

of his kidneys taken out for sale to people in the West.

There is much more that will take place, and we will document it over the next several months. However, it is clear to say that during the 1980's, during the Reagan administration, we would have never granted MFN to the Soviet Union when they were doing terrible things. I remember when the Reagan administration and President Reagan gave the speech in Orlando, the evil empire, where he talked against the activities that were taking place. We in the Congress in a bipartisan way stood in solidarity to those in the Soviet Union, the dissidents, those that wanted to leave the Soviet Union and those that were being persecuted because of their faith and whatever reasons they were being persecuted, we stood in solidarity. Even during the Reagan administration, 250,000 people came and rallied on the Mall on behalf of those people.

Every time there were visits from the Reagan administration and also the Carter administration to Russia, they may very well have met with Brezhnev and met with Gorbachev, but they also met in the American embassy in solidarity with those who were being persecuted in the Soviet Union. We stood with those people during that period of time, and we ought to stand with those people in China during this period of time.

When I talked to Natan Shcharansky, who was in Perm Camp 35 in the Soviet Union, Shcharansky was baffled that we would ever grant MFN to China because he maintained that the reason he was released from Perm Camp 35 prison during that period of time was because of our activity in regard to MFN.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, I might say that we will cover a number of these issues and urge the Members to seriously look at religious persecution, persecution of dissidents, the Catholic church, the Protestant church, the Buddhists, and many others as we make a decision whether or not we would grant MFN.

DEMOCRATIC ANSWER TO REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL INACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, let me just say that I paid special attention to the gentleman from Virginia who spoke with respect to China and also to my Republican friend and colleague from Florida, [Mr. FOLEY] who spoke with respect to NAFTA and its shortcomings. I cannot say how gratified I am to hear my colleagues on this side of the aisle starting to understand and recognize

the limitations of some of these international agreements and treaties that we have entered into, and I am pleased that they are speaking out.

Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed to read in this week's papers that the Speaker is back at it again. For 3 months the American people have waited for the Republican party to begin to move on an agenda, to propose a budget, to address the serious problems we have with health and with education, health for our children, reforming our campaign finance system. Yet day after day we show up here for work and nothing. No budget, no bills scheduled, very few votes, and so it is not hard to see why most people feel like nothing is getting done in Washington. Yet the Speaker, who has done nothing to move an agenda for working families, has instead decided that it is time to launch attacks, to distort the facts and to demonize those who disagree with him. The same Speaker who seems to be running from his own personal responsibilities for violating rules of this House and subverting our campaign finance laws has accused others of rigging the game. So it is no wonder that the American people have grown cynical and tired of Washington's political games.

Last year the Gingrich revolution with all its excesses and missteps and extremism was exposed for what it was. It was a radical attempt to turn back the clock on progress for American families.

□ 1300

But let us not forget the Gingrich revolutionaries do not just want to cut Medicare and education to give tax breaks to the wealthy. They brag about their opposition to Medicare, they tried to eliminate the Department of Education, they tried to let polluters rewrite environmental laws. And let us also not forget that it was our efforts in this House that stopped that revolution. And let us not forget that we did not do it alone. Working men and women throughout the country stood up and said we want to protect Medicare, we want to invest in education, and we want to preserve our environment.

Now, NEWT GINGRICH has learned nothing, I think, from the experiences of the last 2 years. In fact, just yesterday in a frantic drive to recapture the fervor of his lost revolution, the Speaker proposed a set of massive tax breaks for the wealthiest people in this country. This Gingrich tax would give away to the wealthy—these tax breaks would cost over 300 billion over the next 5 years, \$300 billion, and what is more than that, what could happen if this occurs is the following:

You cannot do this. You cannot have breaks in those magnitudes without breaking the budget. It cannot be done without wrecking Medicare. It cannot be done without savaging education.

At a time when we should be coming to some consensus on how to balance

our budget here, the Speaker seems more concerned about coddling his wealthy donors.

The Gingrich speech comes just one day after a story in the Washington Times revealed that wealthy donors warned the GOP that if they do not get their tax breaks, the Republican Party will not get their money. It was as simple and clear as that. There is no end to the Gingrich Republicans' effort to pander to these wealthy special interests.

