

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

All out in final stretch of 'Militant' circulation drive!

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 67/NO. 19 JUNE 9, 2003

U.S., UK forces clear way to control Iraq oil sales

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The major political parties in the Kurdish and Shiite areas of Iraq have reacted with anger at Washington and London's announcement that the imperialist powers occupying the country will not allow an Iraqi "interim" government to be formed anytime soon.

Chief U.S. "civilian" administrator of Iraq Paul Bremer, and other U.S. and British government officials, had delivered the news to the disappointed Iraqi politicians May 16.

The decision hammered home the reality that the U.S. and British armies are the sole governing authority there, and will remain so until they give further notice. One week later the United Nations Security Council adopted a U.S.-crafted resolution that recognized Washington and London as the "occupying powers." The decision lifted the UN economic sanctions imposed 13 years ago and opened the way to selling the country's oil on the open market.

Meeting on May 24 in Baghdad, major Iraqi organizations issued a formal protest at the reversal of previous plans to rapidly

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Some 10,000 Shiite Muslims rallied in Baghdad May 19 to demand U.S. forces leave Iraq. Kurdish groups, which backed imperialist invasion, are objecting to announcement that U.S. and British occupiers intend to run the country for the foreseeable future.

U.S. officials call for overthrowing Iranian gov't

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"U.S. eyes pressing uprising in Iran" was the provocative headline of an article in the May 25 *Washington Post*. The article stated that "senior Bush administration officials" were planning to meet in two days to discuss possible "public and private actions" that some of them "believe could lead to the toppling of the government [in Iran] through a popular uprising."

This probe follows accusations by U.S. officials over the previous week that leaders of the Al Qaeda group are functioning in Iran. "There's no question but that there have been and are today senior Al Qaeda leaders in Iran, and they are busy," Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asserted May 21.

Without offering a shred of evidence, pa-

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France: workers protest attacks on pensions

BY NAT LONDON

MARSEILLE, France—Hundreds of thousands of workers demonstrated in Paris, Marseille, and other French cities May 25 to protest moves by the employers and the government to attack retirement pensions. Over the following two days, hospital workers and air traffic controllers went on strike.

These actions were part of a series of labor protests that have taken place in recent weeks, led by public employees who are facing the brunt of the French rulers' drive against workers' social wage. On

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Strikers take their fight to fellow Tyson meat packers

BY EDWIN FRUIT

CHEROKEE, Iowa—Strikers in Jefferson, Wisconsin, are entering their fourth month of picketing against meat giant Tyson Foods. They are members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 538.

In phone interviews, Scott Howard and Linda Kolodzne reported that their co-workers are not demoralized and want to stick this fight out to the end. According to Howard, none of the workers have crossed the picket line. Kolodzne said that even though there are scabs in the plant, there is a very high turnover, especially on the sanitation crew. She said that the company is using a room at the Holiday Inn in Watertown, Wisconsin, 15 miles from Jefferson to hire scabs. The strikers and others are organizing informational picket lines at the hotel.

In addition, strikers and their supporters are picketing a hiring agency called QPS in

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New York City, Saturday, June 7

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Diana Newberry, Young Socialists, and **Joel Britton**, Chicago organizer of the Socialist Workers Party, both recently returned from tour of northern Europe
Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New Internationalist*
Roger Calero, *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* staff writer, victor in fight against anti-immigrant policies of U.S. government

Chairpeople: Arrin Hawkins and John Studer

- ❖ Calero antideportation victory sets example of what working people can accomplish by picking the right fights
- ❖ Europe: vanguard workers, farmers, and youth resist bosses' assaults, as conflict among imperialist powers sharpens
- ❖ Cuban working people's readiness and political consciousness: powerful obstacle to Washington's 44-year-long goal of overthrowing Cuba's socialist revolution

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Reporters' committee covers Calero antideportation fight, victory

As part of the *Militant's* weekly coverage of the antideportation fight by Roger Calero, we reprint inside an article posted May 20 on the website of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (RCFP). The article appeared under the headline "Journalist wins fight to remain in United States: A native-Nicaraguan journalist working for two New York-based publications was detained by the INS for more than 10 days in December 2002, despite his permanent U.S. residency status." The RCFP provides legal assistance to journalists facing attacks.

The article is about the recent victories won by Calero, a *Militant* staff writer and associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, in his fight against the U.S. government's efforts to exclude him from the United States. This story and two earlier articles that the RCFP wrote about Calero's fight can be found at www.rcfp.org.

Calero gained his first victory May 1 when his attorney, Claudia Slovinsky, received a letter from the U.S. Department of

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Basque nationalists in Montreal jail speak out

BY YANNICK DUGUAY AND GRANT HARGRAVE

MONTREAL—Gorka Perea Salazar, 28, and Eduardo Plagaro Perez de Arriluzea, 30, have been in an immigration prison here since June 6, 2001. They came to Canada in 1997 as political refugees from the Basque country in northeastern Spain. There the two supporters of Basque independence had been condemned to six and seven years in prison, respectively, for criminal arson. The only evidence presented against them was confessions they made under torture. While waiting for a response to their request for refugee status from the Canadian Immigration Commission, they were jailed by the Canadian government after Madrid requested their extradition.

The Basque Prisoners' Support Committee was formed in Montreal after their arrest and has fought for their release. So far the group has prevented their extradition.

The case of Perea and Plagaro is but one example of the Canadian government's attacks on immigrants seeking refugee status in Canada, which have accelerated the last two years.

On April 23 the Canadian Minister of Justice was supposed to rule on the case, but the decision was postponed, as has happened in the past, until June 30.

Veronique Gauthier, spokesperson for the Basque Prisoners' Support Committee stated that the group would continue the fight to free Perea and Plagaro. "We are discussing how to mark the second anniversary of their arrest with an action on June 6," she said in an interview.

Gauthier also stated that her organization plans to take advantage of the election of Daniel Turp in the April 14 Quebec provincial ballot for the Parti Quebecois. Turp supports the campaign to free Perea and Plagaro. He is a former federal member of parliament and a professor at the University of Montreal who has visited the Basque country. Meanwhile the committee is continuing to distribute information on the case every Tuesday at the Mont-Royal subway station here.

Basques are an oppressed nationality mostly in northern Spain, and southeast-

ern France. They have fought for independence from Spain and France for three decades. Since the death in the 1970s of Gen. Francisco Franco, Spain's fascist dictator, the Basque people have won some autonomy—including a bourgeois nationalist-run government in charge of "security" in the region—but not full self-determination. Nearly 600 Basque political prisoners are scattered around France and Spain. Madrid has long refused to move Basque political prisoners to the Basque region and end the policy of dispersing prisoners across the country.

Perea gave an interview to the *Militant* recently from the Rivière-des-Prairies Detention Center in Montreal, where he and Plagaro are being held.

Interview with Perea

"I grew up in a nationalist milieu and my father was a union militant," said Perea. He became politically active at the age of 14 or 15 especially in defense of the Basque language and the rights of Basques. He was a representative of the group *Euskaleria Euskaraz* (Basque language in the Basque country).

"The Spanish government, with the complicity of the judicial system, is trying to adopt laws against freedom of expression and the right of association, laws that criminalize social groups," Perea said. "For example, in the last five years newspapers and radio stations have been closed. Several human rights organizations have been criminalized and the leaders jailed. Last year the party Herri Batasuna, which is for the independence of the Basque country, was banned, which left 300,000 people without a political choice." Perea noted that the government is intensifying repression against Basque nationalists, including a plan to lengthen the terms of political prisoners up to life in prison, a sentence that does not exist at the moment. On February 21, Perea said, the newspaper *Egunkaria*, the only one published entirely in the Basque language, was shut down and its editors were jailed and tortured.

On April 26, 1993, the Spanish police arrested some 35 people, including Perea

and Plagaro, using the excuse of an investigation into criminal fires that had been set the year before. "Once we arrived at the police station we were searched, then I was surrounded by a half dozen police officers who tried to intimidate me," Perea said. "I was hit, threatened and then the interrogation started. It lasted for three days. The police used all sorts of violence to get me to admit to the crime. They held my head in a bathtub and pulled it out just

in time to prevent my drowning, they struck me in the testicles, in the face, all over my body. In the case of my friend Eduardo, they put a motorcycle helmet on his head and then they beat it with a baseball bat."

After three days of "interrogation," Perea and Plagaro finally signed declarations recognizing their guilt. They were then released on bail, in Plagaro's case after three months in prison.

