

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Cuban economist begins
U.S. tour

PAGE 7

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Palestinians speak out at Mideast conference

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"For too long the Palestinian people have gone unheard, silenced, and denied, our identity negated by political expediency," said Haidar Abdel-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation, at the opening of the Madrid conference on the Middle East.

"We refused to disappear or to accept a distorted identity. Our *intifada* is a testimony to our perseverance and the resilience waged in a just struggle to regain our rights," he added. The *intifada* is the Palestinian revolt against Israeli occupation that began in the West Bank and Gaza in 1987. A thousand Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bullets since the beginning of the *intifada*.

"As we speak thousands of our brothers and sisters are languishing in Israeli prisons and detention camps, most detained without evidence, charge or trial, many cruelly mistreated and tortured in interrogation, guilty only of seeking freedom or daring to defy occupation," Abdel-Shafi continued.

"Set them free," he demanded. One out of three Palestinian children has been killed, injured, or detained under Israeli occupation since 1987.

The Palestinian leader demanded that thousands of Palestinians who have been deported or forced into exile since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war be allowed to return. He called for halting Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. "Peace cannot be waged while Palestinian land is confiscated in myriad ways and the status of the occupied territories is being decided each day by Israeli bulldozers and barbed wire," Abdel-Shafi said.

A halt to such settlements would be a condition for Palestinian acceptance of lim-



Israelis protest against expanded settlements. Palestinians utilized conference to gain wider hearing for battle against Israeli occupation.

ited "self-rule" in the occupied territories as a transitional stage toward an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Abdel-Shafi explained that this transitional period should lead to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, the dissolution of the Israeli military administration, and the transfer of power to the Palestinian people. Palestinian leaders continued to press these demands at a meeting with the Israeli delegation November 3.

The Palestinians participated at the conference in a joint delegation with Jordan. Israeli officials had insisted that no residents

of East Jerusalem be part of the Palestinian delegation. But Tel Aviv was forced to back down in practice on its demand that no one with overt ties to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) be allowed to take part.

Most, if not all, the Palestinian delegates are supporters of the PLO. An advisory panel in Madrid was headed by Faisal Hussein, a well-known PLO supporter from East Jerusalem and Hanan Ashrawi. The PLO is recognized by the overwhelming majority of Palestinians as their leadership.

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir ac-

Continued on Page 6

Behind the NDP win in Canada elections

BY COLLEEN LEVIS
AND ROBERT SIMMS

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The New Democratic Party (NDP) won October elections in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, two of Canada's provinces hardest hit by the capitalist economic crisis.

In British Columbia the NDP, led by Michael Harcourt, defeated the ruling Social Credit Party on October 17, taking 51 of the 75 seats in the provincial legislature. Social Credit retained 7 seats out of the 41 they held before the election. Social Credit had been in power for almost 40 years, interrupted only by an NDP government in 1972-1975. The Liberal Party, which held no seats in the last election, won 17 seats this time.

The Social Credit Party crumbled in a succession of corruption scandals involving Premier William Vander Zalm, who now faces criminal charges of breach of trust, and other cabinet members.

However, the public unmasking and crisis of the ousted Socred (Social Credit) regime stemmed above all from its deep unpopularity among working people as a result of a series of major confrontations with labor, the women's rights movement, Natives, and others.

The elections in Saskatchewan took place amidst a wave of protests by farmers who are facing the worst crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The NDP won 52 percent of the vote in Saskatchewan.

Led by Roy Romanow, the NDP took 55 out of 66 seats in the October 21 contest. This left the Conservatives who had formed the previous government with 10 seats and the Liberal Party with 1.

The New Democratic Party won 40.8 percent of the popular vote in British Columbia, down 1.8 percent from the previous election. The party also governs Ontario, Canada's most populous province, where it was elected for the first time in September 1990.

The economic crisis; reductions in real wages, working conditions and democratic rights; and growing social and class polarization have produced volatility and strains on the electoral setup in capitalist politics.

In Canada, the ruling Conservative party

Continued on Page 9

White House agrees to civil rights bill

BY GREG McCARTAN

In a 95-5 vote the U.S. Senate approved a civil rights bill October 30. The measure aims to reverse portions of Supreme Court

Letters backing Curtis parole go to Iowa board

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

DES MOINES, Iowa — A delegation representing the broad support that exists for Mark Curtis's fight for justice delivered more than 400 letters to the Iowa State Board of Parole October 31 urging that Curtis be released from prison.

Curtis is a union and political activist who has served just under three years on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

The Parole Board has scheduled a November 19 hearing to consider Curtis's request for parole. The hearing will be held in Fort Madison, Iowa, where Curtis is in prison.

The letters delivered to the board represent the sentiment of tens of thousands of individuals around the world, including union leaders, government officials, church spokespeople, and many other supporters of democratic and human rights.

Among those submitting letters from the United States are: Mayor Coleman Young of

Continued on Page 10

rulings over the past two years that have dealt blows to workers' ability to fight discriminatory practices by employers.

President George Bush, who vetoed a similar but somewhat stronger bill last year, said he backs the measure. He had vowed to stand against any legislation that would strengthen affirmative action in hiring or lead to companies having to employ a certain percentage of minority or women workers, a measure known as "quotas."

Refusing to mount any real fight to defend affirmative action, the Democrats added wording into the legislation that said quotas are an "unlawful employment practice." Hoping that would be enough to win Bush's approval, Rep. Richard Gephardt said, "We have produced a bill that makes quotas illegal, and which gives white workers, Black workers, women and men, religious minorities, and the disabled access to the courts to enforce their rights."

Until October 23 though, one day before a tentative agreement was reached on the bill between the White House and Congress, administration officials were insisting that Bush would veto the legislation because it was still a "quotas bill."

Faced with a growing possibility of Congressional override of a veto, coupled with widespread disenchantment in society as a result of the lack of any recovery from the recession, Bush "gave in completely" to key aspects of the bill, the *New York Times* noted.

The sure passage of the legislation is one indication that the more liberal Congressmen feel some wind in their sails. Other measures

in the works such as a proposal to extend unemployment compensation are being watched closely to see if the momentum of the rightward shift in capitalist politics is being at least temporarily slowed by the political ramifications of the continuing malaise of the economy and its impact on working people.

What bill addresses

Several important aspects of the bill will strengthen the ability of women and minorities to fight employment discrimination.

For the first time the bill gives victims of intentional job discrimination based on sex, religion, or national origin the right to win cash damages under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Previously a judge could only order back pay and employment or reinstatement if a job was lost. Now, no limits are placed on the amount of money awarded for back pay and medical expenses. Size of payments for pain and suffering and punitive damages would be limited to \$50,000 for small businesses and to \$300,000 for employers of more than 500 people.

Prior to the legislation only victims of racial discrimination could sue and collect compensation for medical expenses and punitive damages. Such claims were allowed under a law passed in 1866 during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War.

Bush had sought to limit damage awards to \$150,000, and then only in cases of harassment.

Continued on Page 5

Launching of new book

'How Far We Slaves Have Come!'

Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder director, reported Mandela's visit to Cuba for the *Militant*, editor of *How Far We Slaves Have Come!* • **Francisco Marchante,** Cuban Consul General to Australia • **Representative of African National Congress • John Maitland,** General President, Amalgamated Mineworkers Federation of Australia

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Dumile Feni was 'model and inspiration'

The following article on the death of South African artist Dumile Feni first appeared in the October 22 edition of the *London Independent*, one of Britain's main daily newspapers. The article appeared together with a photo of the artist in front of the Pathfinder Mural in New York City.

BY PAT WILLIAMS

The progress of the South African artist Dumile was watched by his many friends, black and white, in three countries and all walks of life, with awe and respect and hope. He was a man who refused to "settle" and who pursued his artistic vision with warrior-like dedication, even though the price exacted by the world was appalling.

Dumile (that was all he was ever called) was often destitute and in terrible health; more than once he slept in the New York subway. But he never stopped working, was never bitter, and his genius for friendship meant that he was always deeply loved. Art and work were his life. He paid no heed to material circumstances, nor dues to ordinary life. So he represented for many artists, carried for them, you might say, what many had given up or been forced to yield. This was the source of his magnetism and fascination, the reason for the awe and the hope.

He was without doubt the best draughtsman South Africa produced among a huge crop of talented black artists. His superb drawings, filled with people, had an extraordinary economy of line, and reflected all the contradictions of his own life. They were tough and savage, but also tender and humorous, yet full of dignity, often shocking, but also humane; fused with pathos, and often tragedy, yet strong and loving.

His sculptures — heads and figures — were monumental. They were people scarred, but still upright: such sculptures, one feels, would not allow anyone to push them over. In the South African context, they made a powerful statement. Towards the end, as he became more and more frail, his sculpture became even more monumental. Sadly, his major works remain in clay and may be lost. He could not afford to cast them into the magnificent bronzes

they would have been. You had to step back from the work as from a man of force striding in your path.

Dumile was model and inspiration to a generation of black artists in South Africa. Before him, there was only the mannered "township" style or the Western art tradition. His individual way owed nothing to either. Yet, try as they might, young artists could not work as he did, for his was not a "style" to be adopted, so much as clothing for an inner vision produced by an astonishingly sure hand.

In his late teens asthma and TB brought Dumile 1,000 miles to a hospital in Johannesburg. Other artists saw his "doodles" and his path was set. He had had his first one-man show in Johannesburg when, harassed by the police for lack of papers, he had to leave South Africa on an exit visa, without wife and daughters. That meant he could never go home again.

Dumile was in London for 11 years from 1969, and many of them were good. He had a multitude of friends and a gallery (the Grosvenor) behind him. But by now he was diabetic as well as asthmatic, and the British climate played havoc with his health. An offer from the African Humanities Institute at UCLA [University of California in Los Angeles] took him to the United States and he later settled in New York.

Music was Dumile's inspiration, and

Charlie Mingus was among his many musical friends there. But he was interested in everything, and shared his huge store of information easily: generosity was his dominating characteristic. He was marvelous, sparky, funny company too — and everything fed into the context of his work. A friend remembers him painting day and night for about 48 hours on a few biscuits and a cup of herb tea — and then further delaying a meal because a Chinese vase in a shop window triggered a torrent of information and ideas.

Dumile survived New York for nearly 12 years, but it was a cruel environment, even though he kept in close touch with his family, and friends were constantly visiting. There was an exhibition at the United Nations and many private sales of his work; there were also alcohol and drugs, though not recently.

Throughout he was deeply committed to the African National Congress (ANC). Last year, some of his work was shown in London at the ANC's Zabalaza Festival and at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art. Dumile hoped he might come too, but lack of papers dogged him still. He died penniless, on the edge of better fortune. There had just been two exhibitions in South Africa (one opened the night before he died) and plans were advanced to bring him home, after all these years, for a further exhibition next month.

Dumile was a legend in the end: a litmus-



Militant/Sam Manuel
South African artist Dumile Feni

test for what is possible when a man remains in unadulterated thrall to his work, totally unaware of the risks he takes as he keeps faith with his reality. Each time we heard that though ill, or destitute, or in trouble, he was battling, working, surviving, we were relieved and pleased, for our sakes as well as his. He survived on the edge for 52 years.

Mhlaba Zwelidumile Mgxaji Feni (Dumile), artist, born Worcester, Cape Province, 21 May 1939, married 1968 Fazila Morris (two daughters), died New York City 14 October 1991.

Pathfinder Mural Center to open Dec. 7

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—The Pathfinder Mural Center—Dumile Feni Memorial will be inaugurated December 7, said Meryl Lynn Farber, executive director of Friends of the Pathfinder Mural.

"Dumile was one of the strongest supporters of the effort to paint the mural," Farber said in an interview. The six-story-high work of art, painted on the side of the Pathfinder building on Manhattan's west side, includes more than 150 portraits of revolutionary fighters from around the world. It features leaders whose writings and speeches are pub-

lished by Pathfinder Press including Nelson Mandela, Che Guevara, Karl Marx, Fidel Castro, and Malcolm X.

Besides painting the portrait of Nelson Mandela and speaking around the country to promote and help raise funds for the project, Dumile often brought people to see the mural, Farber noted.

The new center, adjacent to the mural, will include a pictorial history of the highlights in the project. "We'll also have a VCR and show videos of the making of the mural," Farber stated.

In the display will be photos of Dumile painting on the mural, along with photos of some of his works. At least one Dumile original, which was donated to the Pathfinder building, will be displayed.

The mural center will sell posters, postcards, photographs of the mural, and a range of Pathfinder book titles. It will also be used

by the organized teams of mural supporters who have maintained a watch on the mural since it was vandalized in December 1989 and again in March of this year.

"We need to raise \$14,000 to build the center," Farber said. A team of volunteers will do most of the work.

As part of the effort to promote the mural and finance the center, Friends of the Pathfinder Mural will soon be producing a new color poster of the full mural.

Two color posters of the portraits of Nelson Mandela and Malcolm X are still available for \$8, plus \$2.50 for shipping and handling.

To order a poster or make a contribution for the Pathfinder Mural Center—Dumile Feni Memorial, write to: Friends of the Pathfinder Mural, 191 7th Ave., New York, NY 10011.

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Mural photo display in Birmingham

BY SUE SKINNER

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—"Wow! This is just a real interesting place!" "It reminds me of the Berlin Wall." "There's Harriet Tubman!" "Who's that?" "What's Castro doing in there?" "I like that — 'The truth must not only be the truth, it must also be told!'"

These are just some of the comments from nearly 100 people who came to a photo show of the Pathfinder Mural held at the Birmingham Pathfinder Bookstore.

The focus of the Birmingham photo display was a large color blowup of the mural with a key identifying many of the figures. Enlargements of several fighters in the mural such as Lucy Parsons, Sitting Bull, Che Guevara, and Mother Jones along with sections of the mural such as

Anne Erpino's "Little People" or Phyllis Yampolsky's "Chinese Revolution" were displayed as well.

The show was one of the stops on Operation New Birmingham's October 18 Artwalk. During the two and a half hour walk, several art galleries and studios held openhouses. A city trolley periodically made stops to designated locations including the Pathfinder Bookstore.

Most of the visitors had never been to the bookstore or seen the mural. Some had previously helped defend the mural against attacks by those favoring censorship of the arts. Three people traveled two hours from Auburn where they had learned about the bookstore from a campus table displaying Pathfinder books.

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Working people face more instability and social conflict in coming years

Socialist leader speaks on need for independent working-class political action

(This is the final article in a series on independent working-class political action.)

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEWARK, New Jersey — "U.S. imperialism's war against the Iraqi people did not usher in a new world order as bourgeois commentators and politicians have argued," said James Mac Warren at an October 19 Militant Labor Forum here. "Instead, it signaled the disintegration of the old imperialist world order. It was an attempt to stave off its crumbling. What working people face in the coming years is more instability and social conflicts.

"The billionaire ruling families will drag humanity into more wars to hold together their declining system," Warren said.

"This trend toward a more brutal, oppressive, warlike face of world imperialism," he added, "is also reflected in the bipartisan shift to the right of bourgeois politics in this country."

The domestic and foreign policies of both the Democratic and Republican parties have grown almost identical as the employers and the government have carried out a 15-year offensive against the working class. "Malcolm X graphically explained that the difference between the Democrats and Republicans is like the difference between the fox and the wolf," Warren said. The two capitalist parties have only tactical differences on the pace and the way of carrying out this offensive against workers and farmers.

This highlights the need for working people to break from the framework of capitalist politics, said Warren. This framework is most evident in the union officialdom's course of tying the labor movement tightly into collaboration with the employers and their political dependence on the parties of the ruling rich.

Warren, a steelworker, is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago. He spoke at the meeting for the Socialist Workers 1991 Party-Building Fund.

Offensive since 1974-75 recession

"The shift to the right in bourgeois politics has its origins in the 1974-75 world capitalist

recession," the socialist leader said.

For 25 years, he explained, following the end of World War II, prolonged capitalist economic expansion made it possible for broad layers of working people to wrest significant concessions from the exploiters.

That quarter century, however, was also marked by the institutionalization of the class-collaborationist methods of the union officialdom and a political retreat of the labor movement. Control over job conditions, line speed, and safety was given up. When the struggle for Black rights burst forward with renewed force during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the trade union leadership refused to use the enormous potential power of the unions to aid the fight.

The result was a terrible weakening of the unions. But this fact was hidden, since workers were able to continue wresting gains from the employers despite the obstacle of the class-collaborationist policies followed by the union misleaders.

The 1974-75 recession signaled that the capitalist class no longer had the margin for the kind of economic concessions to working people that had established the framework of U.S. politics for the previous 25 years.

The offensive that followed meant take-back contracts and open union busting; foreclosures of thousands of working farmers; cutbacks in government social programs; escalating attacks on past gains of Blacks, Latinos and women; and a sustained chipping away at democratic rights.

Previously the employers "looked for the possibility of labor peace, based on the overwhelming dominance of U.S. imperialism coming out of World War II," said Warren. "When they began their offensive it meant an end to the honeymoon, to the idea that the bosses and millions of working people are one big happy family."

Workers were put on the defensive with the accelerated onslaught of the employers. The unions were further weakened by the class-collaborationist and proimperialist course of the labor officialdom. No effective fight was put up against the bosses' offensive. "With

the exception of the coal miners in the United Mine Workers union, the employers got pretty much what they wanted," Warren said.

In the mid-1980s there was a break in that pattern of routs of the industrial unions, as strikes of meat-packers, paperworkers, and others broke out. Warren pointed to the failure by Frank Lorenzo to break the Machinists union at Eastern Airlines. The airline folded in January 1991 after a 22-month strike.

"The offensive against working people, though, and the retreat of the labor movement have continued. Workers' real wages dropped by 8 percent in the 1980s. In fact our buying power has dropped so sharply that it is now at the same level as in 1961," Warren said. Life expectancy of Blacks has declined in absolute terms. Union membership has steadily dropped.

"Through the experience of the last 15 years it becomes increasingly clear that capitalist politics, practiced by both capitalist parties, is about the business of defending the interests of the capitalist class itself," Warren said.

The U.S. Senate confirmation of Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court and the Senate Intelligence Committee approval of Robert Gates's nomination to head up the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are reflections of the rightward shift in bourgeois politics. These events also reflect the growing crisis of liberalism, Warren said.

"The fact that outspoken racist David Duke is one of the three major contenders for governor of Louisiana is another example of this," the socialist leader noted. Duke, running as a Republican, won close to half a million votes and came in a close second in the primary elections for governor.

