

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Defend abortion rights

All out for January 22 demonstration in Boston

The emergency demonstration called for January 22 in Boston needs to be publicized and built by all those who support keeping abortion safe and legal. It provides an opportunity to respond in the most effective way possible to the recent murders at abortion clinics — by mobilizing in

EDITORIAL

large numbers in public protests to defend our rights and to demand that Washington protect the clinics by any means necessary. The planned "Action for Reproductive

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Thousands protest murders at Boston clinics

BY DANNY BOOHER
AND MARGO STORSTEEN

BOSTON — Less than seven hours after an antiabortion gunman walked into two Boston-area clinics December 30 and shot seven people, killing two clinic workers, more than 500 people turned out in front of one of the medical facilities to protest the killings and defend a woman's right to choose.

The next day 2,000 demonstrated at the state capital to denounce antiabortion terrorism and demand the government provide protection at abortion clinics. More than 1,000 people participated in a January



Militant/Maceo Dixon
Some 2,000 demonstrated in defense of abortion rights in Boston December 31 after antiabortion thug murdered two people and injured five at local clinics.

3 memorial service for the two women murdered in the attacks.

Activists in the fight to defend abortion rights are calling for ongoing protests and encouraging wide participation in an "Action for Reproductive Freedom" called by the National Organization for Women in Boston January 22, the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

Massacre at abortion clinics

The murderous assault in Boston began December 30 when John Salvi, an anti-abortion-rights terrorist from Hampton

Beach, New Hampshire, walked into the Planned Parenthood clinic in Brookline. According to Susan Newsom, vice president of Planned Parenthood of Massachusetts, he walked to the reception desk and asked, "Is this Planned Parenthood?" Shannon Lowney, the 25-year-old receptionist, replied, "Yes."

Salvi then dropped the bag covering an automatic rifle and opened fire killing her with five shots at point blank range. He turned his gun on others in the reception area injuring three more people. A medical assistant and two men who were accompa-

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Firestone sacks striking workers

BY SHIRLEY PEÑA

DES MOINES, Iowa — As the *Militant* goes to press Bridgestone/Firestone spokesman Trevor Hoskins announced January 4 that the company will fire thousands of striking United Rubber Workers union (URW) members.

"After a six month strike, it is important we return to full production and that we begin our seven-day continuous operation schedule in order to meet the needs of our customers," Hoskins told the media. He announced that the company would implement its "final offer" and begin hiring permanent replacements. The rubber workers are on strike at plants in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Oklahoma.

The company announced that strikers were invited, along with everyone else, to "apply" for jobs. The company spokesperson said that workers would be hired at 30 percent of the old wages and benefits and without representation by the URW.

Workers at the Firestone picket line in Des Moines responded with anger. Dave Henderson, 33, a six-year veteran at Firestone and Jeff Long, 29, who has worked at the plant for the past five years, said that in the hours following Hoskin's statement, cars have been driving by the picket line honking in solidarity. A number of workers have stopped to speak with the strikers, expressing their support with the rubber workers' fight.

One United Auto Workers Local 450 member from the nearby John Deere plant stopped with a bucket of fried chicken for the picketers. He told the strikers, "You guys stay strong."

Henderson explained that Firestone workers have been subjected to a series of attacks since the strike began. "They're trying to take away what took 40 years to build," he said.



Militant/Barbara Bowman
Striking rubber workers protest at Bridgestone/Firestone plant in Des Moines, Iowa, December 8. The company says it will fire all workers who do not return to work.

ANC leader discusses challenges facing S. Africa

BY STEVE CLARK
AND GREG ROSENBERG

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa — "The question facing the ANC at all levels is the transformation of South Africa into a country whose resources can be shared by all of its citizens," said Arnold Stofile, newly elected treasurer-general of the African National Congress, one of its six executive offices. "If we continue to have imbalances based on racial differences, we will continue to have a racist society."

As chief government whip, Stofile is the leader of the ANC's caucus in the South African Parliament elected last April in the country's first-ever one-person, one-vote election. *Militant* correspondents interviewed him during the ANC's 49th national conference, held here at the end of December.

The ANC holds 252 of the 400 seats in the national assembly and 60 of the 90 seats in the senate. In addition to serving as the country's legislature until the next national elections in 1999, the national assembly also functions as a constitutional assembly to draft and approve the constitution of the new, post-apartheid South Africa.

Stofile described the obstacles the ANC-led government has faced during its first seven months in beginning to implement the goals of the ANC's election manifesto. These objectives include the creation

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Socialists campaign to sell Marxist magazine to coworkers

BY NORTON SANDLER

NEWARK — "Reading, discussing, and selling *New International* no. 10 to coworkers will be our top priority in the trade unions over the next two months," Joel Britton, national trade union director of the Socialist Workers Party, said to a recent leadership meeting of socialist trade unionists. The meeting took up the openings that exist today to discuss communist politics with industrial workers in the United States.

Participants included members of the International Association of Machinists; United Food and Commercial Workers; International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; United Steelworkers of America; United Auto Workers; and United Transportation Union.

Britton reminded those present that "talking socialism" on the job is a pillar of SWP trade union work. "In every in-

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Young Socialists meet sugarcane workers in Cuba — page 7



Palestinians protest settlements

Some 300 Palestinians locked arms and blocked the road in front of an Israeli bulldozer to block the building of 500 housing units in the West Bank December 27. About 30 Israelis from the Peace Now movement joined the protest. Israeli troops fired tear gas at the demonstrators, dispersing them. Some 35 Palestinians were arrested.

The Palestine Liberation Organization called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat urged the Israeli government to stop the settlers. Arafat said the land seizures placed the 1993 accord with Tel Aviv in "real danger."

Tehran makes oil deals

The Iranian government recently won a 5 percent stake in an international consortium to develop the Caspian Sea oil fields in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. The accord distressed the governments of Turkey and Russia, which also have a stake in the oil-rich region. Tehran also signed an agreement with Turkmenistan to lay a pipeline to transport gas to Europe through Iran.

In another development, the Iranian government clinched a deal to transfer 2.2 million tons of crude oil from Kazakhstan through the Caspian Sea. The two governments are also discussing an oil pipeline. A Moscow official expressed "great concern" about a Tehran pipeline deal with Central Asian states because that would put the oil outside its control.

Rights abuses growing in Turkey

According to Turkey's Human Rights Association, Turkish government forces have emptied or destroyed some 570 Kurdish villages in 1994. The organization also reported that more than 400 people were killed in clashes in November and 55 people died while in police custody. The Turkish government's war against the Kurds cost nearly \$8 billion in 1994, about 20 percent of the country's national budget. More than 300,000 troops have been deployed in southeast Turkey where some 13,000 people have been killed in the 10-year conflict.



Israeli soldiers charge a group of Palestinian protesters and Israelis from the Peace Now movement at an army blockade. The demonstrators were attempting to block the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

The Clinton administration, in a hypocritical display of concern for the situation facing the Kurdish population, is withholding 10 percent of U.S. military aid to the Turkish regime pending the completion of a State Department report on human rights abuses.

Pilots call off strike in Spain

The pilots union at Spain's Iberia Airlines called off a strike scheduled to start December 28 after reaching an agreement with management on wage cuts and layoffs. Under the new contract, the union agreed to pay cuts of up to 15 percent of wages and the voluntary retirement of 150 of its 1,800 members.

Haitians demand army disband

Thousands of protesters marched in Haiti December 26 and 28 chanting, "Throw all of the thugs out of the military" and "Ban the army." The demonstrators took to the streets after a firefight between U.S. and Haitian troops and discharged Haitian soldiers. The battle at the Haitian army headquarters left four people dead

and several more wounded.

The discharged soldiers, who were demanding back pay and their pensions, were among those being left out of the new Haitian army. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide said he plans to reduce the army from 7,500 to 1,500.

Instability looms in Argentina

Fearing a repeat of the recent financial catastrophe engulfing Mexico, the president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank held a meeting with Argentina's economic minister, Domingo Cavallo, on December 28 in New York. Alarm on the part of investors has shaken Argentina's stock and money markets. The Merval stock index in Buenos Aires fell more than 15 percent during the last two weeks of 1994. Cavallo told the *Wall Street Journal*, "What happened in Mexico cannot happen in Argentina."

Argentina's inflation rate has dropped to 4 percent this year from 1,300 percent in 1990. At the same time the budget deficit climbed to \$12 billion, up from a 1990 surplus of \$2 billion.

GATT officials halt China entry

Hoping to wring more trade concessions from the Chinese government, the governing body of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade has decided not to allow Beijing to join the World Trade Organization for up to six months. A spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry stated that China's failure to gain entry into the trading organization "was due to the fact that certain signatory parties insisted on the excessive demands."

According to a World Bank report, "China's tariffs remain higher, more numerous and dispersed than those of most other large developing countries."

Trooper fired in abortion case

Washington state trooper Lane Jackstadt, who was charged with unlawful imprisonment for detaining a couple on their way to an abortion clinic in July, was dismissed from the force recently. The cop had held Deanna Thomas and Justin Cooper for 45 minutes in an effort to dissuade them from keeping an appointment at an abortion clinic, after stopping them for speeding. A spokesman for the state police said Jackstadt was fired because he cheated on a promotion examination almost two years ago.

Cop orders hit in New Orleans

Federal agents investigating a drug operation secretly recorded the phone call of a New Orleans cop ordering the contract killing of a woman who filed a brutality complaint against him. Kim Groves was murdered on October 13, the day after she reported the incident to the police internal affairs department. The government has filed federal charges against the cop, Len Davis, for violating Groves's civil rights. A spokeswoman for the New Orleans district attorney's office said no state murder charges have been filed because federal authorities have not referred the case to them. Davis, along with eight fellow officers, was also indicted on charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

Canada banks reap record profit

Major banks in Canada are reporting record profits for 1994. Total profits for the six biggest banks were \$3 billion. The Royal bank, the largest, hauled in \$1.14 billion, up from \$214 million in 1993 and \$76 million in 1992. The same week profit figures were released, it was also revealed that the major banks are claiming \$214 million in "software development" as a tax write-off. The chief executives of the banks are leading spokespeople for cuts in government spending on social services. Susan Bellan, chair of the banking committee of the Canadian Organization of Small Business, told the *Vancouver Sun*, "Here they are screaming about the deficit and warning that international banks are going to do us in. Then they have the nerve to basically abuse the system."

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

Joe Young, member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2952 in Vancouver, British Columbia, contributed to this column.

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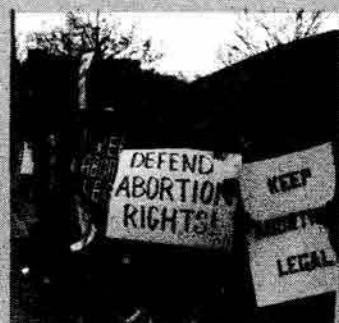
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THE MILITANT

Defend abortion rights

The cold-blooded murder of abortion clinic workers in Boston is aimed at striking terror into those who defend women's rights. It is a threat to the democratic rights of workers everywhere. The 'Militant' provides ongoing coverage of the battle to defend a woman's right to abortion.

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Resistance by Chechen people provokes sharpening political crisis in Russia

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Moscow's month-old war against Chechnya is sharpening debates among the Russian population about the validity of the conflict, as well as deepening the crisis of the Russian government and its armed forces. Disgust with the war is growing among millions, and opinion polls show that the Russian people oppose it by more than 2-to-1.

Images of the conflict on Russian television are increasing the opposition. Responding to the carnage, a retired doctor in Moscow told the *Washington Post*, "I watched it on TV — so many people were killed, there must be hundreds." She said Russian president Boris Yeltsin "should be shot for this."

Television has broadcast scenes of dead Russian troops, a naked and legless Russian soldier, smoldering Russian tanks, and Chechen corpses and bombed-out buildings in areas pounded by the Russian armed forces since late December. Similarities are being drawn with Washington's war against Vietnam, during which TV footage of both slain GIs and U.S. war atrocities entered the living rooms of millions of working people and accelerated condemnation of the war.

In response, the Russian government has threatened to revoke the license of the NTV television network. During Moscow's war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, in which 15,000 Russian troops were killed, the regime exercised extreme secrecy and state censorship of the press. Corpses were shipped home in sealed coffins, for example, in order to diminish the impact of the mounting death toll.

The Russian military is in a state of turmoil as well. Columns of troops have refused to fire on unarmed civilians, and few appear ready for street-by-street combat to capture and hold the Chechen capital of Grozny. "I don't know why we are here, why we have been sent to fight against Russian people," Vitaly Ponvin, an army private, told the *New York Times*. "I think Yeltsin is crazy. This makes no sense."

The discord extends all the way up to the top brass. Gen. Eduard Vorobyev, deputy commander of Russian land forces, was offered command of the Chechen mission in late December and refused, writing a letter of resignation to protest the bloody mili-

tary intervention. His superior, Gen. Vladimir Semyonov, refused Vorobyev's resignation.

Gen. Alexander Lebed, who commanded Soviet forces during the Afghan war, said he would accept command of the Chechen operation only in order to pull the troops out of the region. "From the military point of view, the Russian army should never have entered Chechnya," he stated.

Pressure mounting on Yeltsin

Ultrarightist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is among the few prominent political figures in Russia to back Yeltsin's murderous war to block independence of Chechnya, a republic of some 1.2 million people located in the northern Caucasus mountains between the Black and Caspian seas.

"Yeltsin has no political future," said the chairman of the Russian parliament's defense committee in late December.

"Without question, his presidency is at stake," said a Yeltsin aide.

As the Russian government pressed the murderous aerial and ground assault on Grozny in early January, the prominent politician Grigory Yavlinsky called for Yeltsin's resignation. Former prime minister Yegor Gaidar, a former close ally of Yeltsin, called the attack "a massive military crime" and said "there is a great danger of a military coup."

Battle for Grozny

At least 40,000 Russian troops were dispatched to Chechnya by Moscow on December 11. Yeltsin ordered the all-out offensive against Grozny on December 31.

The day prior to the assault, Chechen president Dzhokhar Dudayev called for a cease-fire, but the Kremlin ignored the appeal. Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general, declared Chechnya's independence in 1991.

Despite heavy bombardment and an attempted storming of the capital, Russian forces had been unable to take Grozny as of January 5. Only an estimated 100,000 of the industrial city's 400,000 residents remained there, as growing numbers of apartment buildings, homes, and other buildings were gutted by fire. There was no running water or heat in the city. Hospitals filled with the sick and wounded are without electricity and needed medical sup-



Chechen citizens organized a 40-mile chain involving 100,000 people December 20 protesting the bombing and shelling by the Russian government.

plies, and Russian artillery has directly targeted them. Food is growing increasingly scarce.

For their part, the Chechen fighters have grown more confident and effective in the street battles. Thousands of volunteers responded to an urgent appeal by their military leadership to defend the city.

"We have the spirit," said a young Chechen soldier on his way to a battle with hundreds of others on New Year's Day. "We have nothing to lose, and we have Allah with us."

"Our slogan is freedom or death. And now we are showing the world what that means," said another.

Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev sought to justify Yeltsin's massacre in Chechnya in a taped interview for the U.S. news program "Meet the Press" January 1. "It is just intolerable to have a military gang anywhere," he said, "be it in the center of Moscow, be it in Los Angeles or whatever, or Chechnya, and we have to put it down."

The exposure of the Russian government's ruthless conduct of the war has begun to create political problems for Washington and the imperialist powers in Eu-

rope. They are taking their distance from reported Moscow atrocities, while continuing backhanded support for Yeltsin's war.

"Naturally we back Yeltsin," said German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel January 3, "but that does not alter the fact that we tell our partners [in Russia] clearly how we see things."

The U.S. government tepidly criticized Moscow for the first time December 31, saying it was "deeply disturbed" about the reported bombing of an orphanage. At a news briefing January 3, U.S. State Department spokesperson Michael McCurry said the U.S. government had "expressed specific concern...about the kinds of tactics that the Russians have been using, which have led to many more deaths than we think should have occurred."

McCurry then added: "We have a long history as a democracy that includes an episode...where we dealt with a secessionist movement through armed conflict called the Civil War. And so we...need to be conscious of those types of issues when we look at a new democracy in the former Soviet Union, in Russia."

An article in the January 2 issue of the *New York Times*, headlined "Why Europe Is Careful Not to Scold the Bear" explained that "both European and American leaders see no alternative to Mr. Yeltsin in Moscow."

San Juan offers millions for U.S. Southern Command to relocate forces to Puerto Rico

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The U. S. Southern Command, currently based in Panama, is looking for a new home. The government of Puerto Rico is making a strong bid, offering tens of millions of dollars in concessions to the Pentagon. Florida officials are also trying to influence the military brass to locate there.

The Southern Command is in charge of organizing U.S. military operations in South and Central America. Some 700 military officers are headquartered there, with no combat troops at the present time. Under the Panama Canal Treaty they are scheduled to leave the country by 1999. In 1989 the Southern Command organized the U.S. invasion of Panama, which left hundreds of Panamanians dead.

The Pentagon has divided the world into five zones for planning purposes. Besides the Southern Command there are the European, Atlantic, Pacific, and Central Commands. The Atlantic Command is responsible for military missions against Cuba,

Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

Puerto Rican governor Pedro Rosselló of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party is a strong supporter of the Southern Command moving to Puerto Rico. He argues that spending by the U.S. military and the people stationed there would add millions of dollars to the local economy. Much of this money would be spent in telecommunications services, airlines, and hotels. The economic effect of the Southern Command has been compared to the offices of a major corporation. The government of Puerto Rico offered the Pentagon \$100 million in concessions if the military operation moves to Puerto Rico.

