

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

SPECIAL FEATURE INSIDE

Facing capitalism's 'long, hot winter'

In This Issue from 'New International' no. 12

by Jack Barnes

—PAGES 6–9

VOL. 69/NO. 12

MARCH 28, 2005

Miners in West join Utah union solidarity rally

BY LUIS ASTORGA
AND TERI MOSS

PRICE, Utah—One hundred people from Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah attended a benefit for the Co-Op miners here March 12. The event was organized by the miners, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) retirees, and other supporters of the union-organizing struggle at the coal mine, operated by C.W. Mining Company. The rally was held at the UMWA District 22 hall.

“If we win, it will be a victory for all miners in the region,” said Juan Salazar, a leader of the miners fighting for UMWA representation. “If we lose, other coal companies will be bolder in trying to do the same things Co-Op did,” he added, referring to low wages, unsafe working conditions, and harassment by the bosses on the job. Addressing the challenge of organizing workers who largely labor in nonunion mines throughout the western United States, Salazar said, “All miners need the UMWA. Not just for better pay, but for safety and for dignity on the job, and to protect ourselves against the attempts by the bosses to victimize us.”

Mike Dalpiaz, UMWA international at-large vice president, addressed the meeting. Other speakers included UMWA officers from Arizona and representatives of the Operating Engineers, another union that organizes coal miners in the West.

“My Hispanic brothers and sisters here are up against the Kingstons,” the owners

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Huge protest in Lebanon demands Syrian pullout

Hezbollah confronts diminished Syrian presence for first time

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Under relentless pressure from mass popular protests in Lebanon, imperialist demands from Washington and Paris, and calls for a pullout by the Egyptian and Saudi regimes, the Syrian government has withdrawn about a third of its troops from Lebanese territory. Many of its remaining forces, which earlier numbered 14,000 soldiers, have been redeployed to the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon, near the border with Syria. Military intelligence agents of the regime in Damascus have begun vacating offices in Beirut and other cities.

In the largest action so far, according to news reports, as many as 800,000 people joined a rally at Beirut's Martyrs' Square March 14. The action was organized by opposition parties pressing for Syrian withdrawal. Its size reflected the popular anger at Syria's decades-long intervention in Lebanon, which has included blocking a revolutionary upsurge among Lebanese toilers from toppling the government in the 1970s that largely disenfranchised the Muslim majority.

Like other capitalist parties, Hezbollah



AFP/Getty Images/Anwar Amro

Hundreds of thousands of people rallied at Beirut's Martyrs' Square March 14, in the largest protest rally so far, demanding that the government of Syria pull its forces out of Lebanon.

has staged rallies in a show of strength to secure a bigger share of political power in the vacuum that will be left by the forced departure of Syrian troops. The organization, which has called for an “Islamic Republic” and has been allied with Damascus, faces

the reality of the diminished Syrian presence—a problem it confronts for the first time. On March 13 Hezbollah, which is based among Shiite Muslims, held its second mass rally. Press reports indicate that at

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Back cover text, 'New International' no. 12

“One of capitalism's infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism's accelerating drive toward war, it's going to be a long, hot winter”

—Jack Barnes

Today's sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled both by the opening stages of a world depression—what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles—and by the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy and organization since the late 1930s, when the U.S. rulers prepared to join the expanding Asian and European wars, transforming them into World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, this cataclysmic crisis for “the West” and for “Christendom.” And draw satisfaction and enjoyment from being “in their face” as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

Speakers include:**JACK BARNES**, Socialist Workers Party national secretary**MARY-ALICE WATERS**, editor, *New International* magazine, recently returned from 2005 Havana international book fair**Reception 1 p.m. Program 2 p.m. Refreshments afterward**

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Imperialists close ranks in pressing Iran to end uranium enrichment

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Washington and its allies in London, Paris, and Berlin announced a coordinated plan March 11 to pressure the government of Iran to end uranium enrichment—a process necessary to produce fuel for nuclear reactors. The plan represents a closing of ranks among the main imperialist powers in North America and Europe over this issue, and a

narrowing of their tactical differences on how to block Iran's nuclear progress.

While agreeing on the goal of stopping Tehran in its tracks on processing uranium, London, Paris, and Berlin have differed with the U.S. rulers on how to achieve their common objective. They have tried to keep Washington at bay vis-à-vis Iran in order to advance their own competing imperialist interests in the region. The French rulers, in particular, have substantial trade and investments in Iran, including selling components to Tehran for its nuclear plants.

Washington is now making progress in pushing these European Union (EU) governments to adopt its tactical approach toward Tehran. The British, French, and German governments—referred to as the EU Three because of their joint initiative in talks with Tehran over its nuclear program—sent a letter to the EU member countries declaring that unless Iran makes permanent its suspension of all uranium enrichment and

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Iraqi Kurds make progress toward return to oil-rich Kirkuk

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The United Iraqi Alliance, the electoral bloc that won a slim majority in Iraq's recent elections, has agreed to the return of thousands of Kurds to the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. Differences over control of Kirkuk and its surrounding Tamim province have been the primary barrier facing the Shiite-led bloc in reaching an accord with the main Kurdish parties on forming a coalition government.

At the same time, suicide bombings, organized largely by supporters of the former Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein, have increasingly targeted Shiites in an attempt to force retaliation. The bombings are beginning to be met with public protests by many Iraqis—including a demonstration of some 2,000 on March 1—and condemnation by leading Sunni Muslim figures.

The question of Kirkuk has been at the center of negotiations between the main parties that won a substantial number of seats

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Socialists meet with students in Havana

BY JANET KEAN

HAVANA—“It’s true, in the United States when you’re sick or injured and go to a clinic, you have to agree to pay before the doctor will see you! I have relatives there and they’ve told me,” said Karelia, a student enrolled in a pre-nursing program at the January 28 Polyclinic here.

Karelia was one of 18 students who joined in a discussion on February 14 with two visitors to their class, one from London and the other from Sydney, Australia, who spoke about conditions facing working people in the countries where they live and elsewhere in the imperialist world.

The two, Jonathan Silberman of the Communist League in the United Kingdom and Joanne Kuniansky from the Communist League in Australia, were part of an international team of *Militant* reporters who were in Cuba to cover the annual Havana International Book Fair, held February 3–13.

The students at the clinic are part of a pilot program in Havana for young people, ages 15–16, who have not completed sufficient schooling to go on to the university. Following completion of this one-year preparatory program they are eligible to begin full-time nursing studies. After three years they have the option of pursuing degrees in other fields such as biology and psychology, or entering medical school, although most remain in nursing.

“They get a chance to further their education and, at the same time, help to remedy a nursing shortage that we have particularly in Havana,” said Lourdes, one of the nurses at the polyclinic.

“We study professional ethics and the history of nursing and health care in Cuba before and after the revolution,” said Adelin García, president of the student body. “We also take courses in geography, math, biology, chemistry, and physical education, as well as political science, history, and defense preparedness.”

After a brief presentation by Silberman, students peppered the two guests with questions on a variety of subjects, from working-class resistance to the attacks by the capitalists, to the prospect of more imperialist wars such as the invasion and occupation of Iraq, to the price of books and reading habits in their respective countries.

The class realities of health care in the United States and other imperialist countries was one of the questions that drew the most discussion. Kuniansky, a meat worker in Sydney who was a registered nurse and worked in hospitals in the United States for a number of years, was able to bring that experience into the exchange.

One youth asked: when workers go on strike, what is the role played by immigrants—are the employers able to divide them by nationality? The students were particularly interested when Silberman



pointed to the example of a successful struggle by garment workers in the Miami area to organize a union at the Point Blank Body Armor plant, where a number of the workers are immigrants from Cuba as well as other Caribbean countries.

The guests had been invited by Frank García, who teaches political science to the students. He himself is a third-year sociology student at the University of Havana.

García made the invitation when he stopped by the stand organized by Pathfinder Press at this year’s Havana International Book Fair, which García has visited often.



Militant photos by Joanne Kuniansky

Frank García, left, a teacher at a pre-nursing course at a polyclinic in Havana, shows students in his class, above, the “Earth at Night” photo on the back cover of *Nueva Internacional* no. 7 (see ads on pages 1 and 7). The photo highlights the stark global inequality in access to electricity.

“I first came by the Pathfinder stand in 1998 when I was a high school student, and I’ve been back to visit it at every book fair since,” he said.

Like many others, García has taken advantage of Pathfinder’s sale of books in local currency on the final day of the fair. He’s built up quite a library of Pathfinder titles, some of which he is now using as course books. Several students nodded knowingly when their teacher mentioned that Pathfinder was the publisher of *Lenin’s Final Fight*, a collection of writings by V.I. Lenin, and *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky, two central leaders of the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

During the class discussion, García held up the “Earth at Night” photograph on the back cover of newly released issue no. 7 of *Nueva Internacional*, which he had purchased at the book fair. The photo graphically depicts the gulf between the imperialist and the semicolonial world in terms of access to electricity and the class differentiation within countries as well. He went through the picture of the

world, region by region, explaining to the students some of the realities of imperialist domination.

He asked Silberman to tell the students the story of the successful antideportation fight in the United States by Nicaraguan-born Rogér Calero, whom he had met during a previous book fair. “Calero later went on to become the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States!” García added with a smile.

After the class, the guests made a donation to the polyclinic’s library that included a copy of *Nueva Internacional* no. 7.

The pre-nursing program is one of more than 150 projects currently under way throughout Cuba to increase access to education and a broad range of cultural programs for working people. “As the result of what we call the Battle of Ideas, some 60 to 70 percent of the entire population here is today involved in some kind of formal education,” Juan Carlos Frómeta, who works in the offices of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, told the *Militant*.

If the pilot project is deemed a success, it will be extended nationwide.

Youth build festival in UK

BY JAMES HAYWOOD

LONDON—A National Preparatory Committee (NPC) based here has been organizing activities to build a broad delegation of young people from the United Kingdom to the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students, scheduled for Venezuela August 7-15. The gathering is an opportunity for youth from the United Kingdom to meet young people from every continent fighting imperialism.

The NPC has held screenings of the documentary *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, which shows how workers and peasants in Venezuela took to the streets in

massive numbers in April 2002 to defeat a U.S.-backed military coup against the government of President Hugo Chávez. Their actions split the armed forces and led to the defeat of the coup.

The movie was shown at a community center in South London. After the film, a Venezuelan man spoke from the floor about the struggles by working people in his country. The event was hosted by New Generation, a group of youth who are mostly immigrants from Latin America, which plans to send 11 of its members to the festival.

The documentary was also shown at

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THE MILITANT

16th World Festival of Youth, Students Caracas, Venezuela, August 7–15

Thousands of young people will participate in the world youth festival this summer in Venezuela. Their presence will be an important answer to the imperialist-backed campaign that aims to overthrow the government of Hugo Chávez and deal a blow to efforts of workers and farmers there to extend the gains they’ve won. The ‘Militant’ brings you the facts. Don’t miss an issue!



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Kurds gain in Kirkuk

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in Iraq’s National Assembly through the U.S.-orchestrated elections in January. The United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) needs the Kurdish bloc, which received the second-highest vote and netted 75 seats in the 275-member National Assembly, in order to form a government. The UIA won 140 seats, far short of the two-thirds majority that would enable it to form the government outright.

The agreement between the UIA and the Kurdish parties reportedly includes the eventual return of 100,000 Kurds to Kirkuk and redrawing the borders of the Kurdish autonomous regions to include the city. Kurds would resettle there prior to a vote on whether to join the autonomous Kurdistan region. Already, in provincial elections held simultaneously with the January 30 national elections, Kurdish parties won 58.4 percent of the vote in Tamim.

“As for Kirkuk, we agreed to solve the issue in two steps,” said Fuad Masoum, a member of the Kurdish coalition, according to the Associated Press. “In the first step, the new government is committed to normalizing the situation in Kirkuk, the other step regarding annexing Kirkuk to Kurdistan is to be left until the writing of the constitution.”

