

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
AFL-CIO faction fight threatens
split in labor federation
—PAGES 4,9

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Populist demagogue beats 'reformer' in Iran's election

U.S. gov't response muted

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a landslide victory June 24 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran in a run-off election against former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Ahmadinejad, the mayor of Tehran since 2003, is not a "conservative" or an Islamic "hard-line fundamentalist"

NEWS ANALYSIS

as the bourgeois media have largely labeled him. He is capitalist politician who demagogically presents himself as a strong leader who stands above classes and can deal with the "corrupt elite"—that is, a Bonapartist figure.

In his election campaign Ahmadinejad used the populist rhetoric of the 1979 plebeian revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed regime of the shah. He appealed to the outrage of the toiling masses over rampant bourgeois corruption, the less and less hidden privileges of the bourgeoisie and middle-class layers, and the growing class differentiations in income, wealth, and health.

The only forces surprised by Ahmadinejad's victory were the middle-class reformers who live in a different reality than the workers, farmers, and other exploited producers of Iran. They blamed the "unwashed masses" for choosing "reaction." Capitalist politicians in imperialist countries that have courted the "reformers" in Iran were taken aback too. Middle-class liberals and their radical fellow travelers in the United States and other imperialist

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More gov'ts recognize U.S.-backed regime in Iraq

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—A growing number of states—including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria—have announced plans to recognize the U.S.-backed regime in Iraq and establish diplomatic relations with Baghdad. Some 80 states and organizations participated in a June 22 conference in Brussels, co-sponsored by Washington and the European Union. They issued a statement urging all governments to recognize the Iraqi regime. These are the latest steps along Washington's road of establishing a stable capitalist regime in Iraq.

Toward that goal, the nearly 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq will stay for an indefinite period until the Iraqi military and police are strong enough to defeat armed anti-government militias on their own, said U.S. president George Bush in a June 28 nationally televised speech at Fort Bragg, North

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Klansman gets 60 years for role in 1964 killings

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—"The whole world knows he should have been convicted of first-degree murder, but at least he was convicted," said Eddie Carthan, former mayor of Tchula, Mississippi, in a June 24 interview. He was commenting on the June 21 manslaughter conviction of 80-year-old Edgar Ray Killen for the 1964 slayings of three young civil rights workers—James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman—near Philadelphia, Mississippi. Killen was sentenced on June 23 to 60 years in prison.

Carthan, a long-time civil rights activist in the Mississippi Delta area, is currently minister of the Good Samaritan Ecumenical Church.

Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman were in Mississippi as part of the 1964 Freedom Summer, in which hundreds of volunteers came to the state to help register Blacks to vote. The volunteers, along with local

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Getty Images/Marianne Todd

Edgar Ray Killen, 80, is escorted into the courthouse June 23 before being sentenced to 60 years for his involvement in the 1964 racist murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman near Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate in Seattle:

Support workers' struggles to organize unions

Back right of semicolonial nations to develop sources of energy they need, including nuclear power, for economic advancement

BY CONNIE ALLEN

SEATTLE—"We're getting an especially good response when we explain that our campaign supports workers' struggles to organize unions and strengthen their unions," Chris Hoeppner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle, told participants in a June 25 Militant

Labor Forum here. The meeting celebrated substantial progress in the effort to place the SWP candidate on the ballot. In nine days 4,900 signatures have been collected—more than three times the city requirement.

Some 30 campaign supporters had

fanned out across Seattle that day and the preceding week, campaigning with the party platform and collecting signatures to gain ballot status for the socialist candidate.

Also speaking was Steve Clark, a member of the SWP National Committee. Organizing unions and using union power, he said, is essential if working people are to resist the employers' drive to cut wages, extend hours, throw safety to the winds, and cut pensions and health coverage. Washington's brutal war in Iraq and others it is preparing are an extension of the bosses' offensive to drive down living standards and job conditions at home.

Clark said SWP candidates for mayor

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Navajo Nation bans uranium mining

BY DAVE FERGUSON
AND ALYSON KENNEDY

PRICE, Utah—"I don't want to subject any more of my people to exposure to uranium and the cancers that it causes," said Navajo Nation president Joe Shirley Jr. as he signed April 29 the Diné Natural Resources Protection Act, which bans the mining and processing of uranium on Navajo land. "As long

Continued on page 4

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—Jack Barnes

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An international consortium announced June 28 that France would be the site of the world's first nuclear fusion reactor. A day earlier Washington announced plans to resume plutonium production, stalled since the 1980s. These steps reflect the accelerating push by finance capital for expanding use of nuclear energy, while imperialist powers obstruct its development in the semicolonial world. More next week.

Also Inside:

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Ontario steelworkers end three-month strike, beat back concessions

BY JOE YOUNG
AND JOHN STEELE

INGERSOLL, Ontario—Steelworkers who struck Ingersoll Machine and Tool (IMT) for three months voted by an 86 percent margin June 1 to approve a new three-year contract.

The unionists, members of United Steelworkers Local 2918, succeeded in beating back most of the company's concession demands. The 136 workers produce shell casings for the Canadian and U.S. armed forces as well as trailer axles.

The new contract includes a 1 percent annual wage increase, a \$200 signing bonus (Can\$1 = US\$0.81), an increase in long-term disability payments, and the cost-of-living clause from the previous contract. The company succeeded in deepening a two-tier wage system under which new hires will now be paid 20 percent less than other workers and it will take three years to reach the maximum rate.

The bosses had demanded a 12 percent wage cut, 32 percent lower wages for new hires, the elimination of four paid holidays, and the gutting of the seniority system.

During the course of the strike the IMT owners used court injunctions to limit picketing, brought in scabs, and fired 10 workers. The fired workers will be reinstated and have a three-day suspension placed in their records for nine months.

"It is very important we made a stand on the firings," André McNutt, a set-up

operator with 27 years seniority, told the *Militant*. "We were solidly together. We are a union and that's what a union is for, not going back without my brother."

Terry Coleman, a forklift driver and vice president of Local 2918, told the *Militant* that the company was "not successful in its attempt to interfere with union committees, seniority rights, establish departmental seniority, vacations, or pensions" and that "we retained our early retirement package in its entirety."

Coleman explained that the strikers conducted a "political-style campaign," going door-to-door in Ingersoll with literature explaining the stakes in the strike and drawing people down to the picket line. Support was also won from the Oxford County and other labor councils. The unionists said they took the strike to a trade show in Las Vegas where the culinary workers' union helped print and distribute flyers to potential IMT customers.

California janitors strike for medical benefits



Militant/Rick Trujillo

BY RICK TRUJILLO

SAN DIEGO—More than 200 striking janitors and supporters rallied in front of the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer June 17 in Torrey Pines, California, a suburb of San Diego, above. They rallied again a week later.

Organized by Service Employees International Union Local 1877, the workers, most of them originally from Mexico, are fighting for medical benefits and increased wages. Entering the third week of their strike, some 150 union members out of 1,400 that clean buildings in suburban San Diego County have escalated the walkout to 50 buildings. "We are fighting for health care because it's a right; we are not asking for anything we are not already owed," striker Juan Cortez told the spirited crowd.

"I am here with you for fair wages. Neither the company nor the police will stop us," said Leonel Cortez. "We shouldn't be afraid of anything."

The union is currently negotiating with eight major contractors. The union local reports that these workers are the last of its members in a major metropolitan area without health-care benefits.

UAW files for union vote at N. Carolina plant

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

The United Auto Workers filed a petition June 13 with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold a union election within 42 days at the Thomas Built Buses factory in High Point, North Carolina. The 1,200 workers at the plant manufac-

ture school buses. The company is a unit of Freightliner, a subsidiary of DaimlerChrysler.