Flight to Quebec

In 1997, after appealing their convictions, Perea and Plagaro decided to flee Spain. "We came to Quebec because it is a place where the national demands are similar to ours," Perea told the *Militant*. Upon their arrival here they immediately requested refugee status.

The Quebecois, the French-speaking majority of the province of Quebec, constitute an oppressed nation in Canada who have faced systematic discrimination on the basis of their language. Through several decades of battles against discrimination and for workers rights, Quebecois have succeeded in combating many aspects of their unequal status. There is wide support among people here for independence of Quebec (see article on page 13).

Perea described how he was arrested in Canada at 6 a.m. on June 6, 2001, after the Spanish government requested extradition. "The RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] tactical squad, armed with submachine guns, broke down the door of the apartment where I lived with my companion," he said. Plagaro was arrested at the same time, over 100 kilometers away.

Many of those held in the section of the immigration prison with Perea and Plagaro are accused of violent crimes. After Sept. 11, 2001, the two Basque nationalists, Perea



Thousands march Sept. 8, 2002, in San Sebastián, Spain, to protest banning of pro-independence Basque party, Herri Batasuna, by Madrid and for freedom for Basque political prisoners.

said, witnessed the incarceration of "dozens of Arabs and Muslims, some of whom had no idea why they had been arrested, following the adoption of the 'anti-terrorist' laws by the Canadian government."

Law C-36 was adopted by Ottawa in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States under the guise of combating "terrorism." It allows "preventive" arrests, detentions for up to 72 hours without charges being filed, and denial of the right of the defendants to remain silent and to have access to all evidence against them.

"You have to demonstrate in the streets," Perea said in explaining what can be done to support his and Plagaro's fight for justice. "We don't have access to the parliament, so the street is the only place where we can demand our rights."

Those who wish to support Perea and Plagaro's fight to be freed from jail and oppose their extradition to Spain can contact the Support Committee at solidarite_gorka_eduardo@hotmail.com. The group encourages supporters to send letters to that effect to Canadian Minister of Justice Martin Cauchon at the East Memorial Building, 284 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H8 to demand the end to the extradition procedures. Those who are in Montreal can join the leafleting at the Mont-Royal subway station every Tuesday between 6 and 7 p.m.

Yannick Duguay is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers and was a candidate for the Communist League in the riding of Viau during the recent Quebec provincial election. He is also a member of the Young Socialists. Grant Hargrave is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

THE MILITANT

Garment workers' struggle in Argentina

Workers at the Brukman sewing factory in Buenos Aires, Argentina, (right) occupied plant and kept it running for 16 months in response to bosses' shutdown threats. Evicted by the cops, they continue to demand the government guarantee jobs for them and all other laid-off workers. Read about their fight in the 'Militant.' Don't miss an issue!



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The Militant

Vol. 67/No. 19

Closing news date: May 27, 2003

Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
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Published weekly except for one week in January, June, August and December.
The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 594-1014; Fax (212) 594-1018-8764.

E-mail: themilitant@verizon.net
The *Militant* website is: www.themilitant.com
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The *Militant* Business Office, 152 W. 36th St. #401, New York, NY 10018-8764.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The *Militant*, 152 W. 36th St. #401, NY, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80.

Asia: Send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to *Militant*, 1237 Jean-Talon est, Montréal, QC. Postal Code: H2R 1W1.

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Argentine election follows Brazil pattern

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Argentine president-elect Néstor Kirchner of the Peronist party is putting together a government designed to protect big business while promising to address the needs of working people and middle-class layers crushed by the country's economic collapse.

The elections follow a pattern seen elsewhere in South America, such as the electoral victories of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva in Brazil and Lucio Gutiérrez in Ecuador. Both of them were voted into office on the basis of criticizing their predecessors' austerity measures and speaking out for those most affected by the depression conditions.

In the crowded April 27 race, none of the contenders won more than 25 percent of the vote, reflecting the widespread anger at established politicians for the social catastrophe, as well as the absence of a political alternative.

Outgoing president Eduardo Duhalde was appointed by Congress in January 2002 after an economic meltdown and social explosion in Argentina forced Fernando de la Rúa to resign. In contrast to the unpopular de la Rúa, Duhalde was able to use his Peronist credentials as a "man of the people" to carry through a sharp devaluation of the peso and other brutal economic measures to try to restore the confidence of capitalists.

In the first round, former president Carlos Menem won 24 percent of the vote and Kirchner 22 percent. Behind them came conservative economist Ricardo Murphy; Elisa Carrió, a former Radical Party politician who identified herself as an anticorruption crusader; and Peronist Adolfo Rodríguez Saa, who had been president for one week immediately after de la Rúa's fall in December 2001.

The United Left, an electoral coalition that includes the Communist Party, gained less than 2 percent.

The Radical Civic Union, de la Rúa's party, which—together with the Peronists—has historically been one of the



Workers march in Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires province, during July 2001 general strike. A wave of anti-austerity protests by working people and middle-class layers brought down the de la Rúa regime by the end of that year. Economic collapse forced Argentine rulers to choose Peronist with 'leftist' credentials for president.

ruling bourgeois parties, received 2.3 percent, barely more than the United Left.

In the runoff, Menem, who had served two terms in 1989–99, did not stand a chance in his third bid. At a time when Argentina remains mired in its deepest economic crisis in decades, Menem and his austerity policies are widely blamed. With Kirchner receiving 78 percent support in the polls, Menem bailed out before the May 18 second round and ceded the presidency to his opponent. It became clear that with the country's economy still in shambles, the ruling class needed someone with more "leftist" credentials than Menem in *Casa Rosada*—Argentina's White House.

Peronists

Menem and Kirchner belong to rival factions of the *Justicialista* party, as the Peronist organization is called. The trade union officialdom—the two wings of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT)

and the smaller Federation of Argentine Workers (CTA)—had called for a "vote against Menem" and backed Kirchner in the second round.

The Peronist party has been the main bourgeois political force in Argentina since World War II, when Juan Domingo Perón rose to power. During that period the working class wrested substantial economic and social gains from the bosses, forging powerful unions. But the betrayals of the Argentine Communist Party, which backed the "democratic" imperialist oppressors of Argentina, London and Washington, handed the leadership of the labor movement to the bourgeois-nationalist Peronists.

Posturing as a champion of the *descamisados* (the shirtless), the Peronists have for six decades enjoyed the loyal collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy in subordinating the needs of working people to "national unity"—that is, the interests of the domestic capitalists—and tying the unions to the state. As the world capitalist crisis came crashing down on Argentina, working people were devastated and many of their previous gains sharply eroded.

During the 1990s the Menem regime sold off most state-owned industries. Bosses laid off tens of thousands and brutally sped up production, while the prostrate union movement fractured. The government launched an offensive against the social wage and union rights. For a decade the Menem government pegged the peso to the U.S. dollar, raising the cost of living for most working people. Despite enormous payments to the international bankers, the debt burden mushroomed.

In December 2001, the de la Rúa government, presiding over a deepening depression, defaulted on the debt, setting off a financial collapse. An eruption of working-class protests brought down the regime. In January 2002, newly appointed Duhalde unlinked the peso from the dollar, precipitating a 70 percent devaluation of the Argentine currency. Over the past year the economy has contracted by at least 12 percent. More than 40 percent of the workforce remains jobless or underemployed.

In recent months the freefall has slowed, and Argentina has seen a trade surplus that has won praise from employers, although conditions have not improved for workers and farmers. The rise in exports is due to the peso's plunge, which has made Argentine goods cheaper abroad, while imports have remained at low levels since the buying power of most Argentines has not recovered. Foreign capitalists have been pressing the government to carry out another round of attacks on social programs as a condition for new loans. This has been the backdrop for the election campaign.

Continuity with Duhalde's course

Leading up to the elections, Kirchner, governor of the oil-rich rural province of Santa Cruz in the southern region of Patagonia, used his dark-horse status to portray himself as untainted by the corruption and policies of the Buenos Aires establishment. As Duhalde's handpicked candidate, however, he is expected to continue his predecessor's basic course.

Kirchner blamed Washington and Menem for promoting an "indiscriminate open-

ing" to free-market policies that devastated jobs and living standards. He pledged to give priority to Argentine manufacturers over foreign competitors.

Giving lip service to the needs of the unemployed, he has called for a \$3 billion public works program focusing on construction projects such as highways and housing. Other popular proposals call for increased funding for loans to small businesses and rural development projects.

To help finance these programs, however, he has called for investing pension funds, a move that will make many working people nervous about the future of their retirement.