In the 1970s and ’80s thousands of Kurds were forcibly removed from Kirkuk and the surrounding province by the Hussein regime. Thousands of Arabs were settled there—many also by force—in order to “Arabize” the province and tighten the Baathist regime’s control over the oil resources.

Hussain al-Shahristani, a member of the UIA negotiating team, said anyone expelled from their land in Kirkuk “will be allowed to come back,” the *Boston Globe* reported.

“We agreed with the Kurds that these two issues are to be solved through the government and they agreed on this,” said Ali al-Dabagha, another UIA negotiator, according to a March 10 AP dispatch. “We told them that the issues will be discussed as soon as the central government is formed.” Al-Dabagha said the two sides had agreed that oil revenues from Kirkuk would be controlled by the central government and spent “fairly to reconstruct all provinces.”

The agreement between the UIA and Kurdish parties also includes a power sharing arrangement of government posts. The Kurds agreed to back Ibrahim Jaafari, a leader of the UIA bloc, for the post of prime minister. Jaafari has held posts in all the previous U.S.-backed administrations in Iraq since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. In exchange, Jalal Talabani, a Kurd and leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), would become president of Iraq.

One key ministry post has been set aside to be filled by a Sunni Arab, even though the largest Sunni-led parties and their constituents boycotted the January 30 election.

The Kurds are also seeking to codify limits—which are largely already in place—on Baghdad’s “prerogatives” to control revenue or collect taxes in the Kurdish territory. KDP leader Massoud Barzani said in an interview with the *Kurdistan Observer* that the Kurds also want control of the 100,000-member military force in the region, composed mostly of former guerillas of the Kurdish peshmerga militia.

Al-Dabagha said the peshmerga would be merged into security bodies such as the border guard and local police, reported AP. He also said there would be no separate peshmerga units and the defense ministry would decide how many of them are needed.

Sharply illustrating the explosive character of the historic fight of the Kurds for self-determination, Barzani reportedly told al-Arabiya TV that Baghdad would need the permission of the Kurdistan parliament in order to deploy Iraqi troops in the Kurdish-controlled northern region.

Ongoing bombing campaign

Meanwhile, Baathist forces and their allies—including those organized by al-Qaeda in Iraq, headed by the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi—have been largely responsible for an ongoing campaign of assassinations of Iraqi government officials, bombing attacks on U.S. and Iraqi soldiers and police recruits, and kidnapping of foreigners.

On March 10 a suicide bomber detonated an explosives belt he was wearing inside in a tent next to a mosque where Shiites had gathered for a funeral in Mosul, reported Al-Jazeera TV. The explosion killed at least 47 people and wounded 100 others. No group

has claimed responsibility for the attack. Mosul, a mostly Sunni city, with some Shiites, Christians, and Sunni Turks, has been a center of Baathist-led attacks on U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces and officials.

Some 2,000 Iraqis rallied in Hillah, a predominantly Shiite city south of Baghdad, chanting, “No to terrorism!” according to AP. On February 28 a car bomb explosion there killed 125 people as they lined up outside a clinic for a physical exam required for positions in the health and education ministries and the security forces. A group calling itself the al-Qaeda Organization for Holy War in Iraq reportedly claimed responsibility.

In addition to Shiite and Kurdish groups, a leading Sunni cleric also condemned the bombing. “The real resistance should only target the occupiers, and no normal person should consider dozens of dead people to be some kind of collateral damage while you are trying to kill somebody else,” the cleric, Ahmed Abdul-Ghafur, reportedly told worshipers at the main Sunni mosque in Baghdad. “Everybody should speak out against such inhumane acts,” said Abdul-Ghafur, a member of the Association of Muslim Scholars.

U.S., EU gov’ts narrow differences on Iran

Continued from front page
reprocessing activities, “We shall have no choice but to support referring Iran’s nuclear program to the UN Security Council.” Until recently, the three governments had balked at taking that step, which has been Washington’s central demand regarding Tehran’s nuclear program. The letter also objected to the Iranian government’s record on human rights, support for groups the EU powers deem “terrorist,” and its opposition to the state of Israel.

The Iranian government says the program is aimed at increasing energy for industrial development, not for weapons production. But Washington, along with the EU Three, have insisted that enriching uranium will allow the Iranian program to quickly include the production of atom bombs. Under threat of an EU Three recommendation of referral of Iran to the UN Security Council, Tehran announced a temporary suspension of uranium processing in November 2004.

The March 11 EU Three letter followed the trip by U.S. president George Bush to Europe in February, when the campaign to halt Iran’s nuclear program was a key political theme. In return for the EU Three backing of Washington’s threat to bring Tehran before the UN Security Council, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice announced March 11 that Bush “has decided that the U.S. will drop its objection to Iran’s application to the World Trade Organization and will consider, on a case-by-case basis, the licensing of spare parts for Iranian civilian aircraft, in particular from the European Union to Iran.”

Since shortly after the 1979 revolution in Iran that toppled the U.S.-backed dynasty of the shah, Washington has enforced sanctions that prevent most U.S. trade with Iran and penalize foreign companies that do business with Tehran. On March 10 Bush pointedly renewed sanctions barring U.S. companies and citizens from oil dealings with Iran, claiming its government represents an “unusual and extraordinary threat.”

A day later, a member of Pakistan’s cabinet announced that his country’s top nuclear scientist had sold centrifuges to Iran without his government’s knowledge. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said that Abdul Qadeer Khan “helped Iran in his personal capacity and the Pakistan government had nothing to do with it.”

Khan—who has been under investigation by the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on charges of selling nuclear technology to Iran, Libya, north Korea, and others—has been under virtual house arrest in Pakistan since December 2003. The Iranian government has acknowledged holding discussions with Khan on purchase of the centrifuges, stating the collaboration was only for peaceful purposes, not for weapons.

“The Islamic Republic is determined to use peaceful nuclear technology and no pressure, intimidation, or threat can make Iran give up that right,” said Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi March 12. “Lifting [restrictions on spare



Corbis/Lynsey Addario

Kurds hang signs in support of the Kirkuk Brotherhood List in Kirkuk, northern Iraq, January 25, days before the national elections. Kurds have used their strong showing in the nationwide vote to press for greater autonomy. Their efforts have resulted in an accord with the United Iraqi Alliance, the coalition that won the majority of seats in the National Assembly, that allows expelled Kurds to return to Kirkuk.

parts] is no concession and entering the WTO is a clear right of all countries.”

Tehran’s intention to develop its nuclear resources has been no secret for decades. Its nuclear program began in the 1960s, under the U.S.-backed monarchy of the shah. Work on the Bushehr nuclear power project—an object of imperialist scrutiny today—was started in 1974 by the German company Siemens. The reactors were viewed as necessary for industrialization of the country. The project was left unfinished after the 1979 popular insurrection that toppled the shah. Work at Bushehr resumed with Russian aid in the 1990s.

On March 13, the London *Sunday Times* reported that Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon and his inner cabinet have given “initial authorization” for a military attack on Iran’s nuclear sites. “If all efforts to persuade Iran to drop its plans to produce

nuclear weapons should fail, the U.S. administration will authorize Israel to attack,” the *Times* quoted an unnamed Israeli security official as saying.

For several months, the paper said, Israeli forces have been simulating an attack on Iran’s Natanz uranium enrichment plant. “Israeli tactics included raids by elite commando units and air strikes by F-15 jets using bunker-busting bombs to penetrate underground facilities,” the *Times* said.

Meanwhile, Iranian president Mohammad Khatami ended a three-day visit to Venezuela March 12. The trip was to include inauguration of an Iranian tractor-assembly plant and the signing of accords with Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez on sharing technology in industries such as mining and oil. Iran’s national oil company is already training employees of Venezuela’s state-run oil company Petroleos de Venezuela.

Top U.S. military brass cleared of wrongdoing in Abu Ghraib abuse

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The official report by government investigators into the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by the U.S. military at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq has concluded that the torture and humiliation of inmates was not the result of Pentagon policies. The report was ordered by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to review policies for treatment of detainees in Afghanistan, Iraq, and at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. It was also an attempt by Washington to minimize the political cost it continues to pay for the Abu Ghraib scandal, which, as the *Militant* reported last year, reflected practices that are widespread throughout the U.S. prison system.

In a press conference following a March 10 hearing by the Senate Armed Services Committee, Navy Vice Adm. Albert Church claimed, “There was no linkage between the authorized interrogation techniques and the abuses that in fact occurred.” Church led the investigation and authored the report.

According to the unclassified executive summary of the report, Church concluded that “poor unit-level compliance” contributed to abuses along with poor “dissemination of interrogation policy.”

Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski told investigators that a boy held in the Abu Ghraib prison, who said he was 12 years old, “looked like he was only eight,” according to documents obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union under the Freedom of Information Act. Karpinski, who was the commander of the U.S.-run prison, has been suspended from duties while the investigation was going on.

Military officials said no juveniles were subjected to the abuses captured in photographs revealed last year, the Associated Press reported.

Karpinski also said she had seen a written

order to hold a prisoner the CIA had captured without keeping a record of the individual. These inmates were often referred to by prison guards as “ghosts detainees.”

Karpinski is the only officer who has been relieved of command as a result of the abuse at Abu Ghraib. Six enlisted soldiers pled guilty to military charges stemming from their roles in the abuse at Abu Ghraib. Pvt. Charles Graner, Jr. was convicted at a court-martial this year and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Pfc. Lynndie England, who was shown in photographs last year leading a naked male detainee at Abu Ghraib by a leash, and gesturing at the genitals of another as if she were holding a gun, is scheduled to go on trial May 3. England faces 16 years in prison.

Meanwhile, U.S. Army criminal investigative reports, which have not been made public yet but have been obtained by Human Rights Watch, revealed that two Afghan prisoners who died while in U.S. custody in 2002 were chained to the ceiling, kicked, and beaten by U.S. military personnel in sustained assaults that caused their deaths. One soldier, Pfc. Willie Brand, was reportedly charged with manslaughter for one of the deaths in a closed hearing in Texas last month. Brand allegedly acknowledged striking a detainee, named Dilawar, 37 times and was accused of killing him over five days by “destroying his leg muscle tissue with repeated unlawful knee strikes.”

The Church report stated that U.S. interrogators have killed six prisoners. Subsequent information provided by the Army and the Navy indicated that at least 26 Afghan and Iraqi inmates have died in the last three years at the hands of their U.S. captors. A number of these cases are still under investigation and may result in homicide charges. Only one of the deaths reportedly occurred at Abu Ghraib.

Utah solidarity rally

Continued from front page

of C.W. Mining, said Wilburg Willey of UMWA Local 1332, based in Window Rock, Arizona. “I and my Navajo brothers and sisters feel it is our fight also.” Most of the workers at that mine are Navajo.

Wars Peterman, president of International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 953, drove up from New Mexico to attend the event. This local organizes coal miners at BHP mines in the Farmington, New Mexico, area as well as other workers throughout that state and western Texas. “2006 is a big contract year for underground miners at BHP,” Peterman said. “We will be facing company demands to take away medical benefits. In the event of a strike, the IUOE miners will look for the solidarity and experience of the Co-Op miners to help them stay strong.”

How Co-Op fight unfolded

In his presentation, Salazar walked through the history of the fight. “On Sept. 22, 2003, the company fired 75 miners for union activity, sticking up for one another,” he said. “From there, we turned a lockout into a strike. After 10 months on the picket line, we were able to force the National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] to order the company to take all the workers back.”

“We won a back-pay settlement for our time on strike. But we have yet to receive a penny,” Salazar said. The miners returned to work last July. The NLRB subsequently authorized a union representation election, based on a petition the UMWA had filed on behalf of the striking miners.

Salazar said the miners worked for five months, often “under attack from the company.” He cited several examples of harassment by the bosses, including the case of Ricardo Chávez, who was “discriminated against when the company kept him from working, claiming he had improper training. The Mine Safety and Health Administration [MSHA] ruled he is entitled to compensation. But the company has not paid this either,” Salazar said. “So, while that ruling was important, we have been handed an-

other symbolic victory. And we don’t want a symbolic victory. We want a real victory. We want union representation at the mine.”