A hearing on the petition is scheduled for June 23.

In March of last year, Thomas Built Buses recognized the union after a majority of the workers signed authorization cards in support of UAW representation. The union recognition was rescinded earlier this year, however, after the National Right to Work Defense Foundation, a pro-boss outfit, filed a petition with the NLRB challenging the "card check."

Thousands of workers have joined the United Auto Workers at the Freightliner plants in Mount Holly, Gastonia, and Cleveland, North Carolina, as well as parts workers in Atlanta and Memphis, according to the UAW's

website. The company employs about 8,200 workers in North Carolina, a third of its national workforce.

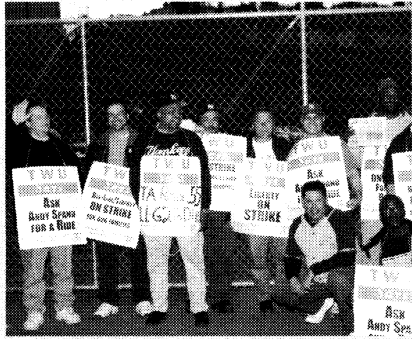
UAW officials, like other union tops, have relied on "card check" authorization agreements to try to stem the decline in membership as a substitute for mobilizing the labor movement—including workers inside the targeted plants—to win union-organizing fights. The Thomas Built Buses plant was one of the few unionized plants in the Greensboro and Winston-Salem region, according to the Greensboro *News-Record*.

Union membership overall continues to decline across the state. According to the 2004 Bureau of Labor Statistics survey, only 3.6 percent of workers in North Carolina are unionized, the lowest percentage in the country.

THE MILITANT

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Klansman gets 60 years

Continued from front page

Black residents, also set up Freedom Schools that summer for Black students. Carthan participated in the Freedom School in Mileston, near Tchula, and met Schwerner when he visited the school two weeks before his murder.

Carthan blamed the prosecution for the fact that murder convictions were not secured. "The prosecution didn't do the very best job," he said. Manslaughter is distinct from murder in that it does not involve malicious intent or premeditation. Dragging their feet for 41 years after the crime and pushing for milder punishment than what's called for is part of the ongoing efforts by state and federal authorities to cover up their responsibilities for sanctioning racist terror in the 1960s.

For further reading

From Mississippi to Boston: The demand for troops to enforce civil rights

How demands for troops to enforce civil rights in the 1960s aided the mobilization of working people against racist assaults. \$6

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"I don't have any sympathy for Killen, even though he's old," said Joann Hogan, in an interview following Killen's sentencing. Hogan, also a lifelong resident of Tchula, is a former leader of the Catfish Workers of America. "He should have been convicted of murder, because that's what he did. And he's shown no remorse. Instead, he acts like he'd do it again if he could."

Killen, a leader of the Ku Klux Klan in Neshoba County in 1964, plans to appeal his conviction.

Ben Chaney, younger brother of James Chaney, has called on Mississippi authorities to pursue prosecution of the seven other suspects in the case who are still alive. While state prosecutors say the only two triggermen in the killings are dead, the Mississippi State forensic pathologist and others have said they believe there were more than two shooters, which could lead to further arrests. This would require exhumation and a new autopsy of James Chaney's body, as was recently done in the case of Emmett Till. Fourteen-year-old Till was murdered in 1955 by racists in Money, Mississippi.

Socialist Workers campaign in Pittsburgh



Militant/Joel Britton

Socialist Workers campaign supporter Marty Ressler (left) collects signatures June 25 outside Del Monte plant in Pittsburgh to put SWP mayoral candidate Jay Ressler on the ballot. More than a dozen workers signed the petition that day. Some 600 workers, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, are employed at this former Heinz plant. Socialists collected nearly 2,300 signatures to put Ressler on the ballot June 18-25, the first week of petitioning. Campaign supporters are reaching out broadly in the region, including among coal miners. A recent team sold the *Militant* at the Shoemaker mine in West Virginia.

Seattle: Socialist Workers mayoral candidate gets hearing

Continued from front page

in Seattle, New York City, Pittsburgh, and elsewhere are speaking out against the U.S. government's drive to prevent nations oppressed by imperialism from developing nuclear power and other energy sources to expand electrification necessary for economic and social advances. They are explaining the need to build a revolutionary movement that will lead the working class and other oppressed and exploited producers to take power from the capitalist class and establish a workers and farmers government.

Hoeppner, a packinghouse worker who has been a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, said the campaign builds on the activity the SWP carries out year round. Party members active in unions have helped mobilize union solidarity in the Northwest for the fight of Utah coal

miners organizing to join the United Mine Workers of America, and Snokist cannery workers in the Yakima Valley who recently won a seven-month strike for a union contract. The SWP campaign champions the effort by cement haulers at the Port of Seattle to join the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

The following week, Hoeppner said, he would be speaking at an event organized by young people in the area to raise funds to participate in the August 7-15 World Festival of Youth and Students in Caracas, Venezuela.

Campaign volunteers reported a good response to petitioning at the longshore union hall. A docker who participated in one of two delegations to Utah to bring solidarity to the miners there helped collect signatures, and two others bought copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*

and a subscription to the campaign newspaper, the *Militant*.

More than \$8,000 was contributed or pledged at the forum for the campaign

and to cover legal and other expenses of the effort to win an exemption from disclosing the names of campaign donors (see box below).

Teams at coal mines, packing plants will boost 'New International' sales

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

"Fresh from successful petitioning to put the Socialist Workers mayoral candidate on the ballot in Seattle, we have met in Utah to spend a week selling the two new issues of *New International* and the *Militant* to coal miners and other workers here," wrote Naomi Craine and Joe Kapsner, currently on the road.

"The team began with visits to the Dugout and Horizon mine portals. A miner at Horizon was interested in visiting the Militant Labor Forum hall in Price to get the *New Internationals*. He bought a copy of the *Militant*, which he has read before." They said that earlier in the day, "a young worker stopped by the hall in Price and bought both *New International* nos. 12 and 13."

Craine and Kapsner also reported that five people—including a retired union miner who has followed the Co-Op miners' organizing battle in nearby Huntington—bought the *Militant* from a door-to-door team of canvassers in Price, Utah. They met a *Militant* subscriber who was interested in the upcoming Militant Labor Forum on "Uranium mining, electrification, and workers' rights" because her uncle died of cancer after working 15 years in uranium mines in Colorado.

A similar team is being organized out of Des Moines, Iowa, for the first week of July. It will include sales at many meatpacking plants in the region. Teams like these give a boost to reaching the goal of selling 3,350 copies of *New International*.

Most important is organizing a week-to-week plan to campaign to sell *New International* in working-class districts, in industrial work-

places, at union and political events, and elsewhere. This also includes systematically contacting *Militant* subscribers, who are likely to be receptive.

Request for disclosure exemption

Chris Hoeppner announced June 25 he has filed for exemption from publicly disclosing names of campaign financial contributors. A few days later the Seattle Ethics and Election Commission (SEEC) informed the party's attorney in the case, Jim Lobsenz, that it had granted the SWP's request for an expedited hearing, setting it for July 14. In 1997 the SEEC denied the SWP such an exemption.

Hoeppner pointed to the importance of the party's fight to regain a campaign disclosure exemption in Seattle. Turning over names, addresses, and jobs of contributors, he said, provides "a ready-made 'enemies list' for government agencies, employers, and others seeking to victimize union militants and socialists."