Now, this week we were supposed to take up a bill that would have saved middle-income homeowners hundreds of dollars a year on their mortgage insurance, and I might add that this bill received broad bipartisan support in the committee. But at the last minute the Republican leadership bowed to the pressure of the special interests and pulled the bill.

We should have passed that bill. It would have saved a middle-income family buying a \$119,000 home \$70 a month. That bill now has been shelved because the special interests got to their leadership. No relief for homeowners, no help for middle income families trying to balance their budgets, no balanced budgets for America. And we get from the reborn revolution, all we get from it is tax breaks for their wealthy donors.

So the American people are tired of this. They are tired of seeing their hard-earned dollars, their hopes for a secure retirement, their promise for their kids' education, threatened by a relentless Republican drive to reward the wealthy donors.

The Speaker may be right. The game in this country may be rigged. But it is not rigged by the working families who struggle every day to make ends meet. It is not rigged by the working men and women who organize and fight back when they see our rights are threatened. It is rigged by the wealthy interests that the Speaker seems so eager to please with these new tax giveaways.

This country needs a real debate on our different political philosophies, a debate about some of the most fundamental questions that we face today:

What is the role of government? What are the possibilities of limits on the free market? What is the meaning of citizenship? Of political participation itself?

So let us have that debate, and let us remember our own history when we have it. I believe that somewhere along the line our politics has gotten disconnected from the American people. People no longer see a link between their lives and politics, between their lives and the forces controlling our economy, between their lives and the real challenges that we are facing as individuals and as a nation, and this disconnection has helped create a feeling of powerlessness, of frustration, of alienation.

Our challenge is to try to plug people back in. We need to give people a reason to believe again. We need to reestablish a connection between people and their Government and between people and our economy, and I want to talk about a group that the Speaker attacked and demonized just several days ago.

To me the labor movement is fundamental to this challenge of reconnection. Over the years more than anybody else, the labor movement has helped connect people to politics in a meaningful way. By fighting for the day-to-day needs of the American families, by representing values beyond what we could see, unions have brought dignity and depth to our democracy. They have helped put a human face on change, and we need that human face today more than ever. At stake is not just the future of our families, it is the fate of our democracy.

Today I want to talk to you about some of the ways that unions can be the missing link we so badly need in this changing world. Recently I was driving out of town, and I passed underneath a bridge, and on the bridge there was a big banner that read "Unions, the people who brought you the weekend," and I thought that was a creative reminder of the role that unions have played in America, but then you wondered how many people really understood what that means.

Now growing up, I could not help but hear that message because I grew up in a union household, and for 30 years my grandfather was a member of the Automobile Workers, and every single morning I got up with him and watched him go off to work in the old Dodge main plant at Hamtramck, Michigan. We were first generation middle class, and by that I mean we understood that the only reason we were middle class was because of the battles that working people had fought and won.

Unions were not something you really had to discuss; it was just part of us. By simple osmosis, just being there, you were brought up to believe that certain rights were fundamental, as fundamental to the idea of liberty as free speech itself, and we held these rights to be self-evident, that everyone has a right to earn their own bread, that every person is endowed with certain inalienable rights, and that among these rights are the right to organize, to collectively bargain and the right to strike, and based on those rights we were brought up to believe in certain principles, that if you help a company make money, you deserve a raise, and if you get sick, you deserve good health care, that if you put in a lifetime of loyal service day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, you deserve a secure retirement and a pension. And if you do your job well, nobody has a right to take that job away from you.

So we understood that if we got up every morning and worked hard, we could earn a pretty good life, and

through the decades of battles both big and small corporations grudgingly came to accept certain responsibilities as well, that if they paid their workers fairly and gave something back to the community they would have loyal workers and they would have loyal customers.

Now to us that was the collective bargain, that is what community was all about, and for about 30 years that basic formula helped this country build a middle class that could afford to buy the products, the Zeniths, the Chevys that people made.

And of course when I tell this story to students, they look at me as if I am an old quaint professor telling them stories about the Great Frontier, and I guess who can blame them because if you read the stories that are abundant in the papers today and you listen to the stories on radio and on television, you kind of wonder.

Disney, the all-American company that I grew up with and ran home to watch after school, they announced that they are paying one person \$90 million, and what does that person do to earn \$90 million? Well, he got fired. He was the President and did not do a good job, and they fired him. As a going away present, they gave him as a severance package \$90 million. And of course the man who actually did the firing just signed a contract at the Washington Post, the paper in this town said, that paid him \$776 million over the next 10 years.