Demands by imperialists

Capitalist investors in the United States and other imperialist countries have warned Kirchner to put their interests first. Horst Kohler, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stated May 13 that the next government in Buenos Aires had to protect "creditors rights" and carry out an "ample program of reforms," meaning belt-tightening measures for working people. One onerous IMF condition for new loans to Argentina is that it run a budget surplus.

The IMF has also demanded the Argentine government allow banks, currently blocked by legislation, to foreclose on tens of thousands of late mortgages, a ruinous move for the debt-struck middle classes.

Kirchner has called for renegotiating Argentina's record \$151 billion foreign debt. Arguing that this is necessary to assure payments to international creditors, he proposes that bankers write off part of \$60 billion in defaulted debt and that they agree to be paid the balance over decades.

In a move to reassure investors, Roberto Lavagna, the chief Argentine negotiator with the IMF, will stay on as minister of economy, indicating continuity of the government's policies.

The new foreign minister, Rafael Bielsa, has emphasized an orientation toward Mercosur, the regional trade bloc of Argentina, Brazil, and other countries in the Southern Cone. In a job at Menem, Bielsa declared, "There will be no carnal relations with the United States." The Menem government was notorious for bragging about its "carnal relations" with Washington.

While the brazenly pro-imperialist Menem had been their clear favorite, Wall Street and London's City have voiced cautious support for the new government.

Richard Lapper, writing in the *Financial Times* of London, noted that Kirchner's "populist" campaign promises had been "as welcome as an icy blast of wind." But his review of the new administration's recent policy statements—including a commitment to debt payments and hints of "even deeper fiscal adjustment"—concluded that if Kirchner "moulds expectations in line with tough economic realities, those Patagonian winds might not be so cold after all."

The new regime's big-business policies are bound to clash with the expectations among working people. "I hope this president does what he says, and that factories reopen and production rises," said Elvira Ocampo, quoted in the May 21 *Miami Herald*.

Ocampo and other workers occupied the Brukman garment factory in Buenos Aires for more than a year in face of the bosses' threat to shut it down. They were evicted by Duhalde's cops on April 18, on the eve of the elections, but are continuing their campaign to demand the government nationalize the plant to guarantee jobs.

UK dairy farmers win reversal of milk price cuts

BY CAROL BALL AND PAMELA HOLMES

LIVINGSTON, Scotland—"This shows what farmers can do," said Alex Wilson May 19, after announcing a victory in a fight by dairy farmers in the United Kingdom (UK) against the efforts by a supermarket chain, LIDL, to slash the price it pays them for milk. Wilson, the Scotland spokesperson for the group that has organized this round of protests, Farmers For Action (FFA), reported that the supermarkets' suppliers—the milk processors, who buy liquid milk from the dairy farmers to process, and then on to the retailers—had "been told by LIDL buyers that their contracts will stay the same."

Earlier that evening some 200 dairy farmers and their supporters from throughout Scotland had gathered at the gates of the LIDL distribution centre here, for the third time in as many weeks, to protest the attempt by the supermarket's management to cut the price of liquid milk the company pays to dairy farmers by 1.3 pence per litre. In doing so, the supermarket flouted a voluntary agreement called the "Supermarket Code of Conduct," established last year following protests by farmers across the UK.

FFA organized the protests here and similar actions at six LIDL distribution points across the UK. The dairy farmers' actions began on May 6, with the participation of about 500 farmers. "All the depots targeted were shut down and the staff sent home," said an FFA statement.

At a May 8 meeting with dairy producers, representatives of LIDL, which has 4 percent of the UK retail grocery market, insisted on the price reduction. The response of dairy farmers organized by the FFA was seen at the supermarket's distribution depot here. Some 200 FFA members and supporters picketed for 12 hours—from 6:00 p.m. on May 12 till 6:00 a.m. the next morning (see article in last week's *Militant*).

This was followed by similar 12-hour blockades by dairy farmers at LIDL's distribution centers in Belvedere, Loughborough, Runcorn, and Weston Super Mare in England, May 15–16. At that point, the supermarket's management told the processors that "they will now only make a 0.75 pence per litre cut, which was still unacceptable," reported the FFA. The actions in England continued from 5:00 p.m. May 18, to 6 a.m. the next morning. On both occasions, dairy farmers lined the roads next to the depots with agricultural equipment, forcing the company's trucks to remain in the yards.

By Monday night, May 19, the campaign returned to Scotland. Dairy farmers were joined by other workers in the industry. One feed supplier from Leven, in Fife, said he had come to support the farmers because he had seen what was happening to agricultural producers. "About seven years ago, my round covered 280 farms and 65 dairies," he said. "Now, it's 45 dairies." Another feed supplier from the area provided free celebratory tea and coffee.

Another indication of broadening support for the dairy farmers was the presence of three members of the Scottish Parliament—Fiona Hyslop, Scottish National Party; Margo MacDonald, Independent; and Mark Ruskell, Green Party.

Concluding his report to the assembled protestors, Wilson emphasized, "We now have to apply ourselves to raising the price in the autumn." This was well understood by the dairy farmers.

A farmer at the May 19 action from the Scottish town of Kilmarnock, told the *Militant*, "It's fantastic that we've managed to stop them. I've been here all three nights and I'm delighted. But we really need a price increase of four pence. The price used to be 22 pence, and now it's 16 pence. If we gave them the milk for nothing, they'd want the carton as well!"

From Pathfinder

The Leninist Strategy of Party Building

The Debate on Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America

by Joseph Hansen

\$26.95

U.S., UK forces to control Iraq oil sales

Continued from front page

involve them in a figurehead transitional government.

Hamid al-Bayati of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which is backed by many Shiites and orients to the Iranian government, proposed that the group organize protest actions in Iraq and abroad. Other participants balked at the idea, according to the *New York Times*.

Washington accuses the Supreme Council of being a tool of Tehran, and has moved to begin disarming its 10,000-strong Badr militia.

Frustrated by Bremer's May 16 announcement, representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan have abandoned their expectant vigil in Baghdad and returned to their territories in the north. They invited Bremer to travel there to "confront the popular disenchantment" with the decision, reported the *Times*. The two parties have functioned as close allies of Washington through the 1990s, and during and after this year's war.

To the victor go the spoils

The vote in favor of the May 22 resolution in the UN Security Council, drafted by Washington and co-sponsored by London and Madrid, was virtually unanimous. Among the 14 "yes" votes were the representatives of France and Germany—the largest imperialist powers on continental Europe—and those of China and Russia. All had raised objections to the U.S.-British assault on Iraq because they expected that a U.S. victory would deal a fatal blow to their trade and investments in the oil-rich country, which is exactly what is happening.

Syria's delegate left the country's council seat empty during the voting. Syrian government officials later asserted that with more time to consider the issue, they too would have voted "yes."

The vote cleared the last hurdle for the

resumption of exports of Iraqi oil on the open market, which will now be carried out by the U.S.-run regime. Iraq possesses the world's largest known oil reserves after those in Saudi Arabia. Revenues from this trade will be placed in a fund to be controlled by the U.S. and British governments. The fund will be held at the Iraqi central bank, where a former U.S. banking executive is now in charge.

The resolution instructed UN officials to undertake a review of contracts that Moscow, Beijing, Paris, and other governments as well as private corporations had signed with the Saddam Hussein regime. It suspended payments on Iraq's foreign debt, which stands at more than \$100 billion, for four years. Iraq is estimated to owe between \$8 billion and \$12 billion each to France and Russia, and a little more than half that amount to Germany.

Washington agreed to some minor amendments as a thinly veiled face-saving justification for French, German, and Russian backing for the resolution. Among them was the change in job description of the main UN official in Iraq from "special coordinator" to "special representative." The man who got the job, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, received the endorsement of the Bush administration.

With their vote, Paris and Berlin admitted to the blows Washington had already dealt them with its assault on Iraq and takeover of the country, and tried to put the best spin on it.

"We have achieved substantial improvements," said Germany's UN ambassador, Gunther Pleuger, explaining his government's affirmative vote. "The war that we did not want, and a majority of the council did not want, has taken place. We are now in a new situation. We cannot undo history." French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin stated, "Even if this text does not go as far as we would like, we have decided to

vote for this resolution." Speaking at a news conference with his German and Russian counterparts, he added, "This is because we have chosen the path of unity of the international community."

After praising Paris's decision to vote for the resolution, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell added, "Does it mean that the disagreements of the past are totally forgotten? No. Let's not paper it over and pretend it didn't happen—it happened."