Miami competing

Dade County, Florida, which includes Miami, has put together a package of concessions including subsidized healthcare, housing, land, and a free fiber-optic link for the telecommunications system of the command.

"Our package is worth around \$55 million, which is half of Puerto Rico's" said Miami attorney Don Slesnick, who is working on the lobbying campaign. "Puerto Rico has lobbied hard and should be complimented for their work. They've put themselves at the top of the list."

Besides Dade County and Puerto Rico, local governments in Georgia, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana are trying to get the Southern Command to relocate to their states. The decision is supposed to be made by U.S. defense secretary William Perry soon.

According to newspaper reports here,

Puerto Rico and Miami are seen as the two front-runners because of the greater availability of bilingual workers. Puerto Rico would provide greater immersion in the Spanish language for the officers that will be organizing military interventions throughout Latin America. The press says Miami has a more diverse Latino population and has better airline connections with all of Latin America than does the Puerto Rican capital San Juan.

The Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), the largest group on the island that favors independence from the United States, has said it will organize a campaign against the relocation of the Southern Command to Puerto Rico. A statement by the youth wing of the PIP said that moving the Southern Command to Puerto Rico was an attack on the people of Latin America "who have been victims of interventionist actions coordinated by this arm of the Pentagon."

"This is a mere publicity ploy by Rosselló to try to demonstrate that he's more American than the Americans," said PIP electoral commissioner Manuel Rodriguez. "I think all this talk about South Com's economic benefits is a lot of hype."

Last July the Southern Command conducted military exercises in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, about a two hour drive outside San Juan. Some 1,500 people protested on July 4 against the U.S. military operation.

Ron Richards is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees in San Juan.

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Washington, D.C. council slashes budget

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — As the city council here wound up 1994 by approving \$280 million in budget cuts, a prominent Wall Street investment service lowered the city's bond rating. The bank's action could drive up the interest rate the city must pay on money borrowed to cover its municipal bond issues.

For weeks Wall Street investment banks threatened to lower the city's credit rating if substantial budget cuts were not made. Standard and Poors (S&P), a Wall Street financial rating service, placed the city on "Credit Watch" just one week before the council vote. "The District's ability to gain fiscal control" is key to maintaining its current rating, exclaimed S&P.

The banks have said the city is a substantial investment risk. But Ronald Gault, managing director of J.P. Morgan Securities Inc., a financial adviser to the city, said the willingness of banks to put up funds depended heavily on the District's legal authority to borrow from the U.S. Treasury if it runs out of money.

With that type of backing five domestic and international banks jumped in at \$50 million each to guarantee a \$250 million municipal bond issue expected to go on the market at the end of the year. The city will fork over \$10 million in interest payments, and fees to banks, investment firms, and lawyers.

Congress, Wall Street bankers, and big-business spokespeople have blamed the city's financial crisis on "excessive spending on social programs." Under a 1973 law granting the city limited self-government, the budget, legislation, and administrative

agencies of the city are subject to review and the approval of Congress. Last summer Congress imposed a \$140 million cut in the city's budget. Those cuts have already led to layoffs, closure of 12 youth recreation centers, and reduction in garbage collection and other city services.

City officials have pointed out that Congress has contributed substantially to the deficit. Speaking at a meeting of neighborhood representatives, congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton explained that when Congress granted "home rule" to the district, it passed on to the city nearly \$3 billion in unfunded pension fund costs, and a \$284 million operating budget deficit.

Several congressional representatives have said that should the city default financially it could lead to the end of home rule and a congressional takeover of the city.

The actions of Congress, Wall Street, and the city government are part of a stepped up drive against the already deteriorating standard of living of working people here. The austerity package approved by the council includes layoffs of city workers, as well as reductions in education, health care, aid to families with dependent children, and other city services. It also includes millions in increased property taxes, which fall heaviest on workers who own their homes and small business people.

Bilingual education programs and other services for the city's growing Latino and Asian population were nearly eliminated. Some 200 mostly Latino workers picketed outside the council building during the vote. Staff for the city's Office of Latino

Affairs was cut from 13 to 2.

Funding for public schools has been slashed by \$31 million, forcing reductions in staff. School board officials have stated the cuts may also necessitate increased class sizes and the elimination of adult education, summer school, driver education, and some athletic programs.

The cuts will deepen the already deplorable condition of the District's education system. Only 10 students obtained perfect verbal scores in PSAT tests this year. Schools opened late this fall after parents won a court order forcing the city to repair fire and other safety hazards throughout the school system.

Another \$7 million was taken from the University of the District of Columbia, which caters largely to the city's Black, Latino, and working-class students. The big-business mouthpiece the *Washington Post* demanded the university be downgraded to a two-year college.

"The workers are getting beat up, there is no question about that," explained Mayor-elect Marion Barry. In addition to two weeks of unpaid furloughs, city workers will also be asked to give back \$30 million in wages.

The cuts deal crippling blows to health care in a city where infant mortality and



Unionist demanding universal health care at August 28 March on Washington, D.C., 1993. Budget cuts hurt health care and hospital workers in the capital.

life threatening illnesses are among the highest in the world. The city's only public hospital, D.C. General, is slated to dramatically drop the number of beds available. The jobs of 220 workers at the hospital have already been eliminated through early buyout offers.

Health-care cuts will be crippling

City health officials are reviewing proposals by private hospitals to take over D.C. General's case loads, and to reduce its remaining services to a minimum. The move would make hospital care less accessible to the city's working class.

Health-care services for women would also be further curtailed. Women in the first months of pregnancy won't qualify for public assistance. Though city officials defeated congressional opposition to the use of city funds for abortions for poor women, not a cent has been spent on the service.

Transportation subsidies for students, the elderly, and poorer working-class areas of the city will be reduced. Bus fares for the elderly will increase from 30 cents to 50 cents. Lowering of subsidies in the Southeast area will raise fares from 35 cents to 60 cents. Free transfers between the metro rail system and busses will be eliminated.

School transportation costs to working-class families will also increase as the D.C. school system reduces its subsidy of bus fares.

Smelling blood, a recent series of editorials in the *Washington Post* pressed for deeper cuts. "Mr. Barry's Cuts: Still Not Enough," read one. "D.C., Budget: The Cuts Won't Do It," read another. Following the council vote the *Post* editorialized, "D.C. Finances: More Cutting to Do!"

Sam Manuel is a member of United Transportation Union Local 454 in Washington, D.C.

Homeless man shot near White House

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A U.S. Park Police officer shot and critically wounded a 33-year-old homeless man, Marcelino Corniel, as he stood in front of the White House on the morning of December 20. He died from his wounds a day later.

In a scene captured on video and broadcast on television, Corniel was standing on the sidewalk with a knife taped to his left hand pointing to the ground. He was surrounded by three U.S. Park Police officers and two Secret Service agents who were pointing their 9 mm handguns at him.

Corniel, who had burn scars over about 70 percent of his body from a previous car accident, was apparently angry over the constant harassment he and other homeless people face from the police patrolling Lafayette Park across the street from the White House. According to other individuals in the park, Corniel was upset that Park Police had removed two lockers belonging to three homeless friends. The cops had also taken away his blankets. Just that morning, one of them had kicked and prodded Corniel with his nightstick.

Robert Hines, a Park Police spokesman, called the shooting "appropriate."

"I'm certainly not going to stand here and second guess the decision a law enforcement officer made...and neither is the president or anybody here," said White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers.

The day after the shooting and just hours before he died, Corniel was charged with assaulting a federal police officer.

Three other Lafayette Square protesters filed a suit in U.S. District Court December 22 demanding that the police stop harass-

ing demonstrators and homeless people there. William Thomas, one of the people who filed the suit, stated that cops regularly kick people who sleep in the park and jab them with batons, supposedly to enforce a prohibition against camping.



Homeless people at Lafayette Park across from White House face harassment by Park Police. Corniel had been victimized the morning of the shooting.

Orange County suspends union contracts

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — Utilizing a bankruptcy law escape clause, the Orange County board of supervisors suspended union contracts covering county employees in late December. This will give officials of the bankrupt county the power to fire workers without regard to seniority and to cut wages.

The Orange County Employees Association, which represents 11,000 of the county's 18,000 workers, said it will take court action to reinstate the voided contracts. Association officials are also pleading with individual department managers not to lay off workers.

With its investment losses now estimated at more than \$2 billion, the supervisors are slicing \$40 million from the current operating budget and project cutting another \$80 million in July for the next fiscal year's budget.

Orange County's investment fund contains assets of 187 school districts, cities,

and other public entities.

The workers were told that it was time for the "county family" to make sacrifices.

Robert Wilberg, a county parks' groundskeeper and union activist, responded saying, "This 'county family' crap is totally unreal. We're not a family. We're the workers."

The number of workers to be fired has not yet been disclosed, but department managers have been told how much they have to cut and that they have until January 10 to do it. One reported it was going to be "devastating."

Workers who escape the firings face wage cuts and reduced hours.

Virtually all social and public services will be hit by the massive cutbacks — schools, housing, welfare, parks, libraries, and more.

Not surprisingly, some of the harshest blows are aimed at the poor and homeless. An estimated 12,000 to 15,000 people are homeless in Orange County, which is

hyped as being one of the most affluent counties in the country.

Some food and shelter is provided by nonprofit agencies, which are heavily dependent on county subsidies. These funds were among the first to be cut off.

One agency operates a winter program at two armories, providing a nightly meal and mass shelter. A spokesman said one of the armories might close, leaving 300 people on the street.

A county rent program, which provided interest-free loans to help families facing eviction or homeless people with the prospect of an apartment, has been iced.

So has a job training program.

After finishing a balogna dinner at a shelter, James Enriquez, who is homeless, told a reporter, "It still amazes me how thin they can cut that meat."

He added: "I just hope [county supervisors] are eating good. I hope they really enjoy their meals. They're always welcome to come down here and dine with us."

New International no.7

OPENING GUNS OF WORLD WAR III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

By Jack Barnes



The U.S. government's murderous blockade, bombardment, and invasion of Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, more wars, and growing instability of international capitalism.

\$12

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Stocks, bonds, and the international exploitation of workers and farmers

We are reprinting below excerpts from "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold." This resolution was discussed and adopted by the August 1988 convention of the Socialist Workers Party. It is taken from the recently published *New International no. 10*. Copyright ©408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

Over the past century trade in stocks, bonds, and other commercial paper—the devices that Karl Marx called "fictitious capital"—have become integral to the very functioning of the world capitalist system: its interrelated banking and monetary operations, government finance, domestic and foreign trade, industrial production, mining, and agriculture.

Capitalism does not operate on the basis of a "real economy" in which the ups and downs of production determine the conditions of both capitalists and working people, and a "paper economy" whose price gyrations affect only speculators and middle-class professionals who play the markets. The trading in stocks and bonds, together with intertwined credit and monetary flows, are part and parcel of the capitalist mode of production. They are inseparable from the production and circulation of commodities, including the sale and purchase of human labor power. Debt and paper values are not things. Like the commodity itself, they are part of the production and reproduction of capitalist social relations.

Crisis of capital accumulation

The growing instability on Wall Street is a symptom of the profound crisis of capital accumulation infecting the entire body of the world imperialist system. Another crash cannot be prevented by new regulations aimed at altering the habits of operators on the stock, bond, and options markets: bans on computer-assisted "program" trading, measures to shut down markets if fluctuations become too stormy, stricter credit regulations, or the myriad other

"reforms" much-discussed in the big-business press in the wake of October 19. Nor can the banking system be sealed off from the blows it will receive.

The explosive expansion, internationalization, and accelerating transaction speed in the securities markets have become necessary to the circulation of money capital and its interpenetration with industrial, mining, and agricultural production and trade.

In order for the surplus value created by the labor of working people to be transformed into profits, the capitalists must compete among themselves to sell the commodities produced in the fields, mines, mills, and factories. They must compete to maximize further gains from their accumulated profits, whether by plowing this money capital back into production or finding other sources of investment or speculation that they believe will yield a larger return.

The circulation of money capital, Marx observed, is the "most striking and characteristic form of appearance of the circuit of industrial capital, in which its aim and driving motive—...money-making and accumulation—appears in a form that leaps to the eye (buying in order to sell dearer)." Under capitalism, he pointed out, "The production process appears simply as an unavoidable middle term, a necessary evil for the purpose of money-making."

Frederick Engels, in preparing a second edition of volume two of *Capital* a decade after Marx's death in 1883, added in light of further experience: "This explains why all nations characterized by the capitalist mode of production are periodically seized by fits of giddiness in which they try to accomplish the money-making without the mediation of the production process." Today the world capitalist system has evolved to the point that just such a fit of giddiness has become unavoidable. Its duration and volatility remain to be seen....

Already in 1895 Engels took note of the growing role of the stock exchange in financing exploitation abroad and promoting colonial expansion and oppression. Colo-



Brokers on Mexican stock exchange trade frantically December 21, following sharp devaluation in value of the peso. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels explained that under capitalism, the stock market is inseparable from the production and circulation of commodities, including the sale and purchase of human labor power.

nial policy, he wrote, "is a pure appendage of the stock exchange, in whose interest the European powers divided up Africa a few years ago."

International character of trading

Today, while the regulation of stock markets themselves—like the issuance of currency—remains the prerogative of national state institutions, the international character of trading in stocks, bonds, and currencies is greater than ever before in history. It is only through unceasing exchanges of money capital denominated in dollars for marks, yen for dollars, today's dollars for tomorrow's lira, today's pesos for tomorrow's dollars that world trade, domestic trade, international and domestic

debt creation, and thus the hiring of workers and their production of goods take place.

Massive amounts of money capital are transferred electronically all day and night from the bond market in London or Tokyo, to an investment bank on Wall Street, into shares on the New York Stock Exchange, into government securities held by a major bank in Bonn or Stockholm, into the stock market in Zurich, into currency speculation in Singapore, into a loan to the government of Brazil or Zambia, into interest on a previous loan that ends up in a U.S. or French bank, into mortgages on Canadian or New Zealand farmland, and so on.

The prices of sugar, tin, cotton, copper, and other primary commodities on which the oppressed countries with semicolonial economies are dependent for export earnings are subject to destabilizing fluctuations due to what happens on the futures market at the Chicago Board of Trade or other commodities exchanges.

Debts on which Third World capitalists and governments are required to pay massively compounding interest to the modern-day users are resold to these same wealthy coupon clippers on the international bond market at current prices from as low as five cents on the dollar (Peru) to around fifty cents on the dollar (Brazil).

Socialist workers set campaign to distribute 'New International' no. 10 as 'top priority'

Continued from front page

stance," he said, "our goal is to advance the process of the working class thinking socially and acting politically."

"The recently launched international campaign to sell 1,500 copies of *New International* no. 10 will be welcomed by trade unionists, who through their own struggles are beginning to look for a broader explanation of the worldwide crisis of capitalism."

This latest issue of the Marxist magazine includes articles that analyze the capitalist economic crisis in the years since the 1987 stock market crash. These are "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1988, and "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War" by SWP leader Jack Barnes.

Better understanding of world

The magazine also features "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution," by *New International* editor Mary-Alice Waters, and "The Curve of Capitalist Development" by Leon Trotsky, a leader of the 1917 Russian revolution.

"By reading these articles and distributing and discussing the ideas contained in them with fellow trade union fighters, we will all be better equipped to understand what the working class is living through today on a world scale, and why capitalism offers only the perspective of deepening economic disaster, fascism, and war," Britton said. "As the introduction to the magazine states, 'The political conclusions that best fit this reality—and are thus the best guide to action—are communist conclusions.'"

Members of the Socialist Workers Party will be urging trade unionists who read

about this campaign in the *Militant*, or find out about it from someone on the job, to join the effort to organize discussions and classes on the ideas contained in *New International* no. 10.

The socialist workers adopted a goal of selling 220 copies of the magazine to their coworkers by the end of February. That's

roughly 15 percent of the 1,500 international target.

"This is one of the biggest challenges of its kind that we have taken on in a while," said Britton. "Making and exceeding our targets for sales of the magazine will require careful, detailed attention beginning immediately," he concluded.

For Further reading

New International no. 10

Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution

by Mary-Alice Waters

What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold

resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party 1988 convention

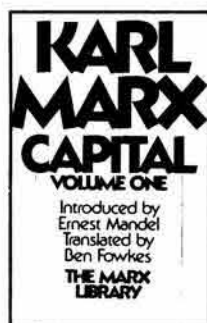
Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War

by Jack Barnes

The Curve of Capitalist Development

a 1923 article by Leon Trotsky

\$14



Capital

by Karl Marx

Marx explains that capitalism is a specific stage in the development of class society; how large-scale modern industry draws men, women, and children into the factories and into the industrial reserve army that competes for jobs. And how at the same time this produces the insoluble contradictions that make possible the transformation of society into one ruled for the first time in history by the majority, the producers. Volume 1. \$13.95

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ORDER your copies today! Get EXTRA copies! Help get *New International* no. 10 into the hands of coworkers, friends, and political activists.

Hundreds at regional conferences discuss imperialism's march toward fascism, war

Some 550 people turned out for three regional socialist educational conferences held in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Twin Cities, Minnesota, December 31-January 2. Many were members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, the Young Socialists, and the Communist League in Canada. Others were young people and workers attending their first socialist gathering in order to learn more.