"The important thing is not that Duke has been a neo-Nazi, a former head of the Ku Klux Klan," Warren said, "but that such a racist is totally acceptable in the framework of the two parties of big business in the United States.

"Duke is a good Republican," Warren said. "He is no more racist than Bush. He attacks what they attack, like affirmative action, only he does it using demagoguery."

Duke campaigns against what he calls "the rising welfare underclass," whom he blames for all of society's ills, such as unemployment, crime, and threatening "our treasured Christian life-style." He attacks minority hiring quotas as unfair to qualified whites.

As class polarization deepens there is more potential for the radicalization of combative workers, explained Warren. At the same time rightists feel more emboldened to attack the working class.

Duke's radical right-wing appeal is designed to tap into deep frustration felt by middle-class layers and some in the working class who suffer from the deepening eco-



Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

Unionist at January 1991 protest in Washington, D.C., against war on Iraq. 'Billionaire ruling families will drag humanity into more wars to hold together their declining system,' Warren said.

Killer cop indicted in Los Angeles

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — A cop who killed two unarmed Samoans here last February has been indicted for manslaughter.

Emptying his gun and reloading, he had fired 20 shots at the victims, 13 in the back. He claimed self-defense. If convicted, he faces a maximum prison term of 13 years, and a minimum of three.

Pouvi Tualalelci, a warehouse worker, and his brother Itali, a college student, were killed in front of their home in Compton. The slaying occurred in the presence of Pouvi's two young children.

Part of the greater Los Angeles area, Compton has a sizeable Samoan population. There, and in other nearby Samoan communities, racist police abuse is widespread.

The indicted Compton cop, Alfred Skiles, had responded to a domestic dispute call. He asserts he fired after the two brothers tried to grab his gun.

This is flatly contradicted by a third brother who witnessed the killings. He charges that Skiles began shooting after the two victims had complied with his command to kneel. The prosecutor's office said several of the 20 shots were fired after they slumped to the ground.

The killing sparked strong community protest. More than 400 Samoans demonstrated at Compton City Hall demanding prosecution of the cop.

The indictment of Skiles by Los Angeles County authorities is considered newsworthy because it is the first such criminal charge against a cop in nearly ten years.

But the failure to indict him for murder has drawn added protest. Attorney Melvin Belli, who is representing the family of the victims in a federal civil rights suit, termed the killing an assassination and "the worst case I have heard of."

In a telephone interview, Fuiava Alailima, a community activist and a cousin of the slain brothers, said, "People are relieved that he was charged with anything at all." At the same time, he stressed, the charge should have been murder.

Pointing to the fact that Skiles had time to put a second clip in his gun and that a majority of the shots were in the back, he said, "There's no way his life could have been in jeopardy."

"The worst thing," he added, "is that the children saw their father kneel and get shot."

He said one son is still experiencing nightmares and the family is particularly concerned about the other. "He's become withdrawn. He doesn't want to deal with it."

Turning victims into criminals

Alailima pointed out that in an earlier case of police brutality, the cops had given up on their efforts to make the victims into the criminals.

In 1989, county sheriff's deputies in riot gear stormed into a Samoan bridal shower party in Cerritos. They dragged the guests outside, handcuffed them and threw them to the ground. People were kicked and clubbed.

To cover themselves, the cops filed charges against seven of the victims. Last spring, three of them were brought to trial. This turned out badly for the cops. As in the later Rodney King incident, a neighbor had videotaped the incident.

Cops testified that as they approached the house they were met with a barrage of rocks and bottles. But the video showed the handcuffed guests on the front lawn after the alleged barrage, with no evidence of bottles or rocks. The jury voted acquittal. Since then, Alailima said, the prosecutor has dropped the charges against the remaining four.

conomic crisis and see no alternative being presented by anyone, including the liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

Proposals on 'independent' parties

"From this point of view, it's no wonder that you begin to hear some labor officials and middle-class leaders of Black and women's rights groups saying that we shouldn't be so totally tied — lock, stock, and barrel — to the Democratic Party," Warren said.

"The leadership of these organizations has been slightly disillusioned with the experience of the last 15 years," he said. "If you begin with the idea that you can influence the direction of the capitalist parties by organizing enough votes for them, giving enough money to them, selling your soul to them, begging and pleading with them, or if you try to act, talk, and look like them, you can get frustrated when your influence on them has practically disappeared."

Warren noted that some labor officials have begun to raise the idea of taking steps toward forming "independent" political parties.

These union officials are responding to pressures from the ruling class, Warren explained. They have seen their leverage and influence in the Democratic Party wane. They are concerned not because of the beating working people are taking, but because their own social status, generous salaries, and perks flow from a healthy dues base and other forms of income that come with their positions.

Furthermore, the outlook of union officials, including those who probe the idea of a "third" political party, assumes the permanent existence of capitalism. They talk about

Continued on Page 12

After Thomas confirmation hearings Bush moves to strengthen presidential powers

BY GREG McCARTAN

In the wake of Senate confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas for the U.S. Supreme Court, President George Bush is seeking to tighten White House control over access to files compiled on nominees for the Court and other offices.

An FBI report containing allegations of sexual harassment against Thomas by former employee Anita Hill was leaked to the press as it became clear that Thomas's nomination was going to win Senate approval in early October.

The charges put Thomas's nomination in jeopardy and the Senate Judiciary Committee was compelled to hold what became widely publicized hearings on the matter. The High Court nominee flatly denied the allegations made by Hill.

On October 24 Bush urged the Senate to appoint a special counsel to investigate "who leaked what and for what reason."

Access to files compiled by the FBI when checking a nominee's background from now on can only be made available to committee chairs and those they specifically designate, Bush stated.

Most importantly, though, Bush said committee members "will read the reports immediately in the presence of the [FBI] agent and then return them. No FBI reports will stay on Capitol Hill."

It is widely assumed that aides to liberal Democratic senators on the Judiciary Committee made the files public and talked Hill into testifying in a last-ditch attempt to derail the Thomas nomination.

Thomas, who is Black, is known for his anti-working-class views. The Bush administration hopes the conservative judge will be of help in pressing the assault by the ruling rich on democratic rights and working people's standard of living.

As head of the Equal Employment Oppor-

tunity Commission (EEOC), where Hill worked as an aide, Thomas took a stand against affirmative action. In the past he came out in favor of requiring prayer in public schools. He is a firm supporter of the death penalty. What stood out the most at the hearings, and what became a slight political *faux pas* during Hill's testimony to the committee, is Thomas's past praise of an article casting abortion as immoral.

Despite these views, the fact that Thomas is Black won support for the nomination from some civil rights organizations. The nominee also downplayed his views during the confirmation hearings to help secure the court position.

In her testimony on the sexual harassment charges Hill described in detail how Thomas allegedly pestered her for dates, spoke to her about his sexual prowess, and described scenes from pornographic films to her.

Most of the hearing was centered on these statements. But the political underpinning of Hill's testimony was revealed when a junior senator asked Hill if she had had any disagreements with Thomas on other matters. Hill responded that the two had argued over *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. The committee chair quickly brought an end to that line of questioning.

Because of the widespread nature of sexual harassment of women by employers, millions watched the hearings closely. The growth in the number of women in the work force over the past four decades, especially in industrial jobs, has led to increased confidence among women to fight for their rights, leading many working people to oppose the intimidating and degrading practice of sexual harassment.

In numerous surveys 40 percent to 70 percent of women report they have encoun-



Anita Hill testifying before Senate Judiciary Committee. FBI report with allegations that Thomas had sexually harassed her was leaked to press. After the hearings Bush acted to tighten government control of files on nominees.

tered sexual harassment on the job. But the government has taken little action to curb the problem: Of the 5,694 complaints filed with the EEOC under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, only 50 were acted on.

Because the Senate hearings were conducted as a trial, supposedly to determine whether Thomas was "guilty" or not, many were drawn into taking sides with either Thomas or Hill. While it is definitely not out of the realm of possibility that Thomas did indeed abuse Hill in the manner described, her allegations were not directly corroborated by any witnesses to the events. Based on the "evidence" presented it is impossible to de-

termine who was telling the truth.

Responding to Bush's request for an inquest into who made the files public, the Senate voted 86-to-12 to appoint a special counsel charged with looking into the matter. The large bipartisan majority was secured because the investigator was given power to look into similar leaks during inquiries into the "Keating Five" scandal. In that case five Senators were linked to Charles Keating, Jr., a major contributor to the politicians' election campaigns and owner of a failing savings and loan institution. Four of the Senators were Democrats.

Bush's quick move to capitalize on the liberal Democrats' last desperate effort to deny Thomas the nomination is another small step in putting more power and authority in the hands of the president at the expense of Congress.

Bush has sought to limit Congress's authority to screen nominations and inquire into nominees' views on sensitive policies, such as what happened with Thomas on abortion rights.

One administration official told the *New York Times* that the "problem in the Thomas case was the question of confidential information being breached in some fashion, which leads you down an important path when you're thinking about reforms" of the nomination process.

Bush's drive to strengthen presidential power in this case is another example of how, as the capitalist economic crisis worsens, the ruling rich find more of a need for a strong central authority to press their attacks against working people at home and abroad.

4,000 nurses strike in Los Angeles County

Four thousand nurses struck Los Angeles County hospitals October 29, demanding a shorter workweek and higher pay.

Eight thousand laboratory technicians, clerical workers, and custodians at the hospitals also set up picket lines in a one-day show of solidarity with their coworkers.

Before the end of the day, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge William Huss issued a back-to-work order requested by the county on the grounds that the walkout imperiled the public welfare.

The nurses and the hospital workers are members of Local 660 of the Service Employees International Union. All have been without a contract since October 1.

Nurses point out that while the county budgets for 5,500 positions, 1,000 are not filled, leading to long working hours. In addition, nurses at private hospitals make 9 percent to 14 percent more than those at the county facilities.

The union is demanding an immediate 10 percent wage hike and 7 percent next year. A reduction in health insurance premiums for the nurses is also being sought.

After debating the judge's order the nurses voted to return to work.

Hundreds attend California fund meetings

BY ESTELLE DeBATES

Meetings hosted by supporters of the Socialist Workers 1991 Party-Building Fund were held in nine cities across the country on October 26 and 27. More than \$8,600 was collected at these events — a big boost to the \$150,000 fund, which ends December 15. In addition, supporters report winning \$5,000 in new pledges or raises in previous pledges.

Hundreds of fighters took part in the meetings, which featured leaders of the Socialist Workers Party addressing world politics and the prospects for working people to fight for a way forward.

More than 100 students, workers, professors, and longtime Cuba solidarity activists turned out at the San Francisco meeting to hear Mary-Alice Waters. The meeting, part of the regular Militant Labor Forum series, was held October 27 at the Service Employees International Union hall in downtown San Francisco.

Waters, who is editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, was on a two-day

continued the next morning and evening when Waters spoke to some 150 students in classes at two community colleges in Oakland.

Students asked about the economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and its impact on Cuba; whether the Cuban government's decision to encourage tourism as a means to obtain hard currency would undermine the revolution; what kind of leadership would the revolution have

when President Fidel Castro dies; why the Cuban government sent volunteer troops to Angola in 1975 to fight the South African army; why Washington maintains a trade embargo against Cuba; and how much truth is there to U.S.-government inspired charges of widespread human rights violations in Cuba.

Waters was also the featured speaker at the October 26 Party-Building Fund meeting in Los Angeles, which drew well over 100 participants from as far as Arizona, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. They came from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, ranging from activists in Cuba solidarity organizations to those who are only beginning to learn about the revolution.

Among those in the audience were students from several colleges, immigrants from a number of countries in Latin America, garment workers, and others.

Waters explained in some detail the unprecedented problems and opportunities now confronting the Cuban revolution. The atmosphere was one in which members of the audience felt free to raise any questions, and a frank discussion ensued.

Many reached into their pockets to support the Party-Building Fund in order to back the Socialist Workers Party's efforts to get out the truth about Cuba. New pledges to the fund totaled \$1,890, and several thousand dollars from earlier pledges were collected.

With this boost, the fund is closer to being on schedule. In the past two weeks, the fund has advanced from being 13 percent behind schedule to 5 percent behind. Supporters are now well within striking distance of getting the fund on schedule over the next week, which will help ensure collecting in full the \$160,570 in pledges by December 15.

Margaret Jayko in San Francisco and Nelson Blackstock in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

Socialist Workers 1991 Party-Building Fund			
Area	Goal	Paid	% of Total
St. Louis	5,500	4,385	80%
Greensboro*	2,300	1,765	77%
Atlanta	5,500	4,158	76%
Baltimore	3,000	2,181	73%
Detroit	8,500	6,040	71%
Seattle	5,000	3,551	71%
San Francisco	10,000	6,905	69%
New York	16,300	10,601	65%
Boston*	5,500	3,500	64%
Omaha	3,000	1,900	63%
Newark	9,700	5,980	62%
Twin Cities	8,300	4,846	58%
Pittsburgh	5,500	3,210	58%
Houston	4,800	2,570	54%
Chicago	8,000	4,040	50%
Miami	2,400	1,167	49%
San Diego	2,000	890	44%
Los Angeles	15,000	6,590	44%
Washington, D.C.	6,000	2,605	43%
Salt Lake City	6,500	2,295	35%
Des Moines	3,525	1,205	34%
Philadelphia	5,000	1,645	33%
Birmingham*	6,500	2,089	32%
Cleveland	3,000	805	27%
Morgantown	2,800	645	23%
Other U.S.	4,815	4,578	95%
International	2,130	440	21%
Total	160,570	90,589	60%
Should be	97,058	65%	

*Indicates raised goal

1991 Party-Building Fund

Collected: **\$90,589** Goal: **\$150,000**



speaking tour in the San Francisco Bay area. She recently returned from a three-week reporting trip to Cuba. Waters has been there several times, covering the revolution for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Jim White, Socialist Workers Party candidate for San Francisco mayor in the November 5 elections, chaired the event and welcomed Waters to the Bay Area. More than \$1,500 in new fund pledges to the Party-Building Fund were made at the meeting. This brings the total pledged by fund supporters in Northern California to more than \$12,000, well over the original goal of \$10,000. Some \$1,500 of the pledges were collected at the meeting.

A wide-ranging discussion ensued after Waters' presentation, a discussion which con-

White House agrees to civil rights bill

Continued from front page

The new civil rights legislation also reversed much of the 1989 Supreme Court ruling in *Wards Cove Packing v. Antonio*.

The case had to do with employment practices that are not discriminatory on the surface but have the result of disproportionately keeping women or minorities out of the work force. Strength tests or the requirement for a high school diploma are two frequently cited practices on this score.

The Court ruled that the complainant had the burden of proving the employer had no business necessity for the practice, a requirement that put stringent limits on those wishing to file discrimination cases. The new legislation puts the burden on the employer to explain why the practice is necessary for the job in question.

The bill reverses another 1989 Court decision that enabled the reopening of a consent decree in Birmingham, Alabama. The decree provided for the hiring of more Black fire fighters. The new law bars such reopening of old cases if the new plaintiffs — in the

Birmingham case a group of fire fighters who are white — knew or should have known of the consent decree.

Another Court decision nullified by the bill is a ruling that challenges to discriminatory practices had to be made soon after the procedures began. Now complaints can be filed when the effects of the practices become clear.

Why it is a 'quotas' bill

The Bush administration argued against the bill because it understands that the kind of discrimination inherent in the capitalist economic system means racist and sexist practices on the part of employers will continue.

The issue is an important one for the labor movement because the billionaire ruling families profit from the oppression of women, Blacks, and other minorities. They not only reap higher profits out of the lower wages paid to these sections of the working class; but divisions fostered by the rulers within the working class — between men and women, Blacks and whites, and immigrant and native born — sap the ability of all workers to wage common struggles in their own interests.

By taking up the fight for affirmative action and against all forms of discrimination the trade unions can help break down the divisions within the work force, opening up greater possibilities to unite all working people. As the economic crisis worsens, the employers will continue their assault on the labor movement, targeting especially the rights and gains won in struggle.

In 1989, the wealthiest one-fifth of the population received 46.8 percent of all income, up from 43 percent in 1969. The poorest one-fifth received just 3.8 percent, down from 4.1 percent in 1969.

This emphasizes the widening gap between those who benefit from and control the wealth and working people who produce it. Within this framework one statistic after another shows the character of discrimination in every aspect of economic, social, and political life.

Women's hourly wages stand on average at 78 percent of men's. Annual earnings of women are relatively lower — 68 percent of men's in 1989. While still qualitatively lower, this marks a big step forward from the 1960s and 1970s when the average stood at 59 cents earned by women for every dollar earned by men.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics charts reveal in part why this gap still exists: women are more represented in service, teaching, and low-paid industrial jobs. Having broken into previously all-male job trusts, women are still



Fire fighters in Chicago. Women today earn 78 cents to every dollar men make.

Socialist urges yes vote on abortion rights initiative

BY SHERRIE LOVE

A measure declaring abortion legal is among several ballot initiatives to be voted on in the state of Washington November 5. Two of these proposed measures have become big issues of debate in recent months. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer's* headline November 4 summarized it as a "Life and Death Election".

Initiative 119 is sponsored by Washington Citizens for Death with Dignity. It would allow those who are terminally ill to legally end their lives.

Initiative 120 is a measure defending a woman's right to choose abortion. If passed, it will make abortion legal under state law, based on current federal standards contained in the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision.

The initiative states, "The sovereign people hereby declare that every individual possesses a fundamental right of privacy with respect to personal reproductive decisions." It includes sections on the right of women to choose or refuse birth control and prohibits the state from interfering with a woman's right to choose abortion.

Support for Initiative 120 is organized by the YES on 120 Campaign. This is a state-wide effort backed by more than 60 organizations. Fact sheets distributed by the group point out the broad support of the right to abortion in the state of Washington. In 1970, three years before the *Roe v. Wade* decision, a state law legalizing abortion was passed. Supporters of Initiative 120 have set up literature tables on campus to win support among students.

In September antiabortion forces organized a march of 10,000 in Seattle, campaigning for a "no" vote on the initiative.

Kathy Wheeler, Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council, reported, "In the past several weeks there has been much greater interest in discussing abortion rights. There are signs in front yards and ads on television both for and against Initiative 120."

Wheeler is asking supporters of her campaign to vote "yes" on the initiative. She explained, "The fight for women's equality begins with the fight for safe and legal abortion. A big vote for this initiative will show the widespread sentiment we know is there supporting a woman's right to choose." Wheeler added, "We must not allow the antiabortion mobilizations in Wichita and across the country to go unanswered. The best way for us to defend our rights is to mobilize our forces in the streets."

