridgetown: P.O. Box 891. Tel.: (809) 436-7723.

Waynesburg College Black Student Union. Sun., Feb. 28, 7 p.m. WVU Mountainlair, Shenandoah Room. Donation: \$4. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Free Trade, Protectionism, or an Internationalist Perspective for Workers and Farmers. Speaker: Bob Aiken, Communist League campaign spokesperson. Sat., March 6, 6 p.m. Call for location. Donation: \$3. Tel: 02-281 3297.

BRITAIN

Manchester

Stop the Deportations: What's Behind Israel's Unceasing War Against the Palestinians. Speakers: Jonathan Silberman, Communist League; representative, General Union of Palestinian Students. Sat., March 6, 6 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Tel: 061-839 1766.

Sheffield

The Coming Revolution in South Africa. Speaker: Pete Clifford, Communist League, attended Feb. 19-21 African National Congress international solidarity conference in Johannesburg. Sat., March 6, 6 p.m. 1 Gower St., Spital Hill. Donation: £1. Tel: 0742-765070.

CANADA

Montreal

A Contribution to Black History Month: Speeches by Malcolm X in Spanish. Speaker: Jennifer Smith, director of Pathfinder bookstore. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 6566, boul. St-Laurent. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Toronto

Cuts in UI and Welfare — How to Fight Back. Speaker: representative, Communist League. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 827 Bloor St. West. Donation: \$3. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

Vancouver

Jobs for the Unemployed. Stop the Cuts in UIC! Speakers: Joe Young, Communist League, member, United Steelworkers of America Local 3495; Mike Barker, member of VHJ local of Hospital Employees Union. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. (between 23rd and 24 Ave). Donation: \$3. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

ICELAND

Reykjavik

Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today. Introduction to new pamphlet in Icelandic and a report back from Cuba. Sat., March 6, 5 p.m. Klapparstíg 26. Tel: (91) 17513.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Does Clinton Represent a Way Forward for Working People? Sat., March 6, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

SWEDEN

Stockholm

Germany: Millions March against Racist Attacks. Speaker: Dag Tirsén, Communist League, member, Food Workers Union. Sat., Feb. 27, 4 p.m. Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

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Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, and *Nueva Internacional*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 111 21st St. South. Zip: 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079, 328-3314.

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460, 380-9640. **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

CONNECTICUT: New Haven: Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516. Tel: (203) 772-3375.

FLORIDA: Miami: 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 172 Trinity Ave. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 545 W. Roosevelt Rd. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 829-6815, 829-7018.

IOWA: Des Moines: 2105 Forest Ave. Zip: 50311. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

MARYLAND: Baltimore: 2905 Greenmount Ave. Zip: 21218. Tel: (410) 235-0013.

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

MINNESOTA: Twin Cities: 508 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI: St. Louis: 1622 S. Broadway. Zip: 63104. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 141 Halsey. Mailing address: 1188 Raymond Blvd., Suite 222. Zip:

Holy-Tech, Inc. — Italy's upcoming church fair will feature a



Harry Ring

confessional device which will enable busy sinners to fax in a listing of their sins. We assume the faxed confessions will include a credit card number for the collection box.

For more affluent sinners — The Italian church trade fair will also feature more comfortable confes-

sionals, including sound-proofing, electric sliding doors, upholstered armchairs and air conditioning.

Girding for class war — We know it's not funny, but a British corporate manager dropped dead hiking through a mountainous area in a freezing rain. A number of British companies are said to be sending managers on such military-style forays to help "motivate" them.

Symbolism — Meeting a city requirement for public art in new downtown developments, the owners of a Los Angeles skyscraper unveiled a mural they described as a "symbol of ethnic diversity and

harmony." The mural features three angels — two blondes and a brunette, all white.

The good old days — Responding to the noise about the three white angels, one of the owners of the L.A. skyscraper explained that they're "12th-Century angels."

Need a good lawyer? — Grant Woods, Arizona's attorney general, was fined \$1,400 for hiring an undocumented nanny. He was also charged with neglecting to pay the nanny's social security and unemployment taxes. She was an independent contractor, not an employee, he explained.

Never heard of Kinko's? — When Homefed, the San Diego thrift, went belly up, the feds contracted with Price Waterhouse, the bigtime accounting outfit, to help with the liquidation. Among other things, Price Waterhouse put in a tab of 67 cents a page for photocopying some 11 million Homefed documents.

Cold cash for cold war — The Greater Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce gave an award to Air Force Lt. Gen. Edward Barry. They cited his work as "instrumental in maintaining deterrence during the Cold War." Barry was one of three top officers discovered to have secretly made a bundle of govern-

ment money available to bail out McDonnell Douglas, the aircraft maker.

For sure — The head of the drug manufacturer's trade association confided to a Senate committee that the industry was "a market economy well at work." Over the past decade, prescription prices soared 147 percent.

Simply put — How do you put a price on a prescription drug that will provide relief from pain and suffering? Responds Christina Heuer, a Wall Street drug industry analyst: "You charge what the traffic will bear."

Cuban economist addresses Manchester meeting

BY CELIA PUGH
AND GRAZYNA MARESCH

MANCHESTER, England — "When I last visited Europe two years ago, humanity was still under the impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall," Cuban economist Carlos Tablada noted at a public meeting here February 13. He said that during that visit many had asked if Cuba would suffer the same fate as Eastern Europe. "But more than three years have passed since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and one year since the collapse of the Soviet Union," Tablada told the gathering, "and the Cuban revolution still continues."