Bill Estrada, another leader of the organizing struggle, also spoke. “It is long overdue for the NLRB to count the ballots that 27 pro-UMWA miners cast December 17 in the union election, and reinstate the 30 miners fired for union activity shortly before the vote,” he said, encouraging supporters of the fight to keep the pressure on.

“We are fighting not only the company but the stalling by the NLRB and the indifference of MSHA,” Estrada said. “We have no illusions that these government agencies will hand us a victory.”

One week before the December 17 union representation election, C.W. Mining fired most UMWA backers at the mine saying that the workers would not provide additional proof of their eligibility to work in the United States. Salazar said the firings were a violation of the NLRB agreement that “stated the company could not use immigration threats against workers. But that is exactly what they did. The firings had nothing to do with immigration status. They fired us for union activity.” Miners pointed out several of them worked at Co-Op for many years with the same documentation that only became an issue shortly before the union vote.

Unsafe conditions, harassment lawsuit

Estrada painted a picture of what non-union miners in the area face beyond the Co-Op mine, highlighting why miners need the union to fight for safety.

“A mine 10 miles from here was recently shut down for two days for excessive accumulations of methane gas,” he said, referring to the Andalex Tower mine. Methane is a highly explosive gas present in coal seams. He recounted a discussion with a worker at this mine who explained he and other co-workers are regularly instructed by the bosses to work under methane levels twice the amount allowed by law.

At the nearby Dugout mine, Estrada said, a miner was almost killed when the roof



Militant/Bob Samson

Co-Op miners and supporters at March 12 benefit at UMWA hall in Price, Utah. Co-Op miner Jesús Galaviz (standing), with UMWA miners from Window Rock, Arizona. From left: Wilbur Willie, Elvin Blackgoat, and Sandy Jesus.

fell in last fall. “MSHA blamed the injured worker,” he said. “And MSHA blamed his co-workers for rushing in to save him without first supporting the roof.” MSHA cited the two workers who rushed to remove a massive rock from the miner for not placing jack stands in the area before helping their injured co-worker. Such a delay could have cost the miner his life, Estrada said.

“The conditions most miners are forced to labor under today mean the unions are the present and future for working people,” he added. “They are not a thing of the past.”

Estrada also detailed the attempt by the Kingston family “to try to shut us up through a harassment lawsuit launched against 17 miners, the UMWA, supporters of the organizing fight, and several newspapers.” In this way, he said, “The bosses hope to intimidate people from speaking up. We are not afraid of being sued because we are speaking the truth. A public face is the best way to respond.”

Mike Dalpiaz, representing the UMWA, described the cooperation of UMWA attorneys in filing a response to the Kingston lawsuit for the union and for the 17 miners with attorneys for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Deseret Morning News*, and other defendants. He explained the motions to dismiss the Kingston lawsuit on behalf of nearly 100 defendants draw on each other. “It has been a united effort,” he noted. (See also coverage in last week’s *Militant* and adjacent box.)

Stakes are high

Bob Fivecoat, a member of UMWA Local 9958, chaired the program and recognized several people present. Among them were Tain Curtis and Tom Memmott of Deer Creek UMWA Local 1769, Ed Hinkle from UMWA local 1984 at the Deserado mine in Colorado, and George Neckel from Utah Jobs with Justice.

Two miners from the Seneca mine in Colorado, members of UMWA Local 1385, attended as well. A week earlier four Co-Op miners had taken part in that local’s monthly meeting. Seneca is a surface mine, owned by Peabody Coal, that employs 100 miners. It is one of only two mines organized by the UMWA in northwest Colorado. Peabody announced it will close Seneca at the end of this year and increase production at its nonunion Twenty-Mile mine from 8 million to 12 million tons annually in three years.

Ann and Bob Fivecoat handle the Co-Op Miners Fund. They receive many messages, some of which Ann read to the crowd. One of them, signed by 60 miners, read: “We are members of Local 1248 in Pennsylvania. We can understand your situation more now as we just lost our jobs permanently, because of the Greedy Coal Boss, Bob Murray, who laid us off at the beginning of March. These attacks are what bosses are trying to do all over the country. We congratulate you on the fight you have put up for 17 months and salute your efforts to get the union in and win back your jobs.” Miners who signed the message worked at the Maple Creek mine in Fallowfield Township, Pennsylvania. More than 300 workers who have lost their jobs are represented by the UMWA.

“They can fire us, they can put us in jail, they can threaten us, but we will win,” said Wilburg Willey of UMWA Local 1332, which has gone through four strikes in the last 30 years. “Because our mine is 90 percent Navajo, the company has tried to put us down. They tried to take away our medical insurance,” Willey said. “We have won our

strikes. We have always believed in no steps backwards. We’re going to win here too!”

Women’s conference

Wars Peterman of the Operating Engineers invited participants to a women’s conference co-sponsored by his union and the University of New Mexico Law School on April 18. The union is building “The Changing Woman Conference” among women miners at BHP and other working women. Peterman said the conference idea was developed by a number of women who are union members and work at the BHP surface and underground mines. The conference will include workshops and other presentations on issues such as discrimination in the workplace and sexual harassment.

Before the presentations, everyone enjoyed a Mexican meal of *posole* and *flautas*, and huge platters of turkey and salad. The meal—which was topped off with *tres leches* cake for desert—was prepared by Co-Op miners, their families, and supporters.

After the program ended, a raffle was drawn that included many prizes—from union pins and hats to books on the history of the labor movement and handicrafts donated by supporters of the miners.

Raffle ticket sales during the previous four weeks netted more than \$1,500. Proceeds came from tables miners and their supporters set up in the nearby towns of Huntington and Sunnyside, at union meetings in Utah and Colorado, at political events in Salt Lake City, and by people selling them to their co-workers and neighbors. Participants contributed another \$2,300 at the event for the Co-Op Miners’ Fund.

‘Fight to organize the non-union mines’

George Neckel of Utah Jobs with Justice worked with a food pantry in Salt Lake City to box up some three tons of food to bring to the miners. Neckel said 10 people came to the Union Labor Center in Salt Lake City early in the morning with further donations—including diapers, toiletries, and soap—after reading an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* announcing that cars would caravan from that spot to the rally in Price.

Two university students from Salt Lake filmed the event and conducted interviews. They are gathering footage for a documentary on the Co-Op fight.

Tom Memmott, a union miner at the Deer Creek mine in Huntington who has worked in the mines for 27 years, commended the Co-Op miners “for sticking it out and not running when the Kingstons fired them.... We used to think of miners at nonunion mines as ‘scabs,’ but I don’t think that anymore. Most of the mines around here are not union right now, and I understand you have to work. I call them ‘nonunion miners’ and we’ll be there for them when they fight to organize these mines.”

Leaders of the Co-Op fight urged supporters to keep up the pressure on the NLRB. Letters protesting the firing of the Co-Op miners and demanding their reinstatement, and urging the NLRB to count the votes of the pro-UMWA miners, should be addressed to: B. Allan Benson, NLRB Region 27 Director, 600 17th St. 7th Floor—North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433. Tel: (303) 844-3551; Fax: (303) 844-6249.

Contributions, messages of support, and copies of letters to the NLRB should be sent to “Co-Op Miners Fund” c/o UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501.

Turning victim into criminal

Latest news in Kingston harassment lawsuit

The *Militant* made an error last week in its coverage on the Kingston harassment lawsuit when it reported that the Kingstons—the owners of the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah—had 30 days to respond to the answer in this case filed by the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party. Under rules of the central Utah district federal court, the plaintiffs have 15 days, or a March 17 deadline, to respond to the memorandum by the defendants backing their motion to dismiss the case. The *Militant* and the SWP will then have another seven days to reply.

On March 9, the attorneys for C.W. Mining and the Kingston family-operated International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU) filed their answer to the legal brief seeking dismissal of the case submitted by the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News*—Utah’s two main dailies.

In their answer, the Kingston attorneys’ claim “the original sources from which the Defendants [the Utah dailies] obtained the information upon which Defendants based their own defamations was not a responsible organization, but was a rabid labor union and its cohorts. Defendants did not merely report what others said. Defendants published their own affirmative falsehoods.”

As the *Militant* reported last week, the socialist newsweekly and the SWP filed a motion in federal district court in Utah February 28 to dismiss the case as a “frivolous lawsuit” and to order the plaintiffs to pay attorneys’ fees. “The Kingston family has demonstrated a disturbing trend of using improper and frivolous ‘defamation’ actions as a powerful tool in their attempts to silence their critics,” the *Militant’s* legal brief stated. “The current lawsuit constitutes yet another attempt by the Kingstons to chill the constitutional rights of the press, and deter political opponents from fully exercising their freedom of speech in

order to avoid public scrutiny of their business practices at the Co-Op Mine, and the Plaintiffs should not be allowed to abuse the legal system this way.”

The lawsuit originated last September, when the Kingstons sued the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), its international officers and other officials, 17 Co-Op miners, several labor organizations, newspapers, and other groups and individuals who have supported or written about this important labor struggle. The UMWA and the miners named in the suit have also filed motions with the court to dismiss the harassment case.

The clock is ticking on the Kingstons for responding to all the briefs filed by various defendants in their lawsuit. In their answer to the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News*, the Kingstons claim that the battle by the miners to be reinstated to the their jobs and to be represented by the UMWA is not a public controversy. “The controversy is a private one between the Plaintiff, the UMWA and the miner workers who supported the UMWA,” claims a footnote in the March 9 brief by the bosses. “That the latter group fomented publicity did not alter the essential character of the matter as a purely private dispute.”

The millionaire owners of the Co-Op mine are galled by the fact that the workers have fought back against the conditions they face and generated considerable support for their struggle. This has included speaking out on dangerous working conditions and meager pay at the Co-Op mine, and their desire to be represented by the UMWA. The Kingstons’ description of the UMWA as a “rabid labor organization” serves to underscore this point.

This harassment lawsuit is a classic example of what revolutionary leader Malcolm X described as an attempt to turn the victim into the criminal.

—Editor

U.S. firebombing of Tokyo in 1945 killed 100,000

The night of March 9–10 marked the 60th anniversary of the firebombing of Tokyo by the U.S. Air Force. It was one of the most brutal acts of the “Allied” imperialist powers fighting their rivals in the “Axis” imperialist block over redivision of the world during World War II. On this occasion, we reprint below the article “Museum opens on 1945 U.S. firebombing of Tokyo.” It was first published in the April 29, 2002, *Militant*. This is the first installment of a column that will appear regularly in the *Militant* this year, marking six decades since the end of the second worldwide interimperialist slaughter and presenting the facts about the outcome of World War II.

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Some of the facts about the 1945 U.S. firebombings of Tokyo are being forced into the light of day, in spite of decades of cover-up by the U.S. rulers, with the complicity of their counterparts in Japan. This progress has been made largely thanks to the persistent efforts of survivors of the raids, which killed many hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of working people.

Several survivors were guests of honor at the opening of the capital’s first museum dedicated to recording this piece of history. The event took place March 9–10 to mark the 57th anniversary of the attack on Tokyo, which launched the bombing offensive. Since neither the U.S. nor Japanese governments have provided the necessary assistance, the museum was constructed using \$800,000 in private donations.

Hiroshi Hoshino was one of those who attended the event. According to the *New York Times*, the 71-year-old man has decided to devote “the rest of his life to preserving the memory of the people killed.” He told the reporter, “Of course, everybody knows about the atomic bombings” of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, “but many people are not aware of the napalm attacks at all.”

March 10 was the first of numerous petrol-bomb attacks by massed B-29 bombers on more than 60 Japanese cities over the spring and summer of 1945. The assault was aimed at an enemy that was already close to surrender. The loss of several key engagements, including the Battle of Midway in June 1942 and the Battle for Guadalcanal in early 1943, had sealed Japan’s fate. The expulsion of Japanese forces from Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands in July 1944 brought U.S. bombers within range of Tokyo.