Wheeler is a railworker and member of the United Transportation Union. In the course of her campaign she has spoken in defense of abortion rights at meetings in Seattle and in Vancouver, Canada. She also spoke to students at Portland State University.

"My campaign aims to unite working people to fight together in our own interests," said Wheeler. Her campaign also urges people to vote for Initiative 119.

Michigan students join action to defend abortion rights

BY JULIETTE MONTAUK

WARREN, Michigan — "We will march, we will fight, abortion is a woman's right," chanted students from the University of Michigan. Some 70 students joined 100 participants in an early morning action to defend clinics here from Operation Rescue blockades October 19.

Operation Rescue, a national right-wing group that is opposed to a woman's right to choose abortion, announced a few months ago it would "make Michigan safe for the unborn." It has targeted a number of cities around the country in its campaign.

The rightists targeted the Planned Parenthood clinic here, blocking access by mobilizing in front of the building and parking one of their vans across the back door.

Students from Ann Arbor, who were the first pro-choice activists to arrive, pushed the van away from the back door. They kept the entrance clear for the rest of the morning.

The antiabortion activists organized prayers and speeches during the operation. Lynn Mills, leader of Operation Rescue in Michigan, said they planned further actions in Michigan. Mills said the rightists were encouraged by their successes in Wichita, Kansas, and by the recent appointment of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. She also explained that the local police had helped them in their cause that day by blocking the entrances to the clinic's front drive-ways with their squad cars.

Although the clinic filed a complaint

against the rightists blocking the clinic entrance, it took police two hours to arrest or threaten to arrest them. Of the 100 people involved in the blockade, only 10 were arrested.

Carol King, executive director of the Michigan Abortion Rights Action League, explained in an interview that, since the Operation Rescue-organized mobilizations in Wichita last July, her office has received 400 calls asking how to help defend area clinics. King's opinion was that the anti-choice actions would "fizzle away after time. They will eventually run out of steam."

"We have to get more people out than they do," a member of the National Organization for Women said. "That's the only way we can stop them."

Karen, from Wayne State University in Detroit, said she found out about the day's events from a leaflet posted at her campus. "I have felt for a long time that there needed to be more action to defend abortion rights. If we don't take action then the other side will continue to win," she said.

After the forces blocking the clinic had been dispersed, police moved in to clear the pro-choice activists away from the clinic. Unlike the antiabortion forces, the clinic supporters had been invited to be on the property. Police gave them only 30 seconds to clear out or face arrest. Several clinic supporters were arrested less than a minute after the police warning.

Unemployment among Blacks has remained at levels double that of whites. While income for all Black families stood at 61 percent of that of whites in 1969, it dropped

to 56 percent in 1989.

Given these realities any measures that reinforce affirmative action, strengthen workers' ability to fight discrimination and harassment on the job, or make employers think twice about carrying out racist or sexist policies do indeed have a quotas content to them.

As the employers drive to make working people pay for the economic crisis of their system they will attempt to deepen and politically justify their discriminatory divide-and-rule practices.

Discriminatory practices may make it seem that the bosses want to push women out of the work force and industrial jobs in particular. But the continued rise in the number of women who hold full-time jobs shows that the employers instead attempt to make women accept lower wages and poorer working conditions through intimidation or by gaining acceptance of the premise that they are really just "part-time" workers holding down a job for a while.

By championing measures that weaken the employers' and their government's ability to perpetuate discrimination in hiring, promotions, or layoffs the labor movement will strengthen its capacity to fight on all fronts against the anti-working-class offensive.

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Let's push 'Militant' sales campaign over top!

BY RONI McCANN

At 10 a.m. on November 11 the final results in the drive to win thousands of new readers to the socialist press will be tallied for the *Militant*. Until then supporters internationally are campaigning to make every goal and end the nine-week effort with a resounding victory.

"We made them! We passed all of our goals!" said a *Militant* supporter in Stockholm. As readers can see from the scoreboard below, supporters in 6 cities in the United States, as well as in Canada, Sweden, and France, have achieved 100 percent of their *Militant* goal. Worldwide the campaign is on target in 25 cities — the highest number yet.

By mounting a big effort to circulate the press and win as many new subscribers as possible by the final deadline supporters can push the sales drive over the top!

In many cities this means stepping up sales of the press to coworkers in industrial trade unions; making a special effort to get the *New International* magazine into the hands of political-minded workers and young people; and reaching out in working-class communities where residents speak Spanish and French with *Perspectiva Mundial* and *L'internationaliste*.

Here are some highlights of these efforts so far:

Stockholm: Catarina Tirsén reports that

the issue of the *Militant* with coverage on the attacks on immigrant workers in Germany sparked interest among workers in Sweden where bombings were carried out against refugees in the cities of Göteborg and Oskarshamn. Nine subscriptions to the paper were sold door-to-door in working-class communities near the big Saab-Scania auto plant.

Montreal: "Supporters here sold 19 issues of the *New International* and *Nouvelle Internationale* in one week," writes Michel Prairie. "At demonstrations protesting the coup in Haiti 10 participants picked up copies of the magazine."

Overall sales of *New International* — published in three languages — have shot up, with supporters selling 458 copies in the last two weeks.

Houston: "Last week we had a hard time finding Houston on the scoreboard," writes a supporter from Houston. "That's because we all started looking at the bottom! We have now surpassed our *Militant* goal and the next few days we will be concentrating on sales in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods." Jerry Freiwrth in Houston reports that members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) there have sold 8 *Militant* subscriptions to coworkers and members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) have sold 10.

"The David Duke campaign in Louisiana has generated a big discussion there and 13 people have bought subscriptions from sales teams to that state," said Freiwrth. "At a Lafayette campus Duke's last two campaign events were met with protests, with opponents outnumbering his supporters. At one meeting he started by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag but the crowd started laughing when he got to the part about 'liberty and justice for all' making it impossible for Duke to continue."

Newark: "We've made special efforts to sell copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*," writes Cindy Jaquith. "Two postal workers each bought all 8 issues of the magazine on the job from *Militant* supporter Rich Ariza. Both workers were especially interested in the analysis on the farm question." Supporters in Newark had sold 61 copies of their goal of 70 as of November 4.

Philadelphia: "After falling behind in our sales drive here, last week was an example to all of us about what we are capable of with organization and persistence," writes supporter Kathy Mickells. "Last Saturday was excellent, we sold 10 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 3 to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 4 copies of *New International*. During the week 3 unionists subscribed on the job and an activist in the African National Congress bought 2 copies of *New International*."

"We kicked into high gear and doubled what we sold during the last target sales



Militant/Alfredo Rico

San Francisco abortion rights action

week! We plan to keep up the momentum for the final days of the drive so we can make all of our goals."

Sales to unionists

Members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) have achieved 100 percent of their goal. And members of the United Auto Workers (UAW), United Steelworkers of America (USWA), International Associa-

Continued on Page 12

Areas	The <i>Militant</i>			Perspectiva Mundial		New Int'l*		L'inter*		Total	
	Goal	Total Sold	% Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
UNITED STATES											
Los Angeles *	170	180	106%	100	87	107	116	3	0	380	383
Washington, DC	100	104	104%	18	21	55	52	2	5	175	182
Pittsburgh	75	76	101%	3	4	30	17	2	1	110	98
Houston	75	76	101%	20	12	30	15	2	0	127	103
Chicago	163	165	101%	40	27	70	43	2	1	275	236
Portland	15	15	100%	0	0	10	7	0	0	25	22
Greensboro, NC	55	54	98%	10	5	14	8	1	1	80	68
Seattle *	95	93	98%	35	34	27	24	3	1	160	152
Baltimore	85	82	96%	12	5	40	40	3	1	140	128
Morgantown, WV *	90	86	96%	3	2	30	28	2	4	125	120
Boston *	125	119	95%	40	31	53	30	7	9	225	189
Detroit *	122	115	94%	10	6	30	31	2	1	164	153
Miami *	100	93	93%	30	24	44	34	5	10	179	161
Twin Cities, Minn. *	165	152	92%	18	14	55	42	2	0	240	208
San Francisco	160	147	92%	65	40	72	64	3	4	300	255
New York *	250	228	91%	100	82	110	80	15	16	475	406
Salt Lake City *	170	154	91%	24	17	54	29	2	1	250	201
Newark, NJ *	150	135	90%	50	35	70	46	5	6	275	222
Philadelphia *	70	63	90%	20	14	35	25	2	1	127	103
Birmingham, Ala.	110	98	89%	5	3	43	35	2	0	160	136
Atlanta *	121	100	83%	12	8	56	10	2	0	191	118
Cleveland	85	70	82%	10	5	25	16	2	1	122	92
St. Louis	115	94	82%	5	1	30	11	2	0	152	106
Omaha, Neb.	86	69	80%	12	10	25	10	2	1	125	90
Wichita	10	8	80%	0	1	0	0	0	0	10	9
Cincinnati	17	11	65%	2	0	6	2	0	0	25	13
Des Moines, Iowa *	136	84	62%	25	16	40	6	2	0	203	106
Anamosa	10	6	60%	2	0	2	0	0	0	14	6
Denver	6	3	50%	3	0	2	0	0	0	11	3
Louisville	6	2	33%	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2
New Haven, Conn.	18	5	28%	2	1	5	0	0	0	25	6
National teams	25	21	84%	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	21
U.S. TOTAL	2,955	2,687	91%	676	505	1,170	821	75	64	4,876	4,077
AUSTRALIA *	27	17	63%	7	7	15	14	1	0	50	38
BELGIUM	4	1	25%	1	0	7	4	10	3	22	8
BRITAIN											
Manchester	60	48	80%	3	3	40	15	2	0	105	66
London	100	76	76%	7	9	70	50	3	3	180	138
Sheffield	60	20	33%	3	3	40	5	2	0	105	28
Other Britain	10	3	30%	0	2	0	0	0	0	10	5
BRITAIN TOTAL	230	147	64%	13	17	150	70	7	3	400	237
CANADA											
Vancouver	80	83	104%	15	14	30	29	5	4	130	130
Montreal *	65	65	100%	20	16	50	53	30	39	165	173
Toronto *	80	79	99%	20	17	45	43	5	5	150	144
CANADA TOTAL	225	227	101%	55	47	125	125	40	48	445	447
FRANCE *	5	6	120%	5	3	20	20	15	16	45	45
ICELAND	20	7	35%	0	1	4	1	0	0	24	9
MEXICO	0	1	0%	15	14	5	4	0	0	20	19
NEW ZEALAND											
Christchurch	53	51	96%	2	0	12	7	1	0	68	58
Auckland	75	63	84%	9	6	25	15	1	0	110	84
Wellington	50	32	64%	3	0	14	10	1	0	68	42
Other New Zealand	4	8	200%	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8
N. Z. TOTAL	182	154	85%	14	6	51	32	3	0	250	192
PUERTO RICO *	2	0	0%	6	6	8	8	0	0	16	14
SWEDEN	45	52	116%	20	34	15	22	3	4	83	112
TOTAL	3,695	3,299	90%	812	640	1,570	1,121	154	138	6,231	5,198
SHOULD BE		3,294	90%		720		1,440		126		5,580
DRIVE GOALS	3,660			800		1,600		140		6,200	

* Raised goals.
** Single copies of *New International*, *Nueva Internacional*, and *Nouvelle Internationale*; Subscriptions to *L'internationaliste*

Palestinians speak at meeting

Continued from front page

cused the Palestinians of terrorism and rejected giving up control of the occupied territories. "It will be regrettable if the talks focus primarily and exclusively on territory. It is the quickest way to an impasse," he said in his opening remarks to the conference.

Shamir attempted to blame the Palestinian delegation for the October 28 killing of two Israelis, when a bus carrying Jewish settlers to a rally was ambushed. Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinians in Madrid, denounced the attack on the Israeli bus.

On the eve of the conference a sharp and public row broke out between the Israeli and U.S. governments over the fact that the Palestinians were given equal time with other delegations at the conference. "They are actually letting the Palestinians become a separate delegation," complained Eliahu Ben-Elissar, one of the Israeli delegates.

As the conference unfolded the Israeli army bombed towns in southern Lebanon allegedly in retaliation for attacks on Israeli soldiers. By November 3 the Israelis were forced to back off from this massive shelling under pressure from Washington. This was another sign of the divergence of foreign policy interests between the U.S. and Israeli rulers.

A rally of 30,000 Israelis in Tel Aviv October 26 demanded that the Shamir government stay in the talks and consider ceding territory to the Palestinians. "Shamir may not be happy about going to Madrid but we are," said A.B. Yehoshua, an Israeli novelist, at the rally.

Right-wing Israelis organized a similar size of counterdemonstration in the same square two days later. Many in the crowd were settlers, some with submachine guns strapped to their shoulders. "Death to the Arabs," a section of the demonstrators shouted.

The political polarization in Israel reflected in these actions is developing in the midst of deepening economic problems. A housing crisis is unfolding while unemployment has reached 11 percent and inflation 22 percent. According to government officials major cutbacks in education and health programs are ahead.

Palestinians in the occupied territories have not unanimously supported the course charted by Hussein, Ashrawi, and other PLO leaders toward the conference in Madrid.

Small demonstrations called by Palestinian groups that opposed participation at the conference have occurred in the West Bank and Gaza. A conference in Tehran, sanctioned by the Iranian government and involving groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command,

termed participation at the Madrid meeting "treason to the aspirations of the Palestinian people."

Washington organized the Madrid meeting hoping to capitalize on its gains from a strengthened alliance with the bourgeois regimes of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria during its war against the Iraqi people.

Washington's interests have diverged from Tel Aviv as the U.S. alliance with the Arab regimes has developed over recent years. But this shift has not brought the U.S. rulers closer to a "solution" to the Palestinian question. Their biggest political obstacle is the irrepressible fight of the Palestinian people for self-determination.

Selling the socialist press to unionists

Union	Militant*		New Int'l	
	% Sold	(Goal)	Sold	(Goal)
UNITED STATES				
ACTWU	71%	34	24	10
IAM	95%	127	121	44
ILGWU	76%	25	19	8
IUE	58%	65	38	18
OCAW	74%	38	28	6
UAW	90%	82	74	28
UFCW	84%	100	84	25
UMWA	100%	25	25	9
USWA	99%	91	90	25
UTU	103%	105	108	45
TOTAL SHOULD BE	88%	692	611	237
AUSTRALIA	90%	7	2	0
MFTU	29%	7	2	3
SHOULD BE	90%	6	6	0
BRITAIN				
AEU	20%	10	2	6
NUM	36%	14	5	9
RMT	38%	26	10	13
TGWU	35%	20	7	8
TOTAL SHOULD BE	34%	70	24	36
CANADA	90%	692	611	237
ACTWU	14%	7	1	2
CAW	90%	10	9	3
IAM	60%	10	6	4
USWA	63%	16	10	8
TOTAL SHOULD BE	60%	43	26	17
NEW ZEALAND	90%	692	611	237
NZEU	17%	6	1	1
NZMWU	56%	9	5	3
FTWU	40%	5	2	1
UFCW	71%	7	5	2
TOTAL SHOULD BE	48%	27	13	7
SWEDEN	90%	692	611	237
FOOD WORKERS	17%	6	1	3
METAL	89%	9	8	3
TOTAL SHOULD BE	60%	15	9	6
SHOULD BE	90%	14	14	5

* Also includes subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and *L'internationaliste*.

'There is a hunger to learn about Cuba'

Interview with Cuban economist Carlos Tablada by 'Juventud Rebelde'

The following are excerpts from an interview with Carlos Tablada, a Cuban economist at the University of Havana who is currently on a one-month speaking tour of colleges and universities throughout the United States. The interview appeared in the June 9 issue of the Cuban weekly *Juventud Rebelde*. The paper notes that in recent years Tablada has toured 19 countries in Latin America, Europe, and North America, where he has spoken at conferences and meetings about the political contributions of Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara to the struggle for socialism in Cuba and worldwide.

Tablada is the author of the book *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*.

Carlos Tablada. There is truly a great hunger for learning about Cuba throughout the world. The subject of Che always comes up at all the conferences [where I speak] but a variety of questions are raised, from Cuban-U.S. relations to the question of low-intensity conflicts, the economy of Latin America, the crumbling of the socialist experience in the East and its repercussions in the Third World, particularly Latin America and Cuba.

Juventud Rebelde. Regarding the fall of the socialist experience in Eastern Europe, we have seen the faith of the pragmatists spread around the world, of those who think it is not worth fighting for a superior human ideal, that Che's aspiration that it was possible to create a new man is not valid today, that all his ideas have lost their relevance.

Tablada. No, no, just the opposite. When Che predicted at Punta del Este [a 1961 conference in Uruguay] that the Alliance for Progress would fail and he explained that with capitalism and a market economy Latin America would have no future, the World Bank and many regional organizations denied that assertion. They were sure that the only thing this subcontinent needed was well-managed capitalism.

Development during the 60s and 70s was based on these concepts, which led to its ultimate expression — the neoliberalism of the 80s. That was the same decade that today all these international organizations call the lost decade, because it left a toll of 250 million people living in extreme poverty, 60 percent of the region's population.

Take Argentina, which was the seventh-leading country in the world in the 1920s. There the middle class has disappeared and the country is on the brink of a social explosion. Like Chile. I was also in Chile, where a woman working as a grape picker earns 522 pesos a day and a one-pound loaf of bread costs more than 200 pesos. That is happening in the countries that were the image of prosperity in the Americas at the beginning of the 20th century. I won't speak of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, or even Mexico or Venezuela.

MEETINGS FOR CARLOS TABLADA

WASHINGTON, D.C.

University of Maryland—College Park Mon., Nov. 11, 2 p.m. Tydings Hall, Rm. 1114. Sponsors: Latin American Studies Dept., International Student Council.

Georgetown University

Mon., Nov. 11, 7 p.m. Intercultural Center, Rm. 115. Sponsor: Georgetown Lecture Fund.

LOS ANGELES

California State University Thurs. Nov. 14, 4:30 p.m. Student Union, Alhambra Rm.

Glendale Community College

Fri. Nov. 15, 9 a.m. Campus Center Lounge. Sponsor: Latin American Studies Dept.

Los Angeles City College

Fri., Nov. 15, 7 p.m. 855 N Vermont, Student Center, Klausen Hall. Sponsors: Student Organization of Latinos, Department of English. For more information call Dr. Carlos Ugalde, (818) 240-1000 ext. 563.