UK reps criticize Baghdad operation

All is not well between the two main occupying powers, either. The London-based *Guardian* revealed May 24 that British commanders have held off sending troops to Baghdad in spite of requests by their U.S. counterparts. The British daily claimed that unlike the U.S. troops in Baghdad, British troops in the southern city of Basra have gained the trust of local residents. "In the capital the U.S. forces have not adopted the mingling profile with the populace that has been a success in other cities," an anonymous British official told the *Guardian*.

British construction and infrastructure firms are among the first in line for contracts from Bechtel, the U.S. corporation chosen by Washington as the lead contractor in its "reconstruction" of Iraq.

London's minister of state for trade and industry paid a special visit to Washington in mid-May to plead the British corporations' case, accepting the monopolization of lead contracts by U.S. firms, and emphasizing that, "We're not looking for specialized treatment, because we don't feel we need to ask for special treatment. We're the natural partners... We believed in the war and gave our expertise. We believe in the reconstruction and offer our expertise."

Captains of British industry claim that London's record as the colonial power in Iraq, formerly Mesopotamia, gives them the inside track. "Our companies built many of

the plants in Iraq and know how they operate," said Anthony Allum of the Halcrow Group, which received the nod for a civil engineering subcontract.

Outfits from a range of imperialist countries—including Germany, Australia, Denmark, Portugal, and Spain—are also competing for the profits, along with firms from other countries.

Bremer's decree calling on militias to surrender their automatic and heavy weapons, which has drawn protest from its principal target, the Badr Brigade, expressly exempted the *pesh merga* fighters linked to the two major Kurdish parties.

These militia fighters "fought with coalition forces and we look to leave them with some of their forces north of the green line," said Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, commander of the U.S. and British land forces. The green line is the southern border of the areas controlled by the Kurdish parties under the Saddam Hussein government.

A spokesman for the Supreme Council, which is linked to the Badr Brigade, criticized the differential policy. "We will not accept that other militias will be allowed to stay there with their weapons while we will not be there with ours," Adel Abdul Mahdi said. Mahdi rejected U.S. charges that the brigade is a puppet of the Iranian government. In mid-May Lt. Gen. John Abizaid, the deputy commander of U.S. forces in the region, claimed that the brigade is controlled by a "foreign government," an accusation aimed at Tehran.

U.S. holds former ally at arm's length

As the occupying forces prepared their efforts to confiscate the Badr Brigade's weapons, they also summarily dissolved the Free Iraqi Forces militia of the Iraqi National Congress.

The group and its leader, Ahmad Chalabi, had been promoted by Washington as the main force in an Iraqi "interim" administration. The group's militia fighters had also been equipped by U.S. forces and trained under Pentagon supervision in both Iraq and Hungary. Given the cold shoulder by Washington after the White House clarified publicly that it—and no one else—intended to run Iraq, Chalabi has shut down his Baghdad office, which had been guarded by U.S. forces.

Washington now says that its forces will also disarm the People's Mujahadeen troops that have carried out attacks on Iran from their bases in northern Iraq. U.S. officers signed a cease-fire with the Mujahadeen in April that allowed them to keep their weapons, which include tanks and artillery. Washington reversed that decision a few days later.

Meanwhile, one tale in the Pentagon's managed presentation of its war on Iraq has come unraveled, reported Robert Scheer, a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*. Scheer devoted a recent column to describing the BBC's "shocking dissection of the 'heroic' rescue of Pvt. Jessica Lynch."

Noting that Lynch herself has no memory of the events, Scheer stated, "almost nothing fed to reporters about Lynch's capture by Iraqi forces or her 'rescue' by U.S. forces turns out to be true."

Contrary to coverage in the *Washington Post*, which headlined one story, "She Was Fighting to the Death," Scheer wrote, "It has since emerged that Lynch was neither shot nor stabbed but rather suffered accident injuries when her vehicle overturned. [U.S. doctors] confirmed the account of the Iraqi doctors, who said they had carefully tended her injuries."

"The manipulation of this saga really gets ugly... in the premeditated manufacture of the rescue," continued Scheer. In contrast to the Pentagon's accounts of Special Forces risking life and limb to storm the hospital, the BBC investigation showed that "not only had Iraqi forces abandoned the area before the rescue effort but that the hospital's staff had informed the United States of this and made arrangements... to turn Lynch over to the Americans."

The Iraqi ambulance used to ferry the wounded Lynch did come under fire; the shooting came not from Iraqis, however, but from U.S. soldiers who "forced it to flee back to the hospital," wrote Sheer.

Likewise, it has become clearer every day that Washington has not discovered any credible evidence that the Saddam Hussein regime had "weapons of mass destruction."

Metalworkers in Australia strike for contract

BY ROB GARDNER

SYDNEY, Australia—About 50 metalworkers at the Morris MacMahon plant here have been on the picket line since March 12, fighting for a union contract. "They left us no choice," James Bridge, a 31-year-old forklift driver at the plant, which produces industrial cans and drums, told the *Militant*. We had been "trying to negotiate with the company for nine months" before the walk-out, he said. Then the bosses threatened to sack some of the union activists.

A big majority of the strikers, who are members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), are immigrant women from countries in Asia and the Pacific. Low wages and an atmosphere of intimidation by the bosses in the factory are key issues in the strike. The company also wants to take back a condition, won in 1993, in which the normal 38-hour week is worked Monday through Thursday, with any Friday work paid at overtime rates. The workers at the plant have never had an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (contract). They work instead to the industry-wide Award, which sets out a range of minimum wages and conditions, negotiated by unions and employer associations in the Industrial Relations Commission. The company wants to impose a nonunion Australian Workplace Agreement.

"They show [us] no respect," Sarita Singh said, describing conditions in the plant before the strike. Another striker, Marina Pomare, said there was a "big speed-up over the last year or so." For instance, there is only one setter across three lines instead of one setter on each line, and one woman palletizing at the end of the drum line where previously there had been two. Pomare, who works on the line making 20-liter (roughly five-gallon) cans, said, "We get \$12.50 an hour [\$1A = \$0.60U.S.], but we make seven pallets of cans an hour, 80 cans a pallet, and the company gets \$20 a can."

The company has hired scabs through a labor hire agency, Frontline, Bridge said, and about 20 Morris MacMahon workers have crossed the picket line since the beginning of the strike. The big majority of drivers coming to the plant, however, were honoring the picket line, he stated, and a



Militant/Bob Aiken

Metalworkers on strike in Sydney picket the Morris MacMahon plant in May

Transport Workers Union sign and flag features prominently on the picket line.

Police escort one or two trucks and strikebreakers on a boarded-up bus through the picket line each morning into the plant and each afternoon as they come out. The pickets give the scabs a rowdy "welcome," including banging loudly on several drums—a din that has become a signature of the strike.

The strikers have been reaching out for support. They are traveling to Moss Vale in the coal fields south of Sydney to meet workers at Joy—a mine machinery plant struck by the AMWU for several months in mid-2000. Workers at Joy have been making regular contributions to the Morris MacMahon strike fund. Support for the strike has also come from AMWU members at HPM, veterans of a strike to win equal pay for women at that plant. A large contingent of construction workers from a nearby building site came down to the picket line during their lunch break May 9.

A layer of dockworkers in the Maritime Union of Australia have also become strong

supporters of the strike, with wharfies visiting the picket line in ones and twos, and in groups, on a number of occasions. A contingent of 13 MUA members strengthened the picket line May 8. Amidst chants of "the workers united will never be defeated," a sit-down protest that day held up a scab truck for about 30 minutes before the cops cleared a way through.

Two wharfies were arrested when the MUA members joined the picket line May 12. The cops released them about half a mile from the plant after holding them in a police van for half an hour.

A widening layer of wharfies are discussing how to bring their union more solidly behind the strike. The Morris MacMahon strikers were invited to send a representative to speak at a union "yard meeting" at the Patrick terminal May 19, as part of building a union mobilization at the picket line May 22.

Doug Cooper and Ron Poulsen, members of the Maritime Union of Australia, contributed to this article.

Final stretch of subscription drive: all out!

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

With one week to go *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* supporters are pulling out the stops in a final push to make the goals in the international subscription drive.

In many areas campaigners are redrawing plans to make the most of the sales opportunities between now and June 1. To pick up the slack will require daily organization and participation, along with alertness to political developments.