‘Biggest firecracker’

Still in dispute were the terms of Tokyo’s capitulation, as the Japanese rulers balked at Allied insistence on unconditional surrender, including the emperor’s abdication. Cold-bloodedly targeting civilian populations in large Japanese cities, the U.S. command launched the firebombing raids and then, in August, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Two days before the March 10 assault, U.S. Gen. Curtis LeMay, chief of staff of the Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific, told U.S. Air Force bomber crews that they would be delivering “the biggest firecracker the Japanese have ever seen.”

Planes bombed workers’ neighborhoods

On the night of March 9 the U.S. Command dispatched 300 bombers from U.S.-controlled airfields on several Pacific islands. Each plane dropped 180 oil-gel sticks on the close-built wooden houses in working-class neighborhoods. The sticks acted as accelerants for the inferno to come. More planes followed, dropping a total of 1,665 tons of napalm-filled bombs.

The planes flew so low that Katsumoto Saotome, now a professor at Chiba National University, could see the flames reflected in their fuselages. “They looked like tropical fish,” he told the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in 1995.

The U.S. planes hunted down fleeing civilians to drop bombs on them, and na-



Downtown Tokyo in September 1945, six months after firebombing by U.S. Air Force, which burned to death 100,000 residents. Note razed landscape behind buildings.

palmed the rivers to cut off escape routes, said Takae Fujiki, then a high school student of 15. “It was obvious they were trying to kill as many of us as possible,” she told the *Review*.

Hiroshi Hoshino was 14 at the time of the attack. “My family survived because we ran and ran” reaching “an open lot near the river,” he said. “Somehow the fire never reached us there.” Bomber crews in the last stages of the attack said they could smell burning flesh.

More than 100,000 residents of Tokyo burned to death. A report filed at the time by the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that “probably more persons lost their lives by fire at Tokyo in a six-hour period than at any time in the history of man.”

Area twice as big as Manhattan

This was only the beginning. As the ferocious raids on Tokyo and other cities continued apace, the *Militant* pieced together some of the facts from media sources. In the June 19, 1945, issue, Joseph Hansen reported that an area “twice as great as New York’s Manhattan...has been burned out by fire bombs” in successive raids on Tokyo. “Other Japanese

cities are being similarly obliterated and their inhabitants incinerated.

“The press account of this slaughter,” wrote Hansen, “reads like the routine report of a government agency on the extermination of vermin: ‘The population concentration in that area runs, or rather ran, between 75,000 and 110,000 persons per square mile.... Thus, in the 51 miles burned to ashes there lived approximately 4,500,000 of Tokyo’s 7,000,000 people. None of them could be living in that area now if the pictures tell the story.’”

It was not only Japanese cities that were targeted for the kind of intensive incendiary bombing that left much of Tokyo in ashes. Later the same month the *Militant* printed an article from a Swiss newspaper reporting the firebombing of the German city of Hamburg by British and U.S. planes. The concentrated bombing of “densely populated residential districts” creates a “blanket of fire, covering the entire area and rushing up to ever greater heights,” in what is known as a firestorm, the article reported. “The sea of flames sucks in air from its surroundings.”

The February 1945 destruction of Dresden, a city whose population was swelled by German refugees and had no military

significance, is the best known of all such attacks.

Media cover-up

Without the efforts of the survivors and others, the firebombing of Tokyo and other Japanese cities would have remained a largely untold story. “Those who died cannot talk, so I want to tell the facts about what really happened,” said Saotome, adding, “I write about all this for future peace.”

Japanese historian Shinichi Arai told the *Times* that “until the San Francisco Treaty in 1952, Japan was under control of the [U.S.] occupation forces, and when they arrived, they applied media restrictions, saying that one should not report things which reflected negatively on the United States.”

The firebombing attacks were brought to an end as the U.S. rulers rushed to unleash their newest weapon. According to one history, War Secretary Henry Stimson became “concerned that targets in Japan might become so bombed out by conventional raids that S-1 [the atom bomb] would have no ‘fair background’ to show its strength.” On August 6 and 9 atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By Japanese estimates at least 220,000 people were killed.

With the use of its nightmarish new weapon, Washington had issued a clear warning to its imperialist rivals and an unmistakable threat to the Soviet government and the world’s workers and peasants. Shortly afterwards, the U.S. command accepted Japanese surrender on terms that it had previously refused. U.S. insistence on the emperor’s abdication was dropped. Meanwhile, the myth was propagated that the atomic bombing, like the firebombing campaign, was necessary to “save American lives” and bring the war to an end.

Joseph Hansen’s conclusion to his June 1945 article serves as a fitting comment on the assault on Japan by its imperialist enemies, above all those in Washington and London. “All the horrors that have blotched the pages of human history,” he wrote, “were amateur beginnings in brutishness compared to the planned burning of women, children and old men in Japan for the sake of imperialist profits and plunder.”

Hezbollah confronts diminished Syrian presence

Continued from front page

least 100,000 joined the demonstration in the southern Lebanese town of Nabatiyeh. Five days earlier Hezbollah had held a rally of hundreds of thousands in Beirut.

Both the parties demanding Syrian pull-out and pro-Damascus forces, including Hezbollah, have mounted weekly protests. These rival bourgeois alliances are jockeying for position in whatever government comes out of the crisis that has shaken Lebanon since the February 14 assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri.

The same day Syrian troops began to cross the border back to their country, United Nations Middle East envoy Terje Roed-Larsen announced that Syrian president Bashar Assad had agreed to a timetable for removing his forces from Lebanon—a central demand of the imperialist powers. Last September Washington and Paris co-sponsored UN Resolution 1559, which called for the pullout of all foreign troops and the disbanding of domestic militias. The last demand was aimed primarily at Hezbollah, whose armed forces gained widespread popularity in Lebanon for their role in forcing Tel Aviv to pull its troops out of the country in 2000. Hezbollah reportedly has a militia of 20,000 men today.

Thousands of Syrian troops left Lebanon March 12, in the first phase of a withdrawal. “The first stage will see the relocation of all military forces and intelligence apparatus to the Bekaa valley by the end of March,” said Roed-Larsen, according to the BBC. The schedule for the next troop movement will be determined at an April 7 meeting of Lebanese and Syrian officials.

Roed-Larsen added, “The second stage will lead to a complete and full withdrawal of all Syrian military personnel, assets and intelligence apparatus.” Damascus has

maintained about 5,000 intelligence agents in Lebanon, according to press reports, as one way of influencing Lebanese politics.

Faced with the withdrawal of the Syrian forces that have served as its benefactor, and the popular protests pressing for Lebanese sovereignty against Damascus, Hezbollah has taken steps to try to shore up its support. Although still trumpeting itself as the center of resistance to Israeli aggression, Hezbollah has had to compete with other bourgeois parties for popular support and votes. It has 12 seats in the 126-member parliament.

The rallies organized by Hezbollah have featured the Lebanese flag, and have not called for Syrian troops to remain in the country. Along with chants of “Death to America” and “Death to Israel,” protesters at one action carried signs saying “Yes to Syrian withdrawal, no to 1559.”

“Almost no one in Beirut interpreted the Hezbollah mobilization as an invitation to Syria to maintain its smothering occupation of Lebanon,” the *Financial Times* noted March 15. “It was a thank you, a goodbye, and an admonition not to upset the tables on the way out.”

Hezbollah’s deputy leader, Sheik Naim Qassem, told Al-Jazeera the group “felt that Lebanon today is at a crossroad, and this requires that we be more active internally.”

The imperialist powers are pressing their offensive against Hezbollah as part of their effort to gain greater influence in Lebanon. For the moment they are putting aside the demand to shut down Hezbollah’s militia and instead are trying to force the group to help in the consolidation of a stable capitalist regime, whether in or out of government.

U.S. national security advisor Stephen Hadley told CNN Late Edition March 13 that the initial withdrawal by Syria is “good news. We’ll have to see the details.”

While continuing to label Hezbollah a “terrorist” organization, Hadley said, “all elements in Lebanon have an opportunity through the elections to participate in the process that will result in a democratically elected government.... The sequence needs to be: Get Syrian troops out of Lebanon; get free and fair elections; get a democratic government in place in Lebanon. And they will then need to deal with those forces that are not prepared to accept democracy.”

The *Financial Times* editors concluded that Washington has “wisely joined the international consensus on Hezbollah: that it is part of the fabric of Lebanon and possibly of a future, legitimately elected government.”

On March 9 the Lebanese parliament voted to reinstate Omar Kamari as prime minister, nine days after he had resigned in the face of mass protests. Opposition parties—which include rightist organizations and Walid Jumblatt’s social-democratic party, based largely among Druze—have so far rejected Karami’s call on them to join a government of “national unity.” Instead they pulled out all the stops for the March 14 demonstration to strengthen their bargaining position and build momentum for national elections scheduled for May. These parties hold about 50 seats in parliament.

“Unlike previous anti-Syrian rallies, Sunni Muslims came out in force to join Druze and Christians to commemorate the loss of their leader,” Hariri, the BBC reported. “Many schools and offices closed early for the demonstration.”

Lebanese president Emile Lahoud tried to undermine the protest, saying on March 12, “If they want to continue demonstrating, a little firecracker will lead to a catastrophe.” His effort to ban a mass demonstration on February 28 was equally ineffective. Karami resigned after that outpouring.

Facing capitalism's 'long

In This Issue from 'New International' no. 12 by SWP na

Below is the "In This Issue" by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes introducing New International no. 12. This issue of the magazine of Marxist politics and theory is being released later this month along with a companion volume, no. 13, featuring "Our Politics Start with the World." Both are being published at the same time in Spanish as issues no. 6 and 7 of Nueva Internacional.

A meeting celebrating publication of the two new issues and launching a campaign to sell them, along with subscriptions to the Militant, will take place Saturday, March 26, in New York City (see front-page ad).

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BY JACK BARNES

This issue of *New International* opens with "Their Transformation and Ours," a resolution prepared in the last several months by a commission of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. It is based on political reports and summaries I gave in November 2004 that were discussed and adopted by an expanded meeting of the SWP National Committee in which leaders of

Communist Leagues in a number of countries, including Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom, participated.

The resolution has been submitted to the party's membership for discussion, leading to a vote at a convention scheduled for June 2005. Centered on several decisive points of world politics, it has been drafted to be read and discussed together with—as an integral component of—"Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," the political report adopted by the party's 2002 convention and the central article in this issue of *New International*.

"Their Transformation and Ours" analyzes the sharpening interimperialist conflicts fueled both by the opening stages of a world depression and by the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy and organization since its preparations in the late 1930s to transform the nearly decade-long war in Asia and the European war of 1939–41 into a world war. Class-struggle-minded workers and farmers must face—fully—this historic turning point for imperialism (and cataclysmic crisis for "the West" and "Christendom"). And draw satisfaction and enjoyment from being "in their face" as we chart a revolutionary course



Top: Getty Images/Keystone/Hulton Archive; Bottom, left: Landov; Bottom, right: U.S. Air Force/Tim Vining
We have seen "the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy and organization since its preparations in the late 1930s to transform the nearly decade-long war in Asia and the European war of 1939–41 into a world war," says Barnes. Top: Streets of Dresden, Germany, after February 1945 firebombing by British Royal Air Force and U.S. aircraft that killed more than 25,000 people. Left: U.S. airfield at Wiesbaden, Germany. Thousands of U.S. troops at massive bases there are being relocated to the United States today while small "forward operating sites," sometimes called "lily pads," are being set up closer to where Washington anticipates greater need to use its military might. Right: U.S. troops in Uzbekistan, where they first established a base in anticipation of 2001 war in Afghanistan.

to confront it.

The resolution weighs the importance of the beginning political transformation of militant workers who, impelled by these momentous changes, are taking the lead to reach for, organize, and

"Class-struggle-minded workers and farmers must face this historic turning point for imperialism and cataclysmic crisis for 'the West' and 'Christendom.' And draw enjoyment from being 'in their face' as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it."

use *union power*. As the social consequences of capitalist crises grow, as inevitable political conflicts sharpen between and within classes, and as probes to restrict political and democratic rights used by working people increase, these vanguard militants will join with other workers to resist accelerated employing-class assaults in the plants and the political arena, at home and abroad.