The centerpiece of each conference was a talk on "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," which looked at recent world events in the context of the themes of an article by that title in the newly released issue no. 10 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. The featured speakers were SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in Los Angeles, *Militant* editor George Fyson in Twin Cities, and Michel Prairie, editor of the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale*, in Philadelphia.

The communist leaders stressed the explosive instability of world capitalism today. Among the examples discussed by Barnes, Fyson, and Prairie were:

- the crash of the peso, with its devastating effects on the livelihood of millions in Mexico;

- the civil war in Algeria, where more than 100 people have died every day on average for the last two years, as well as that conflict's destabilizing impact on Algeria's former colonial rulers in France; and

- the inability of the regime in Russia to put a lid on the rebellion in Chechnya.

Far from being the product of a world in chaos, these events are triggered by the workings of the capitalist system in a period of economic depression. As the world becomes more volatile, and as working people begin to fight back, bourgeois politicians are shifting to the right and reactionary demagogues are being emboldened, from Patrick Buchanan in the United States to open fascists in the recently failed government in Italy.

At the same time, the three speakers pointed to evidence that the working class has not been broken anywhere in the world. Before the capitalists can impose their "solution" of fascism and war, they will have to take on the workers and farmers in battle and defeat them.

In the meantime, the talks explained, fighting workers and youth need to keep their eyes on opportunities to actively engage in politics and build the communist movement. Doing such work today is a precondition to forging mass workers parties in the heat of coming class battles that can lead the toilers to take power out of the hands of the capitalist war-makers once and for all.

In this framework, each conference featured eyewitness accounts from recent *Militant* reporting trips to Cuba and South Africa. These talks and discussions looked at the struggle by workers and farmers in Cuba to defend the socialist revolution and at the tasks facing the South African toilers in advancing the democratic revolution, strengthening the African National Congress, and building a communist leadership.

Other classes focused on defending immigrant rights, the fight for women's liberation, the *Communist Manifesto* today, and how communists carry out political work



Militant/Margrethe Siem



Top: Mary-Alice Waters speaking on Cuban revolution at socialist educational conference in Philadelphia.

Left: Crowd at conference in Los Angeles.

Militant/Susan Zárate

in the trade unions.

Dozens of young people joined in the weekend's discussions. Among them were a total of 30 about to take off on an international youth brigade to Cuba. The January 6-20 brigade is made up of students and young workers from the United States and elsewhere who will be reporting on Cuba today for campus and community newspapers and radio stations.

Conference participants also discussed plans for defending the Cuban revolution; responding to the December 30 murders of two workers at abortion clinics in Brookline, Massachusetts; protesting education cuts in Canada; and taking part in other protest actions and union solidarity activities.

By the end of the gatherings, participants were better prepared to return to their cities and unions and carry out politics. New members signed up for the Young Socialists, and others were convinced to become more actively involved in campaigns and activities of the communist movement.

The articles below highlight a few of the discussions at the conferences and reactions by some of the workers and youth who attended them.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES — "What does it mean to be a young socialist in this capitalist country?" asked Tom Sepe during a discussion organized by the Young Socialists as part of the regional educational conference here. "How do we change this system and change ourselves?"

Sepe, 23, just graduated from the University of California in Santa Barbara and is preparing to participate in the international youth brigade to Cuba. After the talk on "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes, Sepe said, many of his questions had been answered, but he now had new ones to ask.

Ana Rivadenyra, a university student from Spain, said she saw the world more clearly after the discussions here. "I knew something was wrong in the world," she said, "but I didn't have this critical perspective. My feet are touching the ground now."

Rivadenyra is another of the dozen Cuba

youth brigade members who were present. They met during the weekend to discuss details of the trip and also raised more than \$1,500 from a raffle and other fund-raising to help cover travel costs.

The trip to Cuba is "a chance to see people making their own decisions," Sepe explained. "That isn't something we get to do here — we're just offered the ballot box."

Jeanne Tuomey, a student at the University of California in Santa Cruz, is also a brigade member. "I've always been interested in socialism, but never knew an organization to join," she said. A friend of hers who attended the November world solidarity conference in Havana told her about the brigade, and other brigade participants invited her to the conference. After two days of discussions she decided to join the Young Socialists.

Tuomey had been involved in protests against the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 and against environmental destruction. What had been missing, she said, was a scientific understanding of why these things happen and how to change them. "I think there will be a lot of interest in socialism in Santa Cruz," Tuomey added.

Conference participants discussed an eyewitness report from South Africa by Greg McCartan, who just returned from a *Militant* reporting team to that country, and a talk on the Cuban revolution by Naomi Craine, who spent three weeks in Cuba as part of a Young Socialists speaking tour in December.

Hajo Mngadi, a student at the University of Massachusetts who is from South Africa, said the conference was "the first time I met an organization in the United States discussing the ideas and strategy that the African National Congress is about." She also said she learned a lot about Cuba. "The previous information I had was from the media, just negative interviews with people who wanted to leave for Miami. Now I realize there's more to the story."

Tom Leonard, a long-time socialist who worked as a merchant seaman during and after World War II, presented classes on "Racist and Anti-immigrant Discrimination and the Trade Unions: the Case of the Maritime Unions" and "Trade Unions and the Fight against Imperialist War." During

the first class, a participant from Honduras described the discrimination he faced working on British, Greek, Italian, and Spanish trading ships in the 1980s. "My dignity as a human being wouldn't let me tolerate the racism I and other immigrants were subjected to," he said. The unions should take up this issue, he added.

Many of the 150 participants had been involved in the fight against Proposition 187. One was Joellyn Manville, a high school student from Salt Lake City, Utah, who helped start a socialist club at her school. "I thought this country was getting better, but then came 187," she said. "We need more demonstrations. They want to make 187 nationwide, and we can't let it happen."

On the last day of the conference Meg Novack, a member of the Young Socialists from Seattle, announced some upcoming YS activities. These included protesting the recent murders at abortion clinics in Massachusetts; building report-back meetings for members of the Cuba youth brigade; getting letters of invitation for Cuban youth leaders to tour the United States this spring; and participating in a January 25 demonstration against education cutbacks in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Many conference participants were inspired to read more as well. Sales of Pathfinder books totaled more than \$1,000, and six people subscribed to the *Militant*. "Before I only knew a little bit about the world, but now I need to buy books and read," explained a South African student from Eugene, Oregon.

Harry Ring contributed to this article.

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

PHILADELPHIA — Responding to the murders at two abortion clinics in Massachusetts was one of the main topics of discussion at the socialist educational conference here. Several of the nearly 300 participants came late to the conference in order to first take part in emergency protests in the Boston area, and discussions of how best to defend women's rights continued throughout the weekend.

"It's important that there was an immediate response to the murders," said Karen Ray, pointing to the demonstrations of 500 immediately after the shootings and of 2,000 the following day. Ray, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in Boston, gave a class on "A Working-Class Perspective on the Fight for Women's Liberation."

"Workers and young people need to keep up these protests, including helping to build the January 22 rally called by the National Organization for Women in Boston," Ray said. "This response is what was missing in Pensacola, Florida," where two doctors and a volunteer escort have been murdered at a abortion clinics in the last two years. She explained why labor and other supporters of democratic rights must demand that Washington take all necessary steps to protect the clinics from right-wing terrorism, including dispatching federal troops.

Three young people from Bosnia participated in the conference. Naida, a 21-year-old student at the University of Western Maryland, had marched in the November 12 march on Washington to protest U.S. government policy toward Cuba. She and her friend Maja, a 20-year-old student in Pennsylvania, had gone to hear SWP leader Jack Barnes speak in New York in mid-December on the publication of the new issue of *New Internationalist*. Naida purchased a copy of the Marxist magazine there, along with the Pathfinder book, *The Truth About Yugoslavia*.

Tomislav, 22, is a former Bosnian soldier. He said he opposed the war and became a soldier because he was afraid he would go to jail if he refused to fight. He said he has friends who are Serbs who feel the same way. "I saw that if I stood still [refused to fight], they would take me to jail," he said. Tomislav was injured when he stepped on a land mine in Bihac in 1993. He escaped from the region and is staying in a refugee center in Maryland.

Continued on Page 7

The Communist Manifesto

by Karl Marx and Frederik Engels

Founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains how capitalism arose as a specific stage in the economic development of class society and how it will be superseded through revolutionary action on a world scale by the working class.

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The Communist Manifesto

Cuban workers tell U.S. youth of efforts in sugar harvest

BY LAURA GARZA

HAVANA PROVINCE, Cuba — It is hot and steamy, with the smell of molasses in the air, as gears one-story high run the conveyor belts carrying sugarcane through the processing plant. Railroad cars filled with recently cut cane unload at regular intervals to keep the machinery going 24 hours a day. The *zafra* — sugarcane harvest — has begun and workers in Artemisa at the Abraham Lincoln Agro Industrial Complex will be working overtime to process as much sugar as possible.

But this year's harvest is not expected to be much different than the last two, in the range of 4 million tons, a big drop from the seven million or eight million produced in previous years. In the fields and the mills workers have been in a battle to halt a decline in sugar production, but the process of recovering and stepping up production is a longer term job explains one worker to two young socialists from the United States.

Brian Taylor, a 21-year-old rail worker from Chicago and Naomi Craine, 24, a former textile worker and current staff writer for the *Militant*, visited the complex as part of a three-week tour of Cuba sponsored by the Union of Young Communists. They have been speaking about the conditions and struggles facing the working class in the United States to workers and young people here.

More cane cutters have been mobilized than last year and priority given for much of Cuba's precious fuel to run the combines that will harvest the fields. Workers are trying to harvest the cane more rapidly than last year to avoid the costly problem of processing mills shutting down and restarting during the harvest for lack of a steady flow of cut cane. Since trade with the Soviet Union at preferential prices was ended Cuba enacted measures to guard fuel and raw materials for key industries, while many services and other production was cut. The special period, as this stage is known, means making the most efficient use of all resources available is a key goal.

In October 1993, many of Cuba's state farms were transformed into Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC), and sugarcane cooperative members have been at the heart of a discussion about how to deal with problems confronting Cuba's agriculture.

Carlos Antela, a member of the Rigoberto Corcho sugarcane UBPC, explained they were now getting about half the yield from the cane fields they did in the 1991-92 harvest. One reason is the cumulative effects of lack of fertilizers and pesticides, most of which were previously imported from the Soviet Union. But there were other problems on the state farms that affected production also. Antela explained, "the old state farms had more people not



Militant/Laura Garza

Young Socialists Naomi Craine and Brian Taylor in discussion with workers at the National Biotechnical Center in Havana province.

directly involved in production." The UBPC currently has 155 members while the state farm had more than 200.

One of the main aims of the cooperative is to "satisfy the needs of the workers and their families," he said. The UBPC grows food to provide meals for cooperative members and also sells items at cost for members to supply their families, something that has made an immediate difference in the lives of many farm workers in Cuba.

The cooperatives also have autonomy Antela said. "Before the state enterprise directed everything," he added. "We couldn't plant things which would have been possible [like a different type of cane]. Now decisions are made in a general assembly of all the cooperative members." The assembly sets the norms and pay rates for each job and excess money earned by the cooperative is divided up at the end of the year according to the number of days each member has worked.

But cooperative members said it would take time to increase the yields they are getting from the cane. I asked about articles I had read in Cuba on the need for more work to be done to clean the fields of weeds. Cooperative members pointed out they had actually cleared about one-third more land than in the 1991-92 harvest, but the overall poorer quality of the cane means weeds grow more easily in the fields and you have to work harder while still getting a lower yield than you would have before.

Marcos Castañeda, the head of the brigade assigned to grow food for the UBPC, asked the two young socialists about the U.S. government's embargo barring any trade, including the sale of fertilizers, food, and medicines to Cuba. "Why do they want to make us pay such a high price? We chose the government we want, we're revolutionary."

Taylor replied, "Farmers in the U.S. are facing bankruptcy and losing their land, even when they grow a big crop. The prices they get are set by big corporations that control distribution of food and these companies pay low to farmers but sell high to workers who buy the food. The example of Cuba, where people in the countryside are given the priority in housing and you are fighting to maintain access to health care as a right for everyone is not an example they want people in the U.S. to know about. But we are visiting because these are the facts we want to explain when we return."

Health care in the mountains

The two young socialists got a look at conditions in Cuba's countryside in both Havana and Villa Clara province. In the Villa Clara municipality of Manicaragua is the town of La Herradura with only about a dozen buildings. But among them is a two-story family doctor home, part of the system guaranteeing medical care to residents in all parts of Cuba. As part of a program known as the Turquino Plan, even under the current limitations of Cuba's economy, priority is given to providing access to basic services in Cuba's most mountainous regions. Under the plan a university in the mountains has been built, video rooms constructed, and greater access to television reception provided. Teachers and school uniforms for all children are guaranteed even in the most remote corners.

Rogelio Sanchez, a nurse, said that this area of the Escambray mountains, where mules provide the main transportation for many, has 23 family doctors serving about 120 families each. Dr. Grisel Vega, who

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Regional socialist educational conferences

Continued from Page 6

"I understand the basics of socialism and I think it is better," Tomislav said. "I would love to go to Cuba one day."

All three expressed contempt for the warring gangs of bureaucrats in the former Yugoslavia who are organizing a slaughter in the scramble for land. They pointed out how the various regimes try to impose artificial national differences in language, even though people in the former Yugoslavia had long been able to understand each other fine.

Maja explained that the rulers in the United States and Europe "said they were bringing democracy to Yugoslavia and they brought us war." Naida said she supports "limited military intervention by United Nations forces because militarily we are too weak to resist the Serbs and pretty soon there will be nothing left of Bosnia." Members of the Young Socialists explained why they were convinced that imperialist intervention, including under the UN flag, would not aid the struggle by working people anywhere in the world.

Camilo Rosero particularly enjoyed Steve Clark's presentation on South Africa. In the discussion period, the 18-year-old said he would like to see the democratic revolution in South Africa "take the socialist road," and asked, "Why don't they do it now?" He had come from Miami with his father and brother.

Selvi Cakmak, originally from Turkey and now living in Toronto, plans to go on the youth brigade to Cuba. "After the fall of the former Soviet Union a big discussion broke out on Cuba," she said. "So I became interested in finding out what kind of solutions they are looking for. Cuba is different, and I want to see and experience that. I want to come back and tell people." Cakmak will be writing for the George Brown City College newspaper when she returns.

Janine Dukes and Margrethe Siem contributed to this article.

BY JON HILLSON AND LISA ROTTACH

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA — "Even people I know who are not for Cuba want to know what I did and saw in Cuba as soon as I come back," Meagan Arney told a New Year's Day audience here.

The University of Minnesota student was one of four participants on a panel en-

titled "Defending the Cuban Revolution Today," which was part of a weekend socialist educational conference attended by 105 unionists, students, and political activists from five Midwestern states.

Arney, who is working her way through school as a bartender, told the crowd she informs customers of her upcoming trip to Cuba, selling raffle tickets to raise travel funds. "Everybody asks the same question: 'Why Cuba?'"

Dannen Vance, a 26-year-old member of the United Auto Workers union got the same question from many of the 190 workers on his shift at Fawn Engineering in Clive, Iowa.

"There is genuine interest in the trip," Vance said. He noted that most fellow unionists "support my right to travel there, whatever they think of Cuba's government. People are somewhat more open-minded than I had expected," he said, describing how he'd raised \$160 in sales of raffle tickets at work to fund the trip.

"I'm tired of a [U.S.] government that scapegoats everybody for its problems," Vance said. "If it doesn't like a little communist country 90 miles away because of how it addresses social issues, that's a good sign."

Jenny Benton, a student at Illinois State University at Normal and a member of the Young Socialists, described efforts on that campus to organize two students to participate in the brigade. Students are also working to bring Rogelio Polanco and Kenia Serrano, two Cuban youth leaders, to U.S. campuses for a spring speaking tour.

Through such activities, Benton said, workers and youth both in Cuba and the United States "can learn about each other, how much we have in common, how we're the same people."

Adrianna Sanchez, a University of Minnesota student working on the Faculty Student Cuban Lectures Committee, the national coordinating body for the upcoming tour, urged activists in the audience to solicit invitations for the two Cuban youth. "Already, Rogelio and Kenia have received 64 invitations from 30 campuses across the country," Sanchez said.

The spirit of the Cuban revolution pervaded the gathering. On their table, youth brigade members displayed work boots contributed by coworkers and friends as solidarity donations for Cuban agricultural workers hosting the voluntary work portion of their reporting trip.

"In Cuba," *Militant* reporter Laura

Garza said in a presentation to the conference, "you will find the most politically armed working class in the world, our most advanced battalion, where despite tremendous difficulties there is proof that human solidarity and progress are possible in the world today."

Participants were enthusiastic about the discussions at the socialist conference. "I came as a way to follow up the November 12 rally. That was my first demonstration," said Yolanda Gonzalez, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota. She was referring to the 3,000-strong November protest in Washington, D.C., to oppose U.S. anti-Cuba policies.

Tisha Carter, another University of Minnesota student who attended the November 12 march, appreciated the class and discussion on women's rights. "Specific demands, like decreasing the workweek without cutting pay to create jobs, or federal troops to protect abortion clinics, are practical," she explained. "They make common sense, but they had never occurred to me before."

Conference participants discussed how to organize speak-outs, and participate in protests in response to the murders at two Massachusetts abortion clinics. Some \$350 in Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold, including 10 copies of the newly published issue of *New Internationalist* around the themes of which the gatherings here and in Philadelphia and Los Angeles were organized.