Yet how does Disney reward the people here at home? It moves jobs over to Haiti, where it pays Haitian workers 28 cents an hour to stitch its clothes, and yet when Disney stockholders had a chance to ban sweatshop labor, they voted against it.

And we see examples like this every day. Nike announced a 77-percent increase in its worldwide sales. The same day a new report comes out that Nike manufactures most of its product in Asian sweatshops, where it pays its people about 30 cents an hour. IBM tells 120 secretaries that for the good of the company they have to take a 10-percent pay cut. Same week, same very week, its top five executives are rewarded a bonus totaling \$5.8 million.

And the most perverse part of it all is that the corporations who are trying to do the right things, who treat their people well, who reward loyalty, are often penalized for it. Our economy makes it harder for them to be competitive.

So I am here today to tell you we cannot keep moving this way as a Nation. The America of our hopes and dreams will not be if we grow complacent about the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor is at a 50-year high. It will not be if we accept the fact that Manpower Temporary Services is now America's No. 1 employer. It cannot be if we accept the fact that CEO's who made 12 times more than workers in 1960 and 35 times more in 1974 now make 200 times more

than their workers today. And it certainly will not be if, God forbid, we should accept that these things are some sort of unavoidable byproduct of the modern economy.

So this just is not a question of jobs and paychecks. It is about a larger vision of our democracy and our way of life. It is about how we treat each other, it is about whether we are going to move forward together or we are going to split apart at the seams.

Now, there are some people who are trying to forge an alternative reality. In a runaway world, a world of runaway corporations and declining participation and growing income disparity and social unrest, there are some people challenging the New World Order that we live in. We see them in Las Vegas, where 4,000 people just won new rights. We see them in California, where 20,000 strawberry workers are preparing to march for justice this weekend. We see them across America, where 3,000 college students have fanned out to organize last summer. We see them in every city and every State, where people refuse to accept the way things are as a way that they have to be.

The labor movement has helped build American middle class and made the American dream for millions of families. If we want that dream to be vibrant, to be alive and to have new meaning for a new generation of America, we need to revitalize that very important component of our society. Labor has got to get back to basics, it has got to make organizing its top priority again, it has got to reach out to people it has never organized before, it has got to reach across borders to form new alliances in other countries so workers there are not being used as a hedge by our corporations to bring down our wages here, it has got to put a new face on its movement, it has got to work with religious leaders and community leaders to regain moral authority, and I am going to think about that in a second because I think that is the key missing ingredient to challenging the corporate greed and the other greed in our society. It has got to embrace a new spirit of self-criticism, and it has got to stay true to that vision that we learned all those years ago.

Today I want to talk to you about three areas where I believe these goals meet their most severe challenge. I want to talk to you about the role of unions, the reality of this new global economy and the challenge of organizing.

You know, the United Auto Workers have a saying printed right there on their web page. It says, "Before you know where you are going, you have to know where you have been," and I think the labor unions have played three fundamental roles in America, roles they are well-suited to play again.

First, unions have been a historic link between rising wages and rising productivity.

Now what do I mean? Well, this hard link, this link between how hard you work and what you earn, did not just exist in union shops. Unions helped establish a value for the whole society. When unions were at their peak from 1947 to 1973, American workers gave an almost 90 percent increase in productivity, and in return their real wages increased by 99 percent. But as union membership has fallen the past 20 years, this link has been fractured. From 1973 to 1982, workers got only half as much of an increase in real wages as they gave in productivity, and from 1982 to 1994 they only got a third as much. Today unions represent just 10 percent of the private sector, and all told since 1979 productivity has gone up 24 percent, but the real earnings for workers have gone down 12 percent.

Little wonder that most people feel like they are part of that Abbott and Costello routine where Bud Abbott says to Lou Costello, "Lou, if you got 50 bucks in one pocket and a hundred in the other, what do you got?," and Costello says, "Somebody else's pants." I mean people are being squeezed, and unions can make a difference.

In Chicago, IL, for example, grocery clerks at the Kroger Co. who are represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers, they earn \$12.50 an hour, with health and pension benefits. That same employee in Kansas City working for the same company makes \$8 an hour, with no benefits, because that person is not represented by a union.