—C.A.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Basque Struggle for Self-Determination. Fri., July 8. Dinner 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 3557 S. Archer Ave. (773) 890-1190

TEXAS

Houston

Women's Liberation and the Line of March of the Working Class. Speaker: Amanda Ullman, SWP, participant in July 1-3 NOW convention. Fri., July 8. Dinner

6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. (713) 869-6550.

NEW ZEALAND

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30 Years Since the Victory of the Vietnamese People. Fri., July 8. 6 p.m. Donation: \$3. 129 Gloucester St. 365-6055

SWEDEN

Stockholm

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New International sales campaign			
March 26 - August 22			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	170	140	82%
Edinburgh	50	38	76%
UK total	220	178	81%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	55	45	82%
Christchurch	20	15	75%
N.Z. total	75	60	80%
SWEDEN	40	28	70%
CANADA	150	103	69%
UNITED STATES			
Chicago	108	92	85%
Washington, DC	95	76	80%
Houston	105	74	70%
Miami	110	76	69%
Seattle	130	89	68%
Atlanta	115	74	64%
Los Angeles	225	144	64%
Twin Cities	140	89	64%
New York	325	204	63%
San Francisco	205	124	60%
Philadelphia	100	58	58%
Newark	125	72	58%
Birmingham	112	62	55%
Des Moines	105	57	54%
Pittsburgh	100	54	54%
Price, UT	61	33	54%
Boston	120	53	44%
Salt Lake City	15	4	27%
U.S. total	2,296	1435	63%
AUSTRALIA	60	32	53%
ICELAND	32	17	53%
pathfinderpress.com	200	115	58%
World Youth Festival	250	0	
Int'l totals	3,323	1,968	59%
Goals/Should be	3,350	2074	62%

AFL-CIO faction fight may split labor federation

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND SAM MANUEL

The factional struggle in the top AFL-CIO officialdom over how to reverse the decline in the dues base of its affiliates appears headed toward a split in the labor federation. On June 15 five international union presidents announced that their organizations had formed a bloc outside the AFL-CIO. This "Change To Win Coalition" includes the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), Laborers, and UNITE HERE, which account for about 35 percent of the AFL-CIO's membership.

A few days earlier, the executive boards of the UFCW, SEIU, and UNITE HERE authorized their officers to quit the federation. UFCW president Joseph Hansen indicated they would first mount a fight against AFL-CIO president John Sweeney's reelection bid at the federation's July convention in Chicago. Sweeney, however, is expected to have enough votes to win another four-year term.

Leaders of the new grouping blame the current AFL-CIO leadership for not putting enough resources into organizing new members. In 1995 Sweeney, then head of the SEIU, was elected president of the federation on the pledge to reverse the membership drop. The slide has continued, however. In 2001 the half-million-member Carpenters union walked out of the AFL-CIO, complaining that "despite the strong words" the leadership had failed to stem the losses.

Union membership in the United States stands at its lowest in decades—12.5 percent of the workforce. At its high point in 1955, when the American Federation of Labor merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, union membership was 33 percent of the workforce. Today the rate stands at 13 percent in manufacturing, and 8 percent in privately owned companies as a whole.

While presenting itself as more responsive to the needs of workers, the Change To Win group, led by SEIU president Andrew Stern, a former Sweeney protégé, proposes the same basic course as the current AFL-CIO leadership.

The new group's platform calls for spending \$60 million, half the federation's budget, on union-organizing efforts. With that money it proposes the AFL-CIO "rebate" half of the dues paid by its affiliates to be used for organizing drives.

The new formation also advocates accelerating the move toward union mergers. Recent examples of this trend are the fusion of the United Steelworkers union with the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers (PACE), and the merger between UNITE—which organized garment and textile workers—and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union (HERE).

The AFL-CIO issued a statement noting that its proposals and those of the rival grouping "are more alike than different in their goals and principles." It said the federation's plan includes a "strategic organizing fund" providing so-called rebates to affiliates.

If rival union federations come into

being, the two formations may raid each other for members. Officials on both sides have made such threats, the May 19 *Business Week* reported.

At the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) convention in late May, where he was a featured speaker, Sweeney said the defecting unions were "dividing and weakening" the union movement, and cited CBTU president William Lucy's opposition to the disaffiliation move.

Presenting himself as a champion of "diversity," he condemned the proposal by the Stern-led group to cut back the AFL-CIO Executive Council from the current 54 to 13 or 16 members—to include only the heads of the largest unions, which would reduce the number of Blacks and women on the body. Sweeney announced that the AFL-CIO would host a national "summit on diversity" before its July convention.

Militant Fighting Fund gains new endorsers

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—"As a defender of civil rights for more than six decades, I extend my support to the *Militant* newspaper and the Socialist Workers Party for defending free speech and freedom of the press," wrote Frank Wilkinson June 21. "C.W. Mining's lawsuit should be opposed by all democratically-minded people. It is a serious threat to the First Amendment and to the rights of labor."

Wilkinson is executive director emeritus of the First Amendment Foundation and the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation. He sent his letter to the Militant Fighting Fund, which is helping the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party defend themselves from a "defamation" suit by C.W. Mining that operates the Co-Op mine in Utah. Workers there have been fighting to win recognition of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Two Utah dailies, the UMWA, 16 Co-Op miners, and other unions that have backed the miners' organizing fight are also named in the suit.

A target of government harassment for 38 years, Wilkinson spent nine months in jail in 1961 for refusing to testify about his political beliefs before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. He won a court fight in 1984 forcing the FBI to turn over 132,000 pages of government spying reports.

A number of other endorsements for the Militant Fighting Fund were also obtained during the June 13 hearings on Puerto Rico of the United Nations Decolonization Committee. These include: Ismael Guadalupe Ortiz, leader of the successful fight to get the U.S. Navy to remove its troops and close its base on the island of Vieques; Jorge Farinacci, a leader of the Socialist Front, one of the pro-independence organizations in Puerto Rico; and Father Luis Barrios, of the San Romero church in New York.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3800 in Minneapolis also became an endorser last week. The local is sending a \$50 contribution and a support statement. Also, from St. Paul, Minnesota, Rafael Espinosa, union representative of United Food and Commercial Work-

Meat packers strike in New York, win union representation and contract



Unionists on strike June 24 against Milazzo Wholesale Meat in New York City
BY DAN FEIN

BROOKLYN, New York—Meat workers and truck drivers at Milazzo Wholesale Meat in the Brooklyn Meat Market made gains after a one-day strike June 24. "Our strike won us union recognition with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 342 and a contract with improvements," said Fernando Lopez, a shop steward and truck driver. This includes overtime pay for more than eight hours of work per day and a pension plan.

ers Local 789 at Dakota Premium Foods and Lone Prairie Packing, sent an endorser card and a \$20 donation.

An updated endorser list and a new brochure has been posted for use on www.themilitant.com. The brochure reports on the June 14 court ruling ordering C.W. Mining attorneys to rewrite their "amorphous complaint."

Legal and publicity expenses for the *Militant* and SWP continue to mount in this case. A \$60,000 fund was launched June 11 to cover the costs. The deadline for payments is August 15. So far, \$42,000 has been pledged toward the goal.

"Every area should adopt a goal for the \$60,000 Militant Fighting Fund effort,"

said Norton Sandler, one of the organizers of the defense campaign. "The potential is great. In addition to collecting about \$1,500 already pledged last week, we received \$50 from an attorney in the Miami area, \$25 from a professor at Cornell University, and several smaller donations from others.

"When we talk to people about this fight and ask for help we get contributions," Sandler said. "We need this money quickly. The bills related to preparations for the June 14 hearing on the case will be due in a few days. In addition, the attorneys will be working with the lawyers for the other newspaper defendants to respond to the next filing by the Co-Op mine owners."