More than 260 students and workers heard Tablada during his three-day visit to Manchester. He is in Britain as part of a six-week European tour speaking on the challenges facing Cuba today.

In response to a question on whether the

United States has succeeded in its aim of causing unrest among the Cuban people, Tablada explained, "People can't be satisfied with the shortages in everyday life. Public transport is nonexistent; we only have 40 percent of foodstuffs. If we were satisfied with this we'd be a society of no hope, or a society that hasn't got it in them to fight for more achievements, or is hypocritical that we don't have expectations. There is a big discussion going on. But people know what capitalism is like; they see how the people of Latin America live. We have closed factories," Tablada emphasized, "but people still get paid."

Tablada explained the importance of voluntary work brigades and contingents for changing how work is organized and things are produced. "If this is not done," he said, "socialism can be more alienating than capitalism. We want people to identify with

work, but not just for reasons of production. Voluntary work is part of people working without material incentive. Today we have more voluntary work than ever."

Serious errors in 1970s

"In the 1970s we made a serious error and we're paying for it to this day," Tablada continued. "We stopped doing our own thinking and adopted the Soviet model for the economy and certain institutions. This was a backward step which affected morals and consciousness. We began to reconstruct capitalist relations in Cuba. The bureaucracy grew to more than 200,000 people and privileges began to appear that are common to bureaucracies of capitalist and Eastern European countries. Che and Fidel warned against this approach in the 1960s. We began to correct these problems in 1984."

In the discussion period Tablada was asked if U.S. intervention against Cuba is more likely today after the collapse of the Soviet Union. "People thought we weren't invaded before because of the Soviet Union," he replied. "If this were true we'd have been invaded with its collapse." He then explained how the Cuban people have always mobilized in their own defense and that the U.S. administration is nervous about direct intervention because they know that the death of thousands of U.S. soldiers would be unacceptable to the U.S. people.

Greetings were sent to the meeting by Graham Stringer on behalf of the City of Manchester Council, and by Bob Owens, regional secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and chair of the North West Trade Union Congress.

Tablada also spoke to packed lectures at Liverpool, Manchester, and Manchester Metropolitan universities. These meetings were larger than those during the 1990 tour. He spoke to 27 students at Ducie High School in the inner-city area of Moss Side. The media have targeted this area as a criminal "Bronx of Britain." Tablada also addressed a meeting of the Black Peoples Alliance.

Celia Pugh is a member of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union and works at GEC Alsthom, Trafford Park.

Carlos Tablada speaks to students in Sweden

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Cuban economist Carlos Tablada spoke to a meeting of 58 students here February 15. The meeting was sponsored by organizations for students studying political science, the history of ideas, and national economics. Most of the young people were from the University of Stockholm.

Tablada began by explaining that the Cuban revolution in 1959 created the possibility of tremendous changes for the people of Cuba, including a massive land reform, organizations for farmers, and new schools and universities. This was not easy, he said. "In 1958 the gross national product was the same as it had been in 1929, but the population was twice as large."

Most of the industrial development came after the revolution. Che Guevara made a big contribution to that process, Tablada said. After visiting the Soviet Union in 1960, Guevara realized that the Cubans needed to build a different kind of socialism — one with a political consciousness. The debate over how to build socialism is still going on in Cuba today, Tablada said.

Until 1965, Guevara developed his ideas with success. But after that, Cuba more and

more began to adopt the Soviet model. Initially, it seemed to work. But, in practice, it also meant copying privileges.

Tablada explained that while the current economic crisis makes life more difficult for the Cuban people, no one goes hungry. "Every day the electricity is off for three hours since we have very little fuel," he said. "I love big breakfasts, but now I only have tea and a piece of bread in the morning. But when my daughter's face and eyes were badly injured when the pressure cooker in my home exploded, neighbors found a car with fuel and took us to the hospital. The doctors and nurses did their job. They did not ask for credit cards or insurance papers. They did not demand to know who she was or who her father was. I have been to nine Latin American countries and they have many good hospitals," Tablada stressed. "But they are not available to everyone."

"We only have half the food supply that we need but the prices are the same as before and we share what we have," the Cuban economist said. "We haven't closed any schools or universities or hospitals, and they are all still free of charge."

In response to a question about the situation facing women in Cuba, Tablada ex-

plained that before the revolution the majority of women, like the majority of Blacks, were illiterate. Today, he said, 57 percent of university students are women. He added that 30 percent of the political leadership of the country is female, while before the revolution only one-tenth of one percent was.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



The 32-member African Supreme Council for Sports has approved a boycott of the 1968 Olympics, in protest over the decision to allow South Africa to participate. At last count, 15 of the African member nations have formally withdrawn, and the rest are expected to follow suit.

As a result, South Africa and its friends around the world have been asking the withdrawing nations to "reconsider." They base their arguments on the fact that South Africa has promised to send an integrated team to Mexico which will travel together, wear the same uniforms, and march under the same flag. Of course, Olympic tryouts for black and white athletes in South Africa will be separate.

United States Olympic representatives are making it clear that they can be counted among South Africa's friends. Avery Brundage, 80-year-old Chicago millionaire who is president of the International Olympic Committee, has asked the boycotting African nations to "think twice before denying South African non-whites their first opportunity for equality."