Socialist workers, young socialists, and others in 36 cities and 11 unions from six countries enter the home stretch with some 270 *Militant* subscriptions to sell. For *Perspectiva Mundial*, it's 90 to go. Those make for challenging, but reachable, goals.

Special attention will be required to make up the lag in sales of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes, and several issues of *New Internationalist*, all of which are available at generous discounts when purchased with a subscription (see ad on page 15). Campaigners have sold a bit more than a third of this target so far.

The final stretch of the drive coincides with a modest uptick in labor resistance. Union struggles—including contract fights and organizing drives—right now in the

United States involve meat packers in Wisconsin, chemical workers in Texas, garment workers in Florida, and GE electrical workers in Massachusetts. These and other fights center around resistance to the results of the deepening deflationary crisis.

Unionists in a number of European countries are also taking strike action—in some cases on a large scale, such as in France, Germany, and Sweden—and joining demonstrations to defend public health care and other social programs that are under fire by the capitalists. Similar skirmishes are taking place in Australia, Iceland and other imperialist countries.

As workers and farmers feel the impact of the bosses' layoffs and attacks on the social wage, more begin to seek newspapers and books that can arm them politically with facts, Marxist analysis, and a revolutionary action program.

Midwest packing team sets example

A team that took the socialist periodicals to meat packers in the Midwest in recent days was welcomed by a number of workers, reported Kevin Dwire from Des Moines.

"Volunteers from Des Moines, Omaha, Chicago, Twin Cities, and Sioux City joined the team, which sent squads through the northwest Iowa, northeast Nebraska, and South Dakota area," he wrote.

"One squad traveled to Cherokee, Iowa, to participate in a benefit social for United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 538 on strike against Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin [see front-page article].

"Before the fund-raiser *Militant* supporters went door-to-door with the paper, and met a fighting-mad retired meat packer," Dwire continued. "As he filled out the subscription card, he explained that his health insurance coverage is so poor that

his life savings had been wiped out in four days during a recent health crisis.

"The wife of another meat packer bought a single copy of the paper. Her husband's pension had been recently cut off, and they are now facing payment of medical insurance premiums of more than \$400 a month."

Team members also took the paper to workers at an IBP-Tyson plant in Denison, Iowa, and went door-to-door in Storm Lake in the same state, meeting many meat packers. All told, they sold 15 subscriptions to the *Militant* in three days, along with 25 subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and 7 books. The majority of the sales were to meat packers.

From Los Angeles, Nan Bailey described *Militant* supporters' stepped-up efforts there that have given the campaign momentum. "We're concentrating on taking the papers and the books door-to-door in the working-class community where the Pathfinder bookstore is located," she said. Four teams have gotten out for a couple of hours each, bringing back three subscriptions and a similar number of names to call back for further discussions.

"We've also sold several subscriptions to young people who are building, and plan to participate in, the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange in July," Bailey reported, "and we've put in a renewed effort to get out teams to meet workers at two garment plants on a weekly basis."

Militant supporters in all areas will need that kind of organized approach and fighting spirit in this final week. To help them track the international drive's progress, the *Militant* will post a new subscription drive chart each night on its web site, www.themilitant.com. Organizers should send in new subscriptions by e-mail at the end of each day so the chart can be updated and posted the next morning. All subscriptions received at the *Militant* business office by noon on Tuesday, June 2, will be counted for the final scoreboard.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 5-June 1: Week 7 of 8

Country	Militant			PM			Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	
AUSTRALIA	30	29	97%	5	3	12	4	
CANADA								
Vancouver	35	29	83%	5	4	15	13	
Toronto	30	17	57%	5	3	25	6	
Montreal	12	11	92%	6	9	15	13	
CANADA total	77	57	74%	16	16	55	32	
ICELAND	15	12	80%	1	0	8	7	
NEW ZEALAND								
Christchurch	16	13	81%	1	0	4	0	
Auckland	20	14	70%	1	0	5	3	
N.Z. total	36	27	75%	2	0	9	3	
SWEDEN								
Stockholm	10	5	50%	2	0	4	2	
Gothenburg	12	10	83%	2	2	8	6	
SWEDEN Total	22	15	68%	4	2	12	8	
UNITED KINGDOM								
London	40	17	43%	15	2	25	9	
Cent. Scotland	12	6	50%	1	0	8	2	
UK total	52	23	44%	16	2	33	11	
UNITED STATES								
Washington	25	27	108%	12	6	15	3	
Omaha	17	18	106%	31	22	17	8	
Des Moines	25	26	104%	12	15	12	9	
San Francisco	35	34	97%	15	14	25	8	
Los Angeles	45	42	93%	20	19	20	21	
Utah	10	9	90%	5	7	10	3	
Detroit	25	22	88%	8	6	12	10	
Twin Cities	45	39	87%	35	27	25	1	
Tucson	10	8	80%	2	2	6	6	
Newark	55	42	76%	20	14	30	17	
Birmingham	20	15	75%	5	6	10	2	
Chicago	40	30	75%	25	23	25	4	
NE Pennsylvania	20	15	75%	6	4	10	7	
Atlanta	35	26	74%	15	15	25	9	
Seattle	30	22	73%	8	2	20	1	
Charlotte	20	14	70%	8	3	16	3	
Tampa	25	17	68%	10	8	15	4	
Western Colorado	18	12	67%	12	12	10	3	
Boston	35	21	60%	15	14	25	4	
Houston	25	15	60%	10	2	25	3	
New York	100	58	58%	40	23	60	21	
Pittsburgh	30	16	53%	3	2	2	20	
Miami	32	17	53%	10	1	25	4	
Cleveland	20	10	50%	8	4	18	3	
Philadelphia	30	15	50%	7	5	10	0	
U.S. total	772	570	74%	342	259	468	158	
Int'l totals	1022	733	73%	386	283	597	223	
Goal/Should be	1000	880	88%	375	330	600	525	

IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM			Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	
AUSTRALIA								
AMEIU	4	4	100%			2	0	
MUA	4	1	25%			2	0	
Total	8	5	63%			4	0	
CANADA								
UFCW	11	5	45%	2	0	9	2	
UNITE	4	0	0%	5	2	6	2	
Total	15	5	33%	7	2	15	4	
ICELAND								
Efling	1	1	100%			1	0	
NEW ZEALAND								
MWU	2	0	0%			1	0	
NDU	2	1	50%			1	0	
Total	4	1	25%			2	0	
SWEDEN								
LIVS	3	3				3	1	
UNITED STATES								
UFCW	50	36	72%	75	79	40	19	
UMWA	15	5	33%	4	7	10	0	
UNITE	25	16	64%	20	19	20	6	
Total	90	57	63%	99	105	70	25	

AMEIU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; Efling—Union of unskilled workers; LIVS—Food Workers Union; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Two Harlem residents killed by N.Y. cops, hundreds protest



Militant/Dan Fein

Hundreds in Harlem protest on May 25 against police killings of Alberta Spruill and Ousmane Zongo

BY DAN FEIN

NEW YORK—Some 250 people rallied and marched in Harlem May 25 to protest two killings of residents of the largely African-American neighborhood by the police.

On May 16, as Alberta Spruill was preparing to go to work, New York City cops broke down her door and tossed a flash grenade in her apartment under the guise of looking for drugs. The grenade created a deafening noise and blinding flashes. The cops wrestled the 57-year-old Black woman to the ground and handcuffed her. An hour and a half later, Alberta Spruill was dead from a heart attack caused by the cop assault.

Spruill was a longtime municipal worker and member of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees District Council 37 and of the Coalition of Black Trade unionists.

Seven days later, a cop killed Ousmane Zongo as he was repairing African art at Chelsea Mini Storage. Zongo, 43, was an immigrant from Burkina Faso who also lived in the neighborhood. Zongo was unarmed as police officer Bryan Conroy chased him in the storage facility before shooting him four times.

The cops claim they raided the 5,000-room storage building looking for bootleg compact disks.

Nellie Bailey from the Harlem Tenants Council was the main organizer of the demonstration and chaired the rallies. "There is a war of terror by the

New York Police Department against people of color and the working class," she told the crowd, adding that "repression will continue until the collective will of the people is heard."

Nina Paulino, a friend of Santiago Villanueva, a Dominican-born garment worker who was killed by police in New Jersey April 16, 2002, told the protestors about the circumstances of Villanueva's death. While at work in a Bloomfield, New Jersey factory he had an epileptic fit. "Four cops arrived and killed him," she said. "The four cops have been indicted by the grand jury for 2nd degree reckless manslaughter."