Navajo Nation bans uranium mining

Continued from front page

as there are no answers to cancer, we shouldn't have uranium mining on the Navajo Nation," he added. "I believe the powers that be committed genocide on Navajo land by allowing uranium."

The act states, "No person shall engage in uranium mining and processing on any sites within Navajo Indian Country."

The widespread opposition to new uranium mining was reflected in thousands of Navajos signing petitions against it, and the 63-19 vote for the ban by the Navajo Tribal Council. Fifty people gathered to celebrate at the signing ceremony.

Many individuals and organizations on the Navajo Nation are actively fighting against attempts to restart uranium mining. On June 14, the Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining and the Southwest Research and Information Center filed a 300-page brief with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission asking that the uranium license for Hydro Resources Inc. (HRI) be revoked.

More than 1,200 uranium mines operated on the Navajo Nation from the 1940s through the 1980s, mining more than 13 million tons of uranium ore. Hundreds of miners have died of lung cancer from breathing the radioactive dust. Many others who lived near the mines, and the families of miners, also have a high cancer rate. The U.S. gov-

ernment has known about the dangers of radiation exposure since the 1920s but told the miners that it was safe.

For many years uranium miners and their families have been fighting for adequate compensation for the medical costs for lung cancers from mining uranium. In 1990 the U.S. Congress passed the Radiation Compensation Act, which was amended in 2000 under the Clinton administration. However, no miners or their families have yet received any funds under these acts.

The price of uranium has more than doubled over the past two years, from less than \$10 per pound to more than \$23 per pound. HCI, a subsidiary of Dallas-based Uranium Resources Inc., has tried to gain federal permits for the last decade to begin uranium mining southwest and east of Crownpoint, New Mexico, and uranium processing north of a defunct uranium mill.

Earlier this year the Nuclear Regulatory Commission approved a license for HCI to begin the first of its four proposed mine sites around Church Rock and Crownpoint, both of which are part of the Navajo Nation.

There are 15,000 people who live in the Church Rock-Crownpoint region. The Navajo Nation, an area the size of the state of West Virginia, encompasses a big part of Arizona and parts of New Mexico and Utah. Some 275,000 people live in this area.

Human solidarity—In Juneau, Alaska, more than 1,000 people volunteered as blood



Harry Ring

marrow donors. Alex Cesar, 6, is afflicted with leukemia and if matching blood marrow is found it gives a chance of saving him.

What price Zionism—In the

Arab district of East Jerusalem, 88 Arab veteran homeowners are facing demolition of their homes by the illegal Israeli rulers of what was supposed to be an international city of Arabs, Jews, and Christians. But in 1980, the Zionist parliament brazenly declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel. Currently, it says the Palestinian residents are being dispossessed to make way for an archeological park.

Read it and retch—The global stench of U.S. abuse of Guantánamo Bay prisoners is

such that members of Congress have advised shutting it down. In response, Vice President Dick Cheney declared that the prisoners have been treated better by the U.S. than “virtually any other government on the face of the earth.”

Sheer coincidence—Four days after Cheney’s rap, the Pentagon disclosed it had given a \$30 million contract to a Halliburton construction subsidiary. It says the new Guantánamo prison will include day rooms, exercise areas,

medical bays, air conditioning, and a security control room (?). The other, civilized-sounding features will obviously be a first. (Amnesty International called it a gulag.)

Maybe, possibly—In Dillon, South Carolina, two cops were fired when a video of a traffic stop showed them cursing and beating the driver. A news report said they “could” face criminal charges.

Not with ‘ownership society’?—The United Pension

Convention in England released a study that one in five pensioners are living below the poverty line and 1.5 million are undernourished. Also, they add, in winter their homes are too cold.

Harsh numbers—For the first time, Los Angeles County says it made a serious head count of the homeless. It reports that on any given night, 90,000 men, women, and children are camping in the streets and shelters. A majority are Black and Latino plus a smaller number of other non-Anglos.

Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate in New York City: Puerto Rico’s independence in interests of toilers in U.S.

The following are excerpts of a statement presented by Martin Koppel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, at a hearing of the United Nations Decolonization Committee held June 13 on the colonial status of Puerto Rico. About two dozen people testified at the hearing. An article on this event appeared in last week’s Militant.

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Others have testified here to the abundant facts demonstrating that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony, and describing the brutal consequences of this colonial subjugation for the Puerto Rican people.

As several have eloquently explained today, independence from U.S. rule is a necessity for the people of Puerto Rico if they are to freely determine their own destiny.

I would like to add that a successful fight for the independence of Puerto Rico is in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States. Workers and farmers here have absolutely no interest in Washington’s colonial rule over Puerto Rico.

The U.S. rulers always talk in terms of “We Americans.” But that’s a lie. Working people in the United States have no common interests with the owners of General Motors, Boeing, Cargill, Exxon, and the twin parties that serve their interests—the Democrats and Republicans. Instead, we have everything in common with fellow working people around the world—from France to China to Puerto Rico. We face a common oppressor and exploiter: the tiny class of U.S. billionaire families and its government.

As long as Puerto Rico is under Washington’s colonial boot, the fighting capacity and solidarity of the working-class movement in the United States will be weakened.

As the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City, I have been speaking with working people about that fact. And it rings true, especially among workers who are engaged in resistance to the offensive by the employers against our wages, working conditions, and rights.

Today we are hearing more revelations about the torture and degradation of prisoners locked up by the U.S. government at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo—territory occupied against the will of the Cuban people. These crimes are not “excesses” or aberrations. They show the true face of U.S. imperialism. This brutalization is simply an extension of what the U.S. rulers do routinely

to prisoners inside the United States. Washington is the number one jailer in the world, with 2 million men and women behind bars.

Jailed independence fighters

Three independence fighters have been locked up in U.S. prisons for a quarter of a century—Carlos Alberto Torres, Haydee Beltrán, and Oscar López. And José Pérez González and José Velez Acosta remain in jail for activities against the U.S. Navy’s presence in Vieques. I join with others here to demand: release them all now!

I also join the call for the release of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by the U.S. government on espionage and other conspiracy charges. Their “crime” was gathering information about ultrarightist Cuban-American groups that have a long history of violent attacks against Cuba from U.S. territory, with Washington’s knowledge and complicity.

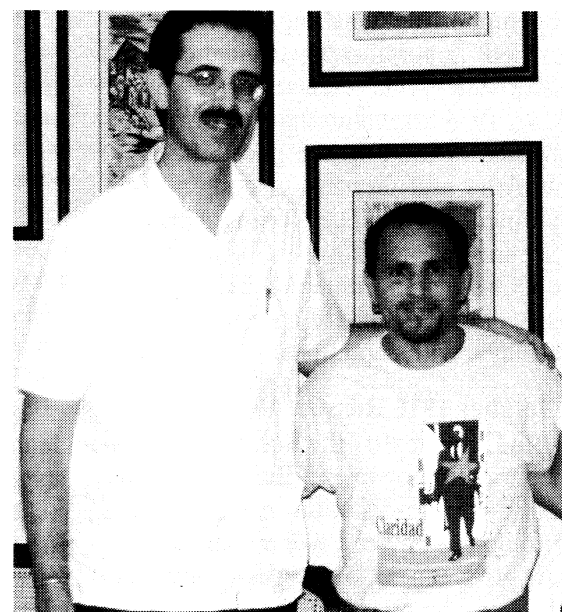
The U.S. government has used Puerto Rico as a springboard for launching assaults on countries around the world—from its invasion of Grenada in 1983 to the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, and the war and occupation of Iraq. It continues to use Puerto Rican youth as can-

non fodder in these imperialist wars. I salute the students at the University of Puerto Rico who are telling the truth about this fact as they campaign against the use of university campuses by the ROTC. The successful 60-year-long struggle by the Puerto Rican people to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques also helped educate millions about these realities....