As an appendix to "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun" we are running two reports debated and approved by the Third Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1921, which I referred to several times in the 2002 convention report. Included here are "A

Very Unstable Equilibrium: Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party" by V.I. Lenin, and "The World Economic Crisis and the Tasks of Communists" by Leon Trotsky. These merit a few introductory comments.

Acting confidently, responsibly

In preparing the party's 2002 convention, the SWP National Committee recognized that we were addressing a special challenge: Not only how to orient the party to act in face of the "long, hot winter" world capitalism has now entered, but how to lead it to act confidently and responsibly. When enough indications accumulate that

the direction of capitalist development, and thus the class struggle, has shifted, communist workers must act on that knowledge, and act now. We do so even when concrete manifestations of the unfolding political logic—accelerating financial and economic crises, increased militarization, spreading wars, intensifying interimperialist conflicts, and increasing social and economic pressures on a growing majority of the working class—are still visible only in partial, scattered, and partly disguised ways.

Once we understand the algebra, we need to act before it's possible to do all the arithmetic. If, before acting, we wait until we can

substitute constants for most political variables, it will be too late. In the midst of these changing conditions, we will have squandered opportunities to act as part of a small but recognizable emerging working-class resistance, to join with others in affecting its outcome and politicizing its militants, to learn from the experiences, and to transform the revolutionary workers movement in the process.

Valuable political tools

What tools do worker-bolsheviks have at hand to better understand and act on today's shifting long-run trends and the consequences for communist strategy and party building? It was with that question in mind at the 2002 convention that we called to delegates' attention the reports by Lenin and Trotsky to the 1921 Comintern congress. Those reports ended up sparking considerable interest both during and after the SWP convention, and the editors decided it would be useful to include them here.

The Bolshevik leaders' analysis was developed in the heat of revolutionary activity, applying what they had internalized from studying similar, earlier efforts by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the founding leaders of the modern communist movement, to apply the materialist dialectic to turning points in history. Mastering this historical materialist method is necessary if we are to orient ourselves politically to such shifts.

A revolutionary proletarian party not only organizes its own members and supporters to act on the evidence of such changes and their logic; it takes responsibility for encouraging other class-

A Request of Our Readers

The Militant is printing this feature article in 12-point type, larger than our standard 10-point typeface, and with greater space between the lines. We urge readers to send us their opinions on the readability of this larger type.

hot winter'

ational secretary Jack Barnes

struggle-minded, fighting workers and farmers to do the same. Militants won to this perspective may occasionally overreach what the relationship of class forces allows. Such mistakes will be made. But we remain convinced by 150 years of revolutionary working-class history that the costs of political indecision and delay are far more dangerous and difficult to correct.

Two different turning points

Extracting lessons from Lenin and Trotsky's analysis in the reports printed here is made more complex by the fact that the turning point vanguard workers act on today bears little resemblance to the concrete historical period more than eighty years ago during which the Bolsheviks were inspiring, educating, and leading millions in class combat. The Communist International, organized in 1919, was a product of the most exhilarating event of the twentieth century: the victorious conquest of power by the Bolshevik-led workers and peasants of Russia in October 1917, and the extension of this power to large parts of the tsarist empire in Europe and Asia to become the first union of soviet socialist republics.

Working people worldwide were drawn to the possibility of learning from and emulating a living proletarian revolution and its leadership, which had shown for the first time ever how to educate and organize workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors to conquer—and defend—workers power.

In March 1918, just four months after the conquest of power, the Bolsheviks proudly took the name *Communist*. In doing so, they were signaling their unequivocal break with all elements of the world socialist movement that, with the guns of August, either had politically gone over to imperialism, or had vacillated in face of the Second International's capitulatory course. They were redoubling their intransigent opposition to these "socialists" who had ceased subordinating

their lives and work to advancing the proletarian struggle. They were underscoring the fact that the toilers of the expanding union of soviet socialist republics were reknitting continuity with the revolutionary proletarian world movement that Marx, Engels, and their comrades—not only from Germany but from France, Belgium, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom—had begun building at the London convention that in 1847 voted to issue the Manifesto of the Communist Party.

A new kind of movement

The Bolsheviks were taking a name synonymous with being in the front ranks of the proletariat—among "the most advanced and resolute section," in the words of the Manifesto—in its march toward power, toward the dictatorship of the proletariat. They were proclaiming a new kind of movement, one "in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer," but on "clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement." Communism merely expresses, "in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."

"Insofar as it is a theory," Engels had explained a year earlier, communism "is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in [the class] struggle and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat."

Between 1918 and 1920 revolutionary or prerevolutionary situations erupted in Germany, Hungary, and Italy, and mighty battles were fought by workers and farmers in Britain, France, Japan, the United States, and elsewhere. As the Comintern's Third Congress opened in June 1921, workers and peasants in Soviet Russia and worldwide were still celebrating the Red Army's recent crushing of the counterrevolutionary, landlord-capi-



Reuters/Manuela Hartling

Capitalism is in opening stages of a world depression, Barnes says. Workers line up at unemployment office in Berlin, Jan. 9, 2003. The jobless rate in Germany exceeds 10 percent, and is nearly 20 percent in the eastern section of the country.

talist armies that had waged a brutal three-year civil war to turn back the revolution. Invading forces from fourteen countries, including France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other imperialist powers, had also been repelled.

Postwar depression

In the wake of World War I, capitalism had entered a period "of prolonged and profound depression," Trotsky told the 1921 Communist International congress. The roots of that convulsion, he added, could have been seen "as far back as 1913," the eve of the interimperialist slaughter in which 8.5 million soldiers died, another 21.2 million were wounded, and factories, livestock, and railroads across Europe were decimated.

As it turned out, despite ebbs and flows, neither that social and economic crisis, nor the wave of revolutionary opportunities impelled by the Bolshevik victory, were to run their course for another twenty years: a period marked by the triumph of fascism in Italy; the Great Depression of the 1930s; a murderous political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union; the victory and bloody consolidation of National Socialism in Germany; and, most importantly, renewed opportunities for the socialist revolution—that is, prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations in Europe and Asia—that were exhausted only with the defeat of the Spanish revolution in 1939, making the simmering imperialist world war inevitable.

The concrete character of the historic turning point today, analyzed in "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," is very different from that of 1921. As is the world relationship of class forces. One difference is the international political standing of communism among workers, farmers, youth, and others. In the years following the October Revolution, the political respect the Bolshevik leadership had earned, and the confidence millions of workers worldwide had in it, became a powerful objective factor in the international class struggle.

Today, more than three-quarters of a century later, broad mass political attraction to communism among militant working people and youth has—for the moment—been exhausted. At best, communism is seen as a perhaps heroic and historically interesting, although bypassed, movement. At times it is put forward by academic "Marxists" in eviscerated form, its revolutionary working-class heart—the inevitable march toward state power—cut out. At worst, it is identified with the Stalinist counterfeit of Marxism

Continued on Page 8

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by Jack Barnes

(See front-page ad for back cover text)

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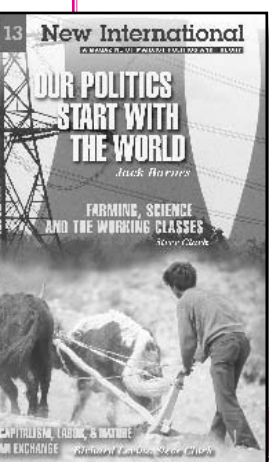
OUR POLITICS START WITH THE WORLD

by Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced, reproduced, and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, says Jack Barnes in the lead article, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

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'New International' no. 12

Continued from Page 7

and all the counterrevolutionary, political crimes against and betrayals of the working class and peasantry—and communists—committed in its name around the world.

Finest examples

The political course and communist continuity hammered out by the Comintern in Lenin's time, however, are revolutionary and working-class to the core. The reports by Lenin and Trotsky printed here are among the finest examples of the materialist dialectic used as a guide to revolutionary action by working-class leaders. Our job is to learn from and apply Lenin and Trotsky's living, practical example of how Marxists approach the interrelationship between deep-going economic and financial trends in international capitalism, shifts in long-term patterns of imperialist politics and the worldwide class struggle, and sea changes in working-class resistance. Our responsibility—and opportunity—is to act accordingly, in response to today's trends, and build revolutionary proletarian parties as part of a world communist movement.

Using these tools enables us to shape "Their Transformation and Ours" as a complement to "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun,"

to affirm the central political conclusion they share, and to act on its implications for the organization and activity of proletarian revolutionists today:

We find ourselves in the very opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles.... Like most other workers, c o m m u n i s t s participating in this convention must internalize the fact that this world—the likes of which none of us have known before in our political lives—is not only the world that must be faced today, but the one we will be living and fighting in for some time. By *acting* on this reality today, we will not be caught short politically as wars erupt, deeper social crises explode, pogroms are organized and attempted, and union conflicts become life-and-death battles. The proletarian party that exists tomorrow can only grow out of the proletarian party we put together *today*.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Barnes points to the "political transformation of militant workers who, impelled by these momentous changes, are taking the lead to reach for, organize, and use union power." Above, garment workers at the Point Blank Body Armor plant in Oakland Park, Florida, celebrate victory in union-organizing struggle May 3, 2004.

ing the recent release of *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo*, Pathfinder Press's Spanish translation of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara, the central leader of the revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso between 1983 and 1987. Also presented at that meeting was *Nueva Internacional* no. 7, the Spanish-language translation of *New International* no. 13, featuring the report "Our Politics Start with the World."

Association of Combatants meetings

The Matanzas and Cienfuegos gatherings were sponsored by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution—the "Combatientes"—an organization spanning multiple generations of Cubans who have fought, wherever and however needed, to make and defend the first socialist revolution in the Americas. The meetings presented nearly a dozen Pathfinder titles, all of

For Further Reading

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions by Jack Barnes
A handbook for workers and farmers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism today. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. **Also available in Spanish and French. \$23**



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In *New International* no. 10
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by Farrell Dobbs
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which were completed with collaboration from leaders of the Combatientes. These titles range from *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara to *Pombo: a Man of Che's 'guerrilla'* by Harry Villegas, from *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández to *From the Escambray to the Congo* by Víctor Dreke, *Aldabonazo* by Armando Hart, and numerous others.

Steve Clark, the managing editor, in addition to overseeing much of the final work on the magazine, has traveled to Tampa, Atlanta, Newark, and San Francisco. There he worked with the leadership of the almost 200-person worldwide volunteer team of revolutionists who organize the formatting, proofreading, and numerous other steps necessary to produce and print not only *New International*, *Nueva Internacional*, and *Nouvelle Internationale*, but books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder, as well as the shipping and handling of orders and efforts to get these titles onto bookstore and library shelves around the globe. In Newark and Tampa Clark spoke at regional socialist conferences to prepare an international meeting in New York at the end of March to politically launch the campaign to get these two new issues, in English and Spanish, into the hands of working people and youth worldwide.

Changing type size

As a result, I took responsibility for drafting In This Issue, which is the final, nail-in-the-coffin piece for each issue of the magazine. In reviewing and editing several formatted articles over the last two months, I had become increasingly convinced that the pages were irritatingly hard to read. The type was too small. There was too little space between the lines. They attracted you too little and made you strain too much. I was assured the pages would look better, that the type would be more readable in the printed magazine. That was not the case. So, taking advantage of the accidental and temporary editorial powers I held, I instituted an increase in the type size—in the readability—of each of the two new issues of the magazine in both languages. The editor had already insisted that the ads be reworked to better complement, not compete with, the text, photos, and political content.

These seem to me political questions, class questions, not solely a matter of style or appearance, let alone taste. Every issue of *New International* contains political and theoretical articles that are challenging to read and absorb, regardless of age or eyesight. Most of us are not used to doing this kind of reading. It's not easy. It takes hard, concentrated work. We're not trained to do it. For most of our waking hours, we're not asked or expected to do it. The truth is, under capitalism, we're not supposed to do it.