During the march from Spruill's apartment building on 143rd St. to Harlem's center on 125th St., this reporter spoke with some of the demonstrators, who marched chanting "No justice, no peace, no racist police!"

"It's unfair that a person in good standing in our community has to die at the hands of the police," said Marva Jones. "They are militarized. If she can die like that, the rest of us are in trouble."

Hashim Warren, who, as Spruill had been, is a member of District 37, made a similar point. "I live in Harlem and have been stopped by the police who say they were searching for guns," he said. "The way they killed her, it could have been me."

A number of students took part in the march. "It's really important to oppose police brutality in New York," said Julie Kessler, a New York University student. "Most people don't even hear about it. The march today helps let people know."

Pathfinder volunteers take on printing

BY NORTON SANDLER
AND JIM ALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO—Over the past five years, more than 250 supporters of the communist movement in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, France, Australia, and Sweden have been organized through the Pathfinder Reprint Project to convert the nearly 400 titles published by Pathfinder Press into digital format in order to take advantage of new advances in printing technology.

These books contain the historic lessons of 150 years of the modern workers movement and an analysis of the unfolding dynamics of the world class struggle today. In recent months, volunteers have begun shouldering many new responsibilities and with them has come a new name—the Pathfinder Printing Project—to more accurately express the day-to-day work of project volunteers.

The biggest change is the establishment of a project “print team,” composed of five experienced production team leaders. This print team works with other project production teams on an expanded quality-control process and a final check of the CD-ROM’s of Pathfinder books produced by this corps of international volunteers. They then organize to send the CD’s directly to printers they have selected in North America, see through all production-related questions, including quality control and delivery of the new stock to Pathfinder’s distribution center in Atlanta, Georgia. The print team makes its decisions on which printers to use based on holding down costs while at the same time maintaining Pathfinder’s quality standards.

Scheduled to roll off the presses in June, as the first titles organized start to finish in this way by the print team, are reprints of *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky; *Kronstadt* by Trotsky and V.I. Lenin; and *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Frederick Engels.

Grows out five years of work

These expanded responsibilities flow from the work project volunteers have been carrying out the past half decade. Working under the direction of a steering committee based in San Francisco, volunteers have completed the conversion to digital format of 363 books, pamphlets, and bulletins. Since July 2002 alone, they have prepared 46 reprints and eight new books as well as an attractive new Pathfinder 2003 catalog.

As volunteers developed skills and gained the confidence needed to produce high-quality books, step by step they expanded the scope of their work to include the formatting, proofreading, and cover checks on all new books published by Pathfinder as well as the reprints.

In addition, for a year now supporters of the communist movement have joined Socialist Workers Party (SWP) members and Young Socialists to organize sales of Pathfinder books to bookstores and libraries. The supporters are also organizing the production and mailing of high-quality promotional literature. A team of these volunteers has the responsibility for updating and maintaining the publisher’s attractive web site, www.pathfinderpress.com, which is becoming an increasingly effective tool in the sale and promotion of Pathfinder books.

In September 2002, project volunteers took on another major responsibility: operating the publisher’s new warehouse and distribution center in Atlanta, Georgia. From this transshipment center, volunteers send Pathfinder books to destinations worldwide, maintain the inventory levels, and monitor Pathfinder’s accounts. Flowing from this, volunteers there have begun to receive and record the payments from the stores and libraries that purchase Pathfinder books. Over the Memorial Day weekend, volunteers—some working in Atlanta, and several others working at home on computers at various locations—will complete



Militant/Linda Joyce

Pathfinder reprint project volunteers help set up new distribution center in Atlanta, September 2002. From this transshipment center they ship book orders worldwide. The volunteers have now assumed printing and related book-production tasks.

the data entry work necessary to have an updated set of the publisher’s record of book inventory and customer history that will facilitate the work of those who organize the Atlanta business and distribution

center.

Printing Project volunteers are taking on other important new work that contributes to the production of Pathfinder books. One such project is the scanning

of the notes of reports and talks adopted by SWP conventions and leadership committees. These notes are the basic foundation on which many Pathfinder titles and *New International* articles are built. By using these notes, transcribed reports and talks by SWP leaders Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, for example, have been transformed into books and pamphlets such as *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics; Capitalism’s World Disorder; The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning; Their Trotsky and Ours; Cuba and the Coming American Revolution; Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Liberation*; the lead articles in the majority of issues of *New International* magazine; introductions or prefaces to many titles on the Cuban revolution; *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks; The History of American Trotskyism; Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women; Letters from Prison*; and others.

Now, having the notes available in digital form over the Internet will facilitate the production of future books, and also allows the editors to work simultaneously in more than one location.

Militant index, shared network

Other volunteer teams are now preparing a complete index of the *Militant* newspaper from 1928 to today and digital files of a selection of material important for the work of the communist movement today from the SWP internal bulletin.

Last but not least, the Printing Project leadership has recently organized several members of its international team to work closely with the SWP leadership on establishing new computer, Internet, and data-base tools that meet the needs of the communist movement today.

What’s behind threat of deflation?

Below are excerpts from “Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War,” the lead article in *New International* no. 10 (see ad on page 15). The article is based on talks by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, at educational conferences in Chicago, New York, and Miami in 1994. *New International* is a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. The article is copyright © 1994 by *New International*. The excerpts are reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

We’ve already discussed the fact that we’ve entered the third year of an upturn in the capitalist business cycle in the United States that is only now beginning to result in substantial job creation. This kind of shallow and sluggish recovery is and will be normal for depression conditions. The generations that have grown into adulthood and political life since the end of World War II, however, are living through something new, something outside the previous direct experience of any of us.

The capitalists in the United States and in other imperialist powers are not putting capital into a major expansion of productive capacity, as they did from the 1950s into the 1970s. For nearly two decades the capitalists have faced an accelerating crisis of declining profit rates, as explained in the Socialist Workers Party’s 1988 resolution, “What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold.” Capitalists are driving to cut costs—“downsizing,” “resizing,” or “re-engineering” in current business jargon—instead of expanding productive capacity, because they can’t secure a competitive rate of return on investment in capacity-expanding plant and equipment.

Both within the United States and throughout the world capitalist system, price competition is intensifying among capitalists, as they contend over limited markets. As a result, there will be a tendency toward deflation, with prices of many products falling. The capitalists continue to fear a deflationary collapse like the one that marked the opening years of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The massive rents—the above average profits—commanded by the manufacturers of major name-brand products have become much more difficult to extort, in many cases evaporating, as these goods are

forced to compete for market share as just one more commodity alongside others.

This is the opposite of what has happened in the imperialist world during the conscious lifetime of most adults today. During these years, mammoth imperialist trusts competed for world markets by expanding, by taking on new capacity, by building new factories and adding new machinery. Those sectors of capital that prepared the best for growth reaped the biggest rewards. That’s the way it worked for the first two and a half decades following World War II, until the engines began gradually running down in the late 1960s and mid-1970s. It no longer worked that way in the 1980s, but the emerging new reality was largely hidden by a massive balloon of debt, which set the stage for what’s happening today—the “great de-leveraging,” as they say....

Deflation and inflation not opposite

This is a deepening crisis for the working class worldwide. As we explain in *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, the deepest economic division in our class is between those who have a job and those who don’t. Growing joblessness saps the strength, the morale, and the fighting capacity of the working-class and labor movement. If the workers movement doesn’t lead the fight for a shorter workweek *with no cut in pay*, then the bosses will exploit the growing pressures and demoralization of joblessness—as they have done in Germany, in France, in Canada, and I imagine elsewhere—to start writing into occasional contracts a shorter workweek *with a proportional pay cut*. And behind that formula, temporary and part-time work—at lower pay and with fewer benefits—will increase.

We must continue to link the fight for the sliding scale of *hours* to a sliding scale of *wages* to protect the working class against the effects of inflation. Workers must not let the deflationary pressures we’ve been discussing be used by the employers as a rationalization to deny cost-of-living protection to workers’ wages and social entitlements. Even if we are correct and inflation continues to moderate for the immediate future, we should keep several considerations in mind.

First, even with today’s deflationary pressures real wages fell once again by 1 percent over the past year in the United

States. Buying power declined both because the employers succeeded in pushing down actual wage rates—of union and nonunion workers alike—and because there continues to be inflation even if at a low level of around 3 percent officially. The cost-of-living adjustments—COLA clauses—that a lot of unions fought to include in contracts in the sixties and seventies fell short of keeping up with rising prices. But the number of workers covered by even this partial protection has fallen to its lowest level in a quarter century, as the officialdom in one union after the next has succumbed to the bosses’ concession demands.