Colonial domination of Puerto Rico reinforces the systematic discrimination and racist prejudice faced by 2.7 million Puerto Ricans here, along with Blacks, Chicanos, and other oppressed nationalities. As long as Puerto Rico remains a colony, Puerto Ricans will be subjected to second-class status in the U.S....

Mr. Chairman, in face of a growing worldwide economic depression, the U.S. rulers, who live off the labor and resources of millions around the world, have the arrogance to tell the Puerto Rican people that they have no choice but to depend on Washington, that independence would only bring them ruin.

But the living, fighting example given



Militant/Laura Garza
Martin Koppel (left), SWP candidate for New York mayor, with former Puerto Rican political prisoner Luis Rosa in 2004 in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

by the workers and farmers of Cuba and their revolutionary leadership gives the lie to this claim. Revolutionary Cuba shows that in making a socialist revolution, it is possible to fight and win genuine independence from U.S. imperialism. Cuba points the way forward for working people around the world, including in the United States.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

July 11, 1980

NEW ORLEANS—The 1980 aluminum industry contract, signed May 30, offers a grim example of union retreat in an industry enjoying record profits.

The three-year package negotiated by the United Steelworkers of America and the smaller Aluminum Workers International Union covers Alcoa, Reynolds, and Kaiser, the big three aluminum companies in the United States. Smaller companies generally agree to similar contract terms.

The first news aluminum workers got came in a company flyer announcing a “substantial settlement” at the Miami, Florida, negotiations.

Aluminum workers in the Steelworkers union do not have the right to ratify our contract; it is decided by top union officials.

The new contract provides wage increases of twenty-five cents in the first year, twenty cents in the second, and fifteen cents in the third. This is less than 2 percent a year.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

July 11, 1955

Another advance for unionism was chalked up by Southern workers as the three-month strike of Greyhound bus drivers in ten Southern states and the District of Columbia ended victoriously. In Miami, Florida, and in Louisiana, however, bitter strikes by AFL hotel workers and CIO Sugar refinery workers continued.

The Southern bus drivers’ victory has resulted in the first union contract for the Greyhound company in this area.

In the feudal sugar baronies only a short distance from New Orleans, 1,500 Negro and white members of the CIO Packinghouse Workers have reached the three-month mark in their strikes against the Godchaux and Colonial Sugar companies. Company agents scoured the countryside for as far away as 200 miles in a scab recruiting campaign. Although they have succeeded to a limited extent in this dirty business, it has by no means broken the strike.

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

July 12, 1930

The Supreme Court of California last week refused to recommend the release of Warren K. Billings, working class fighter who is serving a life sentence in the most notorious anti-labor frame-up that American history redolent with these crimes of capitalism has known for decades. Because Billings has been in prison before for his labor activities, the “governor cannot act on a pardon” until the Supreme Court makes a “favorable” recommendation.

The frame-up against [Tom] Mooney and Billings is one of the most dastardly monstrosities of American capitalist class justice.

In the 13 years of their imprisonment, exhaustive investigation has proved to the hilt that they were tried in the most prejudiced atmosphere and convicted on the basis of corrupted, perjured evidence, bought and paid for by the manufacturing and industrial interests of the State.

France 1936: mass working-class upsurge

Stalinist Popular Front tied workers to capitalists, paved road for fascism

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

An article in the May 2 *Militant* took up the revolutionary working-class political strategy followed by the communist movement since its founding. It explained how that course was reversed by the Popular Front. This was the line that, from the mid-1930s on, was pursued by the Soviet government and the parties around the world that oriented to Moscow for political direction and sustenance.

The Popular Front was based on programmatic alliances of workers' parties with liberal bourgeois parties. During World War II, Communist parties worldwide followed this line by supporting Washington and other "Allied" imperialist powers in their war with their "Axis" rivals.

In 1936 a revolutionary upsurge in France opened up the possibility for workers and farmers to contend for political power. The Communist and Socialist parties, however, blocked that opening by subordinating the struggles of working people to a Popular Front alliance with capitalists.

October 1917 Russian Revolution

In October 1917 the Bolshevik party led working people in Russia to carry out the first revolution in history that brought to power a workers and farmers government, overturned capitalist rule, and advanced the worldwide struggle for socialism.

By the mid-1920s, however, a rising bureaucratic caste in the Soviet workers state, headed by Joseph Stalin, reversed the Bolsheviks' proletarian internationalist course. It imposed a line of subordinating the interests of working people to some "progressive" wing of the capitalist class in country after country, in order to serve the diplomatic maneuvers of the privileged bureaucracy.

Writing in the April 16 issue of the *People's Weekly World*, which reflects the views of the Communist Party USA, CP national chairman Sam Webb defended this perspective. He cited Georgi Dimitrov, who in 1935 laid down the Popular Front line on behalf of the Stalin-led Communist International.



In midst of wave of sit-down strikes in France, workers march out of Renault auto plant on June 19, 1936, after six-day occupation of factory. French Communist and Socialist parties blocked workers' upsurge from becoming fight for political power.

At that time, "fascism was gathering its forces in Germany, Italy and elsewhere," Webb wrote. "That made it all the more imperative that communists shed themselves of simplistic concepts of the revolutionary process like 'class against class,' skipping intermediate stages of struggle."

That argument is a rationalization for the CPUSA's decades-long course of supporting one of the two main parties of the U.S. ruling class, the Democrats, against the Republicans.

The Stalinist line went through many twists and turns. After a period of supporting liberal bourgeois politicians who might secure diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by capitalist governments, in 1928 Moscow lurched into an ultraleft course, the "third period."

Disaster in Germany

That led to disaster in Germany. Instead of fighting for a united front of workers organizations to defeat the rising fascist movement, the German Communists—following Stalin's line—focused their fire on the Social Democratic Party as the "main enemy." This course allowed Hitler's National Socialists to take power without a struggle—a major defeat for the work-

ing class worldwide.

Instead of returning to the Leninist policy of the workers' united front, however, the Stalinized Communist International called for support to "democratic" imperialist governments under the banner of an "antifascist people's front." At the Comintern's Seventh—and last—Congress in July–August 1935, Dimitrov presented this new line.

In its early years the Comintern had advocated the united front as a perspective of workers parties joining in action, independent of the capitalist parties, to defend immediate needs of the working class against the employers. That tactic was employed to advance the line of march of workers and farmers toward taking state power.

Dimitrov gave lip service to the united front, but the content of his report was its negation: a "wide general front of the people against fascism." In the name of "broadening out" the coalition to farmers, it called for including capitalist parties.

The Stalinist leader pointed favorably to the example of the French Communist Party, which earlier in 1935 had launched a Popular Front coalition with the Socialist Party and the liberal bourgeois Radical Party.

Labor upsurge in France

In France the social crisis had been sharpening since Feb. 4, 1934, when fascists and royalists staged violent demonstrations and attempted a coup. Radical Party prime minister Edouard Daladier resigned and was replaced by the rightist Gaston Doumergue.

In face of rising fascist attacks, a working-class radicalization deepened. Fearful of this growing unrest, sections of the ruling class began to consider the fascist alternative, already in power in Germany. French imperialism also began to rearm, preparing for the coming imperialist war.

Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, then living in exile in France, called for united-front actions by the mass Socialist and Communist parties and for the formation of workers militias to mobilize against the fascist threat. He collaborated closely with the Communist League, which fought for the revolutionary internationalist

perspective followed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The French Communist Party pushed for a Popular Front, arguing that it could prevent war and stave off fascism at home.