All this is helping to build up more and more support for the boycott of the Olympics being planned by black athletes in this country. Most black people are not very impressed by the new "opportunity for equality" in South Africa.

Meanwhile, the head of the South African delegation to the Olympics was quoted in the Feb. 27 *New York Post* as saying,

"The games are essentially a Western creation and it's only through the grace of God and the kindness of the Western nations that the whole world now competes in the Olympics."



March 6, 1942

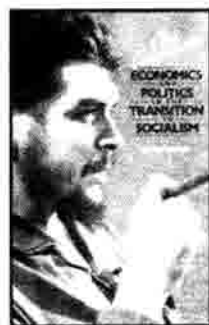
Christ Popoff, Syracuse militant who was convicted on frameup charges of arson in 1940, is now a free man, it was announced this week by the Workers Defense League, whose efforts in behalf of Popoff saved him from a sentence of 15-25 years in prison.

Popoff had incurred the hatred of reactionary forces for his activity in labor defense and unemployed activities over a period of many years. He was arrested in March, 1940, and charged with attempting, for pay, to set fire to a restaurant in Watertown, N.Y., so that the owner could collect the insurance. He was convicted on the testimony of a confessed firebug and sent to Attica Prison.

The WDL took the case after the conviction, and its lawyers secured a reversal of the conviction from the Appellate Court on the grounds of insufficient evidence. A new trial resulted in a second conviction. And was again reversed on the same grounds last December.

This is the second victory in recent months for the Workers Defense League in New York State. Two months ago its activities resulted in the release of Carl Gilmore, union teamster and victim of antilabor and anti-Negro prejudice, who was also sent to jail on a frameup charge.

Books on Cuba from Pathfinder Available in English, Spanish, and French



Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism
by Carlos Tablada
286 pp.
\$16.95 (\$11.95 in Spanish; \$26.95 in French)



Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today
by Mary-Alice Waters
37 pp. pamphlet,
\$3.50

These titles examine the contributions of Ernesto Che Guevara to building socialism and explain how Cuban working people are drawing on these lessons to meet the challenges confronting the revolution today.

Available at Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12, or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Please include \$3 handling for the first book and \$.50 for each additional title.

Defend, extend Social Security

Despite what Clinton Administration officials would have us believe, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other entitlement programs are not gifts. They are conquests of working-class struggle.

The initial proposal coming out of the White House to tax a greater amount of Social Security benefits is just a first step in the offensive against working people's living standards and the hard fought for gains we have made through struggle.

Clinton is now on the road trying to convince working people that he is after the rich to pay more. But nothing could be further from the truth. The propaganda campaign against Social Security recipients, most of whom are retired and disabled workers, indicates who the Clinton Administration is really after.

Democratic and Republican politicians alike argue that there are too many old people; that Social Security was never meant to cover so many; and that workers were never meant to live so long after retirement. In pushing this line, the capitalist politicians and big-business media hope to gain acceptance for deeper slashes in Social Security.

These forces advocate such measures as raising the age at which a worker can retire with full benefits, freezing cost of living adjustment raises in Social Security payments, and cutting the actual amount of payments. They propose first cutting the benefits of those with higher incomes, as they can "afford it." But such cuts invariably expand to squeeze working people. What Clinton and his gang are after is to turn Social Security into a kind of charity for those who are the worst off, instead of a right

that everyone is entitled to.

The attitude of the labor officialdom, that workers "all have to sacrifice," is disgraceful. It was the labor movement, through mighty battles, that won and extended the right of all working people to have real social security throughout their lives. Labor fought to win protection against the effects of capitalism on workers faced with unemployment, illness or injury, and retirement, not just better contract provisions for employees at this or that company.

Only the labor movement can defend these rights. By saying no to cutbacks and fighting for health care for all and education for workers of all ages the labor movement can help put the working class as a whole on a more equal footing. This will make it easier for workers to stand together against the effects of the current economic crisis.

The labor movement should also take a strong stand against the rightist forces outside of the government who are campaigning against Social Security, such as Lead or Leave. This group of fascist-minded well-heeled youth, who scapegoat elderly recipients of Social Security as the cause of the economic crisis in the United States, take encouragement from Clinton's budget cuts. They echo the demagoguery and social program of right-wing figures like Patrick Buchanan and Ross Perot.

As the worldwide depression continues, these kinds of groups will become more prominent and gain a wider hearing. Working people must answer them and organize to defend the social gains won by earlier generations, as well as to extend those gains to broader layers of society.

A landmark event in S. Africa

The recently concluded February 19-21 International Solidarity Conference organized by the African National Congress in Johannesburg, South Africa, was an important landmark on the road toward the creation of a democratic, nonracial, and nonsexist republic in South Africa.

This conference, attended by 900 participants from about 70 countries, including a number of official government delegations, was the first such meeting to be held on South African soil.

ANC president Nelson Mandela, in his speech to the gathering, pointed to the gains already won and challenges that still lie ahead for the revolutionary democratic movement. "You refused to let the world ignore the tragedy wreaked by apartheid," said Mandela, and "we know you will help us reconstruct South Africa in the vision of the Freedom Charter, as a country that belongs to all its people, Black and white."