Conference participant Frankie Travis — a locked-out A.E. Staley worker from Decatur, Illinois, and traveling "Road Warrior" who has spoken widely in defense of his embattled union — brought T-shirts, videos, and literature to the Twin Cities event. "Broader issues aren't being discussed in the unions. It's important to discuss these issues in the union because our fight is tied to other parts" of the world, he told the *Militant*. "Simply having picket signs at plant gates doesn't work."

"This conference," Travis said in greetings to the audience, "gives me a better perspective. You don't have to feel down, feel lost, feel afraid. There are ways to fight corporate greed, to fight the capitalists."

Jon Hillson is a member of the United Transportation Union in St. Paul; Lisa Rottach is a member of the Twin Cities Young Socialists.

Delegates discuss challenges before ANC

'We are going to emerge out of this conference stronger than ever before'

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa — A *Militant* reporting team of Steve Clark, Vana Knap, Greg McCartan, and Greg Rosenberg covered the 49th national conference of the African National Congress held in this provincial capital of the Orange Free State December 17-21. Our January 9 issue covered the major reports and resolutions discussed and adopted by the delegates.

The big majority of the more than 3,000 participants in the gathering were delegates elected by ANC branches, most of them working people and youth from cities, townships, and rural communities across the country. Others were nonvoting delegates or invited observers from organizations in South Africa allied to the ANC and the revolutionary democratic movement it leads.

The interviews below and related articles in this issue provide a glimpse of the range of participants and their experiences and views.



Militant/Greg McCartan

Delegates participate in discussion and prepare to vote on resolutions at closing session of December 17-21 conference of African National Congress.



People who get involved in SANCO projects are "potential members of the ANC," he said. "The ANC is a dynamic organization. It is going to emerge out of this conference stronger than ever before, with a focus on economic development."

Sidney is a member of the interim local council in Cape Town. One of the problems in his ANC branch since the April elections, he said, is that "now there is a scramble" to get positions in government.

The ANC now "has a much different relationship with the system," he said. "Now we must build the things we used to burn down."

"We are holding house visits and public meetings in our area to help raise the consciousness of Coloureds to become supporters of the ANC," explained Mike Dodey, a delegate from Eesterus in Pretoria and chairman of his ANC branch of 200 members there.

In the April elections, the ANC received a minority of votes cast by Coloureds, who are people of mixed African and white ancestry. Like other Blacks in South Africa, Coloureds, who in their majority are Afrikaans-speaking, were denied equal voting rights and subject to segregated housing, schools, and other public facilities.

As part of their divide-and-rule strategy, however, the apartheid regime and former ruling National Party (NP) doled out small privileges to Coloureds and promoted prejudices and fears about the African majority. "The National Party is trying to convince so-called Coloured people that we have a home in the NP," said Dodey. "They highlight supposed differences between various races to encourage people to continue to be racist. But the ANC has won the government for the liberation of all in South Africa, including the so-called Coloureds."

Dodey said his ANC branch has launched an RDP Forum to identify Reconstruction and Development Programs in health, education, recreation, and other fields.

"Many kids are still not going to school," said Dimpho Khumalo, a member of the ANC Youth League and delegate from his ANC branch in the Orange Free State town of Edenburg.

Schools for Africans are still extremely ill-equipped, and there is a shortage of teachers. "Classroom size is about 60 to 70 students per class" in his area, Khumalo explained.

Among the activities of the Youth League, he said, are organizing sports activities for young people and working with local businesses to upgrade education in science and technology in local schools.

"Our branch is somewhat different than most others in that we've been concentrating on the RDP for awhile" said Ricardo Jacobs, a 22-year-old journalist for the *Post* newspaper in Durban in Kwa-Zulu/Natal province. He was a voting delegate from the Durban South branch.

"We've written our funding documents and approached community organizations to bring them into the program," he said. "We're starting a youth program to help with drug and alcohol abuse among young people."

"My branch is mostly Indian working class. We also have professionals and a lot of young people."

"One of the main problems in our area is pollution. We're located near the airport, refineries, and the CG Smith chemical plant. Studies have shown that the Merebank area is the fifth most polluted spot in the world. We're working on a plan to force the companies to clean up the mess in conjunction with the civics [SANCO]."

"For the ANC, this conference has proved very unifying, and very united," Jacobs said.

Joseph Molefi was jailed early in 1994 for his involvement in the March uprising in Bophuthatswana that brought down the tyrannical regime of Lucas Mangope. "The people got tired of Mangope, his cult, and his fake homeland," Molefi said.

Bophuthatswana was one of 10 "homelands," or Bantustans, set up by the apartheid regime in the 1950s in which the majority of Africans were forced to live. "Bop" was among the four whose puppet

governments were declared "independent" by the white-supremacist regime in Pretoria. In March, Mangope was toppled by an uprising of workers and youth who demanded, among other things, that the ANC be allowed to carry out free political activity in the area.

Molefi was a delegate from his ANC branch in Mmabatho, formerly the capital of Bophuthatswana. Today Mmabatho is part of the western Transvaal province. In Molefi's opinion, preparing to win the October 1995 local elections is among the

most important questions before the ANC conference. Currently municipalities are still run either by old apartheid councils or by interim governments chosen half and half by the prior authorities and popular organizations such as the ANC.

Neither setup, Molefi said, is conducive to implementation of housing construction, water and sanitation programs, educational reform, and other aspects of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) initiated by the ANC-led government. Local governments with ANC majorities, he said, can "take initiatives to begin implementing the RDP."

"I'm not a supporter of the ANC; I'm not a backer of the ANC; I'm a longtime active cadre of the ANC," said John Makelelane of Bloemfontein.

Makelelane, now in his thirties, was part of the 10-member observer delegation at the ANC conference from the South African National Civic Organisation and is SANCO's general-secretary in the southern region of the Orange Free State.

Since the ANC election victory in April, he said, the RDP "is now the policy of the government." But its implementation can't be simply left to the cabinet and Parliament, he said. The ANC, SANCO, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) each has a role to play.

"Nobody owns the RDP," Makelelane said. Implementation has to be "community-driven," a term heard often from conference participants.

In building much-needed housing, for example, he said, construction should not simply be turned over to large companies paid from government funds. Instead, the work should be subcontracted to community cooperatives that provide jobs, set pay scales, and help train carpenters, masons, pipe-fitters, and plumbers. The government can provide funds and enforce financial accountability, and engineers can help communities develop plans and ensure standards of quality.

In the Bloemfontein area SANCO has been involved in setting up several brick-making cooperatives that provide employment to jobless people in the townships and sell bricks for housing construction at prices substantially lower than available on the market. Not everyone agrees with this approach, which puts the emphasis on "community control and ownership," Makelelane said. "There are different scenarios."

At the conference, ANC leaders pointed out that branches in many areas had declined in numbers and activity following the elections. "That is the real truth," said Makelelane, who had participated in the conference commission on building the ANC. In the Bloemfontein area. He added, SANCO chapters had grown while many ANC branches declined.

South Africa's 'civics' at work

BY VANA KNAP
AND GREG ROSENBERG

MANGUANG, South Africa — Mahkwenke Fikizolo is regional chairperson of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) in the Bloemfontein area of the Orange Free State. SANCO groups community organizations — "civics" — in townships, rural areas, and cities, and is part of the democratic movement collaborating with the African National Congress.

We met Fikizolo on the opening day of the 49th national conference of the ANC in late December. Following the conference, he took *Militant* correspondents on a tour of the area. Fikizolo's house was bombed and burned to the ground several years ago by rightist defenders of the apartheid regime.

SANCO organizes township residents irrespective of political persuasion. "We have ANC members, PAC [Pan-Africanist Congress] members, and even some National Party members," said Fikizolo. "If there were Inkatha members in this town, they would be in our organization too."

Fikizolo showed us some of the projects taken on by SANCO in the past few years here in Manguang, the sprawling Black township just east of Bloemfontein. Our first stop was Namibia, a squatter camp of tin shacks.

The chairman of the neighborhood SANCO greeted us in the settlement's local office, a tin shack baking in the afternoon sun. The walls were lined with ANC posters. The chairman and his assistant were busy inventorying bags of mealie meal — the ground corn meal that is the staple of Black South Africa — as well as beans, sugar, tea, and soap. These were rations for elderly residents of the camp provided by Operation Hunger, they explained. There has never been enough for everyone. They hope that in the next few years increased rations will be available for unemployed workers and families with children.

The chairman, a skilled carpenter, said he had been laid off from his last job seven months ago. He said most people here need jobs and job training above all. This is

more important even than housing.

We got back in Fikizolo's car and drove further out to a place called Freedom Square, SANCO's pride and joy. Here the main streets are paved and all the shacks and small brick houses have outdoor flush toilets and community water spigots and are soon to receive electricity. Fikizolo reported that an international fund had granted 30 million rand to the area (roughly \$8.5 million), and a local development board in which he participates is organizing to upgrade at least 4,000 houses. Thousands of residents have begun growing their own gardens, blossoming with flowers and some vegetables.

In Freedom Square, Fikizolo introduced us to Ben Pietrus, another local SANCO leader. Pietrus showed us several homes where local residents have begun small brickmaking operations. They sell bricks to people who are building their own houses. From a water reservoir situated on a hilltop, Pietrus pointed out the vast array of tin shacks and small brick houses stretching to the limits of the horizon in three directions. To the south the eye could discern large stretches of agricultural land marking the beginning of large capitalist farms prevalent throughout the Orange Free State.

"This is all new," Pietrus said as he gazed across the area. "When I came here in 1990, there were only four or five shacks nearby a school. Within four years, thousands have moved here." Pietrus said he had been renting elsewhere in the township for 17 years until 1990 when he heard there were people starting to squat here. He and his wife and children were among the first to begin occupying the land in Freedom Square.

In those four years, they and others have been evicted and harassed by police many times. Prior to the April elections, supporters of the apartheid regime sometimes staged armed attacks on the squatter camps. But the people kept coming back. "We would not fire back," said Pietrus. "But we would stand defiant. This land was not being used. Why shouldn't we live here?"

South African leader: 'We must be a mass-based organization'

Continued from front page

of — and equal access to — housing, jobs, electricity, water, sanitation, and other basic needs denied to millions of Black South Africans. The ANC is also committed to a radical overhaul of apartheid-era legislation.

Stofile cited several factors limiting new legislation, including ANC cadres' inexperience in functioning in government and the fact that it is taking ministries longer than many ANC leaders initially anticipated to prepare bills to present to Parliament.

He pointed in particular to resistance from the National Party, the decades-long standard bearer of white supremacy, and Inkatha Freedom Party, a reactionary organization that claims to speak for Zulus and worked hand in glove with the apartheid regime. Since both these parties received more than 5 percent of the vote in the April elections, each holds ministerial positions in the cabinet of the Government of National Unity (GNU).

"We must deliver on the [ANC's] Reconstruction and Development Program in government with parties that are not our allies and whose very legacy we are trying to eradicate," Stofile said.

"We have to walk the tightrope in the GNU. We can't completely alienate our partners. This pours water on what we would have liked to do." He added that the virtually all-white civil service, "deeply steeped in the politics of the previous apartheid regime," hampers all government ministries and acts as a brake on proposals for change.

"The other limiting factor is the very democracy of the ANC. We've bound ourselves to transparency, to a participatory democratic process. Communities must be consulted on pending legislation, over and

above a normal parliamentary process of committee hearings and so on."

Land act, affirmative action

The ANC leader said that as a result of these roadblocks, "although we've handled 61 bills from May to November, the only one which had a major impact was the land restitution act. The others have made no impact on the people's lives." The Restitution of Land Rights Act entitles Blacks who were robbed of their land under apartheid to file a claim to get it back. Under the legislation, those driven from their land since 1913 have three years to petition a land claims commission and court.

Most other proposals for legislation are at the research or "white paper" stages. "In time, we are convinced we will be able to do these things," Stofile said, "but it's not easy to explain when people are in need of houses and jobs right now. We have established one national education system" in place of the previous separate and very unequal one. But millions still have no decent schools to send their children to.

Turning to other pressing questions before the new government, the ANC leader pointed out that "there is nothing before Parliament at this stage on affirmative action in the civil service or in industry. There is no formal proposal of what can be done in that respect, although it comes up in virtually every debate in Parliament." Implementation of affirmative action measures is one of the main tasks the ANC has set for transforming South Africa's racially divided employment structure. Currently the overwhelming majority of skilled and better-paid jobs are held by whites, while at least 50 percent of Blacks are unemployed.

Stofile said the goals set by ANC conference delegates of strengthening the or-

ganization would be crucial to advancing new legislation. "The ANC must continue to be a mass-based organization, the vanguard of the national liberation movement," he said. "Liberation is not an event, but a process. It will take time to level the social disparities."

"The foundation of our organization is the branch of the ANC," he said, "not the national executive committee. Unless the branches are strengthened we believe the regions will simply collapse, becoming fire brigades" racing from crisis to crisis.

"Building the ANC can't be a matter just for those in the cities," he said. "It must be taken to the people, to the rural areas. And the demands and needs of people around which the ANC can build itself are not homogeneous. In Soweto, people want housing above all. In the Transkei, peasants want electricity in their huts."

Stofile emphasized that the decisions taken by the delegates to the ANC conference, the highest decision-making body of the organization, will determine the course members of the new Parliament will follow in drafting the new constitution. "Those deployed to the constitutional assembly will derive the ANC mandate from here," he said. "Constitutional assembly members are functionaries of the ANC deployed to that sector."

Financing the ANC

Stofile cited the importance of strengthening the ANC's ability to finance itself. This was a major topic of conference reports by both ANC president Nelson Mandela and secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa.

"The question of [the ANC's 12 rand annual] dues has been a headache since 1990," Stofile said. "For some members 12 rand is quite a sacrifice. Sometimes you are



Militant/Greg Rosenberg
Arnold Stofile: "The foundation of our organization is the branch of ANC."

asking people to choose between paying dues and buying bread.

"We must be able to say to a peasant who has 10 goats, 'once a year, give us a kid of your goats, and the organization will figure out how to sell it and raise money.'" He added that the bulk of finances will have to come from new and more professional fundraising, not solely reliant on efforts by central ANC leaders.

Stofile cited "building a relationship with industry and commerce to plow back resources they derive from the sweat and blood of workers — many of whom are members of the ANC. We can't be partners in the corporate world," he said. "We're not an enterprise. But we're talking of co-operation...of recycling resources back to the movement."

The ANC leader said that continued international support from backers of South Africa's democratic revolution "cannot be overemphasized."

"Workers of the world would do well to encourage [the ANC's] initiatives, and to establish a similar kind of democratic participation of people in government in their own countries."

Economic upturn brings modest hiring in S. Africa

BY GREG McCARTAN

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The South African economy in 1994 "has crept out of its longest recession on record," reports Johannesburg's big-business daily the *Citizen*.

Guarded hope is evident in the opinion columns of daily papers that a downturn in strikes by labor unions, new access to international markets previously blocked off by sanctions, and a projected inflow of foreign capital can push growth rates up to between 3 percent and 4 percent in 1995.

Despite growth of 2 percent in 1994, South Africa's capitalist economy is following the pattern of those in North America, Europe, and elsewhere. That is, "downsizing" has led to a drop in nonfarm employment by some 510,000 jobs since 1989. This brings the number of jobs down to the 1980 level.

But a spurt in manufacturing in the closing months of 1994 led to a lengthening of the workweek and some additional hiring. The "improvement in employment is still marginal at this stage," however, according to the Johannesburg *Star*.

A drought across parts of the country was one factor putting the brakes on economic growth last year. Failing crops are also leading capitalist farmers to dismiss workers.

During a tour around Welkom, a mining center in the largely agricultural Orange Free State, leaders of the African National Congress said farm workers are swelling the ranks of "informal settlements," shantytowns erected on unoccupied land. Newly erected tin and wood shacks form a ring around Thabong, a township outside Welkom where Blacks were forced to reside during apartheid.

Capitalist farmers and large agricultural traders here were dealt a blow in late December when the European Union (EU) rejected lowering tariffs on most exports of food and fiber from South Africa. After this country's elections last April, South Africa was included for the first time in the Generalized System of Preferences, which

lowers EU tariff barriers on certain products from certain countries.

Cut flowers, tobacco, honey, and most fruits and vegetables will remain subject to stiff tariffs. Johannesburg's financial daily *Business Day* concluded that "there is now fear that the protectionist tendencies shown by the likes of France, Italy, and Spain will rear up again" when South Africa seeks to qualify under another EU agreement granting trade preferences to some Third World countries.

In 1994 South African exports lagged and more capital continued to flow out of the country than came in through foreign investment. "It has been said of visiting potential foreign investors," commented the *Star*, "that 'they all had their notebooks, but where were their cheque books?'"

Price hikes due in part to the drought — vegetable prices rose 18.4 percent in September alone — are adding to inflationary pressures. Price rises hit an annually adjusted rate of 10.1 percent in September, outstripping many wage increases negotiated in industries during July and August. The union contracts do not include a cost-of-living escalator.

Since the South African government signed onto the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT), there has also been discussion in the media about the future of highly protected industries such as automobile and tire manufacturing. While most of the wealthy owners of industry and mining houses favor entry into GATT, these business interests are debating how best to press forward "streamlining" and "cost-cutting" needed to compete on the world market.

South Africa's auto industry "needs to move up a gear or so if it wishes to hold its own against chill winds of competition fanned by the country's return to the global fold," said an article in *Business Day*. Import duties of up to 80 percent are now imposed on automobiles, while tire imports are restricted by permit and a 25 percent duty on low-priced products. Industry offi-

cials are urging the government to institute some protectionist measures to help them guard their profits.