□ 1315

If unions can recouple the link between wages and productivity, if they can reestablish the social compact and remind people that they can demand a fair share of the profits, they will shrink income disparities, they will strengthen our middle class, and we will be laying the groundwork for renewal of our democratic institutions.

Second: Unions have helped remind us that the economy exists for people and not the other way around, and by doing so, they have articulated an alternative set of values to corporate greed. If we are going to create a sense of community and participation in society, we have got to create a sense of community in the workplace. At work, as in society, it matters for people to work together, to have rights together; it matters for people to care about each other. It is an alternative set of values that believes people will act for reasons beyond pure self-interests.

Bob Kuttner reminds us in his new book, now let me paraphrase: Even in America, not everything is for sale. People have civic and social selves.

Unions, as a form of collective egalitarian action, strengthen those values. Fundamentally, unions at their best are an example of democracy in action. So it was no accident in Poland in the 1980's that the Solidarity movement was equated with democracy, because

when they argued for equal rights and worker rights, when they demanded to be treated with dignity and respect and fairness, they were not just arguing for those values in the workplace, they were arguing for those values in society. And with that larger vision came a certain moral authority. When labor was at its height, unions used to use that moral authority as a brake on runaway greed.

Now, over the past few decades, unions have lost that moral authority. They have ceded the higher ground, and they shoulder a fair amount of the blame. Too often they turned inward, they stopped organizing, they stopped focusing on the larger work force, and worked hard to protect what they had.

Then, as their membership shrank and the workplace changed, they fell further and further behind. They fought their own bureaucracy, and they made it easy for people like the Speaker to paint them as special interests. Where unions were once seen as allies of the middle class, they were now seen as the enemy. Where unions were once celebrated for raising wages, Ronald Reagan made America resent the fact that union members were earning more than anybody else, and that resentment, unfortunately, continues to this day.

But this can only go on for so long. Republicans have already overplayed their hand. The public is engaged in a backlash against the revolution of last Congress, and I think that was a harbinger of things to come. In cities and towns across the country, unions are joining together with religious leaders and respected community advocates to regain moral authority, to shame corporations into treating workers with dignity and respect.

The American people know greed is not enough, and block by block, town by town, city by city, we need to bring public pressure to bear, because it is the only way change is going to happen. That is the way it has always been. You have a force that gets out of control, that exudes greed, and you need a countervailing force to react to it. Historically that has been the pattern in this country and often the pattern in Western civilization.

Third, the union has been a part of a larger movement outside the work force that has fought for social reform. They have been the link between free markets and democratic rights. So when I hear my friend, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY] on this side of the aisle say that the free market alone brings progress, I wonder where he studied his economics, because history has shown just the opposite.

It is in places where the free labor movement was strong, in France, in England, in the United States, where we have pensions, the 8-hour day, the 40-hour work week, overtime pay, severance pay, paid holidays, paid sick leave, paid vacation, maternity leave, seniority, and not just for union members and not just at the workplace. We

also have Medicare and Social Security and student loans and, in some places, health care and child care, all brought to you, all brought to you by a coalition of progressives working to bring about change and led by the labor movement in this country.

Unions have been a part of an effort to broaden the meaning of democracy and democratic rights. There is a reason why dictators prefer to deal with individuals, because when you divide people, you conquer.

The first thing that Hitler and Mussolini and Pinochet did was to ban unions. The first thing China did after Tiananmen Square was to ban unions. In Singapore and Chile, rapid industrialization has created systems where labor rights are not fully recognized and wages are low and the environment is not fully protected. The one thing President Carlos Salinas did in Mexico, he absolutely refused to discuss during NAFTA, the one thing was unions.

So as unions get weaker in this country, it is not surprising that we see an assault on Social Security and on Medicare and on education. But as our own history has shown, with each new wave of union growth, each time labor as a movement reaches out to organize the unorganized, there is a new wave of democratic participation and social reform that has followed. I believe that we are at such an historic moment in America today. These are the historic roles unions have played and can play again.

But today we are being challenged by a whole new set of rules. The global economy has changed the rules for everybody, and I believe the labor movement has to change to meet those challenges. I think it is important to differentiate between the real threats of the global economy and the perceived threats of the global economy.