Second, there have been explosions of currency inflation in the midst of depression conditions in this century and there will be again. This is the situation in many semicolonial countries right now, as well as in the USSR and Eastern Europe. We should never have the illusion that the kind of hyperinflation that ravaged workers, farmers, and the middle classes in Weimar Germany in the aftermath of World War I is no longer possible in the imperialist countries. Working people had to carry money in wheelbarrows and suitcases just to buy a loaf of bread; what your money would buy slid hour by hour. That can and will happen again. And long before prices reach runaway levels, inflation has a devastating impact on workers’ wages and living conditions.

The threat of sudden inflationary explosions is built right into deflationary depression conditions. Because in the face of plummeting profit rates, increasing unemployment, and a rise in working-class resistance, the bourgeoisie will divide over how to attempt to weather the crisis. Sooner or later, some capitalist governments will panic and simply begin pumping out money in hopes of buffering the shocks. When that happens, workers and working farmers get slammed with the worst of both worlds—high levels of unemployment and explosive inflation. Employed workers will see real wages plunge; working people living on pensions will be devastated; and farmers will be hit with a new wave of foreclosures. This is what the working-class movement must prepare for.

This has happened before in the history of capitalism. It happened during the long depression in the closing decades of the last century. And it happened during the

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Deflationary crisis worsens in Germany

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Some 25,000 steel and manufacturing workers in eastern Germany, members of the IG Metall union, began voting May 22 on a motion to down tools to demand a 35-hour working week with no loss in pay, in line with conditions in the western part of the country. At present, workers in the east have to work three hours per week longer than their western counterparts to make the same base pay. The job action highlighted the worsening social crisis in Germany today. The strike vote comes less than three weeks after 50,000 metal and auto workers, also members of the 2.7 million-strong IG Metall, struck in support of a nationwide 6.5 percent wage demand.

Union representative Klaus Zwickel described the fight for a shorter workweek as "a question of social justice."

The employers association president, Martin Kannegiesser, condemned the threatened stoppage, arguing, "Recovery in the east should not be endangered by IG Metall."

"Recovery," however, is not the most accurate word for the situation facing German capitalism. The strongest European imperialist power remains mired in an economic crisis. The official unemployment rate, which understates the real situation, stands at 4 million, or 11 percent of the workforce. The jobless rate is twice as high in Saxony and other eastern provinces. After growing by a negligible 0.2 percent last year, economic output has shrunk by the same amount in the first quarter of 2003, making for six straight months of contraction.

This and other data "point to continued stagnation," reported the country's central bank, the Bundesbank, in a May 21 statement. Bank officials said they planned to revise downward their predictions of 0.5 percent growth in 2003. The virtually nonexistent growth and intensified price competition has raised the threat of long-term deflation—a widespread tendency for prices to fall.

In a little more than a decade German imperialism has gone from a prolonged period of economic growth and a dominant position in Europe, including over its French rival, to its present status as the "sick man of Europe."

The big-business media pins the blame for this rapid decline on the wage levels and social rights won by working people. A typical news report in the online edition of CNBC TV stated that Germany's "notoriously generous social welfare system" is not only "crumbling"—it is "strangling Germany itself." Such pundits urge the coalition government of the Social Democratic and Green parties, headed by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of the Social Democrats (SPD), to take a bigger knife to social spending. Schröder will present his latest package for ratification by a special SPD conference on June 1. First announced in March, the measures would slash benefits to the long-term unemployed, and strengthen the bosses' hand in firing workers.

An article in the *Wilson Quarterly*, a bourgeois American journal, repeated such laments, speaking of the country's "costly welfare state," and complaining, "labor costs are high, and labor unions are so strong that it's difficult to fire workers."

Threat of deflation, inflation

Continued from page 6

so-called Great Depression of the 1930s. After more than half a decade of deflation, monetary inflation reappeared in the United States in 1936-37, accelerated at the end of the decade, and then shot up even more sharply during the wartime expansion after 1941.

Despite their names, *inflation* and *deflation* are not opposite, mutually exclusive phenomena under capitalism. *Inflation* is a monetary phenomenon that arises when the purchasing power of a national currency declines. Governments and banks crank out money in various paper forms, eventually far outstripping the output of commodities that could be purchased with that money. Under such conditions, competing capitalist commercial interests bid prices up and up and up and up, in an ultimately self-defeating effort to reap surplus profits. *Deflation* is something quite different. It is not primarily a currency phenomenon. It is the product of

It also detailed the enormous costs to the German rulers of their attempts to integrate the economy of the east, following the country's formal reunification in 1989.

Costs of reunification

The social wage of workers in Germany, east and west, is the product of decades of struggle. In eastern Germany, capitalist rule was overthrown after World War II and bourgeois social relations have not been restored there, even since the country's unification in 1990. Instead of being strengthened by unification, the German capitalists have been forced to devote substantial resources, especially unemployment benefits and other social payments, to working people in the former German Democratic Republic.

The predictions at the time of unification by former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and others that "a united Germany would be uncomfortably powerful for its European neighbors" have been turned on their head, wrote Martin Walker in the *Wilson Quarterly*. The enormous financial drain on the coffers of the capitalists has not let up. The \$1 trillion in state subsidies to the east is "10 times more money, allowing for inflation, than the Marshall Plan pumped into West Germany after 1949," wrote Walker—a reference to loans, grants, and investments that Washington used to shore up the shaky capitalist order in western Europe following World War II.

The reunification subsidies include massive tax breaks and handouts to German capitalists to construct factories in the east to take advantage of its "one structural asset, cheap skilled labor."

The article noted other facts indicating the extent of the crisis and its disproportionate impact in the east:

Since 1989 almost 2 million East Germans, especially young people, have moved to the West. Fewer than 100,000 people have made the journey the other way. A quarter-million jobs have been lost in the east in the last four years as Berlin's program of building roads, rail lines, and telecommunications networks has come to an end.

As this crisis unfolds, the German economy retains an enormous weight within Europe. It remains 50 percent larger than that of its strongest European rivals, Paris and London.

Health-care cuts behind Toronto SARS crisis

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO—SARS claimed the death of a 24th patient in Toronto on May 12. More than 205 people here have been hospitalized with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and thousands quarantined.

The numbers need not have been so high. The severity of the outbreak was a social and health disaster aggravated by years of health-care cutbacks by capitalist governments at all levels who are aiding the bosses' drive to prop up their profits.

The size of the SARS outbreak in Ontario "was an accident waiting to happen," said William Bowie, an infectious disease specialist at the University of British Columbia. "Because of the priorities of the

the long-term tendency of capitalist profit rates to fall, heightening price competition among rival capitals and putting enormous downward pressures on capacity-increasing investment and expanded production—the conditions we've been discussing.

So the question for the workers movement in a depression is not an "either . . . or": *either* to prepare for deflation *or* to prepare for inflation. There will be unanticipated currency inflation superimposed on the deflation endemic to depression conditions. A sudden disastrous collapse of productive employment can soon be accompanied by a terrible price explosion.

That is why the labor movement must be ready to unite working people nationally and internationally around the fight for a program to advance workers' common interests, including measures to protect our class and its toiling allies against the ravages of both capitalist-caused joblessness and inflation.



Thousands protest across Germany May 24 against cuts in social programs for state workers and the unemployed that the Schröder government has proposed.

Germany's economic weakness "could drag the rest of the eurozone into recession," commented the May 22 *Financial Times*. The statistics office of the European Union has reported that factory output in the 12 countries using the euro currency plunged by 1.2 percent in March. In 2001, more than 55 percent of German exports went to nations in the European Union.

The resistance put up by the numerically strong steel and autoworkers and other industrial unions to such attempts to strengthen the bosses' hand is not the only obstacle in the path of German profit recovery. Of particular concern to the German capitalists is the sluggish growth in their export markets.

"Without doubt the export business has become more difficult," noted the Bundesbank report.

The U.S. dollar has already fallen almost 30 percent against the euro since its peak in 2000. The decline of the dollar has put new obstacles in the path of German and other European exporters. Their products have become less competitive as their prices in dollars, the dominant currency of international trade, has risen.

The U.S. government has refused to take action to shore up its currency. "The dollar's value is best set in an open, competitive currency market with minimal intervention," stated the U.S. Treasury.

Conflicts between Washington and its

major rivals in Europe have burst to the surface in the buildup to the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and in its aftermath.