Decades of apartheid rule, exacerbated in recent years by depression conditions worldwide, have had a devastating impact on working people in both rural and urban areas. Official unemployment stands at nearly 50 percent. Since millions of people in rural areas are not counted as part of the workforce, the true figures are much higher. Depending on the area, between 25 percent and 95 percent of those living in the countryside does not have ready access to water, and 60 percent of the population does not have adequate sanitation. In rural areas there are three doctors for every 10,000 people.

The African National Congress — both through the government and through its branches, the trade unions, and other organizations — is advancing a Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) to address apartheid's legacy. The 147-page booklet outlining the RDP says it "seeks to mobilize all our people and our

country's resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, nonracial and nonsexist future."

Central to the objectives to be met by 1999 are programs "to redistribute [30 percent of agricultural] land to landless people, build over one million houses, provide clean water and sanitation to all, electrify 2.5 million new homes, and provide access for all to affordable health care and telecommunications."

Such steps are needed, the document says, because "no political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life."

To "kick start" the RDP, South African president Nelson Mandela has initiated 22 "presidential projects". Already under way are programs providing free health care to pregnant women and to children under six, subsidized school lunches, several home-building projects, and electrification of households, of which 336,913 have begun to receive service since April.

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Antiabortion killings spark demonstrations in many U.S. cities

BY LAURA GARZA

In a swift reaction, pickets, marches, and vigils were organized in a number of cities in response to the deadliest assault to date on abortion clinics—the shootings in Brookline, Massachusetts, that left two clinic workers dead and five others wounded December 30.

On January 1, about 40 people, many members of Tidewater National Organization for Women, held a candlelight vigil outside the Hillcrest Clinic in Norfolk, Virginia, where John Salvi, the alleged killer, went on another shooting spree, shattering the front door glass of the facility. Robin Love, a member of NOW, told the media the vigil was to honor the two women slain in Massachusetts and “to send a message to the women of Tidewater that we will not be intimidated by the terrorist acts of the so-called pro-life movement.”

On January 3, Tidewater NOW sponsored a vigil of some 20 people outside the courtroom where Salvi, arrested in the killings, was arraigned. They carried signs that read “Keep Abortion Legal,” and “Who are the real victims?” with pictures of the two clinic workers who were murdered.

Twenty-five protest in Alabama

The day after the killings in the Boston area, an emergency picket line was held in Birmingham, Alabama, called by the Birmingham Clinic Defense Team. About 25 people participated in the protest. Several passers-by spontaneously joined the action when they saw what was taking place. The group has organized successful defense of area clinics for several years, in addition to participating in defense efforts in Jackson, Mississippi, and Little Rock, Arkansas. The Clinic Defense Team announced a

public event to mark the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision decriminalizing abortion, in Birmingham on January 21. The event is co-sponsored by Alabamians for Choice and Alabama NOW.

Further to the south, 40 Miami-area abortion rights activists turned out to defend the Alba Medical Center of Hialeah December 31. The clinic defense effort was organized by the Miami Clinic Access Project and had been scheduled prior to the killings in Brookline. Among the participants were students, members of NOW, clinic employees, and members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists.

Dora Hernandez, the facility's owner, requested help from local activists after Respect Life of the Miami Catholic Archdiocese called a prayer vigil at the clinic “for an end to abortion.” Hernandez reported that the same group has targeted the clinic for two years.

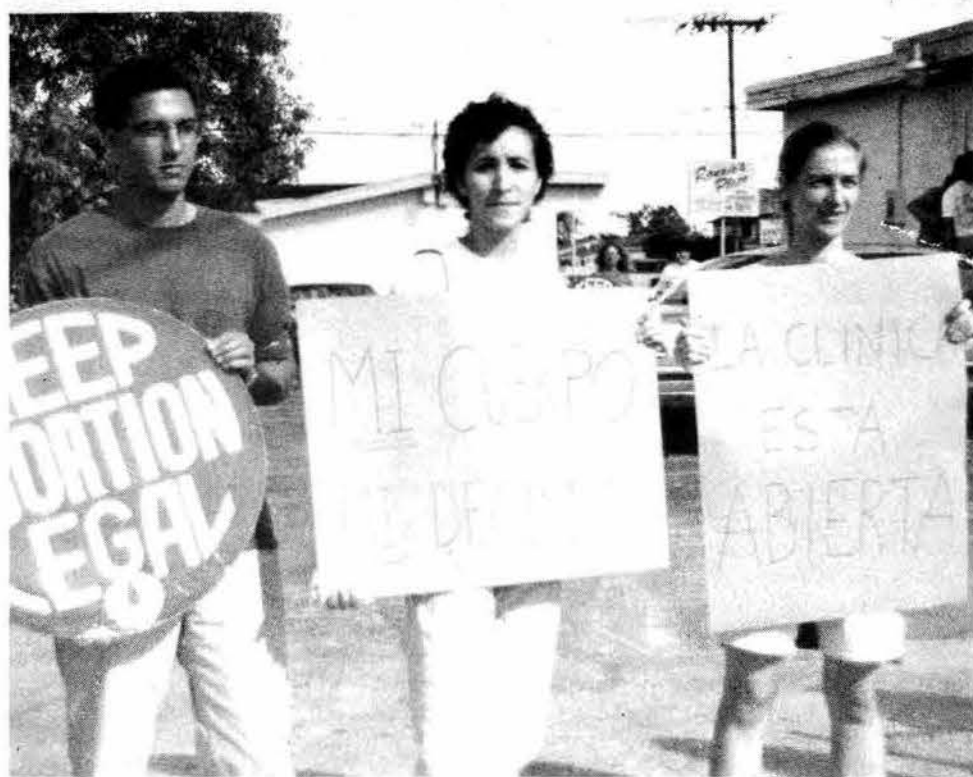
During this time right-wing protesters have threatened doctors, put super glue in doors, and have assaulted patients. The Miami Clinic Access Project is planning further activities around the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

More than 200 people marched in New York City January 3 in an action to protest the Boston killings called by the New York City Clinic Defense Task Force.

In Chicago, the Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition held a demonstration in front of a clinic December 31 and a vigil on January 6 at the Federal Building.

Defenders of a woman's right to choose also held a rally at the Federal Building in Pittsburgh on January 6.

Students at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio plan a speak-out on January



Militant/Phoenix Kendrick

Forty people turned out to defend the Alba Medical Center in Hialeah, Florida, in wake of antiabortion murders in Boston. Protests took place in other cities as well, including Birmingham, Alabama; Chicago; Cleveland; Norfolk, Virginia; Pittsburgh; San Francisco; and Washington, D.C.

21 and Cleveland abortion rights activists have scheduled a citywide meeting to map out further plans later that day.

In Washington, D.C., 100 people chanted “We won't go back, we will fight” at a picket line and press conference called by NOW. Patricia Ireland, NOW president, announced a Rally for Women's Lives to be held in Washington, D.C., April 9.

The previously scheduled event was aimed at protesting violence in women's lives and Ireland said NOW was issuing the current call “to challenge the Clinton administration and Congress to take effective action to end the violence that limits so many women's lives.”

The Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force is calling for people to mobilize to defend area clinics on January 21

and 23, when antiabortion protesters are expected to target many clinics. Training sessions are being held to organize the clinic defense and a representative of the task force said they have been getting a lot of calls from people interested to participate in clinic defense since the events in Boston and Norfolk.

Contributing to this article were: Devon Parry, member of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 9226 in Birmingham, Alabama; Stephen Poff in Pittsburgh; Nancy Brown in Norfolk, Virginia; Maggie McCraw, member of International Association of Machinists in Miami; Alyson Kennedy, member of United Transportation Union in Washington, D.C.; Sandra Nelson in Chicago; and Roni McCann, member of the USWA in Cleveland.

Thousands protest murders at Boston clinics

Continued from front page

nying patients at the clinic were wounded in the assault.

Picking up his bag, Salvi proceeded to the Preterm Clinic a mile and a half down the road. Once there he approached receptionist Leanne Nichols and asked, “Is this Preterm?” When Nichols replied “Yes,” he pulled out his rifle and shot her in the chest. Nichols died shortly after at a Boston-area hospital. Salvi then shot and wounded an office worker and a guard. According to witnesses, he fled the Preterm Clinic firing randomly.

Twenty-four hours later Salvi was arrested in Norfolk, Virginia, after spraying bullets into the Hillcrest clinic there.

Reno: can't 'provide protection'

Local, state, and federal government officials, including Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts and President Bill Clinton, condemned the shootings. But Attorney General Janet Reno claimed the government could not protect the staff or patients at clinics. “Law enforcement does not have adequate resources to provide protection for all threats,” she said.

The brutal killings in Brookline come on the heels of assaults and killings at other abortion clinics in the last two years. The most recent took place in Pensacola, Florida, in July. Antiabortion terrorist Paul Hill gunned down Dr. John Britton and volunteer escort James Barrett with a 12-gauge shotgun. Hill was recently convicted of those murders.

Sarah Judkins, a former administrator at Preterm, told the *New York Times* that receiving bomb threats and hate mail at the clinic was a common occurrence. “The hate mail was really graphic, really violent,” she explained. “It usually centered on killing Jew doctors. It said things like, ‘Hitler was right.’ There were really grisly drawings.”

According to Pamela Maraldo, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, her office had notified the U.S. Justice Department recently about an in-

crease in death threats at the Brookline clinic. A month ago, citing a lessened need, the U.S. Marshals service scaled back from 24 to 12 the number of clinics it was protecting.

Abortion rights supporters respond

The anger and outrage over the shootings prompted protests within hours. The Boston NOW chapter and the Reproductive Rights Network called a vigil for 5:00 p.m. that evening in front of the Planned Parenthood clinic. Carrying candles and holding signs that read, “Defend Reproductive Rights,” “Abortion Must Be Safe, Legal, and Funded,” “Stop Clinic Terrorism,” and “Stand Up for Choice,” abortion rights supporters marched to the Ohabei Shalom Synagogue. To a standing room only crowd Rabbi Emily Lipof welcomed the marchers saying, “I hope the line never ends....With so many of us we can conquer the few of them.”

Speaking on the platform with Lipof were representatives of Planned Parenthood, Reproductive Rights Network, NOW, Abortion Access Project, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

“In the last 10 years there have been over 600 incidents of murders, death threats, break-ins, and kidnappings and 200 clinics have been bombed,” Marlene Freed from the Abortion Access Project said at the protest outside the Planned Parenthood clinic. “What would be the response of law enforcement if it were 200 banks that were bombed? Where are the Federal Marshals that are needed to protect women?” Freed's comments were met with thunderous applause from the protesters.

“I am here because I'm against the violence and I'm here because I support a woman's right to abortion,” said one 16-year-old participant interviewed by a local television station. “What happened here today is senseless. We must have more protests for abortion rights and against the attacks on the clinics.” She has been a clinic escort and said she would be back to defend the clinic again.

Immediately following the shootings the phones at the Boston office of NOW were flooded with calls from people asking, “What activities are being organized?” and “How can I help?” Volunteers came in to answer phones, distribute leaflets, and to organize participation in the upcoming actions and activities. Volunteers produced 5,000 leaflets and fanned out throughout the city December 31 to build the protest at the state capital that afternoon. Others stayed at the office to answer the barrage of phone calls from national and local media who wanted to know how the pro-choice forces were going to respond.

Addressing the crowd of nearly 2,000 protesters at the State House, Ellen Convisser, president of Massachusetts NOW, said, “We have federal and state laws, and court decisions supporting us, yet we still live in a climate where yesterday's terror could thrive.” Convisser went on to explain, “Despite the laws and the court decisions, all progress over the years for women's rights are because of you and me. We will not take this and we will fight back. No social progress has ever occurred unless it came on the back of a social movement. The battle is now up to us. We will not be pushed back.”

Participants at the protest came from Boston and surrounding areas. Students from campuses around the region were also present.

A number of local political figures and the state attorney general, Scott Harshbarger, addressed the protesters. Most spoke of the rise of violence in society and the need to get guns off the streets while trying to reassure the crowd that measures were being taken to safeguard the clinics.

Antiabortion groups divided

While supporters of a woman's right to choose took to the streets in protest, antiabortion groups were divided on how to respond to the recent events.

Eight right-wing antiabortion protesters demonstrated at the Norfolk jail where Salvi was being held. Donald Spitz, direc-

tor of Pro-Life Virginia, hailed Salvi saying, “Thank you for what you did! We want to help you any way we can!” Spitz said the victims in the Massachusetts shootings “were advocates and accessories to murder.” He asked, “Why is the life of a receptionist worth more than the lives of 50 innocent human babies?” Spitz and backers carried signs that read “John Salvi — Prisoner of War!”

Reflecting the divisions among antiabortion forces, most of their prominent spokespeople felt compelled to take their distance from the killings and from statements by figures like Spitz, who was expelled from Operation Rescue last year. The fact that opponents of abortion rights have increasingly been forced to rely on terrorist actions by the extreme right-wing shows the underlying weakness of their movement.

Bernard Cardinal Law, the head of the Catholic church in Boston, called off a mass scheduled “to celebrate the sanctity of life” after the killings. Law also issued a statement that read: “To those in the pro-life movement who express their commitment through prayerful presence at abortion clinics, I would ask that you refrain from such manifestations.”

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops announced January 4 it would consider the call issued by Law to halt protests outside abortion clinics. Law previously was a promoter of efforts to blockade clinics.

In discussions at factories around the Boston area most working people expressed outrage at the killings and opposition to the terror campaign aimed at limiting access to abortion.

Activists are planning a range of protests to defend the clinics here and respond to the attacks. NOW has called for a presence in front of the clinics in Brookline every Saturday for the next month. Supporters of a woman's right to choose are already distributing flyers and encouraging a large turn out for the “Action for Reproductive Freedom” on January 22 in Boston.

Miners union maintains Wyoming contract

BY MIKE GALATI
AND RUTH ROBINETT

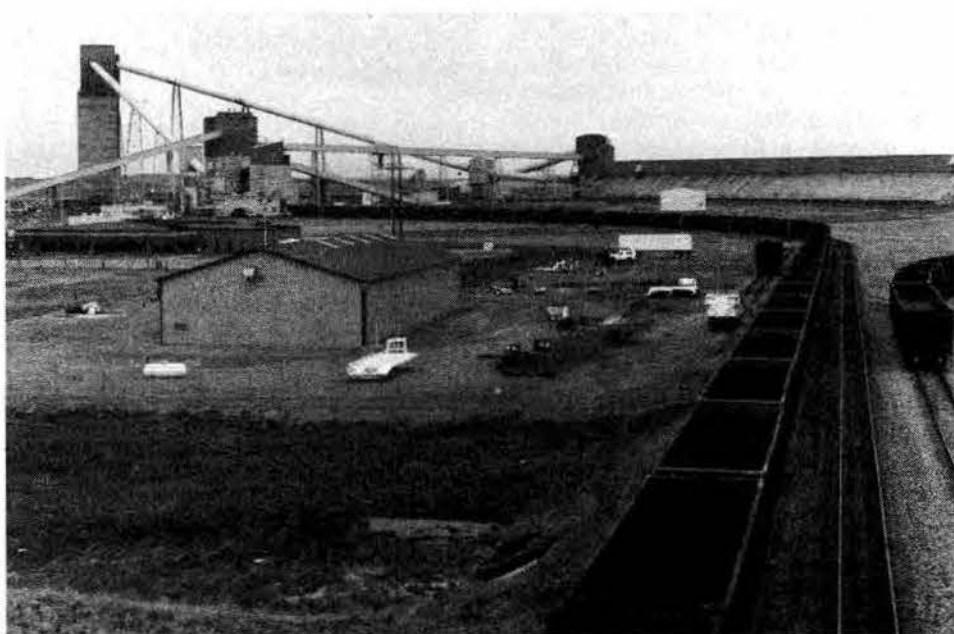
SHERIDAN, Wyoming — United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1972 approved a new contract here by 86 percent in early December with Peter Kiewit Co. and Kennecott, owners of Decker Coal Co. This is the first agreement the UMWA has won at Decker since union members approved a settlement ending a bitter four-year strike against the company in August 1991.

Decker, located just north of the Wyoming border in Montana, is the closest union mine operation to the coal-rich but unorganized Powder River Basin. This area is home to North America's largest open-pit coal mine, the Black Thunder Mine, along with at least 15 other nonunion coal operations. These mines produced almost 160 million tons of coal in 1992, making Campbell County, Wyoming, one of the world's largest coal-producing areas. The coal barons of this area have for years been fighting to keep the UMWA out and have worked hand in glove with Peter Kiewit to break the union at Decker.

Union wins decertification vote

The recent contract comes on the heels of a union victory over a systematic campaign to decertify the UMWA. Last July a group of antiunion miners filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board to oust the Mine Workers local.

The first union members to cross the picket line during a 1987 strike make up the core of this antiunion group. Two hundred and seventy miners walked out that year after Decker refused to negotiate seriously following the expiration of a one-year contract. The company immediately hired scabs who, along with some 50 union members, kept production running for the duration of the strike. After a bitter four-



Black Thunder Mine in the Powder River Basin. The UMWA contract victory at Decker struck a blow to the bosses' attempts to break union in the western coal fields.

year battle, the union won a contract but many of those who had crossed the picket line continued to work in the mine.

The UMWA won the decertification vote this past August even though union membership at the mine is slightly less than half the workforce according to union officials. Many miners explained that the atmosphere in the mine is still tense.