Popular Front line in France

The parties of the Popular Front won the April–May parliamentary elections. On June 4, 1936, Socialist Party leader Léon Blum became prime minister and formed a Popular Front government. The governing alliance was pro-capitalist, because otherwise the Radicals would not participate.

A deep working-class upsurge erupted. Metalworkers in Paris went on strike and a wave of factory occupations involving 2 million workers spread nationwide.

This prerevolutionary situation opened up the possibility for working people, with proper leadership, to organize a fight to take power. Trotsky and the Communist League called for ousting the bourgeois politicians from the Popular Front regime and organizing a workers and farmers government.

The CP and SP, however, corralled working people within the bounds of capitalism. The Communist Party mobilized its cadres against the upsurge. CP leader Maurice Thorez declared on June 11, 1936, "It is necessary to know when to end a strike."

Fearful of revolution, the capitalists made numerous concessions in return for demobilizing workers, including a 40-hour workweek (down from 48 hours), wage increases of 7–15 percent, and two-week paid vacations.

In response to the worsening economic crisis, the Blum government sharply devalued the franc, postponed promised retirement pensions and cost-of-living wage increases, and cut public works. In March 1937 the government unleashed the police against an antifascist workers' march, killing four demonstrators.

The Popular Front government collapsed in June 1937, unable to satisfy the demands of workers while losing its attractiveness for capitalists as a source of stability. The Radical Party, which became the ruling party, turned on its former allies, ruthlessly suppressing the workers movement.

Rightist Vichy regime

The actions of the French Stalinists and social democrats dealt a big blow to the workers movement internationally. The disaster of the Popular Front paved the way for French imperialism's entry into World War II and later to the imposition of the rightist Vichy regime during the German imperialist occupation of France.

The lesson of this experience is that such an outcome was not inevitable. The example set by the Russian Revolution under the leadership of the Bolshevik party points the road forward. That is the road of working people organizing a revolutionary movement that is independent of—not subordinate to—the bosses and their parties, and that leads to overturning capitalist rule.

A subsequent article will describe how the Popular Front line was carried out in Spain.

FOR FURTHER READING

Leon Trotsky on France

by Leon Trotsky

Trotsky argues in the 1930s that while advancing broad mobilizations against fascist gangs, the central task for the workers' vanguard was the forging of a disciplined, proletarian party capable of leading the struggle to take political power. \$24.95

The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)

by Leon Trotsky \$21.95

Leon Trotsky
On France



Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922

by Farrell Dobbs

From the vantage point of the forging of a communist party in the United States, Dobbs describes how workers and peasants in Russia, under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, toppled the tsarist regime, established a government of the toilers, overturned capitalism, and became a beacon for those around the globe battling capitalism's wars and economic crisis. \$19.00

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British-French strife marks EU summit

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The two-day European Union (EU) summit held in mid-June was marked by increased strife between the governments of the United Kingdom and France. The meeting broke down over disagreements on a 2007–2013 budget. In addition, the November 2006 deadline for member states to ratify the EU constitution was put off indefinitely, after the constitution was rejected in recent referendums in France and the Netherlands.

These developments reflect the impossibility of erasing national boundaries by declaring a “union” of capitalist states. In reality, the EU is not a union but a grouping marked by shifting state alliances and conflicts as the wealthy billionaires that rule each country compete over markets, capital, and labor.

The outcome of the recent EU summit also highlighted the sharpening competition among the strongest capitalist powers in the European Union and between these governments and Washington. This is also registered in the weakening of the euro against the U.S. dollar.

British prime minister Anthony Blair, who assumes the six-month rotating EU presidency July 1, insisted on reducing EU agricultural subsidies as a condition for approving a new budget. The subsidies largely benefit big capitalist farmers, especially in France. While erecting tariffs and other trade barriers against goods from semicolonial nations, agribusiness in the EU dumps these cheap agricultural goods on the markets of semicolonial countries, decimating the livelihoods of peasants in those countries. A 2002 agreement between EU member governments set farm subsidies through 2012.

The proposed EU budget, which British officials vetoed at the summit meeting, would also have reduced

the \$6 billion rebate to the United Kingdom—funds returned to London each year from its contributions to the European Union.

French prime minister Dominique de Villepin shot back that Blair’s proposals were unacceptable. “Do we want to renounce our place as world champions for exports of foodstuffs? Most certainly not,” he said. The British rebate, he added, is “an obsolete legacy, no longer with any purpose.”

Neither French nor British officials, however, pointed to the facts behind the conflict. Paris is the world’s sixth-largest agricultural producer and the second-largest agricultural exporter, after the United States. France is also the EU’s top farm producer, accounting for about one-third of all agricultural land in the European Union. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, is a net importer of foodstuffs, as British agriculture produces only 60 percent of food for domestic consumption.

The summit decided a “period of reflection” is needed on the future of the EU constitution after voters in France and the Netherlands rejected it in late May and early June. Departing EU



Workers in Perigord, France, plant tobacco. France is the EU’s top farm producer, accounting for about one-third of all agricultural land in the European Union. Farm subsidies aid agribusiness, especially in France, to beat trade rivals. London, a net importer of food, is demanding the EU subsidies be reduced.

president Jean-Claude Juncker called the November 2006 target date for all 25 EU nations to ratify the document “no longer tenable.” Government officials in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, and the United Kingdom have since announced indefinite postponements on ratification votes.

Meanwhile the EU currency, the euro, continues to weaken against the dollar. The euro has fallen 3 percent to \$1.20 against the dollar since the French

referendum on May 29 and 11 percent from its December peak. Italy’s labor and welfare minister Roberto Maroni, a member of the rightist Northern League, has called for a referendum on returning to the use of the former Italian currency, the lira. The euro replaced the currencies in place in most EU member countries in 2002. The British rulers have refused to give up on their national currency, the pound sterling.

U.S. rulers prepare to renew ‘Patriot Act’

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a measure June 15 that according to its supporters would block enforcement of a provision of the USA Patriot Act that makes it easier for federal investigators to obtain records of libraries, bookstores, and other businesses in the name of “fighting terrorism.” The bipartisan action was adopted in a 238–187 vote. The White House has threatened to veto the measure.

The Patriot Act expires later this year. The administration is campaigning for renewal of the law, which has broad bipartisan backing. Some Congresspeople hope to make it more acceptable by modifying some of its most controversial provisions.

The latest amendment, introduced by Rep. Bernard Sanders of Vermont and backed by a group of Republicans and Democrats, would bar the FBI from using money in applying for a special court order to invoke the Patriot Act in order to obtain lists of library patrons, book sales, and other records.

Section 215, the disputed section of the act, reads, “The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or a designee of the Director...may make an application for an order requiring the production of any tangible things (including books, records, papers, documents, and other items) for an investigation to protect against international terrorism.”

It gives the political police wide latitude to demand that librarians and booksellers turn over their records in order to spy on individuals. It also imposes a gag order barring librarians from discussing such FBI “investigations.” This has been met with protests from librarian and booksellers associations among others.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said in an April 5 statement before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary that he would be open to some minor changes to that section of the law as long as the Patriot Act as a whole is renewed.

The law, passed just following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, expands the powers of the federal police to carry out arbitrary searches and seizures in private homes and businesses, to wire-tap phones and personal e-mail, and to jail immigrants without charges as “terrorist suspects,” among other provisions.