Education: a class institution

We're supposed to go to work, do our job, produce a profit for a boss, and not disturb the placidity of the homeland. That's the long and short of it. Education is a class institution aimed at instilling obedience, on the job and off, not "educating" for a lifetime, not teaching us how to read and write—or to think as the makers of history we can be. Even if at one point in our lives we did learn to read in this way, over time we lose that capacity if we don't keep using it. Simple exhaustion, or temporary illness, increases the difficulty. But the need for each of us to do so does not recede under these circumstances.

Ease of reading is connected to the effective political selection and presentation of photographs. Over the past ten to fifteen years, the communist movement has made substantial



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

***New International* editor Mary-Alice Waters (right, with microphone), speaking February 17 at meeting in Matanzas, Cuba, sponsored by Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, the publishing house of Cuba's Communist Party, is also on the platform.**

progress in preparing photo sections that visually walk readers through the books we produce: "We've improved our use of the 'universal language,'" as it's put in "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun." Readability is of a piece with the care we take in preparing ads. It's the reason we never excuse bad printing (the first limited, digital printing of *New International* no. 13 was terrible). Were we to accept this, the rigor of our copyediting, proofreading, and other crafts we are proud of would slide too. Everything each of us strives to do *well*, individually

"The proletarian party that exists tomorrow can only grow out of the proletarian party we put together *today*."

and collectively, in every book we produce is to the same end: to get rid of obstacles to having fighting workers and farmers, and young people attracted to their struggles, read and consider *the politics*, and together use those books to help change ourselves as we change the world.

Readability: a political question

James P. Cannon, a longtime central leader of the communist movement in the United States going back to its founding in 1919, taught me

something about the class question of readability almost forty years ago when I was a recently graduated young socialist and a newly elected member of the leadership of the SWP. I was in Los Angeles on a speaking and organizational tour, and Jim invited me to stop by to talk politics. Shortly beforehand, the editor of one of our publications had decreased the type size in order to squeeze in a little more copy, and, among other things, Jim expressed his opinion that the type was now too small—way too small. And the periodical was thus also unattractive.

Like all the self-taught, pioneer worker-bolsheviks who founded the communist movement in North America, Jim was a voracious reader all his life. He asked me if I had any idea how many people in the United States alone had vision problems that made reading an extra effort. This was above and beyond the big majority who need glasses by middle age. I didn't and was surprised when Jim reeled off

the figures his secretarial staff had gathered and checked. Even four decades ago, the number was in the many, many millions.

That fact alone would settle the question for any class-conscious worker. Even more, however, English is not the first language of many in our class—not only in recent decades, but at the time Jim Cannon joined the socialist movement at the opening of the twentieth century. Reading and studying theoretical material in your second or third language is always even more challenging.

Same standards in Pathfinder books

For all these reasons, beginning with *New International* 12 and 13 and *Nueva Internacional* 6 and 7, all being launched in early 2005, the type is substantially larger. As earlier issues come up for reprint, each will be reformatted in this larger type size. I'm confident Pathfinder's editors will initiate a review of the books and pamphlets it publishes, as well, and henceforth organize to meet the same standards in every book and pamphlet, new and reprint, that comes off the press.

And there's a good chance that if readers think these considerations have merit and bring them to the attention of the worker-bolsheviks who edit other revolutionary publications, comparable progress can and will be made on those fronts too.

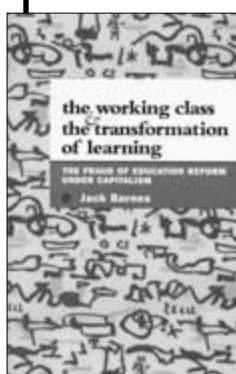
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For Further Reading

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF LEARNING: THE FRAUD OF EDUCATION REFORM UNDER CAPITALISM

by Jack Barnes

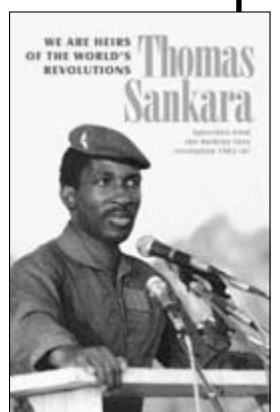
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Sankara, who led the 1983–87 revolution in Burkina Faso, explains how peasants and workers established a popular revolutionary government and began to fight the hunger, illiteracy, and economic backwardness imposed by imperialist domination. **Also available in French and Spanish. \$7.00**



EPISODES OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

by Ernesto Che Guevara

A firsthand account of the campaign that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection in Cuba, opening the socialist revolution in the Americas. **\$23.95**

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The truth about World War II

This year, the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, working people are being told by big-business voices that it's an occasion to celebrate the victory of "peace" and the triumph of "democracy" over fascism. A variant of this theme, peddled by those who look back to the former Stalinist, bureaucratic regime in Moscow for leadership, is that "the world came together in a united effort to defeat a common enemy, fascism."

These are self-serving lies by defenders of the capitalist status quo. World War II was in reality several wars in one. First, it was a war between imperialist powers over the redivision and plunder of the world—in which the defeat by Washington and its allies of Berlin, Tokyo, and Rome did nothing to eliminate the economic and social roots of fascism nor the causes of imperialist oppression. Second, it was a war to defend the Soviet Union—the first workers state—against imperialist efforts spearheaded by Germany's rulers to roll back the Russian Revolution and reestablish capitalism there, a struggle that workers and peasants won. And it was a war for national liberation in which colonial peoples advanced their struggles from India and China to the Mideast and Ireland.

A fourth war also developed: by resistance forces—many organized by the workers movement—in the occupied countries of Europe against the fascist dictatorships imposed by Hitler's National Socialist movement. This was also a war by the workers to create the most favorable conditions for the working classes in Europe to emerge victorious over their own bourgeoisies, whether fascist or "democratic" imperialist, as the conflict unfolded.

In this quest for profits the imperialist rulers committed horrendous crimes that they still lie

about. Washington's nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—as the Japanese government was close to surrender—is the one most cited. But liberal and Stalinist apologists for U.S. imperialism's course, while issuing pacifist condemnations of the atom bombings, are silent about one of the most heinous deeds: the U.S. government's napalm bombing of Tokyo and obliteration of most other major Japanese cities, which burned alive hundreds of thousands of civilians. Equally criminal was the firebombing of Hamburg, Dresden, and other German cities by British and U.S. bombers. The bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union, too, stained its hands with the blood of working people—from the 1940 Katyn massacre of Polish army officers to the Stalin regime's counterrevolutionary role in the defeat of the Spanish revolution.

Within the United States itself, the Roosevelt administration put 110,000 Japanese-Americans in concentration camps. It framed up and jailed 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Teamsters union as well as leaders of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party for their opposition to U.S. imperialism's course. The Communist Party USA supported these reactionary moves as part of its "people's front" alliance with "antifascist" bosses.

These are not historical questions. They are about today. About why the U.S. rulers' ongoing wars are not simply "policies" of one or another president but are driven by the very nature of capitalism in its highest, and last, stage—imperialism. About the lessons of the counterrevolutionary betrayals of Stalinism, which, however weakened, remains the syphilis of the labor movement today. And about the only road to peace—a revolutionary strategy to mobilize workers and farmers to take political power and disarm the imperialist war makers.

Class polarization grips Bolivia

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

For weeks, Indian peasants and urban workers throughout Bolivia have organized highway blockades and demonstrations to oppose government plans to open up the country's oil and natural gas resources to greater plunder by foreign energy monopolies.

On March 15 the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) stepped up the protests with a 48-hour strike. The popular unrest has been fueled by worsening conditions faced by working people.

In a move to deflect the protests, President Carlos Mesa offered his resignation March 6. A few days later he announced he would remain in office after receiving an anticipated show of support from all parties in Congress except for the opposition Movement toward Socialism (MAS), which has led many of the protests.

Middle-class demonstrators, fearful of the economic and political uncertainty, took to the streets to back Mesa, who had taken office in October 2003 after his predecessor, Gonzálo Sánchez de Lozada, resigned in face of a popular explosion against his economic policies.

The ongoing protests have been led by the MAS, the COB, the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (MIP), and other Indian organizations. Their central demand is an increase in royalties paid by foreign oil companies—including Repsol of Spain, British Petroleum, and Petrobras of Brazil—from 18 percent to 50 percent.

El Alto, an industrial district with a population of one million near the capital city of La Paz, was shut down in early March by protests over the water company, Aguas del Illimani, owned by the French-based Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux. Since the utility was privatized, water rates have been jacked up. Many homes remain without running water or sewer service despite the company's promise to increase hookups. Although the Mesa government canceled the company's contract in January, neighborhood leaders in El Alto continue to demand that the company be expelled.

Less than one out of four Bolivians have running water, less than 1 percent have sewage service, and

only 15 percent have electricity.

While Bolivia has the second-largest gas reserves in South America after Venezuela, it is the poorest country on the continent. Over the past decade, successive governments in La Paz have implemented "free market reforms" that allow greater investment by imperialist-owned companies in state-run industries, while removing price subsidies on essential goods and cutting other social programs.

In a country forced to make unending interest payments to imperialist bankers on its \$4 billion foreign debt, nearly half the population of 8.7 million lives on less than \$2 per day. Bolivia's per capita gross domestic product is about \$900—one-seventh of that in neighboring Chile, itself a semicolonial country.

It was the struggle against these conditions that brought down the previous government in October 2003. At that time, the catalyst for the mobilizations by peasants, tin miners, indigenous groups, and others was the plan by the Sánchez de Lozada regime to begin exporting natural gas to the United States. It was seen as a plunder of Bolivia's national patrimony, resulting in a bonanza for the foreign energy monopolies and few benefits for the majority of Bolivians, many of whom cannot even afford gas for cooking or heating.

To try to squash the protests, Sánchez de Lozada deployed the military, which fatally shot 80 demonstrators and injured hundreds. Bolivia's rulers forced out the discredited president and replaced him with the vice president. Mesa posed as an untainted journalist-turned-politician, "independent" of the hated traditional parties that have ruled the country for decades. With demonstrations continuing even as he was sworn into office, Mesa pleaded, "Give me time, give me space."

Economic conditions have continued to deteriorate, however. Since Mesa took office a year and a half ago, the government has faced more than 800 protests—over problems ranging from fuel rates and the price of bus tickets, to opposition to government coca-eradication measures that are devastating working farmers.

Since January Bolivia has been rocked by mass anti-government mobilizations. "Impoverished Indians have halted traffic on major roads for weeks," the Reuters news agency reported March 15. "As many as 1,500 trucks with rotting cargoes are stranded on highways in the central region of Chapare," a coca-growing center. El Alto has also been a focal point of working-class protests.

Bolivian capitalists have increasingly clamored for Mesa to crack down on the working-class and peasant protests. People from the middle classes, afraid that Mesa's resignation would lead to deeper upheaval, have rallied in his support.

According to a March 7 article in the Bolivian daily *El Diario*, demonstrators in La Paz waved flags and chanted, "We do not accept your resignation! We don't want a thief or a murderer to take office." One woman told a local television station that she supported Mesa because "we don't want to fall into the hands of coca growers, thieves, and communists." Protesters blamed Evo Morales of the MAS and indigenous groups for "dividing" Bolivia and "plunging the country into chaos."

On Iraq, Kurdish struggle

BY SAM MANUEL

In a letter published in the February 28 issue, Ben Roberts asserts that the *Militant's* coverage of Iraq has grown increasingly "superficial and inaccurate." His most concrete disagreement is with the paper's presentation of the fact that the struggle of the Kurdish people for national self-determination is one of the unintended and uncontrolled forces that have been accelerated by the imperialist intervention in Iraq—a struggle that working people should support. The *Militant's* stance on this question is consistent with its opposition to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and its call for the unconditional withdrawal of all occupation troops.