The vote marked a blow to the coal bosses' efforts to crush the UMWA in this area. It was the fourth time since 1983 that workers held on to a union voice at the mine. With a four-year contract in place, miners expressed the view that the battle to strengthen the union is not over, it has just shifted gears.

"The vote for the UMWA sends an unmistakable message to nonunion miners

through Montana's and Wyoming's Powder River Basin, that being union is the only way to protect and enhance our working lives and our families' futures," union spokesman Dan Roberts said after the victory.

In the days leading up to the contract vote, the press quoted a November 30 letter to union members from Cecil Roberts, UMWA vice president, that the new agreement "provides increases in most economic areas and creates negotiations over

scheduling without resorting to a strike."

The contract reportedly includes a 30 cents an hour annual wage increase, totaling \$1.20 an hour over the life of the contract; a \$500 cost-of-living ratification bonus; an optional severance package for laid-off employees; and negotiations on a local level for shift schedules.

The contract allows Decker Coal to replace approximately 60 of the 260 hourly workers with sub-contractors as long as there are 200 bargaining-unit employees actively working.

Many miners did not like some of the provisions in the contract, but thought it was as much as they could get from the company now. Several stated that they didn't think they could take a strike at this time to improve the terms of the agreement.

One miner quoted in the *Sheridan Press* said Decker Coal is pushing for 12-hour shifts with restrictions on overtime pay, and that by not agreeing to shift schedules before the contract is signed the company has greater leeway in future negotiations.

Meanwhile, the UMWA is involved in organizing city workers in Sheridan and Kemmerer, Wyoming. The city council in Sheridan recently passed an ordinance allowing city employees to be represented by a union of their choice. However, the new law forbids city employees from striking.

Ruth Robinett is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1370 in New York City. Mike Galati is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Canadian paperworkers strike against 365-day operation plan

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Some 2,400 members of the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers union (CEP) and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC) walked off the job December 23 at three mills in British Columbia.

The workers chose to strike just before Christmas to show their determination to maintain their three-day Christmas shutdown and one-day floating holiday.

PPWC president Stan Shewaga said mediation broke down when the company "more or less threw down the gauntlet" over demands that the mills operate 365 days a year. In 1992 all 12,000 unionized pulp and paperworkers in British Columbia waged a successful five-week strike against the forest companies' demand for 365-day-a-year operation.

The company, Fletcher Challenge, is also demanding what it calls "full flexibility" within the workforce, which means a blurring of job classifications.

Since November 10, 800 CEP members

at the MacMillan Bloedel paper mill in Port Alberni have also been on strike. Workers there are challenging the owner's decision to hire TNL Construction, an outfit with a company union, to work on an expansion of the mill.

CEP members claim that such a move is a threat to union jobs within the mill as well as to members of the building trade unions, which have been fighting against MacMillan Bloedel's union-busting action since late September. A total of 100 workers facing criminal charges arising from the dispute are scheduled to appear in court in January.

The strikes are occurring as the forest companies are showing big profits. Since the end of 1993, the price of pulp has gone from \$390 to \$750 a ton; and the price of newsprint from \$400 to \$550 a ton. "The prices for pulp and paper are skyrocketing, quite frankly, and our members are frustrated they don't have a contract," said CEP vice president Brian Payne. "Our spirits are up about the success of this dispute."

The strikes are also causing concern over newsprint shortages throughout North America. MacMillan Bloedel's Port Alberni mill produces 800,000 tons of newsprint a year — 45 percent of the company's total production. Fletcher Challenge's three mills produce 950,000 tons of newsprint a year. The threat of a strike in Finland is making it more difficult to get supplies from Europe as well.

The Victoria Times Colonist has already reduced the size of its paper to conserve newsprint. The New York Times is so desperate for newsprint for its western edition that it is paying extra to have the newsprint trucked directly from MacMillan Bloedel's Powell River mill to Los Angeles rather than sending it by barge and waiting up to two weeks to book rail cars.

Jeff Whittaker, MacMillan Bloedel's manager of newsprint logistics, said, "Now that there is a huge demand in the United States, those just in time inventory practices aren't as effective as six months ago."

Beverly Bernardo is a member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 178 in Vancouver.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Michael Baumann

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary leaders in the fight against capitalism and the oppression and exploitation it engenders and reinforces. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

The annual book fair in Gothenburg, Sweden, drew a record 93,000 visitors this year, along with 800 exhibitors. The four-day event, a major international fair, was held at the end of October.

"The changing composition of the working class internationally was in evidence in the fair and in our sales," reports Pete Kennedy of Pathfinder Britain, a member of the international team that represented Pathfinder at the fair.

"One young Chilean woman was clearly delighted to see *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara* on sale," Kennedy said. "Another copy of the *Diary* was sold to a socialist from Iran who had participated in the 1979 revolution there. A man from Afghanistan, who described himself as a revolutionary and a communist, and who had fought in the war to drive the Soviet army out of the country, bought a copy of the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 4, which includes the article 'Opening Guns of World War III.'" All told, book fair participants bought seven copies of this issue of *Nouvelle Internationale* and the corresponding issues in English and Swedish.

Young people were among those drawn to the Pathfinder display, reports Birgitta Isacson, another member of sales team. In fact, the great majority of those who bought books from the table were under 25 years old. Many were teenagers. More than a dozen young people signed up to get more information from the Pathfinder bookstore in Stockholm.

In addition to *New International*, other top sellers at the book fair included Ernesto Che Guevara's *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, with six copies sold in three languages, and *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, with five copies sold in two lan-

guages. Also in demand were books and pamphlets by Evelyn Reed on the struggle for women's equality. Nineteen of the 71 books and pamphlets sold were titles on the Cuban revolution. In all, visitors to the fair purchased more than \$780 in Pathfinder books.

Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* has just been republished by Pathfinder in the original Russian. The three-volume work had been out of print for more than a decade. Readers who wished to read the work in the original, including several in Cuba, had requested it be published again.

The *History of the Russian Revolution* is also featured in the new issue of *The Great Ideas Today*, a journal published each year by the Encyclopedia Britannica. The 1994 issue contains a 60-page summary of and excerpts from the book. Thomas Simpson, who prepared the selections, presents them as an "invitation" to read the full work, which is published by Pathfinder.

Ernesto Che Guevara "continues to inspire people who want to struggle against injustice," notes *Crescent International* in a recent review of *The Bolivian Diary*. The publication, printed twice monthly in Canada and describing itself as a news magazine of the Islamic movement, says that while Washington "was able to wipe out its opponents" in Bolivia, "the US's war against Cuba is not over, as recent events have shown.... It is an international bully."

"Thanks for letting me and my fellow inmates purchase your books at half price," writes a reader behind bars in Texarkana, Texas. He enclosed a check covering the purchase of a pamphlet by Frederick Engels and a biography of Karl Marx.

Contributions to help cover the cost of the discount for prisoners can be sent to Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Earmark the check "Books for Prisoners."

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Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. If ordering by mail, please add \$3 for shipping and handling.

U.S. youth visit Cuba

Continued from Page 7

works with Sanchez in a polyclinic, said they sometimes have problems getting antibiotics, "and there is not enough asthma spray."

"We've been able to respond to all the patients that need treatment though," she said, citing an aid donation of medicine received from around the world.

Deteriorating conditions in Cuba's hospitals have been the source of many complaints among the population. Shortages and theft of scarce supplies from sheets to disinfectants, combined with low wages for many workers meant it was often hard to keep the hospitals clean, and people preferred military hospitals where conditions were better. This has been widely discussed and the two young socialists spoke with workers in the Ivan Portuondo Hospital in San Antonio de Los Baños, in Havana province, about the problems they face.

Luisa Yara Vasquez, who has worked as a cleaner in the hospital for five years, said her base salary is 115 pesos a month. She noted the low salary meant absenteeism was a problem. Now she can earn more money by cleaning other areas after she is done with hers. She said after recent workers assemblies in the hospitals conditions had improved and a system of stimulus for outstanding workers was recently begun, providing access to hard to get items. In December Yara was able to buy a chicken, a tube of toothpaste, detergent, root vegetables, and rice and beans through the hospital.

Dr. Antonio Perez Abelhoff said, "Military hospitals have a higher level of work discipline and with less absenteeism they had fewer problems." He also said a contingent of workers from the tobacco harvest had been dispatched to help in keeping the hospital clean when it was needed.

But Yara noted that with the new stimulus package more people were attracted to the job than before. Many of the workplaces the two U.S. youth visited had similar stimulus programs in place as part of the effort to link access to goods with being on the job, and to supplement workers' salaries, which have been hard hit during the special period.

While conditions are difficult and prices have been raised on many items, in a discussion with young science workers at an agricultural research center Ernesto Fernandez said things were easing a little. "Now we see some services, like eating places, that were nonexistent from 1992 until about July of this year. Before you couldn't get rum, now you can find some, there are a few discos open now also," he said. "This Sunday we will have a one-day carnival, which we haven't had for more than two years. You see people have some hope and confidence in the measures the government has taken," to guarantee basic needs he added.

The Young Socialists spoke about struggles of workers in the United States in interviews with several radio, and newspaper reporters and appeared on television in Villa Clara province and in Havana during the course of their three-week tour of Cuba.

At an agricultural camp in Havana province, where they spent the night and worked in the fields the next morning, many youth crowded around as Craine showed a photo album of social struggles taking place in the United States. Included was a photo of a clinic defense line at an abortion clinic. "What will you do when you get back?" several asked. Craine said, "We will talk to people we meet on our jobs, and at events like marches to defend abortion rights or in support of immigrant workers, and explain why defending Cuba is important for fighters everywhere."

Taylor added, "We are helping to organize to get two Cuban youth to visit the United States, and to bring some more youth from the U.S. to see Cuba for themselves, to gather information and write articles about what they learn."

"This is the reason for our visit," said Craine. "To continue to organize an exchange of young people who are involved in fighting for their rights in the U.S. with Cubans who are fighting for their dignity and for socialism here in Cuba."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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

FLORIDA

Miami

Speakout to Protest Clinic Violence and Defend a Woman's Right to Choose Abortion. Speakers: Participants from several campus National Organization for Women (NOW) chapters, Miami Clinic Access Project, Young Socialists, and Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation:

\$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Unions and the Fight for Safety. Panel discussion. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. Location to be announced. Donation: \$3. Dinner: \$6. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

TEXAS

Houston

Mexico's Falling Peso: What Mexico's economic and political crisis shows about imperialism's march toward fascism and war. Speaker: Walter Blades, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Freeway #250. (In the Woodridge Plaza, Woodridge exit off I-45). Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 644-9066.

BRITAIN

Manchester

New Openings for Political Discussion in

Lebanon. Eyewitness account from Lebanon. Speaker: Paul Davies, Pathfinder representative just returned from the International Beirut Book Fair. Sat., Jan. 14, 6 p.m. 1st Floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 061 839 1766.

CANADA

Vancouver

The Quebec Referendum and the Crisis of Canadian Capitalism. Speaker: Michel Dugré, central committee of the Communist League and member, United Steelworkers of America Local 6932, Montreal. Sat., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. (between 23 and 24 avenues). Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343

Cuban Workers and Farmers Defend their Socialist Revolution. Speaker: Michel Dugré, central committee of the Communist League and member, United Steelworkers of America Local 6932, Montreal, who attended the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba in Havana last December. Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. Buffet Supper 5:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. (between 23rd and 24th avenues). Donation: \$4. Forum and buffet: \$10. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

Quebec mayor renounces rightist ties

BY ROSEMARY RAY

MONTREAL — Marc Duclos, the recently elected mayor of Greenfield Park, a town of 18,000 south of Montreal, has been forced to publicly renounce his political ties to a right-wing organization led by U.S. fascist Lyndon LaRouche.

Duclos, who was not very well known before the election, attended seminars in Montreal given by the Schiller Institute, which supports LaRouche's ideas. Duclos also traveled to the United States to personally meet LaRouche a month after the rightist was released from prison after serving a 5-year sentence for tax and mail fraud.

When anti-racist and human rights groups denounced Duclos's ties with LaRouche, he called a press conference December 13 declaring that he was unaware of LaRouche's views against Jews, Blacks, aboriginals, and homosexuals. Duclos stated that because "it was creating such a stink" he would sever all ties with LaRouche.

Wanted to apply LaRouche ideas

Duclos explained that he had only been interested in LaRouche's ideas on "physical economy" which, as mayor of Greenfield Park, he wanted to apply at a municipal level.

Duclos described LaRouche as having "a very important bearing on world developments" and as being "very knowledgeable."

Duclos stated that he had withdrawn an invitation to a representative of LaRouche's organization to teach the municipal employees of Greenfield Park

about the rightist's theories on human resources and municipal infrastructure.

When challenged by journalists to explain LaRouche's comments calling the mass murder of Jews by Nazis during World War II a "common delusion of the American Zionist," as well as referring to homosexuals as a "network of pederastic satanists," and describing Asian people as a "lower form of animal life," the mayor pleaded ignorance. He said he had only heard "rumors" about those subjects.

Supporters of the Commonwealth of Canada Party (CCP), LaRouche's Canadian backers, held a press conference December 16 to support the embattled mayor and insist that their party is not racist or anti-Semitic. CCP supporters distributed literature claiming that Jewish organizations like B'nai Brith and the Anti-Defamation League are part of an international conspiracy linked to organized crime.

Jack Jedwab, executive director of the Quebec region of the Canadian Jewish Congress, said that congress officials would meet with Duclos because, "We want to be sure our municipal officials repudiate racist doctrine and ideas, and are not influenced by people who espouse those views."

Duclos headed up a slate of seven candidates for election to the Greenfield Park municipal council in November. His slate won all of the council seats in the election. André Bourbeau, a Liberal Party member of the Quebec National Assembly, came to Duclos's defense after the ties to LaRouche were exposed. "He's an excellent man and I don't think he's a supporter

of Lyndon LaRouche," declared Bourbeau.

As to Duclos's insistence that he knew nothing of LaRouche's racist and anti-Semitic views, Peggy Curran, a columnist with the Montreal daily *The Gazette* responded in a column that, "No one's that green." Curran said it was difficult to "swallow" Duclos's "know-nothing line" given that Duclos is a "seasoned municipal politician" who subscribes to LaRouche's bi-weekly newsletter and "travels 600 miles" to his meetings.

Rosemary Ray is a member of Canadian Autoworkers Local 1900 in Montreal.

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Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

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Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

Read it and retch — A Fiji Islands judge freed six men who admitted raping a 15-year-old girl. The judge said the victim was "well built" and looked older.



Harry Ring

Separation of church and state, anyone? — In Israel, where the government only recognizes marriages performed by Orthodox rabbis, it was disclosed that the Religious Affairs Ministry maintains

a secret computerized list of Israelis who are prohibited from marrying other Jews. Read on.

Catch 22 — An Israeli woman found she couldn't marry her fiancé because he was on the list of religious untouchables. His grandmother, a Nazi concentration camp survivor, believing her husband had died in another camp, remarried. He then turned up, and a rabbinical court granted a divorce. The court also declared the children of her second marriage — and their descendants — illegitimate.

Believe this one? — An Israeli woman married a man named Cohen. Twelve years later, the rabbis

invalidated the marriage because, rumor had it, an ancestor of the woman had illegally married a divorced woman in 580 B.C.

Since then, no one in the family can marry anyone named Cohen. Cohens are considered descendants of temple priests and subject to special rules.

The couple may face criminal charges for "deceiving" the rabbi who married them.

Why can't it be just us rich folks? — Rapid population growth was a major factor in trouble spots like Rwanda, Somalia, and Haiti, and jeopardizes U.S. "interests" says Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Too many babies, he

said, is economically bad and "it generates disease, it spawns huge refugees, and ultimately it threatens our stability."

A wonderful system — Lisa Archer of Lepanto, Arkansas, has cancer and needs surgery. Her husband, Larry, spent time caring for her and got fired from his factory job. They got the run-around on applications for aid.

Several banks turned them down for a loan. Desperate, Larry robbed a bank and got caught. Declared a detective: "A crime is a crime, regardless of circumstances."

Or don't breathe — In Chicago, a heavy buildup of carbon monoxide triggered thousands of

mandatory home detectors.

The fire chief said the air, in many cases, was better inside than out. Meanwhile, the mayor advised that if you feel symptoms of monoxide poisoning, just "open your windows and ventilate your home."

'American know-how' — Chicago officials came up with a solution to carbon monoxide buildups.

Develop an adequate mass transit system and unclog the streets of the trucks, buses, and cars that spew the deadly stuff? No, nothing so nonsensical. Instead, new standards will require the carbon monoxide detectors to be less sensitive.

Judge blocks anti-immigrant law in California

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — The decision by a federal judge to block enforcement of the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 until a court rules on its constitutionality is the first move in what is likely to be a protracted legal contest.

The December 14 ruling by federal judge Mariana Pfaelzer was in response to a class-action lawsuit against the proposition. The measure was approved by California voters in November.

Participants in the class-action suit include a host of civil rights groups and organizations involved with defending immi-

grant rights. The main attorneys are from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Judge Pfaelzer's injunction bars the public school system from excluding undocumented children. It also bars publicly funded medical facilities and social service agencies from denying care or other aid to undocumented immigrants.

Teachers, medical workers, and social workers, as well as cops, are enjoined from questioning people about their status and reporting those "suspected" of being here

illegally, as the new law provides.

The judge did not block implementation of the clause imposing stiffer penalties on those convicted of selling or using false residency or citizenship documents. Nor did she enjoin the proviso excluding undocumented students from public colleges and universities. But an earlier injunction against these practices issued by a state judge is in effect.