Just days before the opening of the International Solidarity Conference, the ANC National Executive Committee unanimously adopted a resolution on negotiations with the ruling National Party that opens the way for the first ever democratic elections in South Africa. The overwhelming support for this decision throughout the ANC reflects the organization's confidence in the course it has taken and its determination to carry through to the

end the uprooting of apartheid rule. The mass mobilizations over the past year have strengthened the ANC's political resolve.

Contrary to numerous reports on these negotiations, the ANC leadership has stated clearly and unambiguously that it rejects the National Party's call for power sharing. The ANC has always insisted that no minority can have veto power over the process of carrying out a truly democratic election for a Constituent Assembly and drawing up a new constitution.

To help move this process forward the ANC also declared its support for an Interim Government of National Unity that would include minority representation and have as its aim safeguarding majority rule. As Pallo Jordan, director of the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, explained, the government of national unity will be "not a deal struck between political parties, but the outcome of the preferences of the South African electorate as expressed in the first democratic elections."

The strides forward being taken in South Africa today will continue to have an impact on struggles of working people for freedom and social justice throughout the world. We must dedicate ourselves, as Nelson Mandela puts it, to "march the last mile" with the revolutionary democratic movement in South Africa.

Support Peabody coal miners

Some 7,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) are now on strike against Peabody Holdings Co., the largest coal producer in the United States. This is an important labor fight and it deserves support from all working people and youth.

The major issue in the strike is the union's right to know who it is bargaining with so it can enforce its members' rights under a new contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA). Up to now Peabody refuses to come across with crucial information about its vast holdings and mining operations.

By disguising what coal operations it owns, Peabody — and other giant coal companies — aims to shift production to nonunion operations, undercut the union's strength, and evade contractual obligations. The provision in the now-expired 1988 contract between the UMWA and the BCOA, which states that companies must hire three union members out of every five miners in new mines, has often been ignored.

Many miners expect a long, hard battle not only with Peabody but also with the other major coal operators who have yet to agree to a contract with the union. Some UMWA locals at Peabody mines have already set up kitchens for strikers and their families, as well as strike centers to begin organizing solidarity. How well the miners

are able to beat back Peabody's attempt to weaken their union will have an important bearing on the struggles of other working people as well.

This UMWA strike is taking place as depression conditions continue to confront working people in spite of an economic upturn. This makes the fight of the miners even more important. Only through struggle will working people be able to fend off the attacks of the bosses as the economy worsens and they try to make us pay for their crisis.

The big-business press has given scant mention to the UMWA's fight against Peabody. At the very time that U.S. president Bill Clinton is urging working people to sacrifice — and not fight — the major media is not interested in showing union power being used to push for the rights of working people.

The *Militant* has taken the exact opposite approach. From day one of the miners' walkout the *Militant* has publicized the issues in the strike and helped win support and solidarity for the miners. We plan to continue doing just that. Through sales and reporting teams to Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia, we plan to keep our readers abreast of this important struggle. We hope our supporters will continue to make a special effort to send in reports on the strike and get out the *Militant* to coal miners and other working people across the country.

Child care — it depends on your social class

BY MICHAEL PENNOCK

CHICAGO—Chicago has its very own *Home Alone* case of child abandonment. David and Sharon Schoo returned from a nine-day Christmas trip to Mexico. They got off the plane to the lights of TV cameras and the handcuffs of arresting cops. They were charged with leaving their daughters — nine and four years old — by themselves. The children were discovered by authorities when the kids went to a neighbor after being scared by a smoke alarm. The news media was

AS I SEE IT

told they were left with food and instructions not to answer the door or phone, or to leave the house.

The Schoos' case is a constant news item and the talk of the town here. This past week they were hit with an additional 64 counts of child abuse. Other stories of neglect, real and imagined, are making the news.

In another story, a girl opened the door to a saleswoman while her mother was upstairs in the bathtub. Because the 10-year-old had been told not to do this, she lied and said her mother wasn't home.

A short time later the cops knocked on the door. They had come to "protect" the child and arrest the negligent parent. The mother was able to straighten things up without being hauled down to jail.

These stories are part of the same package as the Zoë Baird-type stories. The question, "Who's watching the kids?" is in the air. But the answer differs depending on which social class you belong to.

Joan Beck has a syndicated newspaper column in which she addresses the concerns of women of professional employment. "Public concern has been focused," she writes, "largely on the difficulties of high-profile, high-income women who want live-in or come-in care at home for their offspring."

The bigger issue, she adds, is that "No one is talking about the children. The worrisome, unasked question is what effect it has on young children to be cared for by marginal workers, some of whom don't speak role-model English and can't find other jobs."

After this slap at workers in general and immigrant workers in particular, she devotes half a sentence to the problems working-class parents face finding adequate childcare. The rest of the column is spent raising doubts about, and attacking the wisdom of, any parent who does not provide preschool children with the care of a nonworking, stay-at-home mother.

Beck cites Jay Belsky, a Pennsylvania State University "authority on day care." Looking at day-care centers in three cities, he concluded "the average quality of care was 'barely adequate.'" Belsky asserts this information has been kept quiet by the news media because "no one wants to make parents feel guilty."

But that's exactly what Belsky's report and Beck's column are designed to do. They certainly aren't any contribution at all to the fight for "child-care facilities, conveniently located, free, and available to all," as was demanded in a recent editorial in the *Militant*.