I witnessed these realities; nobody told me about them. I went down into the depths of the Lota mine in Chile and heard a 16-year-old miner tell me, "Cuba must remain, because it represents the only dignity we have left; the day you [Cubans] disappear, not even the boss will let someone like you come visit us." It's incredible the number of shantytowns you see today in Chile and Venezuela and Mexico.



Tony Savino

Child in Haiti. Capitalism has only created more poverty in the world, confirming the relevance of Che Guevara's ideas.

Juventud Rebelde. Here too it's hard, there are serious difficulties.

Tablada. Look, even with the "Special Period" it is going through, Cuba is a thousand light-years ahead of any other country in the Americas. While here we are starting to ride bicycles and we distribute 80 grams of bread per person on an equal basis, the vast majority of people there see bread in the shop window but can't afford it; they have to dream about having a bicycle.

In other words, the capitalist recipes for Latin America have only left more poverty. Every time these truths are confirmed, we must say once again that Che Guevara was proven right. Why do you think so many universities extend invitations to me?

Juventud Rebelde. But you didn't write your book with the Americas in mind.

Tablada. The truth is I didn't. I thought about its usefulness for Cuba and the rest of the socialist world. But liberation theology priests, workers, miners, college students and professors, all showed me that its significance is much broader.

Juventud Rebelde. That makes sense, I can understand that. But in western Europe, in the United States, what would they accept about those ideas? What do they need them for? They don't have the problems of Latin America or the rest of the Third World. In fact, they are the problem.

Tablada. There are many reasons. First, Che is not associated with the socialist experience that failed in the East. What's more, together with Fidel, he was its first critic. Nor is he linked to the corrupted practices of the old left. It is becoming understood that he was not a *foquista* [supporter of a strategy for revolution based on an isolated guerrilla band] like some would have had us believe. They are discovering that his ideas encompass economics, politics, sociology, ethics, everyday morals. And his perspective is new, an incredibly new perspective in the middle of the 20th century.

This perspective is backed in practice by a revolution like the Cuban revolution, which has resisted 32 years of a fierce embargo with an intelligent, calm, and wise vanguard that has not let itself be provoked and has only

engaged in battles that strengthen us. With the recent experience of Iraq and the Persian Gulf war, the wisdom shown by the leadership in Cuba is an example.

In Europe in particular, the euphoria after the crumbling of the Berlin wall has passed and it is being confirmed that the solution did not lie in changing the system. Meanwhile, certain supposed models like the Swedish system are revealing incredible cracks with their dehumanization. I just saw that there were strong public protests over there because of the long lines that patients have to wait in to get an operation for a kidney stone. In Britain you have to wait a year and a half for the same thing, even though ordinary citizens pay 26 percent of their wages in social taxes. More and more hospitals are closing.

In the United States, Reaganomics turned the world's main creditor into the main debtor country. There is a huge crisis in the urban infrastructure. I was in 32 cities and traveled between them by plane or highway, and those highways have more potholes than Havana. There is a growing polarization of wealth and poverty that is offensive, and the middle classes are disappearing.

All this is creating a search for an alternative, a new thinking, and it is Che that offers this new thinking. It's true that it is not a finished thinking, but perhaps that is its greatest virtue, because that keeps it from becoming a dogma. He left many questions open, but even under the conditions of guerrilla warfare in Bolivia he didn't stop studying.

Already in the 60s Che was warning that the socialist experience of Eastern Europe could lead to a particular socialism but not the one foreseen by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. He even spoke of the possibility of a return to capitalism there. In this regard too he remains extremely relevant.

Cuban economist begins U.S. speaking tour

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Cuban economist Carlos Tablada has begun a one-month speaking tour of more than 20 universities around the United States. His tour began November 4 with a lecture at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Tablada is speaking about the Cuban revolution today and the significance of the ideas of Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban revolution in the 1960s and one of the foremost Marxists of this century.

Tablada teaches at the University of Havana and is the author of the book *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, published in the United States by Pathfinder.

The Faculty Ad Hoc Committee for the Tablada Tour is the national coordinator. It is made up of several prominent academic figures at the New School for Social Research in New York. In each city where he is speaking, his visit is being coordinated by a broad range of professors and university institutions.

After Kalamazoo, Tablada will speak at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana November 6. Professors from four departments on campus are local coordinators of the tour, which is also sponsored by La Casa Cultural Latina and La Raza Movement.

In the Washington, D.C., area meetings for Tablada have been organized at four campuses. He will speak at American University November 7 at the invitation of the Graduate Students Union in the Department of Economics and the Graduate Students Union in the Department of International Service. The next day he will address a meeting at Howard University, which has been organized by four departments and a student organization. On November 11 Tablada will speak at the University of Maryland—College Park and Georgetown University.

"There is a lot of interest in this tour at various universities around Los Angeles," said Dr. Carlos Ugalde, who teaches Chicano and Latin American studies at Glendale Community College and is one of the local tour coordinators. He explained that Tablada has been invited to speak at several colleges

during his November 13–16 visit to that area. These include the University of California in Riverside, the University of California in Los Angeles, California State University, Glendale Community College, and Los Angeles City College.

"At each one of these campuses, there are seven or eight professors who are helping build Tablada's tour in some way," Ugalde added.

"There is interest in Cuba now because of the current events in the world," he said. "People have all kinds of different opinions. So I think this will be an important opportunity to have a discussion and a dialogue on Cuba. Understanding the facts about Cuba, its political and economic situation, is necessary to win people to support Cuba's sov-

ereignty and oppose the U.S. embargo against that country."

After Los Angeles, Tablada will go to Seattle and Olympia, Washington, (November 18); New Paltz and Albany, New York, (November 20); New York City (November 21–22); Newark, New Jersey, (November 21); Philadelphia (November 23–25); Newark, Delaware (November 26); and New Haven and Hartford, Connecticut, (December 2).

For more information about Carlos Tablada's tour, contact the Faculty Ad Hoc Committee for the Tablada Tour, c/o Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research, 64 University Pl., 4th fl., New York, NY 10003; tel: (212) 229-5312.

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1,000s of farmers rally across Canada to confront crisis

BY LYNDA LITTLE

REGINA, Saskatchewan—"Just look around you. Look at the support. Farmers are not down, we're alive and kicking and we are going to fight to the last," Warren Conner told 7,500 angry farmers and supporters who packed the Agridome here October 24.

The rally was organized by Concerned Farmers of Saskatchewan to find solutions to the crisis facing farmers in Canada. It brought together busloads of farmers from across Saskatchewan and many from Alberta and Manitoba. The three prairie provinces form the bread basket of Canada.

This was the largest protest so far in a series of rallies, forums, and marches organized by Concerned Farmers in towns and cities across the prairie provinces and Ontario. Just two days earlier 1,600 farmers met in Willingdon, Alberta, to discuss the farm crisis and demand special assistance from the Alberta provincial government for the drought-stricken area of Northeast Alberta.

Participants in the events included exploited family farmers and operators of larger, more secure farms, as well as small business people from rural communities that are affected by the farm crisis.

Top grade wheat sells for \$2 a bushel at the farm gate, the same as 20 years ago. But as Conner explained, the cost of producing wheat has increased seven times in 20 years. "Simply put, we would need \$14 a bushel to keep pace with inflation," he said.

The main demand of the Concerned Farm-

ers movement is for an immediate cash grant from the federal government of \$30 a seeded acre for their 1990-91 crop to make up for shortfalls. It is estimated that this would cost \$1.3 billion.

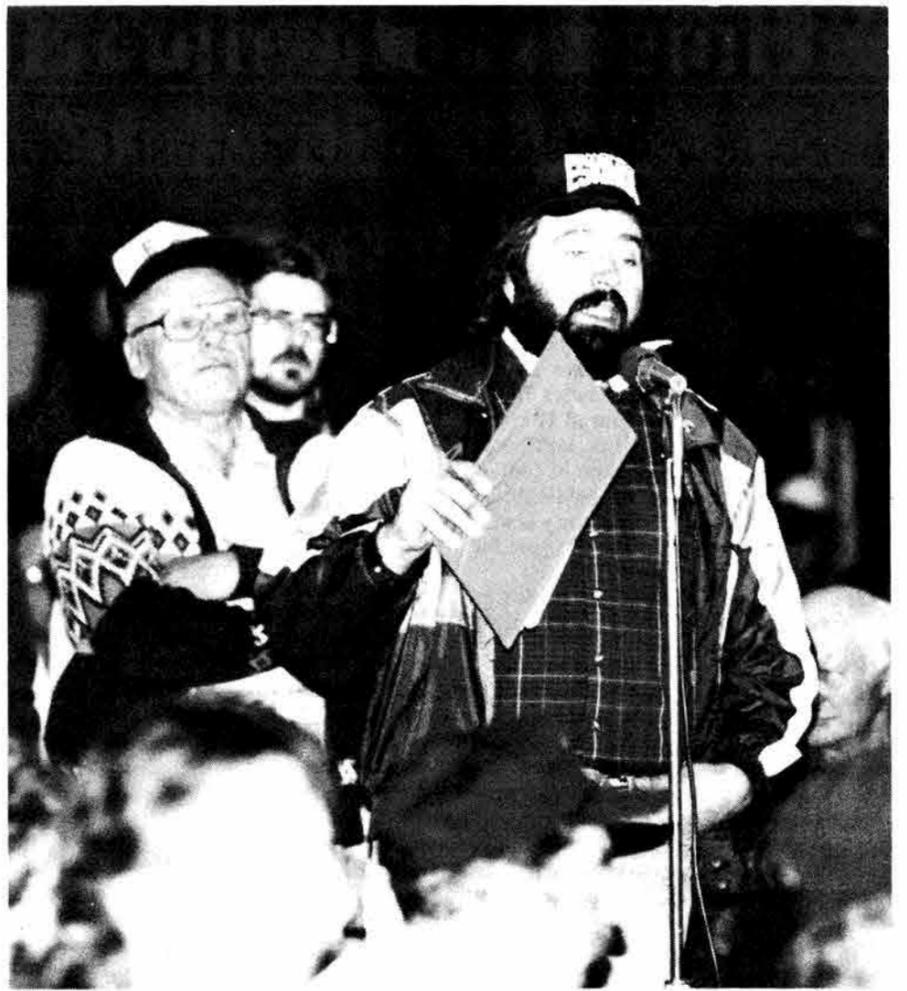
On October 10, in response to farmers' demands, the federal government announced an \$800 million program, \$700 million of which would go to grain farmers at some time in the future.

"Thank you very much, but that will come to approximately \$9 an acre. That will pay a few bills, but the shortfall is not covered," commented rally co-chair Bob Bradley. "It's about \$21 short of our demand."

Roy Romanow, head of the newly elected New Democratic Party (NDP) government of Saskatchewan, characterized the farm protest movement as a "prairie fire of protest." He committed the new government to taking farmers' demands to "Ottawa and even further if necessary."

Rally organizer Jim Sakundiak asked participants to indicate "yes" by standing to various proposals he made on methods to achieve their demands. Only 25 percent of rally participants felt lobbying governments would get results. But the crowd jumped to their feet in unanimous applause and cheering when asked if they felt strike action would be necessary to convince the world of their demands. A near-unanimous stand was taken in favor of getting together with U.S. farmers to get results.

This rally, like most events that have been organized by Concerned Farmers, was an open forum of lively discussion and debate.



Militant/Michael Carper

Sixteen hundred farmers met in Willingdon, Alberta, October 22, several days prior to event in Regina attended by 7,500.

Suggestions ranged from a 10-cent tax on bread, or re-implementation of higher price for wheat used domestically, to a moratorium on the debt many farmers carry. There was a call for a march on Ottawa and several speakers agreed with

the call for a strike for the 1992 crop year.

Some asked that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney call an international summit to discuss the world farm crisis. Several speakers called for an end the "trade war" between the United States and the European Community and a redoubling of efforts to get a GATT agreement on trading of agricultural products.

"Trade wars can lead to military war," Robert Grbavac from Southern Alberta told the rally. "We found that out in the first World War."

Several speakers referred to the money that the Canadian government had poured into the Gulf War. Patti Swinburne of Killarney, Manitoba, said she thought too many billions of dollars around the world are spent on arms and military. "Canada shares in these costs, so please don't tell us there is no money to save our rural economy," she said.

A participant from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, called on farmers to unite and refuse to buy or rent land that has been taken from fellow farmers by Canadian banks and the Farm Credit Corporation.

Hugh Wagner from the Grain Service Union, representing grain elevator workers, called for a united front of farmers and workers. "We no longer need a corporate agricultural policy that has divided us and pitted us against one another," he said. "What we need is a united front for fair prices, decent incomes, and secure farming."

Steelworkers face down closure threat

BY KATE DAHER

CANNONSBURG, Pennsylvania — Four hundred members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and supporters rallied here October 26 to celebrate signing an agreement with Cooper Power Systems.

The workers, represented by three locals of the USWA, had been on strike since July 9. The company had demanded that union members pay a higher premium for health coverage and give up their Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage for a self-insured plan administered by another carrier.

Another key issue in the strike was the company's proposal for job combinations that would allow employees to work jobs other than their own. The union said this would eliminate 200 jobs.

Speakers at the rally included Pennsylvania governor Robert Casey, United Mine Workers president Richard Trumka, State AFL-CIO president William George, USWA president Lynn Williams, and Cliff Cochran, president of USWA Local 3968 at the largest of the Cooper Power Systems plants.

Speaker after speaker encouraged workers to turn out the vote for Democratic Party Senatorial candidate Harris Wofford. Wofford for Senate signs surrounded the stage. Introducing Casey to the rally, Williams credited the governor with settling the 15-week old strike.

But many workers attending the rally had a different assessment of their hard-fought battle. Many said it was their power, their "sticking together," that forced the company to back down and settle the strike.

Picket lines went up at Cooper's factories on July 9 including a permanent picket on the rail line. The plant was shut down. From July through October, the union organized public rallies in Cannonsburg to build solidarity with the strike. They linked up with hospital workers on strike.

Although the company never attempted to bring in scabs, in late September it threatened to close the plant permanently if the union did not agree to concessions.

Cooper Power Systems, which manufactures transformers, is the largest employer in Washington County, employing 1,000 salaried and hourly workers.

Most workers believed that the threats to close the plant were real. "Yes sir, I think

they're real serious," George Cannon, a 28-year veteran of the plant told the *Greene County Observer Reporter*. "Shut it down" was how he explained the general attitude of union members if a favorable agreement could not be reached.

Another striker with 33 years in the plant said, "I think most of the people down here feel like 'close it'... The majority of the rank-and-file feels we've given enough; we're not giving any more."

In 1985 the union agreed to give back \$2.90 an hour and agreed to further cuts in 1988.

On October 13, the strikers voted on what was to be the company's final offer. In a resounding blow to the threats and the company takeback drive, workers rejected the final offer by a 2-1 ratio.

Shouting, "Union Yes, No to Cooper's Greed," workers responded to Cochran's announcement that the final offer was defeated.

The day after the vote, the company began handing out pink slips.

"The responsibility for closing the plant

rests squarely on the shoulders of the union," wrote corporate vice president of employee relations Carl Plesnicher, to USWA District 15 director Andrew Palm.

But the following day, top company and union officials were called to Harrisburg to meet with Governor Casey, where a new agreement was forged. In an about face, Cooper Power Systems backed away from their hard stance against the union.

The new agreement, which was extended to four years, improved on the wage offer and allowed workers to retain their Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage until April 1993, at which time the least expensive plan will be implemented. On the proposed job combinations, no changes can occur without union approval. At the recommendation of union officials, workers ratified the new agreement.

"We showed strength of heart," one 24-year veteran said at the October 26 rally. "If you're going to work for nothing, it's better to vote no."

Meat-packers reject Hormel contract offer

BY GEORGE CHALMERS AND MARK WEDDLTON

FREMONT, Nebraska — Workers in eight plants in the Hormel meat-packing and processing chain voted 1,091 to 525 October 24 to reject a concession contract offer. The offer was for raises of 15 cents an hour each year for the first two years and 25 cents the third year plus takebacks in medical coverage. This would have continued the erosion of real wages and working conditions common in the industry.

Hormel offered the proposal 10 months before the September 1992 expiration of contracts in several "chain" plants.

In the Fremont, Nebraska, plant many were surprised but pleased at the voting results.

In each of the last seven years Hormel has set a new record for profits. Last year it was \$77 million and this year, on Hormel's 100th anniversary, the company's goal is \$100 million. Commented one worker, "In 1971 when I started we killed 3,600 hogs a day and a hog cost \$45 per hundred weight. Today we

kill 6,000 with fewer people and hogs are still \$45."

Injuries are so common there are times when the locker room looks more like a hospital waiting room with people's arms in slings, braces, and bandages. Last week one worker caught a large patch of his arm with a hand-held skinning machine.

The United Food and Commercial Workers union negotiating committee favored a yes vote on the proposal. A company threat was circulated that if the offer was not approved, come September the company would impose the industry average of \$2 less per hour. Hormel base pay is \$11.15 and in Fremont, which has a second tier, \$8.75 for lower-tier workers with 15 months in the plant.

When word of the offer got out, most workers were angry but felt helpless, thinking others would vote yes. As discussion progressed, however, many people, including younger workers, openly campaigned for a no vote.

In the cut department a sign read, "We

gave them more than an inch. Let's not give them the rest of the mile — vote no!" Some chanted "Vote no, vote no!" One worker said that "Hormel should stop making money off its people and start making money off its products."

A backdrop to the discussion was the bitter fight at the Ottumwa, Iowa, Excel plant, formerly owned by Hormel. A number of Ottumwa workers now work here and still have family and friends at Excel.

Most followed closely the Ottumwa developments, especially after Excel workers walked out on strike and left meat hanging on the line. One Fremont worker said, "It does my heart good to see somebody with some guts."

In the wake of the vote the discussion is continuing over "What next?" and how to lessen the divisions and build solidarity in order to put ourselves in the best position to fight for a better contract in September.

George Chalmers and Mark Weddleton work at Hormel's Fremont plant and are members of UFCW Local 22.

Behind NDP election victories in Canada

Continued from front page

now places fifth in the national polls, well behind its traditional foes the Liberals and NDP.

It also trails the Reform Party, a new rightist capitalist party with strength in western Canada and Ontario, and the Bloc Québécois, a capitalist party that promotes Quebec sovereignty in the federal Parliament.