"The loss of medical services for illegal aliens could result in greater health risks for the general population," Pfaelzer said, in explaining her decision. She also noted that a 1982 Supreme Court ruling had

knocked down a Texas law barring children of undocumented workers from public schools. Lawyers for the plaintiffs argued that Proposition 187 was unconstitutional because it infringed on federal authority in immigration, law-making, and enforcement.

Responding to the court decision, Alan Nelson, a co-author of the anti-immigrant measure and former chief of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, said, "This is definitely a victory for the other side. But this is long from over."

Earlier, Newt Gingrich, incoming Speaker of the House of Representatives, said he does not favor a national version of Proposition 187, which some partisans of the measure have pushed. He said a better solution is to beef up the Border Patrol and "seal off" the border. This same argument was made by some Democratic politicians who opposed the bill. Gingrich added that if he had been in California he probably would have voted for the proposition "out of frustration."

Swedish minister pursues rightist policies

BY DAG TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM — The immigration minister for the new Social Democratic government, Leif Blomberg, made the headlines recently when reporters noted that his immigration policies were identical to the right-wing New Democracy party.

Blomberg, former president of the metal workers union, recently headed a Social Democratic immigration task group and became known for advocating tough measures against undocumented workers. He proposed, for example, more restrictions on family reunification.

The New Democracy party won a number of seats in the Swedish Parliament three years ago after campaigning on a populist and anti-immigrant program. It has continued its racist attacks on immigrants. In a typical speech, one of New Democracy's leaders, Marianne Franzén, said that she was afraid "Swedish school-children soon will be forced to turn their heads to Mecca."

During the most recent elections New Democracy splintered into several small factions and was wiped out in the race for Parliament seats. Like the right-wing party, Blomberg favors a fingerprint system for all asylum seekers and would only allow temporary residency for refugees.

While New Democracy proposes restrictions on the rights of refugees during the time their appeals are being processed,

Blomberg goes further. He demands immigration authorities be posted at the border to make on-the-spot decisions with no possibility of appeal. Blomberg said, "There are many who have come to Sweden who don't even come close to having any need for protection." This position echoes New Democracy's claim that government policies encourage workers to try to enter Sweden without just cause.

When confronted by the similarity of his views with that of New Democracy, Blomberg angrily accused a journalist from the magazine *Expressen* of not looking deep enough to see that his proposals are founded on more humanitarian values. But he didn't deny that the practical proposals are the same.

A number of outrageous examples of the brutal treatment meted out to refugees at the hands of the Swedish government have also recently come to light. Refugee families have been deported after one of their children was caught shoplifting. In one case a family was deported after a boy got into a fight with someone who made a racist insult.

The last time Sweden's Social Democrats were in power they launched an unprecedented campaign against immigrants. In December 1989 the government claimed that the country was threatened by an invasion of refugees and declared an emergency situation. Legislation regulating the

rights of refugees was scrapped and hundreds of newly arrived asylum seekers were threatened with deportation. Shortly thereafter a wave of attacks against refugee camps swept the country.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

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AUSTIN, Texas — Chicano students in Crystal City, Texas returned to their classes on Jan. 5, claiming victory in their fight against discriminatory practices by school board officials and teachers.

More than 1,600 students began a classroom boycott Dec. 9 after the school board refused to hear the students' grievances, which had been outlined in a petition. Chicanos charged that teachers sometimes used derogatory names like "banana" and "animal" when addressing Chicanos. They also pointed out that use of Spanish in the schools was restricted.

The Chicano students, who comprise 80 to 90 percent of the school population, were seeking an accredited bilingual-bicultural Mexican-American studies program, a better counseling program, which would include Mexicanos as counselors, hiring of Mexicanos from the community as teachers' aides, and direct election of "favorites" (such as cheerleaders and homecoming queens).

The students were supported by the majority of parents, who expressed pride in their children's willingness to fight for changes in the Anglo-dominated system. The students stated that the problems in Crystal City were those faced by all Chicanos throughout the Southwest.

A federal "fact-finding" team of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare began an investigation of the school district one day after boycott leaders flew to Washington in mid-December to make their demands known to the federal government. Pressure from the students, who refused to go back to school until their demands were met, and from HEW officials, whose presence implied a possible cut in federal funds to the district, forced the school board to meet with the student leaders and their parents.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

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January 20, 1945

The advocates of a forced labor law are trying to rush legislation through the House Military Affairs Committee before the widespread opposition to labor conscription can be mobilized against the measure. Top ranking spokesmen of the Roosevelt administration have appeared before the committee urging speedy enactment of a national service law.

The forced labor advocates are vying with each other in proposing the most savage penalties against the workers who "violate" their compulsory labor laws. They differ only as to the kind and degree of punishment to be inflicted. They are having a field day in thinking up more brutal forms of exploitation.

Representative Russell of Texas introduced a measure to solve the "manpower shortage" by extending the standard work week from 40 to 48 hours, thus eliminating the payment of overtime after 40 hours. Representative J. Parnell Thomas wanted to be sure that a national service law contained a provision "for making strikers go back to work."

Without exception, every labor draft measure is a blow aimed at the heart of the labor movement. Lewis G. Hines, legislative representative of the AFL, who testified against the proposed forced labor legislation, accused high administration officials of using psychological warfare to enslave labor.

The Washington reporter for *Justice*, official organ of the AFL International Ladies Garment Workers Union, reached the same conclusion some time ago. He wrote: "They call it mobilization for total war. But it is also the scheme of military dictatorship."

So far, the only group in the labor movement who have come out openly in support of a forced labor law are the Stalinists. They have joined the strikebreakers and union-busters in calling for immediate adoption of labor conscription.

Supreme Court denies stay of execution for innocent man

BY PAUL MAILHOT

The Supreme Court, by a 6 to 3 vote, denied a stay of execution in a capital punishment case that came before it January 2. That is not so unusual.

What is unusual, however, is that the Texas state prosecutor who tried the original case concedes that Jesse Jacobs is innocent of the murder he was convicted of in 1987.

Jacobs originally confessed to the crime but later recanted and said that his sister, Bobbie Hogan, had committed the murder. The state prosecutor who handled Jacobs's case also prosecuted his sister. He informed the jury that he became convinced that it was in fact Hogan who pulled the trigger and that Jacobs had not even known she had a gun. The jury convicted the sister. After several appeals were turned down, Jacobs's case finally made it to the

Supreme Court where the judges refused to take up his appeal or to hold off his execution.

"I find this course of events deeply troubling," said Justice John Paul Stevens in a dissenting opinion. He called the situation "fundamentally unfair."

The Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that the ban on "cruel and unusual punishment" prohibits the execution of a person who, while a participant in a crime that led to murder, did not actually kill or intend for a killing to take place.

In the past several years the Supreme Court has severely limited the rights of prisoners to challenge a death penalty conviction. While it would seem to be unconstitutional to execute an innocent person, the Federal court is not obliged to consider a claim of innocence when it reaches them through a prisoner's successful appeal.

Defend abortion rights

Continued from front page

Freedom" can and must draw active participation from across North America.

The murders of Shannon Lowney and Leanne Nichols, and the shooting of five others in Brookline, Massachusetts, December 30, is the most serious assault on abortion clinics to date. This assault raises the death toll to 5 stemming from shootings at clinics in the past 20 months:

Dr. David Gunn was killed outside a clinic in Pensacola, Florida, on March 10, 1993;

Dr. George Tiller was shot outside his clinic in Wichita, Kansas, on Aug. 19, 1993;

James Barrett, a clinic escort, and Dr. John Bayard Britton were shot to death outside another clinic in Pensacola, Florida, on July 29, 1994; and

Dr. Garson Romalis was shot while at home in Vancouver, British Columbia, on Nov. 8, 1994.

This deadly violence by antiabortion rightists is aimed at using terror to push back a woman's right to control her body and her life. The forces responsible for these acts are being aided by the federal government's refusal to enforce the law of the land by taking all necessary steps to defend the clinics.

But the right-wing terrorists are acting from a position of weakness, not strength. Despite reactionary court rulings and state and federal legislation, opponents of a woman's right to choose have failed to roll back the law of the land established by the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing abortion. And they have failed to reverse the majority support in the United States for keeping abortion safe and legal and keeping the clinics open.

After initial successes by rightist forces in blockading clinics in Wichita, Kansas, in 1991, supporters of abortion rights organized a massive march on Washington of half a million in April 1992 and successfully countermobilized against so-called right to life forces in Buffalo, Boston, Houston, and the state of Louisiana in the months that followed. The rightists were dealt a stunning blow.

Under the impact of these mobilizations by thousands of supporters of abortion rights, the cops and courts finally began arresting and sentencing larger numbers of right-wingers who blockaded clinics and physically harassed patients and employees. This enforcement of basic democratic rights rapidly reduced the ranks of those drawn into the rightists' planned assaults.

Following the second deadly assault at a Pensacola clinic in July 1994, however, there was little organized public response. While Washington initially sought to portray itself as enforcing the law by stationing federal marshals outside 25 clinics in 18 cities, the number had been halved to only 12 clinics in 10 cities by the time of the most recent killings. Carl Stern, a spokesman for the Justice Department, explained it "became satisfied that Paul Hill [who killed Britton and Barrett] acted alone, that the shooting was not the first of a series and that local police could provide protection."

Now is the time for every supporter of women's rights to get back into the streets to keep the right wing on the

defensive. We must resoundingly reject Attorney General Janet Reno's rationalization following the latest murders that "there are a limited number of marshals to respond to all the demands that are made on them." We must reject the Clinton administration's weak-kneed call for an "investigation" into how to halt violence against clinics and demand instead that the federal government do whatever is needed — including dispatching federal troops — and do it now!

Some supporters of a woman's right to choose hoped that adoption by Congress last year of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances bill would guarantee greater protection. Experience has shown, however, that the problem is not the lack of laws but the government's lack of will to enforce laws that have existed for many years.

Mobilizations of the kind that beat back the rightists in Buffalo, Houston, and Louisiana a few years ago can and must be mounted again right now. As the mass civil rights movement proved in the 1950s and 1960s, the federal government can be forced to act under the unrelenting pressure of mobilizations in the streets.

Divisions are already growing among the rightists themselves. While a few figures such as Rev. David Trosch have declared their support for killing clinic doctors and personnel — the Catholic hierarchy stripped him of his church job for doing so — other opponents of women's rights have gone onto the retreat. Following the latest killings, Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston, long known as a prominent advocate of blockading clinics, called for a moratorium on protests in front of these facilities. A few days later the National Conference of Catholic Bishops announced it was considering the call by Cardinal Law.

Such retreats and divisions are further evidence that the right-wing assaults can be pushed back and the government can be forced to act. The initial outrage and the protest actions by thousands reported elsewhere in this issue — from Boston to Miami and Norfolk, Virginia — have already sent a signal that we can and will fight to defend our democratic rights.

More speak-outs, vigils, and pickets are needed in the days and weeks ahead. Actions can be organized as campuses reopen this month. Organized clinic defense and escort training can be stepped up in areas where it has fallen off in recent months. Working people can carry out discussions on the job and in our unions with the aim of involving as many coworkers and unionists as possible in protest actions. Taking a decisive stand in defense of women's rights is a part of forging the unity workers need to meet assaults on our rights, job conditions, and living standards by the employers and their representatives in government.

January 22 marks the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

Join the Action for Reproductive Freedom in Boston on that day! Make it a national day of action.

Demand full federal protection for all abortion clinics, including the dispatch of federal troops!

Defend a woman's right to choose!

Chechen war stirs political storm

The political storm stirred up by Moscow's savage war against Chechnya is dashing the hopes of Washington and other imperialist powers in the stability of the government headed by President Boris Yeltsin. Since 1991, propertied classes the world over have looked to Yeltsin to help press the reimposition of capitalist social relations in Russia and keep working people at bay in the process.

At the same time, the determined resistance by Chechen fighters in face of brutal bombardment and shelling has surprised and dismayed the wealthy and powerful. It once again shows the will and capacity to fight back on the part of those subjected to degrading national oppression and dehumanizing class exploitation. A people whom few elsewhere in the world had even heard of just a few months ago are today standing off one of the world's largest and most heavily equipped armed forces.

One thing is for sure: Russia is not headed toward the stable, democratic capitalism the imperialist rulers tell us represents the future under their "new world order." Top Russian politicians, including Yeltsin's former allies, are denouncing the growing concentration of power in the office of the president and warning of the dangers of a military coup. The fascist demagogue Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has emerged as the most prominent voice defending Yeltsin's chauvinist Great Russian crusade against the Chechen people.

Nearly a half decade of U.S. imperialism's efforts at capitalist restoration in Russia, following the crumbling of the hated Stalinist apparatus in the early 1990s, have only plunged the country into deeper political crisis and social dislocation. The current war against Chechnya is a product of that failure, compounded by the depression conditions of the world capitalist system itself.

While Russia's economic nose-dive slowed a bit in 1994, growth for the year dropped again, this time by 8 percent, for a total fall of 38 percent since 1991. Incomes, adjusted for inflation, are only 82 percent of their 1990 level, and this "average" figure masks the much sharper

decline for the big majority of workers and farmers. Meanwhile, the staggering costs of Moscow's war will exacerbate Russia's already high inflation rate of 15 percent per month.

Only international working-class solidarity points a way out of the bloody quagmire for the Chechen and Russian toilers. And we've already seen examples. Working people in Chechnya's neighboring regions of Ingushetia and Dagestan have joined Chechens in both armed and unarmed defiance of the invading Russian armed forces. For their part, some Russian soldiers have refused to fire on unarmed civilians and openly denounced Moscow's aggressive course, accelerating divisions within the officer corps. Recent polls show that Russians oppose the war by a 2-to-1 margin.

Washington and other imperialist powers are increasingly caught between a rock and a hard place. They continue to back Yeltsin so long as they are convinced he is the most reliable instrument to drive back the rights and living standards of workers and farmers in Russia and throughout the former Soviet Union. At the same time, the world's mightiest capitalist governments want to weaken Moscow's capacity to project military power abroad, and they are being embarrassed politically by exposures of the beastly character of their friend Yeltsin and his "democratic" regime.

Working people in the United States and elsewhere have no reason for sympathy with the capitalist rulers' dilemma. These wealthy classes and the governments that represent their interests are responsible for attacks on our rights, job conditions, and living standards at home, as well as for the mounting misery, growth of rightist movements, carnage, and wars the world over. In 1995 we should redouble our efforts to organize against the anti-working-class, anti-human policies of these capitalist governments and advance the building of revolutionary workers parties that can lead working people in the fight to replace them.

Bumper crop means crisis for working farmers

BY BILL KALMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa — Iowa Agricultural Statistics released its final crop report recently, highlighting the fact that the state's bumper harvest has deepened the crisis working farmers face here.

The report termed the 1994 crop a "storybook harvest," with results of "record-breaking yields and production for both corn and soybeans."

But the low prices farmers got for these crops at the elevators and escalating costs have turned this into a bitter harvest. "Iowa's farmers are not experiencing storybook prices," the report admits, "as prices on both the output and input side of production are squeezing producers' profit margins."

In fact, the national crop harvest reveals a striking social contradiction rooted in the functioning of capitalism: precisely because of the record-level production of foodstuffs, thousands of farmers will be threatened with foreclosure. U.S. farmers have just finished a corn harvest of 10 billion bushels, the largest in history. In Iowa, almost 2 billion bushels have been harvested, with a record average yield of 152 bushels per acre. This is nearly twice the yield of last year's flood-ravaged crop. Elevators were so overloaded that many operators dumped corn on the ground until transportation could be arranged.

The national soybean crop is projected at 2.52 billion bushels, also a record. Iowa soy production, the biggest ever, is estimated at 446 million bushels.

The increased productivity resulted in a severe drop in prices on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT). As the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "While many Midwest farmers needed big crops this year to recover from last year's flood-ravaged season, the size of the harvest has become too large to support commodities prices."

When the Farmers Commodities Corporation delivered their record-breaking estimates to the CBOT back in early October, corn futures for December delivery fell to \$2.15 a bushel. This was way below the futures price for corn of \$2.99 a bushel posted last summer. In the last month, prices have fallen as low as \$1.84 a bushel, the lowest level in eight years.

As a result, the Agriculture Department reduced its estimate of 1994 net farm income from a 25 percent increase from last year to only 13 percent.

High costs for farmers

The reduction in crop prices has also been coupled with higher prices for farm equipment, agricultural chemicals, and fertilizers, which now are priced at the highest level in 10 years. These escalating costs, plus a rise in land prices and rents, are squeezing the finances of small farmers.

Over the last decade, low prices for crops could be balanced for many small farms by fairly strong returns for hogs and cattle. But there is also a market "glut" of meat. Large supplies of pork, beef, and poultry are expected to "dim the livestock outlook," the *Des Moines Register* noted recently. Hog prices have tumbled to their lowest level in 14 years, and show no sign of recovering. In fact, hog prices have plunged 29 percent since January 1994.

George Moriarty of the Iowa Farm Business Association told the *Register* that farmers he works with show a \$5,000 average loss this year for hogs and crops. "This year will jerk many farmers off the farm," he said.

Big bucks for corporate giants

But while surplus food production has dire consequences for farmers, it translates as mega-profits for food processors and food transportation companies. "It's hog heaven for middlemen," livestock analyst Thomas Moorage told *Business Week*. Major food processors have seen a rally in their share prices on Wall Street. Stock of Smithfield Foods climbed 20 percent between April and October. Archer-Daniels-Midland rose 26 percent, Hormel Foods 29 percent, and IBP a whopping 31 percent during the same period. Most Midwest packing houses are working six and even seven days a week because of the \$15-20 per head profit they're currently making.