Children at home

Working-class parents, mothers in particular, and single mothers especially, are made to feel guilty. A woman railroad worker told me that she would always see coworkers on the phones during breaks on the afternoon shift at a previous factory job she held. "Did you get dinner okay?" they ask the child who answers the phone. "What's your brother watching on TV? Tell him to turn it off and do his homework." And finally, "I love you."

A coworker explained that he and his wife have to leave for work before their second-grade son wakes up for school. They set alarm clocks to wake him up and to remind him when to go to school. This practice became part of the discussion on child care among the members of my train crew. One coworker, whose wife doesn't work, thought this solution was horrible; the engineer thought it was reasonable.

Child care is something each working-class family has to scramble to get on its own. When adequate arrangements are in place, the universal reaction is, "Wow! Are we ever lucky."

The employing class gets great value from making child care an individual or family responsibility, rather than a social right. First, of course, the cost is borne by the family itself. But the greatest benefit to the bosses is that many potential fighters for social change are taken out of circulation. "I better skip that union meeting so I can help the kids with their lessons," workers say. "I can't go to that demonstration; I have to get on home."

The Zoë Bairds and Joan Becks can go on wailing that "you just can't get good help these days." A 12-week, unpaid family-leave bill may be something they can afford to use. But all working people, men and women, parents or not, will be in better shape to defend our rights as a class if we can win child care as a right.

Michael Pennock is a switchman on the Norfolk Southern Railroad, and a member of United Transportation Union Local 1895.

Canada miners: 'We are determined to win fight'

Support for gold miners on strike against the Royal Oak mines in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, remains solid among working people and continues to grow.

Recently Alberta Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 488 adopted a striking family, which requires a donation of \$500 per month plus

mine by CASAW Local 4.

"The commissioners met with CASAW representatives after meeting with Royal Oak in January and told us that we were not being realistic," said Harry Seeton, president of CASAW Local 4. "But why is it not realistic to defend better safety conditions, to fight against unjust fir-

motorists tooting their horns in support as they passed, around 20 pickets held placards with slogans saying, "KFC plucks workers" and "fowl play." Many wore KFC T-shirts with the motto "I like it like that" redesigned with a felt pen to read "I don't like it like that."

The picket line was organized February 11 after KFC in Levin locked out the workers when they rejected the company's demand to resign and reapply for their jobs under a new contract. KFC had just taken over direct management of the store from the franchise holder.

The company is seeking to impose its standard contract, which it claims is in force at their other 66 stores. The workers particularly object to provisions eliminating guaranteed hours of work. The company intends to make them all casual workers, they say. Five of the fourteen workers affected previously worked full-time.

According to Service Workers Union spokesperson Lindy McIntyre, "Under the proposed system they [the workers] could find they are rostered on for two hours a week. They could have less job security and income than the dole [unemployment benefit]."

The pickets are getting wide support from the local community. Food, drink, and paint for the placards have been donated. The workers also have permission to use the kitchen and telephone in a local hotel. A Levin motorcycle club organized a drive-through in the KFC customer parking lot in support of the pickets. Strikers say their picket line has slashed the restaurant's customers by as much as 80 percent.

This support was also registered in the dismal response to company advertisements for 20 vacancies. Pickets reported that a mere handful of interviewees turned up, despite

high unemployment in the area. KFC has brought in management from other stores to operate the outlet.

The workers picketed the restaurant for over a week before the company and the union reached an agreement which involved some concessions on both sides. After a day back at work, a worker told the *Militant* February 21 that "... it would have been good if we had stayed out — we were really damaging their business."

She accepted the return to work, however, saying that people's livelihoods were on the line. Now "we have a strong union in the store." □

Ford demands new rules at Missouri plant

Ford Co. executive Alex Trotman told workers at the assembly plant in Hazelwood, Missouri, that they had earned the "right" to build a new vehicle, the Explorer truck. The 2,400 workers at the plant are organized by United Auto Workers Local 325. Trotman is the executive vice-president of the company's North American automotive operations.

While praising the 2,400 workers for their quality performance, Trotman made it clear his real announcement was that the company wants concessions from the union, Local 325 of the United Auto Workers. He said, "Of course, until we ratify the Modern Operating Agreement, no investments will be made."

The Modern Operating Agreement (MOA) would set new work rules and work standards designed to increase production and reduce the work force. At a December 5 emergency union meeting, Local 325 members voted by a 3-1 margin to authorize the bargaining committee to discuss MOA at upcoming

negotiations.

The vote came in response to a company threat to close the plant in 1994. Many workers are nervous and uncertain about their future employment since production of the Aerostar van is scheduled to end soon. Now, as one worker put it, "the company is just dangling this new product in front of us."

Each of several speakers on the platform, which included high-level officials from the company and the union as well as politicians from around the state, emphasized that workers were being laid off around the country in large numbers. The General Motors plant in Wentzville, also located outside of St. Louis, plans to lay off 400 workers.

Union members had mixed reactions to the company's announcement. One worker said, "You don't get anything for nothing." Many felt a sense of relief that there would be work after 1994. One worker stated, however, "The only thing we got is a guarantee that we're going to have to make concessions."

Some feel that new product or no new product, the union should not agree to a concession contract. "They're saying basically that you've got to change to keep your job — it seems like some kind of intimidation process," said one worker. "They're breaking up our union bit by bit and I wish more people could see that." □

The following people contributed to this week's column: Ned Dmytryshyn, member of Teamsters Local 213 in Vancouver, Canada; Ruth Gray in Wellington, New Zealand; and Charlene Adamson, member of United Auto Workers Local 325 in Hazelwood, Missouri.