In New Brunswick, the Confederation of Regions party, an ultrarightist, chauvinist formation that focuses its activity on rolling back the rights of French-speaking people, won 21 percent of the votes in a recent provincial election, enough to become the official opposition in the legislature.

The NDP was supported by trade union and farmer organizations. Many working people have high hopes for the new governments, seeing in them a defense against the effects of declining living and social conditions. Others have fewer expectations, voting for the NDP simply as a lesser evil to the other parties.

However, there was general enthusiasm at the defeat of the detested Social Credit government in British Columbia.

One Vancouver tea-factory worker remarked, "I hope this means we won't see any more homeless in this city." An airport worker said, "I didn't even feel like voting. But with the NDP, at least we won't have to pay user fees in the hospitals."

A domestic worker from the Philippines said, "Well, we have a new government here, but I don't know if they'll change things. It's like in our country. Corazon Aquino promised us everything, but things keep getting worse."

The NDP received the endorsement of Canada's main big-business daily, the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, as well as the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Vancouver Province*.

The *Vancouver Sun* editorialized on October 23: "All you free-enterprise supporters



Homeless worker in Canadian shelter. Ruling parties were voted out in British Columbia and Saskatchewan due to unpopularity of their attacks on working people.

who are alarmed by the provincial electoral trend can put down the Valium. What you have seen, twice in a week, was not a rush to the political left . . . None of these men is a radical socialist. Both Mr. Harcourt and Mr. Romanow campaigned on a platform of fiscal restraint and Premier Rae [of Ontario] is beginning to sound Thatcher-esque with his spending cuts and privatization plans."

The *Globe and Mail's* endorsement of the NDP in both Saskatchewan and British Co-

lumbia, an unusual move, dwelt on how discredited the former governments had become in dealing with the economic problems.

"The Socred regime has squandered its authority through an unrelieved sequence of mishaps, misbehaviours, misconceptions and misrepresentations . . . The New Democrats, under Michael Harcourt, are experienced in politics and appear, at least, to have a decent appreciation for the limits of power in a modern state."

Accompanying the *Globe's* endorsement of the NDP in Saskatchewan was a news article that described Romanow's policies as "neo-conservative," adding that "Mr. Romanow has moved light years away from the interventionist policies of previous social democratic governments in Saskatchewan."

Socred and public sector workers

In the months preceding the British Columbia elections, the officialdom of several unions, such as the Hospital Employees Union (HEU) and the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU), decided to postpone a fight around their expired contracts, pinning their hopes on and pouring financial resources into the NDP campaign.

"In the morning you are going to see a high morale restored for the people who work in the public sector," said John Shields, president of the BCGEU on election day.

HEU leader Carmela Allevaro told the *Vancouver Sun*, "We expect a government that cares about health care and that puts people's health first."

The membership of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) waged a battle that included a series of strikes last winter to win wage increases. The Social Credit government imposed Bill 82, a law which forced school boards to reverse collective agreements granting wage increases negotiated by teachers.

Ken Novakowski, president of the BCTF, told reporters the "top priority" of the new NDP government should be to repeal Bill 82.

The question of women's rights is another major question facing working people. In British Columbia, the defeated Social Credit government was resolutely opposed to abortion rights.

When the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's restrictive abortion law in 1988, the Socred government tried to impose its own tight restraints on the right to abortion. It was forced to back down following a major confrontation with women's rights supporters.

NDP leader Mike Harcourt called a press conference early in the campaign at the Vernon Memorial Hospital where a new hospital board had recently banned all abortions. Doctors and other supporters of a woman's right to choose demonstrated against the board's decision. Although Harcourt himself is "personally opposed to abortion," he promised to fund women's health clinics that would provide services including abortions and ensure that all hospitals provide abortions.

Some 15,000 opponents of abortion rights lined the streets of Vancouver on September 29 during the election campaign as part of

an international action. There was no countermobilization organized by the unions, NDP, or women's rights groups. Organizers of the B.C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics called on supporters to elect an NDP government.

Three days after the elections in Saskatchewan, more than 7,500 farmers demonstrated in Regina against the lack of government aid in face of the lowest grain prices in 20 years and increasing farm foreclosures.

They demanded immediate action by the new government. Romanow pledged to lead a delegation to Ottawa to demand more federal aid for farmers.

Status of Quebec

Considerable attention was focused on the positions of the new NDP governments on Ottawa's recent constitutional proposals, which do not meet the national demands of either Quebec or Native people.

Harcourt and Romanow are both outspoken opponents of recognition of national sovereignty for the Quebecois, rejecting any special constitutional status for Quebec. Romanow is one of the architects of the 1982 Constitution, which reduced historic powers of the Quebec government. Harcourt has argued that Ottawa should stop yielding to Quebec's "blackmail" of Canada.

British Columbia was the site of the most widespread solidarity actions by Native people last year in response to Quebec and Ottawa's assault on Mohawks defending their land near Montreal. More than a dozen barricades were erected by British Columbia Natives and police attacks took place on several. Then premier Vander Zalm was forced to agree to negotiate Native land claims, the first time a British Columbia government has done so.

Harcourt also promised to negotiate Native land claims. Romanow pledged support to "the concept of Metis self-government and land entitlement."

Ron Dan, a leader of the Lil' Wat Peoples Movement from Mount Currie, British Columbia, which mounted a large-scale struggle for land rights and sovereignty last year, said in an interview, "Nothing will change. We're saying the provincial governments don't have jurisdiction over us, but they say they do. They want to give us money, but the real issue is sovereignty."

Although the NDP has long been seen as a party linked to the trade unions, the NDP and trade-union leaderships agreed to keep labor's support for the NDP "low-profile," so as not to alienate potential middle-class voters. Union support was generally limited to financial backing, with union staffers helping out as NDP campaign activists and organizers.

Vandals hit offices of Steelworkers union in British Columbia

BY GERRY LeBLANC

TUMBLER RIDGE, British Columbia — On October 18 the office of the United Steelworkers of America Local 9113 was vandalized. Two large windows were broken and the exterior of the building was spray-painted by unknown persons. During the British Columbia provincial elections the Tumbler Ridge Steelworkers had provided office space to the New Democratic Party as well as lending support to the local New Democratic candidate. The messages painted on the walls included a number of obscenities as well as blatant antiunion and anti-New Democratic Party slogans.

In a statement released to the press and members of the labor community, Local 9113 stated, "We find this type of behavior deplorable, as should all citizens of British Columbia. Participating in the democratic process should not warrant such a despicable reprisal. We urge everyone who believes in the right of association and freedom of speech to denounce this act and send a clear message to those responsible that the people of this province will not tolerate such bitter attacks."

Calls of support came in shortly after the attack. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, along with other unions, have issued press statements denouncing the attack. One carpenter from the nearby city of Dawson Creek said, "This is another example of the polarization that this [the outgoing Social Credit] government has caused with its antilabor stance."

Black rights activist framed by federal police in Canada

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — Prominent Black rights fighter Dudley Laws is scheduled to go to trial November 13 on trumped-up charges of conspiring to smuggle people between Canada and the United States. Laws is a leader of the Black Action Defense Committee.

Laws was arrested October 15 by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police — Canada's federal police — as he sat in his car outside his office, Confidential Immigration Services. Larry Motley, a resident of Michigan, was also arrested when he arrived at the office later.

At the bail hearing October 17 about 20

supporters demonstrated in front of the courthouse denouncing the charges as a frame-up.

Federal prosecutors demanded \$50,000 bail for Laws and asked that he be required to hand over his passport to authorities as a condition for his release. These demands were dropped when Judge John Kerr objected to their severity.

Laws is also facing a libel suit against him launched by the Toronto police department because he publicly accused the Toronto cops of being the most racist and brutal in North America.

Over the past years Laws has been in the forefront of speaking out and organizing demonstrations against racist cop shootings.

Since 1978 six Blacks have been shot by Toronto cops and four of them killed. The most recent shooting took place May 14, 1990, when 16-year-old Marlon Neil was shot twice while seated in his car by Constable Brian Rapson after Neil was stopped for speeding. Neil recovered from his life-threatening injuries. Rapson is now in court facing charges of attempted murder, criminal negligence, and aggravated assault.

Laws has refused to be intimidated by the police vendetta against him. He spoke at an August 24 demonstration in Montreal to protest the killing of Black youth Marcelus François by Montreal cops on July 3. Laws told the rally, "No police officer has ever been convicted for killing someone. It's a disgrace. Police in Canada are racists and murderers."

Cop violence has become an important issue in the November 12 Toronto municipal election campaign.

In an interview Joe Young, the Communist League candidate for mayor of Toronto, said, "Cop violence against working people can be turned back. Part of this fight today is the defense of Dudley Laws against cop victimization. All antiracist and democratic rights fighters should defend Laws. Our unions need to throw their weight into the fight. This is the only way to force the cops to end their campaign to put Laws behind bars. It is the only way to see to it that all killer cops are prosecuted and jailed to the full extent of the law."

Contributions to the Dudley Laws defense can be sent to 393 Vaughan Rd., Toronto, Ontario, M6C 2N8 Canada.

Cuba: Challenges facing the revolution in a changing world

Hear: Mary-Alice Waters

Editor of *New Internationalist*, recently returned from three weeks in Cuba.

WELLINGTON

Wed., November 13, 7 p.m.
23 Majoribanks St.
Courtenay Pl.
Tel: (4) 384-4205
Donation: \$5

CHRISTCHURCH

Thurs., November 14, 7 p.m.
593a Colombo St. (upstairs)
Tel: (3) 656-055
Donation: \$5

AUCKLAND

Fri., November 15, 7 p.m.
La Gonda Arcade
203 Karangahape Rd., City
Tel: (9) 793-075
Donation: \$5

Sponsor: Militant Labour Forum

Messages back Curtis's parole

Vietnam agrees to forced return of refugees from Hong Kong

The Vietnamese and British governments signed an accord in London October 29, opening the way to the forcible return of thousands of Vietnamese refugees now detained in Hong Kong. This was a reversal of policy by the Vietnamese government, which until recently refused to accept forced repatriation of refugees. The accord came one week after Hanoi agreed to accept the return — under armed guard — of 222 refugees living in Hong Kong. There are 63,500 Vietnamese refugees held in detention camps in Hong Kong, which is a British colony. Alistair Asprey, British secretary of security for the colony, said the police were authorized to use force if necessary to deport the refugees.

In recent weeks thousands of Vietnamese inside the detention camps have staged demonstrations against the repatriation plan.

Unions in Russia organize protests against Yeltsin's austerity plans

Fifteen thousand workers protested in Moscow at the end of October against recent calls by Russian president Boris Yeltsin for more austerity measures. Participants at the rally and subsequent demonstrations demanded higher wages and protection for laid-off workers.

"Yeltsin forgot the promises he made to us for a better life," said Elena Kisilyova, a seamstress from Moscow, speaking at the rally. "We used to ask the government to make things better, but now we demand."

Yeltsin announced to the Russian parliament October 28 his intention to lift price controls by the end of the year and to accelerate privatization of agriculture and light industry. The announcement came after the meeting in Thailand of the Group of Seven imperialist powers that asked a Soviet delegation that was eager for financial aid to impose anti-working-class measures.

The Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unions called for a two-hour strike November 13. Bowing to union demands the Russian parliament approved a bill to link wages to the rate of inflation.

Japan: More undocumented immigrant workers

The number of undocumented immigrant workers in Japan has grown dramatically in the last few years as profit rates for Japanese industry have declined. An estimated 200,000-300,000 workers from other countries, without work permits, are employed by small- and medium-sized companies.

Most of these workers come from Asia or the Pacific. The Japanese immigration bureau of the Ministry of Law estimated that 100,000 people had overstayed their visas to seek work in May 1990 alone.

Employment of unskilled workers from other countries had been against the law. A new law passed in 1990 legalized employment of unskilled immigrants of Japanese descent, while increasing penalties for employing other immigrants.

Undocumented immigrant workers make on the average \$2 an hour less than legal immigrants, who themselves are employed in low paying jobs. Undocumented immigrants are not covered by Japan's Labor Standards Law, leaving them without legal rights to fight for better wages and working conditions or against violations of democratic rights.

"Japan's industrial pyramid is coming to rest on one more layer — that of cheap, and willing, foreign labor," commented the October issue of the magazine *Look Japan*.

Belgian troops remain in Zaire; Mobutu rule shaken

The governments of Belgium and France announced October 29 their troops would stay in Zaire for several more weeks, allegedly to evacuate French and Belgian citizens. The troops were flown in after the autocratic regime of president Mobutu Sese Seko was shaken by widespread protests of soldiers and civilians.

Fifty thousand people spilled into the streets of Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, the same day, as a false rumor spread that Mobutu had agreed to reinstate deposed prime minister Etienne Tshisekedi. Troops loyal to Mobutu fired shots to disperse the crowd.



Julia Terrell, Edna Griffin, and John Studer (far left to right) of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee meeting with members of the Iowa State Board of Parole to present 400 letters supporting the release of the jailed unionist.

Continued from front page

Detroit; Toney Anaya, former governor of New Mexico; actor Ed Asner; John Roberts, director of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts; Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers District 8 in Niagara Falls, New York; Marta Somano, political and educational director of the Western States Region of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; the Coal Employment Project; and Jim Armstrong and Harold Ruggless, president and vice president of United Auto Workers Local 270 in Des Moines.

Those writing from around the world include: Social Democratic Youth of Sweden; Robert White, president of the Canadian Auto Workers union; the Confédération Générale du Travail in France; the Mexican Electrical Workers Union; the New Zealand Food and Textile Workers Union; and General Oil Workers Union 2-8-6 in Tokyo, Japan.

The delegation delivering the letters was granted a special October 31 meeting with the parole board to express their strong feelings about the case. This meeting was especially important because supporters of parole for Curtis are not permitted to speak at the actual parole hearing.

Prior to the start of the meeting, four people showed up at the parole board offices who were not part of the delegation of Curtis supporters — Keith Morris, his wife, and two of his sons. Morris is the father of the Black woman Curtis was charged with raping. In 1988 Morris smashed the windows of the building where the Mark Curtis Defense Committee was located. He has actively campaigned against Mark Curtis and his supporters. Unlike Curtis supporters, Morris is invited to speak at the November 19 parole hearing.

When John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, inquired about the reason for the Morris' presence at this meeting, parole board chairperson Walter Saur declared that this was an open meeting that anyone could attend. Saur attempted to arrange the meeting as a debate and confrontation between the 20 Curtis supporters and the Morris family members, allotting each group a brief amount of time. The meeting did not turn out this way, however, as Curtis supporters calmly presented their case before the board. Morris declined to speak.

Studer gave a presentation to the board on behalf of the delegation. He introduced some delegation members, including Manuel Cortéz, vice president of the United Farm Workers of Washington State; Alfredo Alvarez, former chairperson of the Des Moines Human Rights Commission; Edna Griffin, longtime civil rights activist and member of the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame; a number of packinghouse workers from the Swift/Monfort plant where Curtis had worked; Julia Terrell, Curtis' former next-door neighbor; and other longtime supporters of the defense effort.

Curtis meets all parole criteria

Studer pointed out that Curtis meets and exceeds all the basic criteria for granting parole. "Prison authorities concede that his conduct, job performance, and psychological evaluations are excellent," he explained. Curtis has numerous job offers and a growing network of supporters ready to aid him upon his release. Curtis has never been convicted of any other crime and has already served six months longer than the average time

served by Iowa prisoners sentenced on the rape charge under which he was convicted, Studer said.

The defense committee leader urged the board to act favorably on Curtis' request for parole. If for any reason the board declined to free Curtis, Studer urged that at least they advance him within the prison system on the road toward parole. This could be done by placing Curtis in a minimum security prison or a work release program. Curtis is currently incarcerated at John Bennett Correctional Center, a medium security prison in Fort Madison.

Studer also raised with board members that Curtis not be penalized unjustly in his bid for parole because of his political views or activities. Curtis' case should be reviewed on the basic legally-mandated criteria for parole and not some special political criteria, explained Studer.

Studer said that one of Curtis' lawyers had reviewed his parole file at the board's office last week and found examples of such politically biased entries. One example Studer quoted was written by a prison official from the John Bennett Correctional Center when Curtis was first transferred there.

"Inmate Curtis will have to be watched rather closely noting his political background; that is being politically active for El Salvador, and involved in labor disputes," wrote the prison official. "He claims that the Des Moines Police Department was after him because of his socialist and union activities in Des Moines. It appears that inmate Curtis had developed a 'Mark Curtis Defense Foundation' that operates out of Des Moines. It appears that inmate Curtis gets frequent letters from all over the world, as well as visitors stopping by interested in seeing Mark Curtis set free. Staff at Iowa Men's Reformatory noted inmate Curtis was quite powerful with other inmates and indeed, needs to be monitored quite closely."

A number of board members reacted hostilely to Studer's concern.

Wanda Everage, a parole board member from Des Moines, claimed, "Mark even said he was a political prisoner."

It is the prison officials who label him a "political prisoner," Studer said. In fact, Studer pointed out, it was Everage who opened last year's parole hearing by asking Curtis, "Do you still consider yourself a political prisoner?"

Curtis remains a political person, although he does not consider himself a political prisoner, Studer told the board. "He continues to hold the political views that he had when he entered prison and actively defends his right to carry out those views." Curtis is a member of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

Writing in a January 11, 1991, *Militant* column concerning last year's parole hearing, Curtis explained his position. "I replied that I've never used that term to describe myself; it best describes those who are jailed for charges such as speaking out or writing against government policy."

"You can't have it both ways," responded board member Joanne Lorence. Pointing to the huge stack of letters just delivered to them, she asked, "Should we then just eliminate all political letters that come in on his behalf?"

Pressure to admit guilt

Studer raised a second concern with the board members — the fact that prison au-

thorities have told Curtis that they will never recommend him for release unless he submits to going through the prison system's special Sex Offenders Treatment Program. To participate in this program, Curtis would have to admit guilt to the crime for which he was convicted and abandon the legal appeal of his conviction.

"Mark Curtis' position is that he doesn't feel like he should be forced to drop the legal appeal of his conviction in order to be eligible for parole," Studer told the board. Curtis is in the process of appealing his conviction in federal courts.

Board members avoided comments on this concern, but board chairperson Saur did ask Studer if Curtis' appeal was almost over. Studer told him the appeal was just beginning.

After Julia Terrell spoke to urge the board to release Curtis, Saur adjourned the meeting.