Transportation companies also moved to take maximum advantage of the harvest. Barge freight rates are based on a percentage of a 1974 tariff; this past spring, rates averaged 95-100 percent of the tariff. In recent weeks, however, spot rates for barges have averaged about 350 percent of the tariff in the mid-Mississippi region.

Railroads also are charging premium rates. The Union Pacific Railroad increased its rates by some 3 percent as the harvest began.

Working farmers, however, are being devastated. "Living costs are so high, young farmers can't sustain lower prices like they have," Iowa farmer Max Smith explained. "Today in agriculture, if you don't work 60 hours most weeks and 100 hours some weeks, you don't have a chance to make a living farming."

Bill Kalman, is a member of the United Transportation Union in Boone, Iowa.

Solidarity effort aids locked-out Staley workers

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers

tions.

"The company doesn't care about its employees," said Paul Gnade, a member of URW Local 310 who was one of 12 workers fired in Des Moines, Iowa. "When I first got the news, I was angry and disgusted. I always thought of

997 at Maytag in Newton, Iowa, organized a plant-gate collection and raised hundreds of dollars for the strikers.

Court rules tire company can't cut health benefits

Striking rubber workers at Pirelli Armstrong in Nashville, Tennessee, won a victory in early December when a U.S. district court judge ruled that the company cannot unilaterally terminate health benefits for its retired workers. The ruling affects 250 retirees in Nashville and 2,300 nationwide.

Issues in the strike, which began July 15, include pay and health benefits for active workers. The company has hired 350 replacement workers at the Nashville tire factory.

Australia ice cream workers sign agreement

Workers at Streets Ice Cream in Sydney, Australia, voted to accept a 2 percent pay hike December 15. They also agreed to "discussion but not implementation" of a company plan to break down job classifications. The workers had rejected a similar offer in August. They staged two 24-hour work stoppages on November 24 and December 9, as well as a series of stopwork meetings to protest company concession demands. The protests began after workers learned that factory supervisors were given a secret productivity bonus as a reward for imposing speedup.

The members of the Food Preservers Union and the Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union were joined in their protests by members of the National Union of Workers, Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, and the Electrical Plumbing Union.

The company refused to discuss the union's demands for higher pay and other claims and sent out intimidating letters demanding workers end the job actions. Support for the strikes began to recede after an arbitration court ruled them illegal.

While a few workers that opposed the walkouts claimed the company had won a total victory,



Some of the 60 nurses at Mercy Community Hospital in Port Jervis, New York, who have been on strike since September 1 against layoffs and for higher wages. "It's the most empowering thing any of us has attempted in our lives," one striker said.

other workers pointed to the positive outcome of the unions pulling together. "This is just round one," concluded one unionist.

Des Moines printing workers sign contract

Union workers at the R.R. Donnelley and Sons printing plant in Des Moines, Iowa, voted December 11 to accept wage cuts and other concessions. The seven union locals representing 700 workers in the plant agreed to an 8 percent wage cut and an end to paid lunch periods. The contract freezes base wages for the next five years. The company threatened to shut the factory in order to get the concessions.

Company spokespeople said the concessions would allow them "to use entry level employees anywhere in the plant," "to get the right person into the right job," and to remove people the company thinks are not "performing well."

Over the past few years, union-

ists have often been forced to work a seven-day week. Donnelley, the largest printing company in the country, is notoriously anti-union.

In addition to pressuring workers to accept concessions the Des Moines City Council adopted an "incentive package" to keep the printing giant in town. It includes reducing Donnelley's property taxes by \$2 million over the next 10 years, giving the company a \$1.6 million tax exemption on new machinery, subsidizing wages for training on all new equipment, and granting a \$1.7 million no-interest loan to the company.

The following people contributed to this column: Johanna Ryan, a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1011 in Indiana; Shirley Peña, a member of United Auto Workers Local 997 in Newton, Iowa; Ron Poulsen, a member of the Food Preservers' Union at Streets Ice Cream in Sydney, Australia; and Dannen Vance in Des Moines, Iowa.

ON THE PICKET LINE

around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Shouts of "Solidarity!" greeted a loud, spirited convoy of cars and trucks as it pulled into the parking lot of United Paperworkers International Union Local 7837 in Decatur, Illinois, December 20. Inside were trade unionists from a dozen midwestern cities, bringing solidarity to the families of union fighters locked out by A.E. Staley.

The caravan included an entire semitrailer full of food and toys collected by the labor movement in northwest Indiana, as well as \$10,000 in cash. Union members had organized supermarket collections, raffles, and other activities to raise the money.

After unloading their cargo, the 75 caravan participants joined some 200 workers and others from Decatur for a potluck dinner. "It's a real morale booster for us," said Tonya Van Scyoc, whose husband Ron has been locked out by Staley for 18 months.

Bridgestone/Firestone fires striking workers

Bridgestone/Firestone fired 30 striking workers at its plants in Iowa, Oklahoma, and Illinois December 22. The firings followed company "investigations" of the striking members of the United Rubber Workers (URW) on charges of violence or misconduct on the picket line. The company later fired six more workers at its Indiana plant on similar accusa-

myself as a loyal employee — trying to look at the company's side as well as the workers'.

"If they can sour someone like myself, God help them with all the other employees," he added. Bernie Sinclair, president of Local 310, was also fired.

Sinclair explained the company wants "all the picketers away from the gate so they can hire scabs without them even being seen coming in, and that's not going to happen."

The National Labor Relations Board accused Local 310 of 30 separate incidents of "unfair labor practices" involving alleged attempts aimed at stopping scabs from crossing the picket line.

The *Wall Street Journal* December 27 featured an article entitled "Bridgestone Bets It Can Defeat Rubber Workers' Strike." The article includes a portrait of Yoichiro Kaizaki, president of the company, saying he had "cast the dice in perhaps his toughest wager yet: that he can crush a six-month-old strike at three of the company's eight tire plants."

Workers have moved to counter the company attacks and demonstrate their solidarity with the striking rubber workers. A number of union locals organized a gala Christmas dinner for all the Firestone workers in Des Moines, attended by hundreds of workers and their families.

Other Des Moines-area locals and individual union members donated presents, food, and money. At Fawn Engineering, dozens of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 270 members who were given a holiday ham by the company deposited them in a waiting truck to be taken over to the Rubber Workers hall. Members of UAW Local

LETTERS

Cuba embargo protest

On Wednesday December 7 about 1,000 people voiced their outrage against the U.S. embargo on Cuba in a march to the U.S. embassy organized by the Greek-Cuban Friendship Association. Many youth participated in the rally, as well as representatives of left-wing political parties and of the major unions.

Short speeches against the crushing of the Cuban resistance and the continued occupation of Guantánamo [naval base] by the U.S. military preceded the march. Slogans like "The struggle of the peoples will smash the U.S. embargo" and "Hands off Cuba" were chanted throughout. The march ended peacefully when demonstrators presented a statement of their demands to the embassy.

Linos Pantelakis
Athens, Greece

Immigrant rights forum

A pro-immigrant rights forum, sponsored by the Human Rights Coalition of Arizona, drew about 150-200 people December 10 in Tucson. Lupe Castillo, a leader of the Arizona Border Rights Coalition, spoke of the need to protest the militarization of the border and the Latino barrios. A



Tucson city councilman outlined the terrible consequences suffered by undocumented immigrants when caught by the authorities. Tomás Martínez, a University of Arizona MEChA member, spoke of youth as the future and of the necessity of fighting daily discrimination as a Latino.

At the end [of the program] a resolution was passed to organize a protest march against Prop-

osition 187 in Arizona in February 1995.

Marta DeLeón
Tucson, Arizona

Death penalty is no joke

According to an article in the Fremont, Nebraska, *Tribune*, an internal memo from the state's Attorney General's office called a story on CBS's "48 hours" about the September 2 execution of

inmate Harold Otey "mirthful holiday programming."

The December 6 electronic memo, written by Assistant Attorney General J. Kirk Brown (who spearheads death penalty prosecutions for the state), alerts office personnel about upcoming Christmas viewing. The memo alludes to a previous story that "48 hours" did on the Otey case in 1991. The memo reads, in part,

"To compliment (sic) your family's Yuletide viewing, I have just been informed that '48 hours' will air the sequel 'Otey II: This time he dies' on the evening of December 14 as a part of the network's mirthful holiday programming."

The memo asks, "Can the Christmas party committee rent a big screen TV for our holiday viewing enjoyment?" It concludes with the following verse: "We could raise a glass of Christmas cheer to those we love and those not here."

Brown defended his memo by saying, "Frankly, I did intend it to be humorous. I don't see why anybody in this office shouldn't take significant pride in what we accomplished." He maintained that he meant no disrespect. "Humor is one of the ways I get through my days."

Bill Kalman
Des Moines, Iowa

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. When writing to the *Militant* 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.

Workers in Mexico pay for peso's fall

Austerity, privatizations, more debt promoted as 'solution' to economic crisis

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Austerity, debt, a sharp reduction in real wages, and an accelerated sell-off of the national patrimony to imperialist big business — that is the capitalists' planned "solution" to the crisis of the Mexican peso. The official scheme, worked out between the government of Mexico and representatives of U.S. and other capitalists, was announced by Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo January 3.

Three weeks after taking office Zedillo was forced to devalue the peso by 15 percent December 20. Over the next week, the value of the Mexican currency continued plummeting by more than one-third against the U.S. dollar. Finance minister Jaime Serra Puche resigned December 29.

In an attempt to stabilize the Mexican economy, the Zedillo government lined up emergency credit totaling \$18 billion from Washington, Ottawa, European governments, and 10 major U.S. banks. These credits will be used to guarantee billions of dollars in short-term debt called *tesobonos* that the government must repay to capitalist investors over the next several weeks. These government bonds have been a major source of financing for the state budget.

The plan, among other things, will hold pay raises in 1995 to 7 percent, while inflation is now predicted to run about 15 percent to 20 percent. Rising prices and interest rates will also drive even larger numbers of poor peasants and farm workers off the land and into Mexico's swelling urban slums. Already the income of the wealthiest fifth of the Mexican population is 27 times that of the poorest fifth.

The labor officialdom in Mexico, tightly bound to the country's ruling capitalist party, put up a show of dissatisfaction with the agreement, seeking to protect their flanks from the anger of workers and peasants already facing more than 15 years of declining real wages, growing poverty and joblessness, and dispossession of land and tools. After Zedillo delayed announcing the pact for 24 hours, however, union officials fell in line and signed the agreement.

The *New York Times* paraphrased one top labor official as saying "that he, too, thought it was unfair to ask workers to sacrifice again" but thought that the pact "was the only way for Mexico to overcome its current crisis." The outcome confirmed the estimate of an article in the December 31 *Financial Times* of London that "getting the [union] leaders to sign should not be much of a problem — in Mexico they are used to being told what to do."

"But the fact that real wages only began to recover in 1993 after a 10-year fall," the article continued, "may mean that keeping the unions' rank-and-file from getting restless will be much tougher than in the past."

Accelerating sale of state industries

Besides further lowering real wages, the plan calls for slashing billions of dollars in federal spending. The government has so far studiously avoided specifying where these cuts will come from, but they too will undoubtedly slash deeply into the living and working conditions of workers and peasants.

Another of big business's conditions for the "rescue plan" is the accelerated privatization of Mexican industry and infrastructure. Airports, rail lines, roads, ports, electrical plants, and telecommunications concessions are to be put up for sale to capitalists outside of Mexico. The government will give imperialist banks a freer hand to invest in Mexican financial markets, allowing them to purchase Mexican banks outright for the first time. The *Washington Post* termed this aspect of the agreement a "national garage sale."

Zedillo is even cautiously probing the



Oil workers in Mexico. The Zedillo government plans to put up for sale parts of Pemex, the state oil enterprise, viewed as a symbol of Mexico's sovereignty since the country's oil resources were nationalized from British and U.S. monopolies nearly 60 years ago.

sell-off of parts of the state oil enterprise, Pemex, regarded as a symbol of Mexico's sovereignty since the country's oil resources were taken back from pillage by British and U.S. monopolies in 1938. Former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari had floated the idea of selling up to 40 percent of some Pemex subsidiaries, but the proposal was dropped when the big, imperialist-owned petrochemical companies demanded at least 51 percent.

Adrian Lajous Vargas, the newly appointed head of Pemex, is expected to favor allowing privatization of aspects of the enterprise such as petrochemical production and gas pipelines. Lajous is credited with cutting employment at Pemex by more than half, to 106,000, over the last several years.

The Mexican stock market ended the year down 50 percent in dollar terms from 1993, with an especially sharp plunge in the last 10 days. The crash had repercussions throughout Latin America: the value of Argentine stocks fell 15.3 percent in the last week of December, and the São Paulo stock exchange in Brazil dropped 16.4 percent.

Interest rates on peso loans from Mexi-

can banks have shot up to between 35 percent and 45 percent. The exorbitant rates increase the likelihood that businesses and consumers will default on loans, threatening the banking system. On top of this, much of the banks' capital is in the Mexican stock market or long-term government securities, the value of which has also fallen heavily.

Zedillo's January 3 plan did not stop the hemorrhaging. The peso dropped further and Mexico's stock market continued its decline, signaling that big business will not let up the pressure for further concessions.

Political instability

The government has attributed the devaluation in part to renewed activity by guerrilla forces in the impoverished southern state of Chiapas. The Mexican regime has been unable to reach a settlement in the rebellion that broke out a year ago in response to devastating conditions of poor and landless peasants there.

The U.S. rulers are also concerned about the social and political impact of the crisis in the United States. An article in the January 3 *Wall Street Journal* raised the concern that the weaker Mexican economy and

stronger U.S. dollar tend "to increase the flow of Mexicans across the border to the U.S."

And while the headline of the *New York Times* editorial in its December 29 issue cautioned, "Mexico: Don't Panic Over the Peso," the editors had no plan to resolve the crisis. Their advice to the Mexican president was "to reassure poor Mexicans...they will not be put off again with promises." But the *Times* conceded that convincing foreign capitalists it is safe to invest in Mexico "will require a degree of budgetary austerity at home that could force Mr. Zedillo to defer some of his planned new social spending for awhile."

'Ongoing commitment to privatize'

The editors of *Business Week* tried to strike a cheerful note in the January 9 issue, saying, "Mexico remains a promising market for investment." The magazine pointed to the "ongoing commitment to privatize state-owned industries" and "unfettered access to the U.S. market thanks to the North American Free Trade Agreement" to justify their optimism.

Over the past decade, Mexico has been among the top recipients of foreign capital, although the bulk of the funds in recent years has poured into stocks, bonds, and privatization bonanzas rather than into the construction of new or expanded factories.

Last year Mexico was the first Third World country to be admitted to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, an international organization previously limited to the imperialist powers of North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. But the currency crisis in Mexico shows once again that especially in the depression conditions that mark world capitalism today, neither trade agreements nor bursts of big-time profiteering can lift even the most developed nations of Latin America or elsewhere in the semicolonial world into the ranks of the handful of advanced industrial countries that have dominated world trade and politics for close to a century.

Just before the devaluation of the peso, the U.S. business magazine *Forbes* ran an article entitled "Take a chance on Mexico." It advised bond-holders that investing in "Mexico or Brazil could boost your yield and reduce your volatility."

Court to hear Curtis appeal arguments

BY JOHN STUDER

DES MOINES, Iowa — A Federal Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments January 11 on the appeal by union and political activist Mark Curtis against his conviction on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

Curtis, a meatpacker in Des Moines, Iowa, was convicted in 1988 after Des Moines cops arrested and beat him. This occurred just hours after he attended a meeting to discuss the defense of 17 coworkers who had been seized in an immigration raid. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Curtis did not receive a fair trial. He was convicted even though all the physical evidence in the case demonstrated that he could not have been the attacker. He was barred from presenting evidence concerning the cops' knowledge of his political activities and their prejudice against him, shown by the fact that they called him a "Mexican lover" as they beat him. He was not allowed to inform the jury that the cop who was the central witness against him had been suspended from the police force for lying and manufacturing evidence in a previous case.

The judge in the case also refused to instruct the jury that the uncontested testimony by Curtis and another witness that Curtis was elsewhere when the attack supposedly occurred was grounds to find him not guilty. At the time the alleged victim insisted she was attacked, Curtis was in a restaurant with dozens of coworkers discussing the immigration raid and planned protests against it.

Curtis has been in prison in Iowa for more than six years. He and supporters around the world have waged a political and legal fight to win his release. The international defense campaign on his behalf, led by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, has won support from thousands of unionists and political activists. Currently the defense committee is campaigning to win 250 new endorsers and to gather new support for the fight.

Dennis Banks, the national field director of the American Indian Movement, is among those who have written to the defense committee in recent weeks. "The American Indian Movement wishes to reiterate its support for freedom for Mark Curtis," he said in his December 21 letter. "While we Native peoples have seen injus-

tices inflicted upon us for our spiritual and political beliefs, we are amazed [at] the heavy and brutal force aimed at Mark Curtis."

"Please be assured that we stand with you, Mark, and the many supporters hoping for his freedom," Banks concluded. "We will stay with you until this run is over; count us in for the duration. Just as I was freed, just as Leonard Peltier will be free, so will Mark Curtis."

For more information on the campaign to defend Mark Curtis, to endorse the case, or to send a contribution, call or write:

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