ON THE PICKET LINE

\$100 per child. "We've gotten and continue to get support from the Saskatchewan Federation of Labor and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Saskatchewan," said Blaine Lithaway, executive board member of the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers (CASAW) Local 4 on strike against the Royal Oak mines. "We get tremendous support from unions in the Maritimes, Manitoba, and other parts of Canada. As of February, we had 92 families sponsored."

Industrial inquiry commissioners Don Monroe and Vince Ready, appointed by federal labor minister Marcel Danis to look into the dispute at Royal Oak mines in Yellowknife, announced February 1 that they would now work on recommendations to the minister rather than trying to reach a settlement.

Margaret Witte, the owner of Royal Oak mines, who has been on a vicious campaign to break the union since buying the mine in November 1990, refuses to resume bargaining until the federal labor board rules on the application for recognition by a scab association at the mine. More than 100 strikebreakers are currently working at Royal Oak mines while picket lines are maintained at the

ings, and to stand up against union busting? Royal Oak is getting its way with the federal government and is just stalling, hoping that support and solidarity will disappear for the strikers."

But, Seeton continued, "Our morale is high and we are determined to win this fight. We have told the company that we will never come crawling back."

Yellowknife gold miners are waging a determined struggle — against union busting, cop violence, and replacement workers — to defend health and safety conditions and seniority rights, which were seriously under attack by Royal Oak mines.

On September 18 an explosion killed nine replacement workers. Since that time, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the bosses, and the media have conducted a vicious campaign, without a shred of evidence, to frame up the strikers for the explosion. □

'Staying out until it drives them crazy'

"We're going to stay out until we drive them crazy," said a worker picketing the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) outlet in the North Island, New Zealand, town of Levin February 12. Amid the din of

LETTERS

Mass expulsions

A precedent to the Israeli mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs, dumping them as stateless persons over the border to Lebanon, which refuses to accept them: Oct. 29-31, 1938, the Nazi German government summarily expelled thousands of German Jews, of Polish origin, across the border into Poland at Zbaszyn (Benschen), where they were refused entry by the Polish government, and were forced to languish for months as stateless refugees.

Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old refugee in France, was so incensed at the cruel treatment meted out to his parents that he went into the German embassy in Paris on Nov. 7, 1938, and shot and killed the first thing he saw wearing a swastika.

It was this incident that the Nazis gleefully seized upon to escalate their campaign of terror, murder, arson, and extortion against all Jews in Germany/Austria (*Kristallnacht* Nov. 9-11, 1938).

Robert Des Verney
Oakland, California

Revolutionaries in jail

Recently the Black Culture Work Shop held its quarterly work shop in the visiting room at the United States penitentiary in Lompoc, California. The keynote speaker was Thabo Ntweng from the Socialist Workers Party.

As we awaited the arrival of our keynote speaker my mind drifted to Mark Curtis who I know would have loved this meeting. Lompoc prison is ripe for revolutionary work. Among those in the audience were socialists who followed the ideas of George Jackson and Puerto Rican revolutionaries that are fighting to get imperialism out of Puerto Rico.

Our keynote speaker from the Socialist Workers Party spoke about Somalia and how the U.S. government's primary interest was not to feed the starving people. He spoke about how Somalia could be a jump off point to Bosnia so that the imperialists here would have an opportunity to get their hands involved in a European market they have not had a chance to grasp for over 40 years. He also mentioned how Somalia could be used as another jump off point for going after Iraq.

We thank the SWP for coming and for your continued support. Soon after our meeting there was word of a possible food and work strike. The administration there said: get that Marxist-Leninist Balagoon Moyenda out of here. I'm now in Leavenworth, Kansas.

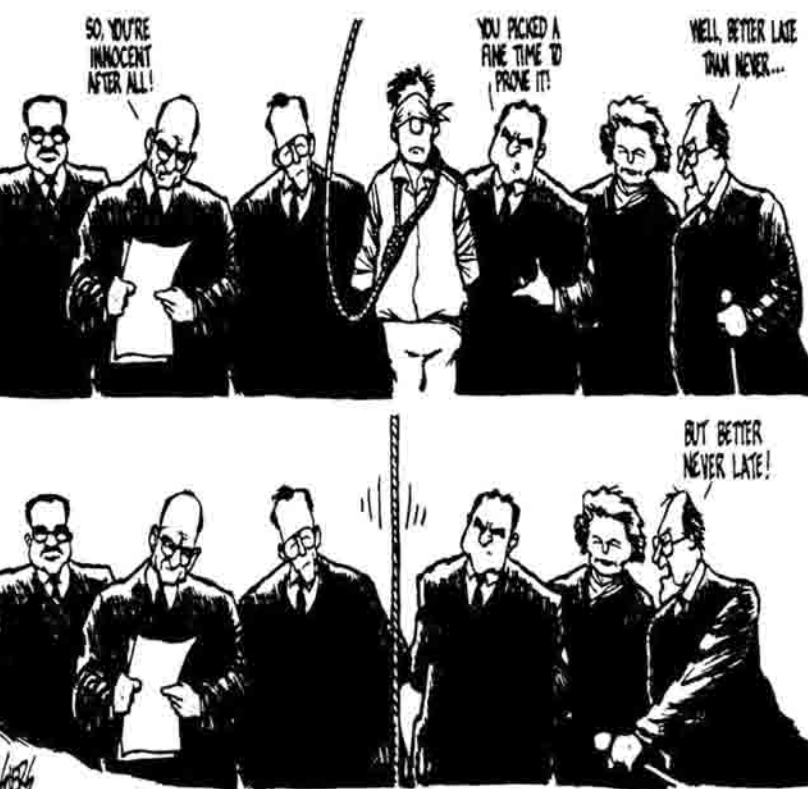
In closing, I send a message to Mark Curtis. Keep struggling even through oppression. Ours is a good fight.