"There was some indication of bias against Mark," stated former Des Moines Human Rights Commission chairperson Alvarez at the conclusion of this meeting with the board. The board seemed "more concerned about getting our group in and out as fast as they could." Alvarez also said he was "surprised when Morris showed up and more surprised when the board allowed him to stay when the appointment was for Mark Curtis supporters."

A meeting held at the defense committee office that evening gave supporters an opportunity to evaluate the day's events and discuss the next steps in winning support for Curtis' ongoing fight for justice.

"I had the pleasure of meeting Mark Curtis in 1987 when he came out to Washington State to learn about conditions of farm workers," stated Manuel Cortéz, vice president of the Washington State Farm Workers union. "Mark Curtis is a great friend, the way he talked to me and my coworkers. We should band together and continue fighting for his release."

Stakes in fight

Studer presented the important stakes involved in this ongoing fight. "There are two main factors the board is going to weigh in determining whether to grant Curtis parole," he stated. "How big a problem is Curtis for them in prison, and how much political weight is there in those letters we delivered to them?"

"They have a lot at stake in keeping Curtis in prison. They play this neat little game that's like double jeopardy, where they say to Curtis you have got to break or else you're just going to rot in prison. This shows the depth of the political fight that's involved here and how political it is for both us and them."

Noting that Curtis' fight is a long-term battle, Studer concluded by quoting longtime defense committee activist Bob Berry, who attended the meeting with the board: "We've got to tighten the screws and turn up the heat."

"The parole board hears us loud and clear and they're very concerned about what we're going to do next," said Mark Curtis to the defense committee meeting through a special phone hookup call from prison.

"It's becoming more obvious to them that the defense is not going way, in fact it's getting stronger. The voices that they hear are going to get louder and louder until it's almost deafening."

"Everything you're doing to help win my release is what is bringing this about. I promise you that I'll keep fighting and I know that you will too. We're going to beat them, there's no question," concluded Curtis.

'Workers and oppressed peoples, unite!'

New book on Communist Int'l describes 1919-20 revolutions in Europe

Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!, a two-volume work, was recently published by Pathfinder. The book contains the full record of the Second Congress of the Communist International, or Comintern, held in Soviet Russia in 1920.

Delegates came to this congress from thirty-seven countries. Their goal was to join with the leaders of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks), which had led the workers and peasants of Russia to power in October 1917, in building a new revolutionary working-class international organization.

Resolutions of the second congress set the Communist International's political course, including on the character of communist parties, the nature of their work in parliament and trade unions, and the alliances they sought with farmers and oppressed peoples.

These two volumes are part of the series, *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*. The *Militant* plans to print in installments the introduction to the book by its editor, John Riddell.

The first section of the introduction, which appeared in the August 16 issue, dealt with the situation of grave crisis for the world capitalist order which existed at the time of the second congress. A revolutionary upsurge was sweeping Europe and struggles against colonial domination by workers and peasants in Asia were gaining momentum. Following the founding congress of the Communist International in 1919 many workers' organizations across Europe had affiliated to the Comintern. The blockade of Russia by imperialist powers meant that it was very difficult even to reach Moscow from outside, but some 218 delegates managed to make the Congress.

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* * *

When the congress convened in the summer of 1920, capitalism in Europe had yet to quell the postwar wave of revolutionary struggles and restabilize its rule. Just over a year earlier, the Paris conference of the Allied powers concluded with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended World War I. The treaty's draconian terms, however, contributed to the continuing crisis of capitalism in Europe. It dashed hopes previously raised in some sectors of the workers' movement by the Allied governments' promises of a "just" and "democratic" peace.

In the major imperialist countries of Europe, production still had not recovered from wartime destruction. A limited economic upswing in 1919 and early 1920 enabled many demobilized soldiers to find work, and unemployment fell somewhat. Nonetheless, in "victorious" France overall production in 1920 was still only two-thirds its pre-war level. In Germany industrial production was little more than half its 1914 level, human consumption of grains was down 44 percent, and the economy was gripped by spiraling inflation. Average per capita wages in Prague in 1920, adjusted for inflation, were just over one-third of pre-war levels.

In the year since the Comintern's founding congress, capitalist rule had withstood vigorous challenges by the toilers of several countries. The lessons of these confrontations, and in particular the events in Germany, shaped the debates of the Second Congress. Foremost among these battles were those waged in defense of workers' and peasants' governments that had ruled for a time during 1919 in Bavaria and Hungary.

Revolutionary government

In the German province of Bavaria, a revolutionary government was formed on April 13, 1919, based on workers' councils and composed of leaders of the Communist Party of Germany and the centrist-led Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD). Isolated from struggles in the rest of Germany and from the aid of Soviet Russia, the Bavarian councils were immediately attacked by troops of the central government, and workers' resistance in Munich, the Bavarian capital, was quelled in the first days of May.

The defeat of the Bavarian councils was the last phase of a bloody four-month war waged against the revolutionary working class by the Berlin government, which was



January 1919: Armed workers demonstrate in Berlin. Revolutionary struggles swept Europe after World War I.

led by the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). This civil war had begun in January 1919 when insurgent Berlin workers were attacked by the Freikorps, units of counterrevolutionary volunteers integrated into the army and functioning under government command. Among the victims of these reactionary murder gangs were the Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. During the weeks that followed, the Freikorps assaulted other workers' strongholds across Germany; in March their renewed attacks in Berlin took the lives of twelve hundred workers. One of the precursors of the Nazi SA and SS units, the Freikorps provided cadres for the German fascist movement while demonstrating the methods of decisive, brutal—and murderous—street actions through which the Nazis were to prepare and consolidate political power.

In Hungary the social and political crisis became so acute in early 1919 that the bourgeois regime yielded the reins of office to the Social Democrats, who then proposed to the Communists that the two parties fuse and form a new government together. The inexperienced Communist Party, formed only five months previously, accepted this proposal, and the new government, based on revolutionary workers' councils, took office on March 21. It was impossible for the communists, locked in a single party with reformists and centrists, to provide consistent revolutionary leadership to the workers' and peasants' councils. Communists in Hungary were also fatally handicapped by their ultra-left course, particularly toward the peasantry. Rather than recognizing the big majority of peasants as exploited toilers and allies, they tended to view the peasantry as an undifferentiated reactionary mass.

These political weaknesses hampered the defense of the Hungarian soviet republic against the invasion organized by the Allied powers. As the ring of counterrevolutionary armies tightened, the Social Democrats broke ranks, negotiating with the enemy behind the communists' backs. Despite international workers' protests and solidarity actions, the revolutionary government was overthrown on August 1, 1919. The ensuing White Terror devastated the working-class movement; 7,500 workers were slaughtered and tens of thousands forced into exile.

Renewed confrontation in Germany

Despite the stinging defeat the workers of Germany suffered in early 1919, within a year they mounted another challenge to capitalist rule. Hundreds of thousands of workers turned away from the SPD during 1919 and early 1920, outraged by its role in organizing the assault on militant workers and restabilizing the capitalist state.

On January 13, 1920, a huge throng of workers demonstrated in front of the Berlin Reichstag (parliament) in defense of the workers' councils in Germany. Security police machine-gunned the rally, killing forty-two workers. The government then reimposed a state of siege across half the country and jailed central leaders of the USPD and Communist Party.

Emboldened by this turn of events, right-wing Freikorps units in Berlin carried out a coup on March 13, ousting the SPD-led coalition government and installing a would-be dictator, Wolfgang Kapp. The leaders of the unions and the Social Democratic Party, threatened with the suppression of the movements from which they drew their power and privilege, called for a general strike against the coup. The USPD did the same. The strike was solid across the country. The army command in the capital and across northern and eastern Germany backed the coup and launched murderous attacks against the striking workers. In Dresden fifty-nine workers were killed. Workers organized militias, which cleared army units out of the Ruhr industrial district and fought back arms in hand in more than two dozen localities. The right-wing regime fell after only four days.

Resisting rightist putsch

On learning of the call by the SPD and USPD for a general strike against the Kapp putsch, the Communist Party leadership's initial reaction was a sectarian and ultra-left one. It urged workers to stand aside from the mass struggle on the grounds that working people had no stake in defending the country's bourgeois-democratic order. This stand was rejected in practice by the working-class ranks of the party. They recognized the broad opposition to the Kapp putsch as a revolutionary opening, a chance to deal the class enemy a decisive blow. Communist Party cadres played a leading role in the strike and in the workers' armed self-defense. The party's central leadership soon endorsed this course, reversing its initial decision.

The rapid overthrow of the Kapp regime demonstrated dramatically the power of united working-class action. Kapp's fall encouraged militant workers to continue their strike, seeking a way to end antilabor repression and the ravages of the military and of rightists under its protection. In the face of this growing pressure, Carl Legien, the reformist head of the main trade union federation, sought to regain control over the mass movement. He proposed to leaders of the SPD, of the USPD, and of other unions that they join in a government of workers' organizations. Among this government's tasks, Legien suggested, would be a purge of counterrevolutionaries from the armed forces and leading posts in state administration. On March 21 the USPD presented their own version of this proposal for a "workers' government" to the strike leadership in Berlin, which included Communist Party representatives.

The following day, the Central Bureau of the Communist Party adopted by a one-vote margin a statement declaring that since the "objective basis for a proletarian dictatorship is not yet present," the formation "of a Socialist government excluding the bourgeois-

capitalist parties" could create "favorable conditions for the proletarian masses" to prepare to take power. Such a government, the statement said, could create a situation "where political freedom can be fully utilized, where bourgeois democracy cannot function as the dictatorship of capital." Communists could not join such a government, but they would act toward it as a "loyal opposition"—retaining full freedom to criticize it, but refraining from attempts to overthrow it.

The statement was later repudiated, by majority vote, by the Communist Party Central Committee and the party congress. The statement was also criticized by Zinoviev in the written report he submitted to the Second Congress on behalf of the Comintern Executive Committee. Lenin, on the other hand, held that the tactic proposed in the statement by the Communist Party of Germany was "quite correct both in its basic premise and its practical conclusions." Where the statement erred, in Lenin's view, was in lending unjustified credit to the credentials of the centrist and reformist leaders of the USPD and the SPD as socialists and as defenders of democratic rights.

The "workers' government" discussion reflected the conviction of millions of workers in Germany that they must achieve a revolutionary government of the toilers. The continuing strikes and armed actions after Kapp's fall demonstrated workers' capacity to fight for this goal. But the Communist Party leadership failed to respond decisively to the opening provided by the widespread calls for a workers' government, and this contributed to the dissipation of the working-class mobilization in Germany. The general strike ebbed away, and the bourgeois government regained stability. Nonetheless, Communists saw the struggle sparked by the Kapp putsch as confirmation that the road still lay open for a revolutionary victory in Germany in the near future.

Communists drew similar conclusions from events in Italy. The bourgeois regime there faced an accelerating crisis in 1919-20: peasants rose up in revolt and carried out land occupations, while workers organized wave after wave of mass strikes, forming factory committees to coordinate their struggle.

In April 1920 workers in Turin waged a general strike to defend their factory committees against a wave of firings and lockouts. The Italian Socialist Party leadership, however, failed to rally the party behind the Turin workers. Indeed, central leaders of the party disavowed the strike, which went down to defeat.

As the Second Congress convened, the workers' struggle in Italy was still ascending; in the first days of September, less than a month after the congress ended, a wave of factory occupations swept across Italy.

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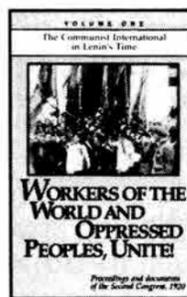
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CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Nelson Mandela's Visit to Cuba. Video. Introduced by Thabo Ntweng, Socialist Workers Party, anti-apartheid activist. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

The Migrants. A video documentary show-

ing super exploitation of immigrant farm-workers in south Florida's sugarcane fields. Speaker from Belle Glade, Florida. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Protest the Coup in Haiti! Speakers: Henry Fouché, coordinator, Midwest Bureau, Haiti's 10th Department; Frederick Lerouge, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100-A, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Nov. 9, 7 p.m. 545 W Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (312) 829-6815 or 829-7018.

The Lessons of Wichita and the Fight for Abortion Rights. Speaker: Pat Smith, chairperson, Chicago Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Nov. 16, 5 p.m. Open house 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., following march and rally for abortion rights. 545 W Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (312) 829-6815 or 829-7018.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Crisis in the Middle East: What is the Road Forward for the Palestinian People? Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. Who Profits? How to Fight It? Panel discussion. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

Celebrate the Life of Richard Cahalane,

Socialist Workers 1991 Fund Meeting

OHIO

Cleveland

The World Capitalist Crisis, Stalinism, and the Fight for Socialism Today. Speaker: John Gaige, National Committee, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 9, 7 p.m. 1863 W 25th St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

Rally protests poultry plant fire

Continued from page 16

nesses were cited for locked or blocked fire exit doors. Nevertheless a citation is much like a traffic ticket, only cheaper, costing violators \$25.

Naomi Craine, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Greensboro, said, "It is clear that the OSHA program, on the state and federal levels, is designed to protect the health and safety not of workers, but of the bosses' profits. It seeks to give the false impression that health and safety enforcement is being taken care of, so that working people won't organize to enforce it ourselves."

Craine, a 21-year-old textile worker, continued, "The most powerful thing the AFL-

Socialist Fighter for the Interests of the Working Class. Speaker: Andrea Morell, chairperson, Boston Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Celebrate the 74th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution: Prospects for Communism Today. Speaker: Doug Jenness, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

Talks in the Mideast: What Road to Peace? Sat., Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Civil War in Yugoslavia. Speaker: Dick McBride, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 1622 S Broadway. Donation: \$3. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

The Struggle for Democracy in Haiti and the Fight Against the Coup. Speaker: George Chalmers, member United Food and Commercial Workers, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Nov. 9, 7 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Fight for Palestinian Rights. Will the Mideast Peace Conference Bring Peace? Speaker: Dave Marshall, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 727-8421.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Haiti. No to the Coup. U.S. Hands Off! Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 2000-C South Elm-Eugene St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Sexual Harassment and Antiabortion Laws: Attacks on Women's Rights and How to Fight Back. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South

St. Donation \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

Pittsburgh

Haiti: The Coup and the Aftermath. Speaker: Linda Joyce, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

Stop the Toxic Waste Incinerator! Speaker: Kate Daher, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-74. Sat., Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

BRITAIN

London

Sexual Harassment: An Issue for Working People. Speaker from the Communist League. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Tel: 71-928-7993.

Sheffield

Malcolm X and the Fight Against Imperialism. Video showing and speaker. Sat., Nov. 9, 6 p.m. 1 Gower St., Spital Hill. Donation: £1. Tel: 0742-765070.

CANADA

Toronto

Working Farmers Fight to Survive. Speaker: Joe Young, Communist League candidate. Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

International Rally to Mark Opening of New Pathfinder Bookshop. Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, editor *New International*; Tony Gibson, Communist League candidate for Auckland Regional Council; Jack Barnes, national secretary Socialist Workers Party of the United States. Sat., Nov. 9, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$5. Tel: (9) 793 075

'Militant' sales

Continued from Page 6

tion of Machinists (IAM), and the Canadian auto workers union are on schedule.

In the New York/New Jersey area UTU members won 20 new readers among rail workers there. Two subscribed at a socialist campaign event held outside of New Jersey Transit's Hoboken terminal featuring UTU member and socialist candidate Karen Kopperud.

In Baltimore a Bethlehem Steelworker bought a copy of *New International* at a plant-gate table staffed by *Militant* supporters. The following week 8 workers picked up copies of the *Militant*. The company announced it will lay off 500 workers in December. In Des Moines meat-packers at three nearby United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) organized plants have bought 20 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 17 to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 8 copies of *New International* through the course of the campaign. At least 7 new readers were won at the Swift/Monfort plant where framed-up and imprisoned unionist and socialist Mark Curtis worked.

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

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

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Christchurch: 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 656-055.

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SWEDEN

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

They're flexible — "WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence agencies recently determined that Israel exported key ballistic missile components to South Africa, but



Harry Ring

President Bush has decided to waive sanctions against Israel called for under U.S. law." — News item.

Read it and retch — A Palestinian whose wife, 63, was beaten and

shot to death by Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip claimed damages. Plia Albeck, an official involved in confiscation of Palestinian land, wrote a legal memo declaring: "Apart from the usual arguments, we should claim that the plaintiff only profited from the death of the deceased because he had to support her while she was alive and now he no longer has to."

Tsk — Regarding that Albeck memo, Israel's attorney general said that while the legal reasoning was sound, the language was unfortunate.

Whatever — New Zealand oil companies jumped the price of

leaded gas three cents a litre, pointing to a new two-cent sales tax intended to encourage use of unleaded gas. Meanwhile, the unleaded also went up three cents. Why? Because, an oilman said, unleaded gas already accounts for a third of the market, so no financial incentives are needed to encourage its greater use.

Tell us about it — "It's obvious that the economy is not coming back as strongly as it should." — Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady.

Safety first — British safety officials calculate that more than 70 percent of job-related deaths are the fault of management. For more

than a century, British law has provided that culpable company officials can be prosecuted for manslaughter. But out of 4,217 deaths in the nine years, only one has resulted in charges.

Maybe he earned the title — Iowa's transportation department rejected a request from a deputy sheriff for personalized license plates declaring, "TOP COP." Officials said that according to a slang dictionary, to cop is to receive bribes — especially in the case of policemen. They felt this would offend other cops.

Belt tightening — Responding to recent restrictions, members of

the House of Representatives reduced by nearly 50 percent the amount of junk mail they send out free. In the first half of the year, since the new rules, their postage bill was a mere \$15 million. Each member of Congress is now only entitled to a yearly allotment of \$178,000 in free postage.

Especially to turkeys — The British *Sunday Times* reports that European employment ministers were about to begin a discussion of shorter working hours when their interpreters "downed tongues and walked out" in a wage protest. An accompanying cartoon has an interpreter announcing, "You have to be able to talk turkey."

Project to index SWP bulletins nearly complete

BY NICK GRUENBERG AND SUSAN LAMONT

NEW YORK — A project to index all the internal bulletins of the Socialist Workers Party has been under way for a little more than two years. An important stage in this process was recently completed when volunteers finished entering information for all the bulletins into the computers that are used in the project.

The bulletins are an invaluable part of the SWP's 63-year record of participation in the class struggle in the United States and internationally. The bulletins were, and are, written by communist fighters active in every aspect of working-class politics, from the rise of the CIO unions in the 1930s to the struggle against Washington's assault on the working people of Iraq in 1990-91.