U.S. gov’t backs off fining employers for hiring undocumented workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Congress and a number of U.S. states have recently passed new bills restricting the rights of undocumented immigrants—over driver’s licenses, health care, and other public programs. At the same time, the federal government in the last six years has essentially stopped imposing fines on employers who hire immigrant workers lacking residency documents in order to meet the bosses’ thirst for profits through cheap labor.

Richard Stana, director of homeland security and justice at the Government Accountability Office, recently told a House of Representatives subcommittee that the number of notices of intent to fine employers for knowingly hiring

“unauthorized” workers fell from 417 in 1999 to three last year.

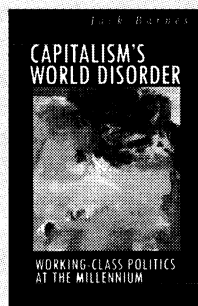
In addition to the law banning the employment of undocumented immigrants, a computerized pilot program is available for employers to verify workers’ Social Security numbers. Last year 2,300 of the 5.6 million employers in the United States used this federal program, according to a Reuters news dispatch.

“On the other side of the debate are the industries that benefit from millions of low wage workers,” the news agency reported. This is the case regardless of whether working people are U.S. born, “legal” immigrants, or undocumented workers.

For Further Reading

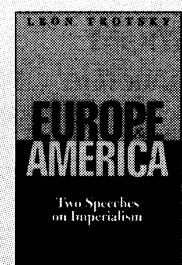
Capitalism’s World Disorder Working-Class Politics at the Millennium by Jack Barnes

“The conflicts between rival national capitalist classes and governments are blowing apart the myth of a ‘united Europe’ at an accelerating pace. Since the end of the so-called Cold War, bourgeois politicians and commentators began talking about ‘the tripolar world’—the United States, Europe, and Japan were the three poles. But that description of power relationships in today’s world bumped up against a big problem—there is no Europe pole. Despite all the talk about unity, the evolution of world capitalism has increased uneven development across Europe and made its character more explosive.” **\$24.00**



Europe and America: Two Speeches on Imperialism by Leon Trotsky

Writing in the mid-1920s, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explains the emergence of the United States as imperialism’s dominant economic power following World War I. He describes the sharpening conflicts between Washington and its European rivals and highlights the revolutionary openings for the working class that would be played out in the decades to come. **\$6.00**



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The historic roots of Jew-hatred: a Marxist appraisal

Below is an excerpt from *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for July. Abram Leon was active in the underground factory committees in Belgium during the Nazi occupation. He was arrested in 1944 and deported to Auschwitz, where he was executed in the gas chambers. In *The Jewish Question*, Leon traces the historical rationalizations of anti-Semitism to the fact that Jews became a "people-class" of merchants and moneylenders in the centuries preceding the domination of industrial capitalism. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ABRAM LEON

The scientific study of Jewish history is yet to transcend the stage of idealist improvisation. Serious historians have boldly attacked the field of history as a whole in the spirit of Marx, and have in large measure conquered it for the materialist outlook. Jewish history, however, still remains the chosen land of the "god-seekers" of every variety. It is one of the few fields of history where idealist preju-



Polish families wait to be led off by Nazi storm troopers during the destruction of Warsaw, the capital of Poland, by German imperialist forces in 1943.

ices have succeeded in entrenching and maintaining themselves to so great an extent.

How many oceans of ink have been spilled to celebrate the famous "miracle of the Jew!" "What a strange spectacle are these men who have, in order to preserve the sacred trust of their faith, braved persecutions and martyrdom," exclaims Bédarride.

The preservation of the Jews is explained by all historians as the product of their devotion through the centuries to their religion or their nationality. Differences among these historians begin to appear only when it comes to defining the "goal" for which the Jews preserved themselves, the reason for their resistance to assimilation. Some, taking the religious point of view, speak of the "sacred trust of their faith"; others...defend the theory of "attachment to the national idea." "We

must seek the causes for the historical phenomenon of the preservation of the Jewish people in their national spiritual strength, in their ethical basis, and in the monotheistic principle," says the *General Encyclopedia* which contrives in this way to reconcile the various viewpoints among the idealist historians.

But while it is possible to reconcile these idealist theories with one another, it is hopeless to try to find some ground for reconciling these same theories with the elementary rules of historical science. The latter must categorically reject the fundamental error of all idealist schools, which consists of putting under the hallmark of free will the cardinal question of Jewish history, namely: the preservation of Judaism. Only a study of the economic role played by the Jews can contribute to elucidating the causes for

the "miracle of the Jew."

To study the evolution of this question is not exclusively of academic interest. Without a thorough study of Jewish history, it is difficult to understand the Jewish question in modern times. The plight of the Jews in the twentieth century is intimately bound up with their historical past. Every social formation represents a stage in the social process. *Being* is only a moment in the process of *becoming*. In order to undertake an analysis of the Jewish question in its present phase of development, it is indispensable to know its historical roots.

Jews' economic and social role

In the sphere of Jewish history, as in the sphere of universal history, Karl Marx's brilliant thought points the road to follow. "Let us not look for the secret of the Jew in his religion, but let us look for the secret of his religion in the real Jew." Marx thus puts the Jewish question back on its feet. We must not start with religion in order to explain Jewish history; on the contrary, the preservation of the Jewish religion or nationality can be explained only by the "real Jew," that is to say, by the Jew in his economic and social role. The preservation of the Jews contains nothing of the miraculous. "Judaism continues to exist not in spite of history, but owing to history."

It is precisely by studying the historical function of Judaism that one is able to discover the "secret" of its survival in history. The struggles between Judaism and Christian society, under their respective religious guises, were in reality social struggles. "The contradiction between the state and a *particular religion*, for instance *Judaism*, is given by us a human form as the contradiction between the state and *particular secular* elements."

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Behind rift in AFL-CIO

The developing split in the AFL-CIO is the result of infighting among top union officials over how to stem the decline in their dues income. Neither side addresses the needs of working people in face of a concerted attack by the bosses and their government on our wages, job conditions, social gains, and rights. Under the circumstances, a new labor federation led by a section of these union officials won't be any advance for working people.

The "Change To Win" coalition offers the same basic course as the Sweeney leadership of the AFL-CIO. They promote collaboration with the employers on the false premise that bosses and workers have common interests to save "our" companies, instead of mobilizing the ranks to defend the interests of working people. Seeking to maintain their high living atop the union movement, labor officials on both sides advocate ever-bigger unions mergers, which only weaken the industrial character and potential power of the unions.

The rate of unionized workers in the United States—12.5 percent—is the lowest since the 1920s. In the 1930s, a working-class upsurge gave rise to a powerful industrial union movement that organized millions. By the end of that decade, however, as the U.S. rulers escalated their antilabor offensive and imperialist war preparations, this momentum was blocked by growing bureaucratic control of the new unions.

During the post-war capitalist economic expansion, the labor bureaucracy further institutionalized its class collaboration. In exchange for gradual improvements for relatively better-off workers, they tied the fortunes of labor to the bosses' profitability. They turned their

backs on the needs of the union ranks, the unorganized, and the oppressed at home and abroad. They let the government hamstringing the unions in red tape. The labor officials have poured millions of dollars into electing one or another of the candidates of the employers' parties—the Democrats and Republicans—in an impotent effort to gain some political clout.

When capitalism entered a long-term economic decline in the 1970s, the bosses unleashed an escalating antilabor offensive. The union bureaucracy has been prostrate and unable to confront the assault. The weakening of the unions is to a large degree the payoff for these decades of class collaboration. For example, instead of fighting for a comprehensive social security program that includes government-guaranteed, lifetime health care for all, union officials negotiated "fringe" benefits industry by industry or company by company, tied to the fortunes of this or that boss. As a result, millions today have no health insurance or face losing medical and pension benefits as the bosses gut union contracts and the Democrats and Republicans step up attacks on Social Security and Medicare.