Balagoon Moyenda
Leavenworth prison
Leavenworth, Kansas

War in Yugoslavia

President Clinton has threatened military action against the people of Yugoslavia. This would bring a much larger war and would mean a much worse living standard for working and poor people over there. It would also not be good for our working class in the United States.

It is very wrong that Serbians, Croats, and Muslims are still continuing to fight each other in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Croatia. The break up of Yugoslavia is helping world imperialism. Tudjman, Milosevic, and Izetbegovic



are all betrayers of the working class of Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. They let nationalists and reactionaries terrorize their own people.

On another point, please when you get a chance write some articles on New Zealand health care. Is it socialized or in private hands? I believe that when I was there in 1944 during World War II, when the Labor government was in power, it was in the hands of the government. It would be a good thing if in the United States the Clinton administration put price controls on hospitals and convalescent and nursing homes. Socialists, communists, and liberal

Democrats must all work together to force our government in Washington to establish much better medical and health services and control over big business who are getting rich off the backs of working class and sick people.

Louis Vukman
San Gabriel, California

Rehab workers strike

Rehabilitation workers at the Federation Employment Guidance Services staged a one-day strike February 3 in New York. The strikers are demanding a fairer contract than the one recently offered to them by management. The

bosses offered the workers a pitifully small raise in the proposed contract. The strikers would like a respectable increase in their salary and better benefits. The strikers are members of District Council 1707 AFSCME.

Workers in the rehabilitation and counseling fields are usually paid low wages; receive few, if any, benefits; and work under stressful conditions. Unfortunately, many workers in these fields are not organized in unions and are likewise easier for management to divide and exploit.

Richard Shore
Bronx, New York

Tax the rich!

I am retired and for socialism. Tax the ruling elites out of this 3.5 trillion dollars to pay off the deficit! It's about time the elite 1 percent sacrifice! But they want it all!

A.G.
Bend, Oregon

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.

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.

Peabody miners in Illinois dig in for hard fight against top coal company

BY STU SINGER

SHAWNEETOWN, Illinois — This small Ohio River town is surrounded by farms producing corn, soybean, and milo. Small oil wells can also be seen in some of the fields. But everything sits on top of a rich coal seam a few hundred feet beneath the surface. Almost 400 workers, members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1602, mine and move that coal to the barges that carry it down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers through the Gulf of Mexico to an electrical power plant near Tampa, Florida.

Since February 1 no coal has been produced at Peabody Coal's Eagle #2 mine. The UMWA is on strike against Peabody, the largest coal producer in the United States. The aim of the strike is to force Peabody, a subsidiary of the British company Hansen PLC, to open some of their books. The union wants to know what other coal properties and mines Peabody owns in order to force compliance with a section of the 1988 union contract that requires Peabody and other Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) companies to offer laid-off UMWA members three of every five jobs at new mines opened by BCOA companies.

Through a policy called "double-breasting" coal operators often violate this contract provision. They hide ownership and change company names to open mines nonunion and exclude UMWA members from the jobs. The dispute over this issue has blocked the contract negotiations between the UMWA and the BCOA. The union called out Peabody miners in a selective strike. At this time other UMWA miners at BCOA companies continue to work.

Organizing the strike

The Shawneetown strikers set up their headquarters in the old elementary school. Town officials only require the strikers to pay utilities. As soon as the walkout started, the union was ready with new phone lines, a fax machine, and a strike kitchen.

Rosters were drawn up and through a phone tree miners were called to begin picketing the two mine entrances and the riverfront barge-loading facility. There are two UMWA locals on strike here. The smaller one has about 20 members who work at the dock; the other local represents 350 underground miners and the train crew that runs the coal between the mine and the river. Picketing shifts are four hours each, 24 hours a day. Union members built shacks and laid in supplies of firewood and rented propane heaters and portable toilets. The shacks and the union headquarters communicate through CB radios.

The pickets are instructed on rules of conduct which include prohibiting drugs, alcohol, and violence on the picket lines. About 10 pickets are on duty at each mine entrance and five at the dock all the time. With this kind of schedule, strikers do picket duty every two to three days. They receive \$150 a week from the union plus medical coverage. There are hot meals at the strike kitchen every day.

Peabody strikers in Shawneetown and in Marissa, Illinois, near St. Louis, Missouri, have set up strike centers similar to Camp Solidarity, organized by Pittston coal miners during their fight in 1989. Many Illinois miners went to Camp Solidarity in some of the big car caravans, including about 25 members of Local 1602.