Nearly 1,000 bulletins

The project includes indexing the bulletins from the SWP's predecessor organizations and the English-language bulletins from the international movements the party has been part of.

The earliest bulletin indexed by project volunteers appeared Feb. 1, 1931. It is an *International Bulletin of the Communist Left Opposition*, published in English by the Communist League of America. The SWP traces its direct organizational continuity to this group of U.S. and Canadian communists, led by James P. Cannon and Maurice Spector. Both these leaders were expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 for opposing Stalin's counterrevolutionary policies in the Soviet Union and around the world.

Since 1931, almost 1,000 bulletins have appeared. They contain 7,200 resolutions, contributions, reports, letters, notes, statements, memoranda, minutes, articles, and other items.

The new computer index will make all this material quickly and easily accessible for the first time in the party's history.

Every item in every bulletin has been read, and essential information about it entered into the computer. The file for each item includes its author, the date it was written, what kind of article it is, the type of bulletin it appeared in, what page it is on, where else it has been published, and other essential information.

Each item is indexed by up to four subjects. There are now 727 categories on the subject list, ranging from "Yugoslavia: Revolution, 1945-46" to "Marxist Theory: Historical Materialism" and "Defense Campaigns: Mark Curtis, 1988-."

'Fascist groups, Anti-fascist struggle'

Users of the new index can now investigate a topic or find a specific article from the bulletin by asking the computer to make a search. All the items in the index can be rapidly scanned by author, topic, and several other categories. The computer displays information about the articles you want to see.

For example, the recent ultrarightist mobilizations in Wichita, Kansas, aimed at closing down abortion clinics in that city, could prompt a search for what articles have appeared in past bulletins about U.S. fascist organizations and how communists have responded to them. By calling up the subject "U.S.: Fascist Groups and Anti-Fascist Struggle," the index user will be referred to relevant articles, going back to the 1930s. A search of the topic "U.S.: McCarthy Era, 1948-55"



Minneapolis Journal Library

Minnesota Works Progress Administration strike, 1939. Bulletins record 63 years of Socialist Workers Party participation in class struggle.

would call up additional related material.

Many different kinds of bulletins have been published over the years, including the *Discussion Bulletin*, *International Bulletin*, *Party Builder*, and *Information Bulletins*. Often, material that first appeared in bulletin form has been reprinted in books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder and its forerunners, in *Education for Socialists* bulletins, and in *New International* magazine and its predecessors.

But there is much in the bulletins that has not been reprinted. The new index will make all this material more accessible.

Revolutionary centralist functioning

The bulletins are an important part of the way in which the SWP functions as a revolutionary centralist organization. They are a written forum for SWP members to discuss the big political questions of the day. For example, "The Economic and Political Crisis in the Soviet Union," published in the Sept. 6, 1991, *Militant*, was originally part of the World Political Resolution presented to the SWP membership by the National Committee in two discussion bulletins. Leading up to the 1990 SWP convention, that resolution was discussed by the membership through the bulletin, as well as in oral discussions in branches around the country, before being adopted by delegates at the convention.

The bulletins allow members to present their views to the entire party and play a critical role in the party's democratic decision-making process. They also allow the entire party to learn from the experiences, both positive and negative, of party members and units involved in various cities and union situations. Successes can be emulated; mistakes made once do not have to be repeated.

The bulletins also allow the national party leadership to speak directly to all members between conventions, an essential part of waging effective campaigns as a centralized party.

Help needed to find bulletins

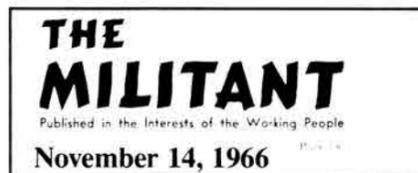
The next stage of the project is to review and edit the new index. The plan is to then add to it *Education for Socialists* bulletins, the *New International* and its predecessors, and bulletins published by the Young Socialist Alliance.

Since the project started, the Communist League/Ligue Communiste of Canada and SWP members, branches, and supporters in

several cities have helped locate bulletins that were missing from the party's files. A number of bulletins were located, but several gaps remain.

This is an aspect of the indexing project that some *Militant* readers may be able to help with. If you have — or know where project volunteers might obtain — any of the bulletins or bulletin pages listed below,

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



NEW YORK — The November 5-8 Mobilization for Peace in Vietnam was kicked off here with a huge rally Nov. 5, held just off Times Square. Some 20,000 people crowded onto Sixth Avenue. A striking feature of the rally was the very large number of young people present.

The rally, along with the four days of antiwar activity, was organized by the Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, a broad coalition of some 80 antiwar and community groups.

The rally served to kick off the weekend's activities. These included mass leafleting at churches and in communities on Sunday, leafleting of GIs at various places where they can be reached in the city on Sunday night, mass leafleting throughout the city on Monday and leafleting at the polls on Tuesday.

Leaflets were distributed in quantities that total close to the half-million mark. One is a general educational leaflet about why the GIs want to come home and why the war should be opposed. A second, entitled, "Do GIs have a Right to Know?," tells of plans for escalation of the war, cites why GIs want to come home, and gives the facts on the Fort Hood Three case.



November 15, 1941

The CIO national convention, starting November 17 in Detroit, meets at a time when

please send a xerox copy to Bulletin Indexing Project, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014:

International Bulletin of the Communist Left Opposition, April-May 1931, nos. 9-10 (single bulletin); missing p. 15.

Organization Bulletin of the Workers Party (New York District), prior to April 1935, no. 1: no file copy (No. 2 is on file.)

Claridad Proletaria, 1937 (or earlier), nos. 1-6: no file copies.

Internal Bulletin of the Marxist Policy Committee, 1937, nos. 1-2: no file copies.

Left-Wing Correspondence of the Committee for an Appeal Left Wing, 1937, nos. 1-3: no file copies; no. 5, January 1938: front page illegible.

International Bulletin of the Information Service of the Fourth International, late 1940 or early 1941, vol. 1, no. 4: no file copy.

International Bulletin, April-September 1942, vol. 2, no. 2: no file copy.

SWP Internal Bulletin, 1942, vol. 4, no. 4: no file copy.

SWP Discussion Bulletin, May 1963, vol. 24, no. 16: missing p. 9.

SWP Party Campaigner: need any copies between 1965-69.

the Roosevelt administration is demonstrating its intentions of shackling the labor movement in preparation for a totalitarian conduct of the war.

The strikebreaking barrage leveled by Roosevelt at the "captive" coal mine strike clearly reflects a turn toward a more open policy of curbing labor's struggle for its rights during the war period.

A further expression of Roosevelt's all-out drive against the right to strike, was his order last week to one of his most willing lackeys, Daniel Tobin, AFL Teamsters head, to immediately call off the strike of Railway Express teamsters in Detroit. When Tobin informed Roosevelt that he was willing, but needed two additional days to get his executive board together, Roosevelt quickly countered with a categorical demand that the strike be called off at once regardless of the circumstances.

Thus, the CIO convention faces the fact that the accelerated war drive means an intensified employer-government campaign against union conditions and against the very existence of the union movement.

[However] the union ranks, impelled by their elementary needs, have refused to be curbed. The Bethlehem Steel strike smashed through the open shop defenses of Little Steel, leading to a succession of CIO victories throughout the entire steel industry which brought widespread wage increases.

The greatest citadel of anti-union terror, the Ford Motor Company, was cracked wide open by a strike which won a closed shop contract for the UAW.

Once a UAW drive was begun in the mushrooming aircraft industry, the young workers in this field poured into the union. The victorious Vultee strike inspired a wave of militancy among the aircraft workers. The North American strike, in spite of Roosevelt's strikebreaking use of troops, further helped to establish the UAW in aircraft.

Justice of Palestinian struggle

Through the participation of their leaders at the Mideast conference in Madrid, the Palestinian people gained a broader hearing in the world for their just demands in their decades-long struggle for self-determination.

A new layer of Palestinian leaders has emerged from inside the West Bank and Gaza as a result of the *intifada*, the Palestinian uprising that began in 1987. This, along with a political and economic weakening of Israel itself, has forced Tel Aviv to make concessions it never dreamed of making two decades ago.

This was significant because of the blows dealt to the Palestinian cause during the U.S.-led war against Iraq, due mainly to the political support Yasir Arafat and other Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders extended to Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

The Mideast conference was the first occasion where the Israeli government has agreed to sit down and negotiate with leaders selected by the Palestinian people themselves.

The unfolding economic crisis in Israel and the accompanying political polarization indicate that the class struggle inside Israel is likely to heat up. This will provide openings for winning over one of the biggest potential allies of Palestinian working people, the Israeli working class itself.

Washington's goal at the conference was to capitalize on its gains from a strengthened alliance with the capitalist regimes of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. These regimes joined in the brutal assault against Iraq.

The U.S. government failed in its war goal of establishing a stable and subservient regime in Iraq that could effectively police the region, along with possibly Syria and Israel, to defend imperialist interests. Washington has since been searching for a range of stable capitalist regimes that it can rely on to deal blows to the struggles of workers and farmers in the region.

Today's capitalist governments of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and other Arab countries are the product of the consolidation of national bourgeoisies and substantial middle classes in these

countries. These bourgeois regimes use their state power — including naked violence and aggression — to advance their class interests against rival powers, as well as against the workers and peasants at home.

These regimes, while claiming to speak on behalf of their Palestinian "brothers," have repeatedly shed Palestinian blood to preserve their own class power and state privileges.

Washington is pressuring more of these governments to follow in the footsteps of Cairo by establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. Nonetheless, these capitalist governments must take into account the potentially destabilizing political consequences at home among Arab people who strongly identify with the Palestinian struggle.

The stronger alliance between Washington and the bourgeois Arab regimes has weakened Israel's influence with Washington. Tel Aviv has lost some of its special weight in the world imperialist system, and thus its leverage in wresting ever-increasing economic and military assistance from its powerful ally.

The divergence of interests between Washington and Tel Aviv has not brought the U.S. rulers closer to a "solution" to the Palestinian question, without which their efforts to establish more stable relations with bourgeois regimes in the Middle East are continually disrupted.

Washington's biggest political obstacle is the irrepressible fight of the Palestinian people for their national self-determination — above all the struggles of the Palestinian people living inside the post-1967 borders of "Greater Israel."

A reflection of this was seen at the Madrid conference itself. Despite efforts to the contrary, the struggles of workers and peasants in the region were highlighted through the speeches of the Palestinian delegates.

Their conduct and the four-year-long *intifada* in the West Bank and Gaza are a reaffirmation that the Palestinians will not stop fighting until they have won their struggle for land and national self-determination. Their fight is in the interests of all working people.

Revolution's lessons are alive

November 7 marks the 74th anniversary of the Russian revolution. Also known as the October revolution, it occurred October 25 according to the Russian calendar used at the time.

With the failure of the coup in the Soviet Union this past summer and the disappearance of the Soviet Communist Party, capitalist politicians and commentators have leaped to proclaim the revolution a mistake, an accident, an experiment that went wrong, or a detour of world development from its otherwise "democratic" course. These are false conclusions.

The usurpation of the revolution by a gangster-like caste of privileged rulers under Stalin in the 1920s cannot hide what the Russian revolution was: an uprising of workers and peasants in their tens of millions in the face of a catastrophic war and economic crisis into which the outmoded tsarist regime had plunged the country.

Led by the Bolsheviks, the workers and peasants took control of the resources, land, and industries of Russia. The revolution expropriated the landlords and capitalists, stripping them of their ability to profit from the toil of the hundreds of millions of working people. Political power passed into the hands of workers' and peasants' councils, known as soviets.

New republics forged by peoples previously colonized by the tsarist empire voluntarily joined the new union of soviet republics. This deep-going and popular revolution inspired and won the solidarity of millions worldwide who sought to emulate the Bolsheviks' example.

Struggles by workers and farmers against the same ex-

ploitation, oppression, and wars have occurred in country after country since 1917. But while workers have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to struggle, revolutionary-minded fighters have continuously run up against the obstacles of Stalinism.

In Cuba, a vanguard organization of working people did lead a victorious revolution that charted the same internationalist course as the Russian revolution had done 40 years earlier. The battle continues today in Cuba, where working people are defending their country against imperialism and fighting to find ways to deepen their revolution.

The Russian revolution and the bloody inter-imperialist war which gave rise to it were not accidents but the inevitable outcome of the workings of capitalism, a ruthless system based on exploitation of the vast majority by a tiny few. But while capitalism has repeatedly spawned wars and depressions, it also creates its own gravediggers — the working class.

In the 1990s world capitalism is in an economic crisis which is leading to sharpening rivalry among imperialist powers and new wars. The brutalities of the war against Iraq were an indicator of what is to come.

The Russian revolution was the working class's answer to the barbarism the imperialists are capable of inflicting to defend their economic system. Working people everywhere face the task of repeating, and completing, what the workers of Russia began in 1917: to overthrow capitalist rule and replace it with the power of workers and farmers, opening the door to a world free of exploitation, oppression, and war.

Defend GIs' political rights

The war against Iraq waged by Washington and its allies earlier this year signaled the period we are in: an explosive time of economic and political rivalry and class conflict. Capitalism is sliding toward depression while the rulers, despite much talk of disarmament, continue to prepare for war. At such times defending the rights of GIs to debate, discuss, and express their political ideas becomes more important.

The labor movement and working people as a whole have a stake in defending the political rights of all working people in uniform. Whenever the rulers prepare for a war, they seek to whip up prowar sentiment and accompany this with a drive to clamp down on the democratic right to freedom of expression. They especially try to limit the rights of the workers and farmers who make up the bulk of the U.S. armed forces.

In its assault on Iraqi workers and peasants, Washington attempted to cover up atrocities like the burying alive of thousands of Iraqi soldiers in their trenches. The U.S. military did its best to ensure that GIs fell into line in support of these actions.

GIs are protected by the same First Amendment rights to freedom of speech, press, and association as other U.S. citizens. But those who run the U.S. military prefer to forget this when it comes to GIs speaking out against

government war policies.

This is the issue at stake in the fight by Jason Coughlin, a member of the Air Force stationed at Offutt base in Nebraska, against attempts by the military brass to harass and victimize him.

The experiences Coughlin went through during the course of Washington's war against Iraq attracted him to the political perspective put forward by the Young Socialist Alliance, which participates in struggles in defense of the rights of working people and campaigned against the war.

In response, the Air Force revoked Coughlin's security clearance, opened an investigation into his political affiliations, and claimed that his "loyalty, honesty and reliability" were in question.

Coughlin has fought back, reaching out for support to working people and other defenders of democratic rights. He presented his case publicly through an interview and column appearing in the *Omaha World-Herald* newspaper.

Public discussion of this issue is what the military seeks to avoid. Winning support for GI Coughlin's right to express his political point of view today will make it harder for the U.S. military to clamp down on GIs exercising their democratic rights as citizen soldiers in the future wars that Washington has in store.

This column is devoted to a discussion with our readers — printing remarks, questions, suggestions, and other comments sent to the *Militant*. Where possible we will take up issues raised in notes and letters as a way to help clarify and expand on the coverage of the paper.

With this issue we are introducing several design changes we think make the *Militant* a more attractive paper. The new front-page flag and the use of color will now be a regular feature.

Listing the cover price in countries where the paper is regularly sold on the street, door-to-door, and at work sites, reflects the international distribution of the *Militant*.

A reader from Brooklyn disagrees with an aspect of the series of articles on independent working-class political action. The reader takes issue with the assessment of the

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union's decision to support the "Labor Party Advocates" at its August convention.

Labor Party Advocates has been promoted by top officials of the OCAW. They say it will not be a labor party, but an organizing committee for such a new organization. This development was reviewed in an article by OCAW member Joel Britton in the October 11 issue.

The reader notes a quote by Frederick Engels, a close collaborator of Karl Marx, from a letter Engels sent to socialists in the United States. Staff writer Brian Williams included sections of the letter in his article reviewing massive struggles waged in the history of the U.S. labor movement that headed in the direction of unions breaking from the parties of the capitalists.

Part of the quote by Engels said, "That the first program of this [labor] party is still confused and extremely deficient ... these are unavoidable evils but also merely transitory ones."

Our reader writes, "One reason you gave for your opposition [to Labor Party Advocates] was that the proposed program for this party was neither anti-capitalist nor pro-socialist. You should ponder Engels' words and also realize that the development of a Labor Party is a process which is still in its infancy. Don't be so quick to reject what you have always called for."

The articles by Britton and Williams discussed the pressing need for the labor movement to chart an independent political course. Each week brings new reasons — from rising unemployment to the showing of David Duke in the Louisiana elections — why the union officialdom's refusal to break with the framework of what is good for "America" and "our" company or what won't bust "our" state and federal budgets furthers the retreat of the labor movement.

Independent working-class political action fundamentally means the working class engaging in strikes, protests, and other mobilizations to defend its interests against the employers' assault; relying on its own mobilized ranks to advance the cause of all working people; and taking political action independent of the institutions and prerogatives of the billionaire ruling families who run America.

Such a course can only come out of growing battles waged by working people as the economic crisis sharpens and Washington seeks to drag humanity into more devastating wars of conquest.

What Britton and Williams argued was that the Labor Party Advocates has nothing to do with even any initial stirrings among working people. It is rather a response by the union officialdom to the pressure they are under from the employer offensive against the labor movement.

Seeing the decline of the dues base and weakening of their political influence in the two parties of big business, a wing of the union officialdom is hoping, through threats of forming a "labor party," that they can regain some lost ground.

Britton reviewed the program of the Labor Party Advocates to show how it is consistent with these facts. As in its composition and structure, there is no indication of a break from the framework of capitalist politics in the liberal program advanced by its organizers.

"The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the constitution of the workers as an independent political party," Engels wrote in the sentence prior to the one quoted above. When this happens, as the reader points out, communists can fight for adoption of a revolutionary program within a workers' party that does represent a break toward independent working-class political action.

Three corrections: In the November 1 issue, a "Union Talk" column on the rail industry said that trainmen who are pushed out of their job as a result of crew size reductions would be placed on a reserve board. The article incorrectly stated they would receive "75 percent of a basic five-day week or 95 percent of last year's wages, whichever is greater." The 95 percent figure should have been 75 percent.

In the November 8 issue two errors appeared: Buddy Roemer, the governor of Louisiana, was incorrectly identified as a Democrat who had switched his party affiliation from Republican. Roemer was a Democrat until last spring when he became a Republican.

An item in the "On the Picket Line" column said that the United Mine Workers of America contract allows miners to take 10 "memorial days" each year, rather than during the life of the union contract as is the case.