I think it is also important to understand that the global economy looks different depending upon where you are standing. In his new book, and I would encourage those of you who are interested in the topic of globalization to read it, William Greider's new book, "One World, Ready or Not," he paints a picture of the global economy as a giant farm combine that reaps as it destroys; it plows across fields and fence rows with a fierce momentum that is both exhilarating and frightening. But despite all of the skillful hands on board in Greider's vision, there are no hands at the wheel. It is a very vivid image. But I disagree; there are hands at the wheel, and they are controlled by people who run our multinational corporations.

From our perspective here today, we can talk about labor in the United States and labor in Japan and labor in China, and we can differentiate between them. We can talk about environmental standards here in the United States and environmental standards in Mexico, and we can see very clear lines of differences, but if you are looking at the global economy from the perspective of multinational corporations, you

do not see clear lines of authority. Multinationals have little or no respect for state boundaries or worker rights. Whatever laws we pass from country to country, whatever rules we set down, they regard them as fence rows to be plowed over.

So the Nikes of the world run off to Vietnam, the Disneys run off to Haiti, Zenith moves to Mexico, corporation after corporation pits workers against each other and seeks out the lowest common denominator, and by doing so, it drives all of our standards down. Now, this is the reality of the global economy today. We all know these threats are very real.

Cornell University recently did a study for the Department of Labor, a study, by the way, which the Labor Department refused to release, and they found that 62 percent of the companies in America are now using countries like Mexico as a bargaining chip to drive down wages and living standards in America. We were promised during NAFTA that wages would go up from \$1 an hour or higher. It is 3½ years later, and the wages have changed. They have gone down, though, to 70 cents an hour, and that pressure of their wage south of our border is giving corporations all over this country the ability to keep wages low or to drive wages down or to take benefits away from our workers.

This changing world order has brought about an ideological shift as well. Even among liberals and progressives, the old New Deal Coalition in this country was built on the fundamental notion that the free market would not automatically take care of people's needs. Goods like retirement savings, health care for the poor and the elderly, public education, and eventually environmental and safety regulations were needed to supplement the market and restrain its success. We came to understand that to advance certain rights, you need a countervailing force on the power of the large corporations and the rapacious instincts of the market.

Today, when it comes to the global marketplace, even some people in my own party seem to be abandoning the commitment when it comes to the global economy. People who would never argue that the hidden hand of the free market would provide for all social goods here at home seem to forget these lessons when you substitute the words "free trade" for "free market." They buy into the notion that there is nothing you can do to affect the global economy except race as fast as you can to compete. Of course in doing so, they are reinforcing an ideology that would leave us increasingly powerless, impoverished, and unprincipled.

Now, for more than 40 years, America fought the cold war to advance some very fundamental beliefs about human rights. We argued for freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to organize. But now that the cold war has ended, we as a nation, we have

abandoned those rights. Our fundamental pursuit the past 8 years has been the protection of property rights. We tried to persuade China to observe patent and copyright laws. We forced Mexico to protect intellectual property like CD's.

In Mexico today, if a compact disc is pirated, there are trade sanctions, criminal sanctions; people can go to jail. But if a worker in Mexico tries to organize and gets fired, they get fired, or if a community is forced to bathe in rivers where toxins run, there are no sanctions, there is no enforcement, there are just consultations; all they get is talk.

Four years ago, almost 4 years ago, during the NAFTA debate, many of us came to this well and on this floor and we argued that America needs a trade policy that will work to open new markets in the same way it works to protect labor rights and environmental rights and jobs, because history has shown that if we do not address the environment and wages and working conditions directly in our trade agreements, they never get addressed at all. But of course these things were left out of the core NAFTA agreement, and America has paid a price.

I remember in debating NAFTA, we had a \$2 billion trade surplus. We had a surplus. We had a surplus. We had more going out. We were producing here and sending more out than was coming into America. But today our trade deficit with Mexico has reached a record \$16 billion, and workers in the maquiladores no longer make \$1 an hour, as I said, they make 70 cents an hour. Along the border, the environment is still so bad that the American Medical Association recently called it a cesspool of infectious diseases.

Seventy percent of the cocaine coming into America and 25 percent of the heroin now comes in from Mexico. Why? Because NAFTA opened up the border. And down in Texas, 11,000 trucks now pass over the border every day. They call it the wave line. For every truck that gets inspected, 199 do not. They just wave them through.