Members of Local 1602 set up a family auxiliary after visiting the Pittston strike. Sue Jones, president of the auxiliary, said before the strike began there were only 6 to 10 members who regularly paid dues. Since



Members of United Mine Workers of America Local 1602 in Shawneetown, Illinois, on strike against Peabody Coal. Pickets at every mine entrance are maintained 24 hours a day.

then many more joined and others work with the auxiliary as volunteers. They set up the strike kitchen and go to area stores to put strike support signs in the windows and get donations of food and services for the strikers. Many stores put up the signs and donations have come from a number of businesses including the Kroger supermarket.

The strike uniform is camouflage colored clothing. Miners, their families, and support

ers wear the clothing both on picket duty, around the union hall, and around town.

Bill Griffith, the 21-year-old son of a miner, was in the union hall when our reporting team visited, wearing the camouflage colors of the strike. He is a boilermaker and takes classes at the community college. Griffith said he started wearing the strike clothes to school to show support. He said the reactions vary, with some students and teachers

expressing support, some opposition, and others not knowing what's going on.

Many others stop by the strike center. One of the local school teachers has been helping out with food for the strike kitchen as have other people in the community. A miner from the AMAX mine brought firewood for the metal barrels where strikers keep fires going in front of the picket shacks.

Planning for a long strike

Steve Jones, at 34, is one of the youngest members of the Shawneetown local. He started in the mines right out of high school. He is president of the local, and a working miner. Jones was at Camp Solidarity with the Pittston strike several times. He was one of several UMWA members who also went to New York City to work on Pittston strike solidarity, getting together there with International Association of Machinists union members on strike at the same time at Eastern Airlines.

A reporter who interviewed Jones recently described him as "burly, with a bushy black beard ... looking like Fidel Castro." Miners cut the article out and left it for Jones along with a cigar.

Jones expects a long strike. As we toured the picket sites, he pointed out how the shacks were built to last through the winter, and will have to be remodeled next spring.

A recent local TV news report here said 7,000 coal miners in Illinois lost their jobs in the past decade but coal production remained at the same levels. At the Peabody

Continued on Page 12

Nova Scotia scallop fishermen refuse to sail in unsafe weather

BY ROGER ANNIS

Scallop fishermen in Nova Scotia are refusing company demands to sail during dangerous winter conditions and are calling for an outright ban on winter fishing. Fifty of them refused to board three Clearwater Trawler vessels February 9 citing a winter storm weather forecast.

"They are calling for 35-mile-per-hour winds with freezing spray and we consider it too dangerous," said fisherman Gordon Morris. "That's the bottom line."

The Clearwater fishermen's contract says the boats don't sail when wind forecasts exceed 40 knots (36 miles per hour) or higher. At other unionized companies the limit is 30 knots. But the fishermen say that this doesn't protect them. They say that company and economic pressures lead to decisions to sail in dangerous conditions.

The workers' action follows the tragic deaths of five fishermen January 31 when the Scotia Trawler vessel *Cape Aspy* sank in a winter storm 60 miles off the coast of Nova Scotia. The modern vessel went down shortly after midnight in freezing temperatures, winds of 35 mph, and 15-foot seas. Eleven other crew members lived, including one who floated for six hours in a survival suit in the wild, frigid waters.

Following the tragedy, fishermen along the southwest coast of Nova Scotia, where the scallop fleets are based, demanded that the federal government close the fishery during January, February, and March. Three

hundred fifty of them addressed a petition to the government.

Federal fisheries minister John Crosbie quickly refused their demand. The fishing companies say they would lose markets if they could not supply fresh seafood year round.

Government blames workers

Several days after Crosbie's refusal, a preliminary report by the federal government's Transportation Safety Board suggested the crew itself was to blame for the sinking. The report said that an open hatch in the bow of the *Cape Aspy* allowed in enough water to cause the vessel to sink.

Crew members claim that it was excessive ice accumulation that caused the sinking. They explain that the boat sank stern-first, which discounts any theory that water in the bow could have caused the sinking.

"All that's up there [in the bow] is a gear locker," explained Robert Berringer, one of the surviving crew members. "It just doesn't seem reasonable to us that a boat would fill up with water in the bow and then sink stern-first."

According to former *Cape Aspy* captain Gerald Hanlon, tons of ice can form very quickly on the deck from ocean spray.

The fishermen explain that winter fishing is back-breaking work, involving lugging icy fishing nets on icy decks. At worst, it requires hammering away every few hours to remove ice accumulations on

the deck while the winds are blowing and the boat is rocking wildly.

"Sometimes you're pounding ice and you're slipping on the deck and you have only the rail and the grace of God to keep you from going over," explained fisherman Norman Keizer. His crewmate, Gary Rees, compared it to "working on a roller coaster that is going side-to-side on a slippery slope."

The companies say that the decision to sail are left entirely up to the captains of their vessels and that no fisherman would lose his job for refusing to sail in adverse conditions. The workers say they have been threatened with disciplinary actions. And they don't think it would be an individual choice.

"If I say I won't go, there are enough guys walking the docks who will go," said Keizer. "How many of us want to leave \$30,000 a year and sit home and go on welfare? So we elect to do a lot of stupid things and we are pressured to do them."

The three unions that represent fishing crews are negotiating improved safety standards with the fishing companies and federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Meanwhile, the fishermen say they will not sail in conditions that they judge to be too dangerous.

The three Clearwater trawlers stayed docked for one week after the February 9 action due to a winter storm. A fourth, non-union, Clearwater vessel sailed on that day.