Omaha daily covers GI's fight to defend democratic rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The fight by Jason Coughlin, a GI in the U.S. Air Force, for his own and all GIs' democratic right to hold and express political views free from harassment from the brass has led to a debate in the pages of the *Omaha World-Herald*.

Entitled, "Airman's Politics Prompt Air Force Investigation," a feature article in the October 12 *World-Herald* reviewed some of the facts of Coughlin's case.

In June, shortly after Coughlin, 20, joined the Young Socialist Alliance in Omaha, Nebraska, the Air Force brass began harassing him because of his political views. The Air Force Office of Special Investigation falsely accused Coughlin of trying to sell the *Militant* newspaper on base property.

On July 1, immediately after Coughlin returned from attending the Socialist Workers Party convention in Chicago, the Air Force suspended his "top secret" security clearance. Coughlin was removed from his job as a computer programmer with the nuclear targeting staff at the Offutt Air Force base, and given a temporary clerk job at the base housing office.

On September 23, Coughlin was informed by Brig. Gen. Albert Jensen that the Air Force was conducting a security investigation on him. "This action is being taken because of your alleged involvement with socialist organizations, contact with a foreign national and the perception of your questionable loyalty, honesty and reliability," wrote Jensen.

"I and other GIs should have the right to stay in and have any political ideas we want as citizen soldiers," responded Coughlin.

"We're still protected by the First Amendment."

Coughlin is currently on leave of absence from the YSA, which is the socialist youth group's practice for its members in the armed forces.

Air Force 'prudence'

In an October 17 editorial entitled, "Air Force Shows Prudence," the *World-Herald* backed the Air Force's action.

"The Air Force has an obligation to be sure that anyone with access to sensitive information uses that information only as intended," the paper wrote. "Considering, however, that Coughlin says he is 'ready to fight for gains for the working class against the ruling class,' the Air Force is only being prudent to take him away from the nuclear targeting computers while it considers his future."

Coughlin responded to these charges October 25 in the *World-Herald* column, "Another Point of View."

In answer to the Air Force's claim that his socialist views and political activity threaten national security, Coughlin pointed to the 1986 decision by U.S. district court judge Thomas Griesa that stated the political activities of the Socialist Workers Party and YSA are legal and constitutional. This ruling stemmed from a landmark lawsuit filed by the SWP and YSA in 1973 against decades of illegal government spying and harassment.

"Since I am not charged with illegal activity, my political ideas have nothing to do with my suitability for a security clearance," wrote Coughlin.



Militant/Roni McCann

Coughlin says his fight is for the rights of GIs to express political views

"What are these dangerous activities" that the Air Force is so concerned about? asked Coughlin. "One of the most exciting things I have done was to go to Wichita, Kan., to defend the right of women to choose abortion."

"I recently went to the Student Environmental Action Coalition convention in Boulder, Colo., and the YSA convention in Ohio," he stated.

"I read and study the ideas of Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Thomas Sankara, and other revolutionary leaders.

"Millions of workers end up in the military. Many, like me, join because good jobs are hard to find. When we join, we do not leave our experiences and lives behind. We don't forget our exposure to union-busting, police brutality, and layoffs. We will continue to exercise our constitutional rights to talk to

each other and learn from each other," Coughlin said.

"Instead of attacking my ideas and activities directly the Air Force has chosen to question the fact that I have had political discussions with working people from other countries," he wrote in the opinion column.

"But the Air Force has admitted I have satisfied all security requirements for such get-togethers," he explained. "Working people all over the world have interests in common, and I intend to learn from other people and help them learn about the situation of people in this country."

In the *World-Herald* interview, Coughlin states his determination to keep up the fight. "The view I've gained through the Young Socialist Alliance, the view of the working-class struggle around the world, is something I'm never turning away from."

LETTERS

Exploitation of farmers

I read with interest the articles regarding working farmers and free trade written by Doug Jenness, because I am the son of a Japanese poor farmer. The farmers have been suffering from government agricultural policies such as farming restrictions, taxes, chemicals and loans. Young people have gone to the towns for 30 years and won't stay in farming. Leaders of the farmers' movement are conservative and support the Liberal Democratic Party in power.

Socialists have to be concerned about farming because of the need for healthy foods, the environment, and solidarity of workers and farmers opposing exploitation from capitalists. We have a proverb in Japan: Eat foods harvested within 30 km.

Please send a 1 year subscription renewal to the *Militant*, and a copy of *Women and the Family* by Leon Trotsky. I am enclosing 15,000 yen. Make the rest a donation to the prisoner fund.

T.Y.
Osaka, Japan

Palestinian cause

I have received the *Militant*. It's clear you are interested in U.S. workers and also in international events such as the Gulf war, the Kurdish problem and the Palestinian cause.

I thank you for publishing part of our interview. You sure did a good job. I wish you good luck and further progress.

Sami Samaan
The General Federation of Trade Unions-Nablus
Ramallah, West Bank

Read every issue

First off, I wanted to thank you for the quality of your publication. Although I am not a subscriber, I read every issue at the campus library at Southwest Missouri State University. Being in a small mid-

western city, our newspaper happens to overlook most of the stories you print. Thanks for keeping my eyes open to the real news of the world.

As I mentioned before, my library gets your newspaper, so I have not subscribed. Instead, use the enclosed money to help defray the costs of sending the *Militant* to prisoners. It is an excellent program, and I am pleased to be able to help, if only slightly.

Best wishes, and keep up the fight. La Lucha Continua!

William A. Morgan
Springfield, Missouri

Stalinism and fascism

The article by George Buchanan in the October 25 issue of the *Militant* entitled "Anti-immigrant attacks rise in Germany" makes a point that needs to be developed more. Buchanan writes that "racist, right-wing currents were nurtured within the bureaucratic caste that ruled [in former East Germany]. This shows that capitalism and the anti-working class political currents it engenders are not the only source of fascists, but that in fact the ruling stratum in the Eastern European and Soviet workers' states is a breeding ground for fascist elements."

I can see how Stalinist functionaries, especially those in or around secret police agencies, would naturally gravitate towards reactionary capitalist politics. After all, their entire political existence is based on suppressing and terrorizing the working class. As their social base crumbles, individuals, whole layers, and even entire sections of the Stalinist caste will collaborate with, or actually join, right wing or fascist forces.

There is ample precedent for fascist leaders and cadres coming out of communist or socialist organizations. Leon Trotsky observed that both Stalinism and fascism were produced by the same cause: "the dilatoriness of the world proletariat in solving the problems set for it by

history. Stalinism and fascism, in spite of a deep difference in social foundations, are symmetrical phenomena. In many of their features they show a deadly similarity."

Saying all this, however, I think it's important not to give the impression that Stalinism leads to fascism, or that the Stalinist castes are 'social fascist.' Fascist forces are used by capitalist classes against a combative working class that threatens to take state power. The Stalinist bureaucracy has a much different task — to maintain its parasitic grip on a society where workers have already seized power. As the cause for both phenomena is the same, so is the solution; as Trotsky put it, "a victorious revolutionary movement."

Bill Kalman
Des Moines, Iowa

Cops and capitalism

The recent articles about police brutality have been great. You also have printed some excellent explanations about the role the cops play in capitalism. Therefore, I was very surprised to read that the SWP is running a candidate for San Francisco county sheriff (*Militant* No. 32, Sept. 13, page 4). Was this a misprint?

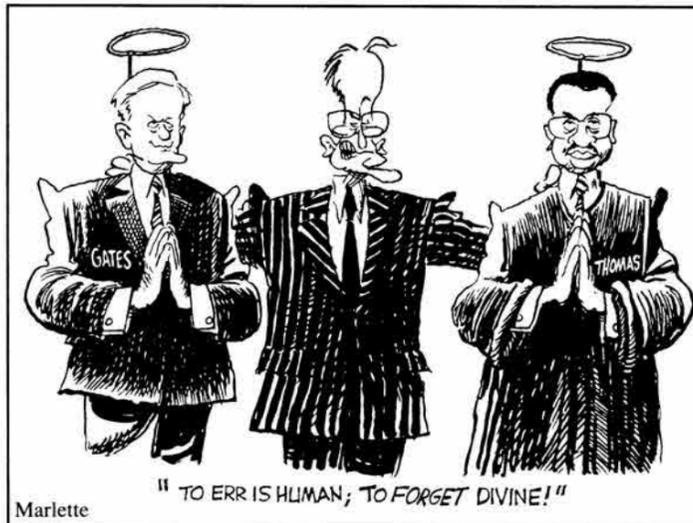
Irma McAllister
New Orleans, Louisiana

Haiti protest

Seventy-five people, mostly Haitians, marched from the State Capitol here October 12 to protest the ouster of Haitian President Aristide and to demand the restoration of democracy in Haiti.

Chants at the spirited march and rally demanded OAS and UN support for Haiti and the freeing of Haitians detained at the Chrome Detention Center in Miami.

Pledges of support for the restoration of Aristide were given by Rev. Taylor representing the Southern Christian Leadership confer-



ence and speakers from Amnesty International and the Socialist Workers Party.

One of the main organizers of the march helped pass out a leaflet announcing a Militant Labor Forum on Haiti to be held October 19. Two Haitians volunteered to speak at the forum, and others promised to attend. Several visited the Pathfinder Bookstore following the march.

Organizers plan a follow-up march and rally at the State Capitol October 26.

Bob Braxton
Atlanta, Georgia

'Militant' gets around

For many years we have had the opportunity of reading the articles published in your newspaper and we have greatly appreciated the high standards of content and form.

As we ourselves are editing a monthly magazine in Dutch on international politics, *De Nieuwe Wereld* (The New World), distributed in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium and partly in the Netherlands, we are not only impressed by, but also very interested in making available here the information and points of view you are able to pub-

lish, especially concerning the labour and democratic movement in the U.S.A.

We would enormously appreciate it if you would allow us to translate some of the articles in your newspaper for our Dutch-speaking audience.

Geert Seynaeve, editor
Kathlijn Pittomvils, press officer
De Nieuwe Wereld
Leuven, Belgium

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

The *Militant* prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners. Every donation helps bring the truth about the struggles of working people to workers behind bars. Please send your contribution to Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Rally protests conditions that caused North Carolina poultry plant fire

BY ROBERT DEES

HAMLET, North Carolina—More than 500 people marched and rallied here October 18 to protest working conditions that caused 25 deaths in a fire at Imperial Food Products September 3. The spirited crowd responded enthusiastically to chants of "organize the South" and calls to continue marches "until the walls come tumbling down."

Participants were mostly Black workers from the area. Several union officials from the recently adjourned state AFL-CIO convention in nearby Charlotte and other activists attended.

The rally was sponsored by a coalition of local groups together with NAACP, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the National Rainbow Coalition, and the Charlotte Labor Council.

The rally showed the potential for organizing working people to fight for safe working conditions. Nevertheless in the two months since the fire at the poultry plant politicians and union officials continue to orient toward relying on government officials and employer benevolence.

Keynote speaker Jesse Jackson praised local politicians, including the mayor of Hamlet who were part of the platform. Jackson suggested that, as the march proceeded through the town of 6,200, people were "marching not on each other, but together, finding common ground." He concluded by leading a chant to "hold on."

William Wynn, UFCW president, and Vena McFadden, vice president of the Service Employees International Union, also spoke.

James Andrews, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO, was quoted in the *Greensboro News and Record* shortly after the fire as saying, "I would be very happy if this incident would spark employers and employees to be more safety conscious." But, An-

draws assured, "I don't expect this to spur any new organizing effort."

'Individual responsibility'

Andrews suggested that if workers are afraid to bring a pressing safety issue to management's attention, they find a church or community leader to raise the issue on their behalf. Andrews also detailed several problems workers in any workplace should be alert to, such as knowing the location of fire exits. He suggested each workers should be individually responsible for his or her own safety. "You always tell kids to pick up their toys," Andrews said.

Not surprisingly, with such a leadership default, union membership among workers in North Carolina has fallen to 4.46 percent.

North Carolina is one of 21 states that has its own federally approved health and safety inspection program. At the time of the Hamlet fire, the state had 16 certified safety inspectors—plus 12 more in training—to police more than 160,000 work sites.

The U.S. Labor Department does annual evaluations of North Carolina's program. Last year's evaluation pointed out that the state has a six-year backlog of uninvestigated complaints. A 1986 fatality has still not been investigated. In 1989 the state agency received 21 serious safety complaints and 17 serious health complaints that were ignored. The number of safety inspections has dropped sharply, from about 2,700 in 1988 to fewer than 1,500 in 1990. Nevertheless, federal evaluators consistently rated the state program as being "generally effective."

The State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) recently joined the attempt to cover up the company and government's responsibility for the 25 deaths. SBI agent David Campbell said, "That was a massive fireball that went through that plant" lasting less than 60 seconds. Workers would have been killed "even



Twenty-five workers died in September 3 fire at Imperial Food Products plant

Militant/Jane Roland

if every door in that plant had been standing wide open."

This is contradicted by the coroner's findings that virtually all 25 died not of burns, but of smoke inhalation. The bodies were found not at work stations, but mostly huddled around locked exit doors.

In addition to relying on the employers becoming more safety conscious, the state

labor tops continue to look to the representatives of big business in government for solutions to the problem of workplace health and safety.

In the state AFL-CIO 1991 Final Legislative Report, Andrews wrote, "The grassroots campaign we conducted was the key to our successful effort to pass legislation that will protect and improve the quality of life for all North Carolina workers." The report was dated September 6, three days after the fire.

The state AFL-CIO's official response to the fire has consisted of a call for "reform of our state OSHA program and for an increase in the number of OSHA inspectors." The body later also called for the U.S. Labor Department to take over the state program.

After the fire, Governor James Martin proposed that 27 more state inspectors be hired, and a decision was made that federal OSHA inspectors would supplement the efforts of state employees.

But additional disclosures about federal OSHA's functioning show that simply transferring health and safety enforcement from state to federal government officials will not solve the problem for working people. For example:

- The median federal fine in cases where a worker is killed or seriously injured is only \$500. This compares with the median state fine of \$395. In one instance, an employer paid a fine of only \$2 for the deaths of two workers in Georgia.

- In 20 years, only one employer has been sent to jail for violating federal OSHA rules, in spite of tens of thousands of deaths and injuries.

- OSHA never hears about many workplace deaths because it relies on the media and employers to report accidents.

Last year North Carolina state inspectors checked less than 1 percent of all workplaces. Federal standards call for random checking of a mere 2 percent. State Labor Commissioner John Brooks conceded that even if the state had met federal standards, Imperial Food Products probably would never have been visited.

U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors, who visited the plant daily, never reported any of the health or safety violations, in spite of state and federal laws requiring them to do so. "These employees are our eyes and ears," Brooks said.

Since the fire, three Greensboro busi-

Continued on page 12

Greek farmers resist police assault

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS AND GEORGES MEHRBIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Several thousand raisin and table grape farmers rallied in Iráklion, the capital city of the island of Crete, September 30. The city's thoroughfares were blocked as the farmers assembled with trucks and tractors in front of the provincial government building.

Inside the building, representatives of the farmers' Coordinating Committee of Struggle met with government officials, including the provincial governor of Crete and the general secretary of the ministry of agriculture, to present their demands. Members of Parliament from the area and representatives of the main political parties also took part at the meeting.

Crete, located in the southern part of the Aegean sea in the Mediterranean, is the largest of the Greek islands and a major agricultural center.

The farmers explained that this past year production had been considerably reduced as a result of phylloxera, a disease of the vine. Still, much of the grape and raisin harvest is going unsold. According to *Eleftherotipia*, a major daily, only 5,000 to 8,000 tons had been sold out of 40,000 tons of raisins produced by the time of the protests. A drop in exports of grapes has contributed to this.

A long line of middlemen contribute to the price squeeze on the farmers and high prices at the grocery store. While producers get as little as 50 drachmas per kilo of table grapes, the consumer in Athens pays at least 250 (187 drachmas = US\$1).

Farmers demanded higher prices for their grapes and raisins; debt relief for the farmers hit with phylloxera; government subsidies for the transport of grapes and low interest loans to enable cooperatives to directly mar-

ket their produce; and European Community (EC) subsidies to boost exports of grapes.

The level of subsidies paid to farmers in Europe is higher than that in the United States. Some 40 percent of gross income from sales of farm products in the European Community is paid from government subsidies, while the comparable figure for the United States is 20 percent.

The Iráklion protest took place the day after a demonstration of 200,000 farmers in France that focused on opposition to cuts in EC subsidies for farm products.

The subsidies mainly benefit capitalist farmers and large food export companies. For example 20 percent of all recipients take in 80 percent of the funds in the EC's subsidy program.

In solidarity with the farmers, the Iráklion Labor Center had called a four-hour work stoppage for the day of the protests. The retailers association called for shops to close for one hour.

Upon rejection of the farmers' demands by the government representatives, hundreds of farmers poured into the provincial government building and occupied it. The police immediately went into action launching a violent attack on the demonstrators. Tear gas, smoke bombs, and rubber bullets descended upon the occupied government building and the assembled farmers.

More than 8,000 farmers resisted the cop attack into the evening. The entire city center was described by the press as a battlefield. The police continued using tear gas for three hours. By then the provincial government building was largely destroyed by fire. Thirty-five people, mostly farmers but including five cops, were hospitalized.

The cop attack was condemned by all

major farm organizations, trade unions, and opposition political parties in parliament. "Responsibility [for the events] resides exclusively with the government," declared representatives of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). PASOK, a bourgeois social-democratic party, controlled the Greek government through most of the 1980s and is the country's largest opposition party.

"Instead of dialogue, the government chose the path of violence against the farmers who had congregated to seek solution to their pressing and immediate problems," said a statement by the Athens Labor Center, which is made up of representatives of most trade unions in Greece's capital.

No police or government body has yet accepted responsibility for the order to attack. The Iráklion city prosecutor launched an investigation after the incident.

The following day farmers returned to Iráklion and blocked all roads into and out of the city. A delegation made up of representatives of the farmers' Coordinating Committee of Struggle, Iráklion's mayor, and the president of the Iráklion Labor Center went to Athens to meet with the press, various political parties, and government officials to present their demands and counter the claims that they were responsible for the violence.

The farmers protests took place in the context of an increasing squeeze on working people as the government of Constantine Mitsotakis is pushing through serious austerity measures. A number of strikes by industrial unions and government employees against layoffs and plant closings unfolded in October. The school year began with dozens of high school occupations by students across the country demanding more funds and better quality in education.