In New York a few weeks ago, a policeman pulled over a truck, they opened the door, they saw bananas. Once they started to dig, they found bundles of cocaine. And it is happening every day. Drugs are coming in, jobs are going out, wages are being suppressed, benefits are being lost by our workers, and we know corporations are not going to do anything about it.

The multinational corporations are doing just fine paying people 70 cents an hour; they are doing just fine with an open border. Yet, when workers in Mexico try to organize, try to form unions, try to fight for better pay for their families, try to take away that bargaining chip, what happens? They get arrested, they get thrown in jail, and for 4 years, 4 years ago, we as a nation put our stamp of approval on all of this when we passed NAFTA.

Today, supporters of NAFTA want to expand NAFTA to new countries. Many

of us believe that before we expand it, we have to fix it.

So the question we face as a nation today is simply this: Are we willing to use our political power and leverage to raise the standards of other countries to our level, or are we simply going to let ourselves get caught in the game of, how low can you go? Are we willing to argue that human rights and labor rights must be a part of any agreement?

In the fight to stop this spiral to the lowest common denominator, labor unions must play a role.

□ 1330

Multinational corporations have a global strategy. The labor movement needs to have a global strategy as well. Labor needs to link arms abroad and fight for common values.

We saw what happened in Poland. Labor support for Lech Walesa helped create worldwide support for the Solidarity movement.

We saw it happen in France. Not long ago, metalworkers from Germany joined arm in arm with their Parisian counterparts to protest unfair demands of a company based in France. Together, they forced the company to back down.

To have leverage against corporations in other nations, you need to have strong countervailing forces in those nations to back them up with collective ideas that matter. That is why it is so important that organizing in other nations is vital.

I would like to see American labor do the same thing in Mexico, Indonesia, and countries throughout the Third World. American labor needs to lend their experience and expertise to help workers in Mexico organize. I would like to see union members from America and Europe work together to raise the wages in the Third World, and we should not be afraid to go after corporations who want to sell in our markets, but exploit people on our own border.

Let me give a couple examples. In Pakistan, the labor movement, working with religious leaders and community leaders, helped expose corporations who forced kids to stitch soccer balls. These kids were 6, 7, 8 years of age, working huge, long days and weeks in factories.

In India, we now have a rug mark that says "This carpet was not made with slave labor."

Of course, who could forget Kathy Lee Gifford and Wal-Mart. When labor helped expose the sweatshop conditions Wal-Mart was forcing some people to work in, it started a national crusade that shamed Wal-Mart into changing its ways.

So if we can bring public pressure to bear across international lines, it will and can have an effect. The more we can hold one corporation accountable, the more we will make others wary.

But let us also understand this: There is a difference between the real

threats of the global economy and the perceived threats of the global economy. What do we mean by that? For all the very real dangers, the global economy directly affects just one-fourth of all the jobs in America today. Beth Shulman's article in last December's *American Prospect* points out that 77 percent of the jobs in America are out of reach of global competition.

There are more people today working in dental offices than are working in the auto industry.

There are more people working in Laundromats than are working in steel-mills.

Columbia Hospital system employs more people than Chrysler.

McDonald's employs more people than General Motors.

Yet, the model we have based our image on is the same manufacturing model we focused on 50 years ago. By doing so, not only are we skewing the reality of the global economy, we are playing into the fears that the threat of the global economy is greater than it really is. That, in turn, creates a sense of powerlessness across the entire economy.

Not long ago I heard a story about a company in Ohio that announced it was moving to Mexico. As a result, both hospital workers and McDonald's employees were all worried about losing their jobs. But the hospital and the restaurant were not going anywhere, but the very fear of moving convinced those workers not to push for salary increases.

While we need to address the very real problems about jobs going overseas, we need to be realistic about its scope. There are enough barriers to organizing unions today. The power of corporations, legal barriers, technology, a shrinking job base, are all tremendous hurdles to overcome. Labor needs new tactics to meet these challenges.

Labor needs to reach beyond its traditional constituencies, it needs to put more resources into organizing, it needs to reach out to younger people, like the thousands of college students who participated in union summer last year.