Roberts claims that "Kurdish separatism is not something unexpected by Washington." He states that the Kurds' unofficial vote for independence, organized by Kurdish groups during the January 30 Iraqi elections, was "tacitly backed" by Paul Bremer, Washington's former proconsul in Iraq. He offers no proof of Bremer's alleged support.

Following the elections in Iraq, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice made a stop in Turkey during her tour to Europe, as the *Militant* reported, to assure Ankara that Washington opposes an independent Kurdistan and is "fully committed, to a unified Iraq."

Peter Galbraith, a former U.S. ambassador who criticizes the Bush administration for not paying sufficient attention to Kurdish separatism, wrote in a February 1 op-ed column in the *New York Times* that last year, when the organizers of the unofficial referendum sought a meet-

REPLY TO A READER

ing with U.S. officials to show them a petition containing 1.7 million Kurdish signatures asking for a vote on independence, neither Bremer nor any of his aides would meet with them. Galbraith wrote that U.S. officials were surprised by the independence vote because they continue pretending that the unity of Iraq is not at issue.

One of the most important unintended consequences of the imperialist rulers' political course in Iraq is the qualitatively wider political space for the Kurds to advance their struggle for self-determination. Similarly, Kurds took advantage of openings after the U.S. assault on Iraq in 1991, when they took control of many villages and towns—including the city of Kirkuk—for a week or more. Surprised by the scope of the Kurdish revolt, the U.S. military stood aside as the Hussein regime used helicopter gunships and heavy armor to ruthlessly put down the rebellion, causing two million or more Kurdish refugees to attempt to flee across the Turkish and Iranian borders. Acting in cahoots with the Hussein regime and Ankara, U.S. troops joined Turkish soldiers in forcing Kurdish refugees back out of Turkey and off nearby mountains into ill-provisioned, barren transit camps. Now as in 1991, the U.S. rulers have underestimated the depth of the national pride and capacity to struggle of the Kurdish people. It will always catch them by surprise.

Roberts argues that the Bush administration is using the Kurdish struggle for self-determination to encourage the "breakup and factionalization of Iraq." He goes on to assert that an Iraq "united under a nationalist movement could toss out the undermanned U.S. forces within a year."

But history teaches the opposite lesson for working people seeking to overcome divisions rooted in the legacy of imperialist domination. That lesson is that only by championing the fight by oppressed nationalities against their subjugation can working people forge the basis for a united fight against their common enemy, the imperialist and domestic capitalist exploiters.

This approach was at the heart of the program of the Bolshevik party under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, which led workers and farmers to power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. By championing the emancipation of the nations oppressed under the tsarist empire, the revolutionary leadership laid a firm basis for the voluntary association of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and for successfully defending the revolution against imperialist military assaults. The reversal of this course by the Stalin-led political counterrevolution, which transformed the Soviet Union into the opposite of a voluntary federation of workers and peasants republics, made the collapse of the Stalinist regime and breakup of the USSR inevitable.

Likewise, the forced retention of the Kurds within Iraq by the capitalist rulers of that country has long been used to undermine a united fight by working people in Iraq—Sunni and Shiite, Arab and Kurd—first against the Hussein regime and now against the U.S.-led imperialist intervention. It has also driven workers and farmers in Kurdistan into the arms of the bourgeois leaders of the main Kurdish parties, which support Washington.

Roberts labels "inaccurate" the *Militant's* statement that "wealthy Sunnis were the backbone of support for the Hussein regime." As proof, he remarks that Iyad Allawi, prime minister of Iraq's interim government and a Shiite, is a "former Baathist assassin." That fact changes nothing about the main base of support for the Baathist regime, which as part of its divide-and-rule tactics promoted privileges for Sunnis at the expense of the Shiite majority. Nor does the assertion that there are Shiite-led organizations involved in the armed attacks against U.S. and Iraqi government forces change the fact that the operational capability of the "insurgency" depends on the financing, organization, and supply of weapons by Baathist forces. All reports indicate that the primary force U.S. troops faced in last November's assault on Fallujah—a longtime Baathist stronghold—was a portion of the elite troops of the former Hussein regime.

Roberts also objects to the *Militant's* report that there was "relatively minor bloodshed" by Baathist attackers on the day of the elections (the one example he gives of a shootdown of a British plane, an event of little consequence in Iraq, was in fact reported in the February 14 issue he criticizes).

Liberal commentators, in their effort to score points against the Bush administration and boost Democratic politicians, cannot accurately present these facts. They present a false view of "Bush's quagmire" in Iraq, failing to explain how the U.S. ruling class—with Democrats offering critical support to the White House—has made gains in the Mideast today by taking advantage of the political incapacity of the Baathist and other bourgeois forces in Iraq to lead a fight against imperialism. And they fail to see the space that is simultaneously opening up in Iraq—for working people, for oppressed nationalities, for women—to organize and fight to advance their interests.

U.S. judge orders release of José Padilla, held for 3 years without charges

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A federal judge in South Carolina ruled February 28 that President George Bush has overstepped his constitutional authority by detaining a U.S. citizen as an “enemy combatant” for nearly three years without filing criminal charges.

The judge, Henry Floyd, ordered the government to release José Padilla, who is also known as Abdullah al-Muhajir, within 45 days from the military brig in Charleston, South Carolina, or charge him with a crime. A Justice Department spokesperson announced that the Bush administration plans to immediately appeal the decision.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

What’s Behind the Lebanon-Syria Conflict? Why Working People Should Oppose U.S. Imperialist Threats.

Speaker: Dean Hazlewood, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 19. Dinner 6:30 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. 3926 Mission St. (4 blocks north of Silver Ave.). Tel: (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Unintended Consequences of U.S. Offensive in the Mideast: Mass Demonstrations in Lebanon Shake Unpopular Government

Speaker: Ma’moud Shirvani, Farsi-language editor of Pathfinder Press. Fri., March 18. Dinner 7 p.m.; program: 8 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 307 W 36th St. 10th fl., (use north elevators). Tel: (212) 629-6649.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Iraq: Two Years After the U.S.-led Invasion.

Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party. Sun. March 20. Program: 3:00 p.m. Donation: \$5. 3717-B Georgia Ave., NW (Petworth Metro Stop – Green Line). (202) 202-1315

“The court finds that the president has no power, neither express nor implied, neither constitutional nor statutory, to hold petitioner as an enemy combatant,” the judge wrote. “To do otherwise would not only offend the rule of law and violate this country’s constitutional tradition, but it would also be a betrayal of this nation’s commitment to the separation of powers.”

Padilla, 34, was arrested in May 2002 at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport as he arrived from Pakistan. He was taken to New York as a material witness in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Two days before a judge was to hear a challenge to Padilla’s detention, the Bush administration declared him an “enemy combatant” and transferred him to the Navy brig in South Carolina. Padilla has been held there incommunicado for the past 32 months without access to his attorneys or family.

The designation of Padilla as an enemy combatant is based on information from two individuals who claim he met with leaders of al-Qaeda and discussed plans to detonate a radiological bomb in the United States. The device, dubbed a “dirty bomb,”



Above, Getty Images/
Mario Tama

Donna Newman, attorney for José Padilla (right), speaking to media June 1, 2004, in New York.



uses a conventional explosive to disperse low-grade radioactive material. According to Padilla’s attorneys, one of the individuals has since recanted his accusation. The other, they say, has a reputation for providing false information.

This is the second time that the government’s handling of Padilla has been rejected by a federal court. In December 2003, a federal appeals court in New York also ruled that Bush lacked authority to hold Padilla in a military brig and ordered him released. However, the Justice De-

partment appealed this decision, and the Supreme Court ruled in June 2004 that Padilla’s petition for release should have been processed in federal court in South Carolina, not New York.

Students in UK build world youth festival

Continued from Page 2

the School of Oriental and African Studies University. NPC representatives spoke at the end to the more than 40 students who attended.

Two days later, eight students took part in a similar meeting at a college in Eastbourne. Many of them had been involved in protests against attempts by the government to privatize large sections of the school. “This festival highlights the need for an internationally organized response against not only those who exploit the Venezuelan workers and farmers but those who exploit worldwide,” said Katan Alder, 18, who helped organize the event. “It’s a fantastic opportunity for those engaged in struggles to communicate and share their knowledge.”

On March 10, the NPC organized a film showing at a meeting room near Oxted School, Surrey, about two hours

from London. “What was the effect of the overturning of the coup in 2002 on the rest of Latin America?” asked James Grogan, 17, after the film.

“It is unusual for an imperialist-backed coup to be defeated,” responded Julie Crawford, from the NPC. “The mobilizations by Venezuelan working people can only strengthen the confidence of others across Latin America who face the same conditions.”

“I’m hoping to go to the festival because I want to learn firsthand about Venezuela and meet revolutionaries from other countries and learn about what’s happening in every part of the world,” said Kyle McSporn, a student at Oxted who helped build the meeting. Participants decided to set up an Oxted Preparatory Committee for the festival, which will organize fund-raising to help those who need assistance to go

to Caracas.

Students at Queen Mary College in east London are planning to hold a similar event too.

Paul Davies contributed to this article.

CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Kick-Off Fund-raising Event for New York Local Organizing Committee for the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students! Featuring DJ Mellow G, open mic, and performances. Sat., March 26, 7p.m. to closing. Donation: \$5-\$10 sliding scale. *Carlito’s Café*. 1701 Lexington Ave. (btwn 106th and 107th St.) Take #6 train to 103rd St.

LETTERS

Two-class party?

There is what I believe is a serious error in the editorial “Using political space opening in the Mideast” in the March 14 *Militant*. The next-to-last sentence reads, “For a new generation of workers and farmers coming into a world of growing capitalist disorder, the space is expanding to advance the fight to build an instrument capable of ending this brutal system once and for all—a revolutionary party of workers and farmers.”

This calls for the building of a two-class party, which has never been proposed by the *Militant*. Such a two-class (or more) party is not the instrument for organizing our class and its allies to take power out of the hands of the capitalist ruling class. The creation of a workers and farmers government, a government including the workers and farmers and their allies, is absolutely necessary. But the party needed to lead the exploited and oppressed is a proletarian party—overwhelmingly proletarian in composition and in its program.

The working class must be led by a revolutionary party of workers that can forge an alliance not only with the exploited farmers but also other layers of the exploited and oppressed, including the so-called “middle classes.”

In spite of their small numbers (relative to the working class) farmers play a vastly more important role in the economy than other layers of the exploited, such as small-business owners, shopkeepers, artisans, etc.

Does that mean that farmers should not be admitted into membership of a communist party? No. There will be some farmers and rural proletarians who are inclined to accept the party’s program and act upon it as disciplined communist revolutionaries. But that is very different from organizing a workers’ and farmers’ party.

The question of the class character of a revolutionary party is one more area where the continuity of revolutionary leadership and the historic lessons gathered by the Bolsheviks must be united with the day-to-day work of communist workers in the unions and the struggle for unions where they do not exist now. Just as we would not permit members of the Kingston clan in Utah to vote in an election for a union, even though some or many of them are exploited by their millionaire leaders, we would not permit people with opposed or contradictory class allegiances to play a role in the formulation of the program or the organization of the work of a revolutionary party, even though they are debt

slaves to banks and exploited by the ruling class of capitalists.

The dangers of letting the leadership of other classes substitute for the leadership that only a communist party can provide are exactly what is being played out in Iraq, Syria, Iran, and in half a dozen countries in Latin America, including Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia.

Robin Maisel
Waco, Texas

Euthanasia

Readers of the *Militant* may be aware that the Supreme Court has agreed to hear the challenge by the Bush administration to the Oregon law permitting physician-assisted suicide for the terminally ill. Currently Oregon is the only U.S. state where it is legal.

The hypocrisy of the position is staggering when we consider the numbers of senior citizens, ill, and disabled people who want to and cannot get the drugs or treatments they need to stay alive. But the Oregon law is also an important advance for human freedom, in that it gives all of us an option we may want to have at some point in our lives. The existence of that option, even if not resorted to in many cases, can be a great comfort to the terminally ill and their families.