While the unions keep weakening, however, resistance by working people to the bosses' "productivity" offensive continues—from organizing struggles by meat packers in the Midwest to striking janitors in Southern California to the union-organizing battle by Western coal miners. It is in these struggles, including efforts to win solidarity and extend it to other working people, that the seeds of labor's future lie. That's where the eyes—and the activity—of class-conscious workers should be.

Populist demagogue beats 'reformer' in Iran vote

Continued from front page

countries were stunned, reacting as if Iran's version of a "Bush agenda" had won over there too.

The *Tehran Times* said the president-elect was not "affiliated to any well-known political party and was even expected to withdraw before the first round of the election."

The *People's Weekly World*, which reflects the views of the Communist Party USA, ran an article by a correspondent from Iran's Tudeh (Communist) Party calling the first round of the vote a "rigged election [that] blocks Iran's path to reform." It said Ahmadinejad is allied with "fascistic forces."

The response of Washington and its allies, however, has been muted. While public attacks by Bush administration officials on Iran's election as illegitimate were very much in the news prior to the run-off vote, they have since been toned down. The imperialist governments see that the newly elected populist demagogue may have an easier time making a deal on the nuclear question, and on cutting aid to pro-Tehran armed groups abroad, than his opponents within the Iranian bourgeoisie who have lost whatever popular support they may have once had.

There are no differences between the Ahmadinejad and Rafsanjani camps, or outgoing "reformist" president Mohammad Khatami, over nuclear power and weapons. All three support the ongoing negotiations over this issue with officials from the imperialist governments of Germany, France, and Britain, who in collaboration with Washington seek to block Tehran's ability to develop and use nuclear power. This take place as the right to acquire nuclear energy is becoming generalized into a national aspiration in Iran, similar to the sentiment to nationalize the oil industry in the 1950s.

Ahmadinejad will be the first noncleric president of Iran in 24 years. He won 17.2 million votes to 10 million for Rafsanjani. Iranian state television reported a 60 percent turnout of eligible voters.

Like his predecessors, Ahmadinejad made it clear he is committed to advancing the bourgeois development of the country—including privatization of industry and greater foreign investment. He pitched his campaign, however, on populist promises. He won support for his presidential bid by vowing to raise wages, lower prices, and wipe out corruption. He said he would provide pensions, health insurance, and unemploy-

ment benefits to women, and zero-interest loans to farmers.

Pitching himself as an "Islamic Robin Hood," he told reporters that he was Iran's "little servant and street sweeper." All this played into the growing dissatisfaction of working people, who currently face 15 percent inflation and an official unemployment rate of 12 percent. An Associated Press dispatch said that actual joblessness exceeds 30 percent. With some 40 percent of Iranians living under the government's official poverty line, the differentiation between the living standard and job conditions of working people, on one hand, and middle-class professionals and the bourgeoisie, on the other, is growing.

Ahmadinejad's rhetoric harked back to popular aspirations coming out of the 1979 revolution. Back then he participated in the student-led movement that seized the U.S. embassy, exposing it as a spy den for the CIA. In the absence of revolutionary working-class leadership, many of the gains the toiling masses made through that popular revolt were eroded and reversed to a large degree by the bourgeois leadership that took the helm since 1979.

Rafsanjani campaigned on his record as president between 1989 and 1997. He oriented his campaign more toward affluent layers, describing himself as one of the original "reformers." At a June 21 rally at Tehran University, he told some 4,000 students, "I believe that I was the prime mover in establishing reforms, and Khatami's government took further steps. Definitely it should go on." With an eye toward making clear his willingness to mend relations with imperialist powers, he organized young supporters to distribute campaign stickers written in English, not Farsi.

"Some reports have explained Ahmadinejad's victory as a populist backlash against Mr. Rafsanjani's corrupt clericalism," noted an editorial in the June 28 *Wall Street Journal*. While corruption is endemic to all capitalist regimes, railing against the sleaze of "reformers" and other capitalist politicians dressed in (increasingly elegant) clerical garb helped boost Ahmadinejad's vote total, especially in contrast to Rafsanjani, a representative of the status quo in the eyes of many.

In the absence of a working-class alternative in Iran, the toilers' desire for social justice and leveling of income distribution gets derailed by bourgeois demagogues into voting for a Bonapartist figure.

Iraqi government

Continued from front page

Carolina. Meanwhile, one of the unintended consequences of the U.S.-led assault on Iraq, the broadening fight of the Kurds for national self-determination, continues to unfold. Leaders of the two main Kurdish parties announced they will form a united government in the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq.

According to a June 22 Associated Press report, Iraq's foreign minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, announced that Egypt would be the first Arab government to restore relations with Baghdad. Jordan's foreign minister announced that Aman would follow suit "very soon." Zebari said he was hopeful diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would be restored too.

The Arab League's secretary general was set to visit Iraq at the end of June in connection with reopening the organization's mission in Baghdad.

Damascus also has plans to reopen the Syrian embassy in Iraq after 23 years of broken ties, said the *Wall Street Journal*. Washington continues to pressure the Syrian regime to stop being "unhelpful" in preventing the use of its territory for trafficking of militia fighters and weapons into Iraq.

Calls for cooperation with the U.S.-backed regime in Baghdad are increasingly coming from former critics of the Bush administration's policies on Iraq. In a June 21 *Washington Post* opinion column, for example, United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan called on participants in the Brussels conference to send a "loud and clear message of support for the political transition in Iraq." Annan said there are more than 800 UN personnel in Iraq. The conference statement urged participating states to "re-establish or strengthen diplomatic relations with Iraq at the earliest possibility."

"Whatever our differences in the past, the world understands that success in Iraq is critical to the security of our nations," said Bush in his June 28 speech. The casualties among U.S. troops—over 1,700 killed and 12,000 injured—are worth the sacrifice in fighting the "global war on terrorism," he said. Bush also highlighted the remark German chancellor Gerhard Schröder made the previous day at the White House that "a stable and democratic Iraq is in the vested interest of not just Germany, but also Europe."

Canada's foreign ministry announced that its envoy to Jordan would double as ambassador to Iraq. Madird, which withdrew its troops from Iraq last year, will send a new ambassador to Iraq soon, AP reported.

On June 14 Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Masoud Barzani took office as the president of the Iraqi Kurdish autonomous region. He said the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan would form a united government there. Since 1991 the two parties had administered separate parts. A unified slate of the two won the second largest bloc of seats in Iraq's National Assembly elections in January. The Kurds also won a majority in provincial elections that include the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and have pushed for the city's incorporation into their autonomous region.

At the same time, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged that Pentagon officials have held secret talks with leaders of armed groups linked to the former Baath Party regime of Saddam Hussein that carry out bombings not to overthrow the Iraqi regime but as bargaining leverage. U.S. Gen. George Casey said the talks are primarily aimed at "bringing these Sunni leaders...into the political process."

Changes in 'Militant' editorial volunteers

Brian Williams, who has recently moved to New York from Houston, has now joined the *Militant's* editorial volunteers. Williams, who worked in a garment plant in Houston, also volunteered for two previous such stints, during 1991–1994 and 2000–2002. Róger Calero and Doug Nelson no longer volunteer in this capacity in order to concentrate on national leadership responsibilities for the Socialist Workers Party. They will continue to write for the *Militant* occasionally like other correspondents.

The *Militant* has many worker correspondents, but no paid staff. In addition to submitting articles for publication, as other correspondents do, editorial volunteers check articles for accuracy, lay out pages, write and edit headlines, and carry out circulation tasks.

—Editor