If a majority of workers are fed up and decide they want a union and they sign a union card, they should have a union. They should not be forced to jump through hoops for 8 years to carry out their constitutional rights. In Canada, they have what is called a card check. It works this way. If a majority of workers sign a card for a union, that is it; they get a union. For too long the National Labor Relations Board has been used to making it as difficult as possible to organize new members. But that cannot stop us.

Labor needs to enlist the whole community; the churches and religious leaders, community activists, responsible local businesses. Everyone needs to involve themselves and understand the link between workplace issues and community issues.

I believe labor needs to take on more struggles that help it create and recapture this moral authority that I am talking about. That is why I believe this weekend's march with the strawberry workers in California is so important.

The strawberry industry is a \$650 million industry. It is run by some of the largest corporations in America, including Monsanto, where senior executives get paid million-dollar salaries. Yet, the people that are working in the fields get paid \$8,000 a year, often working 12 hours a day with no job security, no pension, no health care, often no clean drinking water, no decent bathroom facilities, working every day with dangerous pesticides and dangerous toxins, and most of them have not seen a raise in 10 years.

Last year they had elections across strawberry country. Workers voted overwhelmingly to be represented by the United Farm Workers. But instead of giving workers a raise, do you know how the corporations responded? Some of them fired people, some of them skipped town, some of them even plowed under their own fields. Of course, most of them immediately brought in consultants.

But the strawberry workers of the United Farm Workers have not given up. This weekend, tens of thousands of men and women from all over the country will be traveling to California. I will be joining them. We are going to March arm in arm with the United Farm Workers, and we are not going to give up until strawberry workers have the right and dignity they deserve.

So, the more that labor can regain moral authority in places like the strawberry fields of California, the more it will help them in the steel-mills of Pennsylvania and the hospital wards of Texas.

We may be living in a profound time, a time of profound insecurity, and we may be living in an age when multinational corporations are running amuck, when the gap between the rich and the poor is growing and people seem to be more disconnected every single day. But I do not think for a second that it means they are disinterested. People do not want to see hard work go unrewarded. They do not want to be treated like garbage.

They do not want to read stories about layoffs and downsizing. They do not want to see a \$776 million payoff. They do not want to read stories about Asian sweatshops. They do not want to be left alone to face 5 billion other people in the world economy.

They want to believe again. They want to believe that things can get better. They want to have control over their lives. They want to be part of a community. They want to believe we have larger purposes as a nation. That is what the union movement in this country is all about.

It is not unions who have rigged the game, Mr. Speaker. It is unions who have fought for decency for working

families and a greater vision of democracy. They have fought against the billions of dollars of corporate special interests that is arrayed against them every single day. They have fought against the multinational corporations that know no allegiance to any country and move jobs overseas at the drop of a hat. They have fought against runaway corporate greed and its destructive effects on our communities and our values. Always they have fought against the odds. They have organized when guns and nightsticks have tried to beat them down. They have pooled their resources to get out the truth, even as corporations have outspent them by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Unions have shown average Americans that they have real power, that they can have a larger voice, and that working together, people can make a difference. If we have the courage to try new things, to believe in old values, and to work together to make it happen, I believe unions can lead America into the 21st century. More than that, we will reconnect people to this democracy. We will make them feel a part of something larger than themselves, and we will give them a reason to believe again. That was worth fighting for 50 years ago, and it is worth fighting for again today.

So in conclusion, I say that I look forward to engaging in this debate about unions and people coming together, banding together for decent profits, decent wages, and decent working conditions; because it was the working men and women who stood up and fought those who would perpetrate greed, who got us the 8-hour day, the 40-hour work week, wage increases, Medicare, Social Security, educational benefits, protection at the work site. That movement helped create the most powerful middle class in the history of this planet. It is that movement, again, that will be needed to counter the forces that are trying to drive peoples' wages and drive peoples' benefits and drive peoples' dignity and respect into the ground.

So let us have this debate. I am ready. My colleagues are ready. We are willing to debate the Speaker and his colleagues on the issue of working men and women and their right to collective bargaining. It is a right that was put together, culminating 30 years of prosperity unknown in the history of this planet. We believe, again, that the movement that brought us these rights is ready to take its appointed place in American society.

REPORT ON TRIP TO ASIA LED BY SPEAKER NEWT GINGRICH

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. HASTINGS of Washington]. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.