The same forces that oppose

abortion rights generally oppose this type of right-to-die legislation, and for the same reactionary reasons.

The public debate on this and related topics was given a boost recently by the blockbuster movie *Million Dollar Baby*, in which Clint Eastwood’s character was warned by a Catholic priest that his soul would be beyond redemption if he assisted such a suicide. This is not the conclusion of the movie’s narrator, however, nor is it the conclusion that most viewers are left with, in my opinion.

Mindy Brudno
Wynantskill, New York

Death row in Florida

Juan Roberto Melendez, who spent 17 years, 8 months, and 1 day on death row in the state of Florida, has been speaking out against the death penalty since his release in July 2002. He spoke March 2 at the First United Church of Tampa along with Abe Bonowitz of Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

Melendez was born in Brooklyn and raised in Puerto Rico. At 18 he came to the U.S. working as a migrant fruit picker. In May 1984 he was arrested in Pennsylvania, charged with first-degree murder and armed robbery—crimes he did not commit. He

was extradited to Florida. The entire trial and sentencing took five days.

Melendez spoke no English and had no interpreter. Melendez described the horrible conditions and treatment he and the 247 other condemned men received on death row at the Florida State Penitentiary in Stark.

After a number of years and the loss of several appeals, a new lawyer was appointed to Melendez’s case. A new investigator found a tape recording of another person confessing to the crime.

Both defense and prosecutors had it in their possession a month before trial. This and other exculpatory evidence also held back by prosecutors during Melendez’s trial led to his release. Twenty-five prisoners on death row in the state of Florida have been exonerated since 1972. There are currently 366 men and one woman on Florida’s death row.

Rachele Fruit
Tampa, Florida

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

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.

Irish republicans on defensive as IRA is implicated in murder

BY PETE CLIFFORD

DUBLIN, Ireland—"The imperatives of Irish domestic politics are tearing the Irish peace process asunder and Sinn Fein is savaged as the British government is let off the hook," argued Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, March 5 in his address to his party's Ard Fheis (annual conference). Sinn Fein, the main Irish republican party, held the conference amid an unrelenting campaign of allegations of criminal actions against it.

"Two months ago the process was close to a deal. Now the momentum is going the other way," Adams told the 2,000 delegates and guests gathered here. Sinn Fein had been engaged in talks with London, Dublin, and pro-British unionists over the future of the northern counties of this island nation that are occupied by British troops. In return for the complete disarmament of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) it was to be agreed that the elected assembly for Northern Ireland, which has been suspended since October 2002, would be reestablished and London's right to suspend it be ended.

The IRA, which waged an armed struggle against British rule in the past, has honored a cease-fire since 1997. An earlier agreement fell apart after London and Dublin backed the demand of the right-wing Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) that the disarmament of the IRA be publicly photographed. The IRA rejected the demand as an act aimed at humiliating the group. The DUP is the largest party in the north and would have shared government executive responsibility with Sinn Fein.

Since the collapse of the talks a smear campaign against Sinn Fein and the IRA has taken off. The first focus was a £26.5 million robbery of a Belfast bank on December 20. Police officials in Northern Ireland have claimed for two months that the IRA was responsible for the theft. London and Dublin have seized on the accusations to charge Sinn Fein's leaders were aware of this. The IRA has denied any involvement. Three months after the robbery, neither the police in Northern Ireland nor London or Dublin, have produced any evidence to substantiate their claims.

As their efforts to maintain momentum over the bank robbery allegations began to fade, the British rulers shifted their fire to the January 30 bar fight in central Belfast that led to the stabbing to death of Robert McCartney. His sisters then began a campaign to demand prosecution of those responsible, alleging that republicans were involved and were organizing a cover-up. A rally they held on February 27 in the Short Strand area of Belfast, a small but strongly pro-republican area, attracted between 600 and 1,500 people, according to news reports. Since then, London, Dublin, and the media have gone into overdrive to smear the republicans.

On February 25, the IRA expelled three of its members after its own investigation. A week later, Sinn Fein suspended seven of its members pending the outcome of any court decisions.

Adams invited and welcomed the McCartney sisters to the Ard Fheis. He told the conference this was a central issue "because some republicans were involved" in the incident. "I could not campaign for the victims of British or unionist paramilitary thuggery if I was not as clear and as committed to justice for the McCartney family," he said. Adams called for those responsible to "admit what they did in a court of law." He instructed a solicitor to pass on the names supplied by the McCartney family to the police.

London and Washington have seized on this turn of events to deal blows to the Irish

nationalist fight. London has used the bank robbery allegation to end the £400,000 funding Sinn Fein's four members of the UK parliament receive. London's Northern Ireland minister also announced February 24 that the MI5 security services would take over powers previously run by the Northern Ireland police, targeting the IRA in particular.

On March 2 Washington announced, in a move primarily aimed at weakening Sinn Fein's support in the United States, that parties from Northern Ireland would not be attending the annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations at the White House. The BBC reported March 7 that the McCartney sisters would be invited. Taking advantage of the crude offer by the IRA to the McCartney family to shoot those responsible for Robert McCartney's murder, the U.S. special envoy to Northern Ireland said, "it was time for the IRA to go out of business."

At the conference, Adams protested that prior to the breakdown of talks "there was a sense of nationalists working together"—the Fianna Fail-led coalition government in Dublin, Sinn Fein, and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (a smaller nationalist party based in the north). He said the elections to the European parliament, where Sinn Fein holds two seats, and "the surge of support for Sinn Fein across Ireland, was the last straw for the establishment."

Independence leader elected president again in French Polynesia, a colony of Paris in Pacific

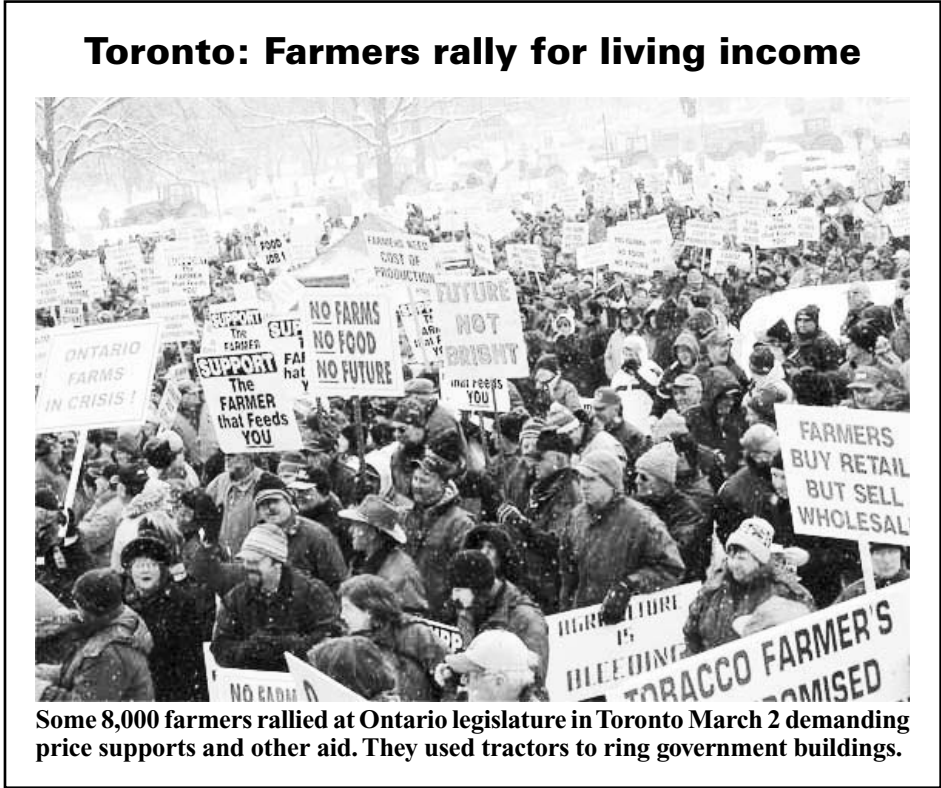
BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Oscar Temaru was elected president of French Polynesia March 3, the second time in less than a year. His election by the local Territorial Assembly follows the victory of his six-party Union for Democracy (UPLD) coalition in by-elections there February 13 and caps months of political instability and protests by working people in the Pacific island territory. About 25,000 people took to the streets of the capital, Papeete, recently in support of Temaru, calling for "taui," or change, in French Polynesia's leadership.

French Polynesia, along with New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna, is one of three colonies in the Pacific ruled by Paris. About 78 percent of the country's population of 266,000 is of Polynesian descent. Temaru is a long-time leader of the movement for independence from French rule, and against France's nuclear testing in the territory.

In May 2004, the party led by Temaru, Tavini Huiraatira, narrowly won general elections in French Polynesia in a result that surprised political commentators. His administration was ousted four months later by Gaston Flosse in a no-confidence vote in the Territorial Assembly. Flosse, a former long-term president, is an ally of French president Jacques Chirac and supports limited autonomy, rather than independence, from France. Working people responded with a protest of 20,000 in the capital. They occupied the presidential palace, circulated a protest petition, and blockaded government buildings for months. Flosse, however, was re-elected president October 23 in a rump meeting of the assembly.

Temaru refused to concede his post and called for new elections. Amid continuing protests, the French government intervened. Paris backed a call by Flosse to annul the results in the Windward Islands, the largest electoral constituency, and call a by-election for the 37 unseated members of the assembly, which has a total of 57 seats.



Toronto: Farmers rally for living income

Some 8,000 farmers rallied at Ontario legislature in Toronto March 2 demanding price supports and other aid. They used tractors to ring government buildings.

The response to the McCartney murder put a spotlight on the discussion at the Ard Fheis on the party's stance to policing in Northern Ireland. Reporting for the Sinn Fein leadership, Gerry Kelly described how "for generations the police in the north have been an instrument of political repression, counter revolution, and terror. It has been a partisan, political, Protestant, and paramilitary force, which has been used in the main against Catholics, nationalists and republicans." He explained that a consequence of the now failed December agreement was to be a transfer of control of policing powers to the Northern Ireland assembly. This step, he said, was "the only way policing and justice can be wrested out of the hands of

London." He reported that had the December agreement progressed, Sinn Fein would have held a special conference to assess its stance on the police force.

During the Ard Fheis lunch break, Ogra Shinn Fein, the youth organization of Sinn Fein, led a protest march of several hundred from the conference to the nearby British embassy protesting collusion of the police and army with pro-British death squads in the north.

In addition to addressing the McCartney murder and broader allegations against it, the Sinn Fein leaders put at the centre of the Ard Fheis preparations for the next round of elections, especially in the UK general election likely to be held in May.

dence forces in New Caledonia, called for a gradual transfer of power from Paris to local authorities, with a referendum on independence to be held in 15 to 20 years.

Temaru said his main priorities would be restoring the local economy and infrastructure, developing tourism, increasing agricultural production, and improving job training and education. He also called for trilingual education—in French, Tahitian and English—saying the islands' young people must regain "their history, their culture, and, of course, their mother tongue." In addition, he announced plans to audit government finances, saying the previous regime had misappropriated or squandered funds amounting to some 100 billion French Pacific francs (US\$1.13 billion).

Flosse's campaign focused on counterposing autonomy to independence, an argument that appeals to many in light of the millions of dollars of subsidies that French Polynesia receives from Paris. He also promised a number of social measures, such as free public transportation, free school meals for junior school pupils, and cheaper electricity, as well as tax cuts for trade and corporations.

Throughout these months, the French government has kept a close eye on its Pacific territory and events have reverberated in national politics in France. The French Socialist Party and the Greens sent delegations of members of parliament to back the UPLD campaign.

Leading up to last year's poll, Paris had threatened to cut off funding to the territory if Temaru was elected. After the by-election, French overseas minister Brigitte Girardin simply urged all political parties to "display a sense of responsibility" so that the country would not "fall into instability." Meanwhile, additional French security forces, dispatched to the territory before last year's poll, have been instructed to remain in Papeete to prevent any "post-election escalation."