The May 22 issue of the British daily *Guardian* reported that given the "current atmosphere," officials at Eurocopter, a giant Franco-German manufacturer of helicopters, have decided not to compete for a lucrative contract to upgrade the U.S. presidential helicopter fleet. A senior executive said, "There's no way this contract is not going to go to an American group and it's unthinkable a European company . . . would stand even a ghost of a chance."

Washington's disputes with its European rivals over each power's protectionist measures in agricultural trade have even wider implications. In a speech to U.S. Coast Guard graduates, U.S. president Bush attacked the EU's near-total ban on the import of genetically modified foodstuffs. Pretending to be concerned about the agricultural crisis in many African countries, Bush called for the increased use of "high-yield biocrops" on the continent.

"Yet our partners in Europe are impeding this effort," he said, in a reference to Paris and Berlin. "They have blocked all new biocrops because of unfounded, unscientific fears. European governments should join, not hinder, the great cause of ending hunger in Africa," Bush intoned. He made no mention, of course, of Washington's attempts to open the lucrative European market.

government, the cost-cutting measures, the conditions were great for SARS to take hold." He was interviewed in a May 3 *Toronto Globe and Mail* article.

On Oct. 18, 2001, five microbiologists were cut from the payroll at the main Ontario public health lab. Only two remain there today. Several had left before the layoffs, fed up with underfunding. The firings went ahead despite the fact that seven people had died from water tainted with a particularly dangerous form of *E. coli* bacteria in Walkerton, Ontario, 17 months earlier, and the West Nile virus had made its appearance in the province. Labs such as this one would ordinarily work on rapid identification and developing diagnostic tests for new strains of disease.

"Do we want five people sitting around waiting for work to arrive?" said Health Ministry spokesperson Gordon Haugh at the time, justifying the job cuts. "It would be highly unlikely that we would find a new organism in Ontario." As the *Globe* article noted, however, that is precisely what happened.

Several other related factors contributed to the severity of the SARS outbreak in Toronto.

The Ontario government's own estimates show that it cut spending on 37 local public-health units by 21 percent over the past four years. These units keep track of communicable diseases and develop programs to contain them.

The cuts to hospital budgets have led to hospital managers refusing full-time jobs to nurses. Half the 100,000 nurses in Ontario work as casuals or part-time, and often have to work at two hospitals to make a living, which can hasten the spread of a new disease. In Toronto, the SARS epidemic was largely hospital-based and dozens of cases were among health-care workers.

The outbreak highlighted the shortage of health professionals and clerical workers to trace those who may have been exposed. Dr. Sheela Basrur, Toronto's chief medical officer of health, had to take people off an investigation of a tuberculosis outbreak in local hostels and syphilis cases. "We would try to beg, borrow, or steal staff from other health units," said Dr. Basrur.

Twenty people were brought from other provinces and 62 were reassigned, bringing to 305 the number of people in Toronto charged with tracing the movements of thousands of people who may have come into contact with the virus and keeping in touch with thousands in quarantine to make sure the required conditions were being observed.

Nor was there central communication or a common database for the hospitals. Dr. Allison McGeer, head of infection control at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, noted that early in the initial outbreak at Scarborough Grace Hospital, where the infection was first observed, there had been infections associated with intubating (inserting a device to keep open the airway) a SARS patient.

"Maybe if we had that data," she said, "we might have seen more clearly the risk involved in certain procedures and prevent what happened at Sunnybrook," where several health workers contracted SARS after a four-hour long effort to intubate a patient.

Basrur questions why the traditional Throne Speech, where the provincial government presents legislative initiatives for the coming year, did not even mention public health in the speech in early May. "I challenge you to find any mention of public health in there," she said. "We're in the middle of a wake-up call and people are still sleeping."

Indonesian military launches assault on Aceh to defeat independence movement

BY ROB GARDNER

SYDNEY, Australia—The Indonesian government launched a major military offensive May 19 against the independence movement in Aceh, declaring martial law in the province located in the northern-most part of Sumatra. In recent weeks, Indonesian president Megawati Sukarnoputri's government has moved to scuttle a cease-fire—in place since Dec. 9, 2002—with forces of the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), or Free Aceh Movement. Indonesian troops now number as many as 50,000, including army soldiers and paramilitary police. GAM reportedly has about 5,000 lightly armed fighters.

Five GAM representatives on their way to peace talks in Japan with government representatives were arrested in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, May 16. They were released briefly before being re-arrested with the declaration of martial law. "We will oppose the onslaught. We will fight for independence," said Mahmood Malik, leader of the GAM delegation. "We are ready. We have been fighting for 27 years."

The Indonesian military offensive has included paratroopers, tanks, armored personnel carriers, warships, and helicopters. U.S.-made OV-10 Bronco aircraft and British-made Hawk-200 fighter planes have also been used. Gen. Endriartono Sutarto, the Indonesian commander, has called on GAM fighters to surrender, declaring his troops will "hunt them down and exterminate them" if they don't.

The Indonesian military plans to relocate into detention camps as many as 200,000 Acehneses living in GAM strongholds. At the end of last year, 62,000 people in the province had been "displaced."

During the first night on the offensive some 180 schools were burnt down. Indonesian authorities tried to put the



Indonesian troops enter Aceh, in northern Sumatra, during May 19 offensive launched by Jakarta aimed at crushing the independence movement.

blame on GAM fighters. *Radio Australia* reported May 21 that these attacks involved "hundreds of arsonists in scores of villages." Indonesian troops arrived on the scene "too late," however, to capture any of the culprits. The GAM has denied responsibility.

A picture of beatings and summary executions of civilians, long the hallmark of Indonesian military operations in Aceh, has quickly emerged. "We're afraid, but only of the Indonesian soldiers," an un-named hospital worker in Bireuen told the British *Guardian*. "They have brutalized us for so long, the only solution is independence. Otherwise we will never have peace."

Eighteen people—including two 12-

year-old boys shot at point-blank—were massacred during dawn raids in four villages in the Bireuen district as the military assault began. Another 30 people were beaten. *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Matthew Moore reported that two men, Juanda and Jamaludin, were shot and taken away and their houses were robbed by the Indonesian army during raids on other villages near Lhokseumawe. The *Australian* gave an account of 51-year-old Ilyas being led down the road in the village of Teupin Raya, bleeding heavily from a head wound. "He had been hit on the head with a rifle butt—an Indonesian soldier's response to the villagers' failure to report the rebel presence in the village," reporter

Sian Powell wrote.

The Indonesian army claimed it had killed 58 rebels as of May 23.

History of struggle

Aceh, with a population of nearly 5 million, has a long history of resistance to rule by Jakarta, and earlier against Dutch colonization. The Dutch invaded the Acehneses sultanate, previously a British protectorate, in 1873. Guerrilla war continued even after the Sultan finally surrendered in 1903. The Dutch had not fully "pacified" the territory when the Japanese army drove them out during World War II. In the 1950s, following Indonesia's independence from Dutch rule, a revolt for greater autonomy simmered in Aceh. GAM was founded in 1976.

In recent years pro-independence sentiment has spread. It has been fueled by resentment against the government in Jakarta, which takes all the revenues from Aceh's oil and gas fields while keeping the province underdeveloped and using brutal military force to secure its rule and the exploitation of the Aceh's wealth.

Aceh's natural gas has been exploited since 1971 by Mobil Oil, which in 1999 merged with Exxon to become Exxon/Mobil. It operates in partnership with the state oil company, Pertamina, which runs the liquefied natural gas plant, generating \$1.2 billion in exports. To press the Indonesian government into increasing "security" for its profit-making operations, Exxon/Mobil shut down its facilities from March through June of 2001. Its installations are now guarded by 3,000 troops.

Former Indonesian dictator General Suharto designated Aceh a "military operations zone" in 1989. This was not lifted until August 1998, several months after Suharto was forced to resign in face of a deepening economic crisis and rising protests against his rule by students, workers, and farmers across Indonesia. In the political space that opened up with Suharto's fall, Acehneses protests against the brutality of military rule there became a national issue in Indonesia. In November 1999 several hundred thousand people rallied in Banda Aceh to demand a referendum on self-determination.

Military operations continued even as peace talks opened between the Indonesian government and the GAM over the last two years. Some 4,000 people were killed, mainly by the Indonesian army and police, in the two years leading up to the December 2002 cease-fire. The toll since 1976 stands at 12,000 killed.

Imperialist powers back Jakarta

The imperialist governments of Australia, Britain, and the United States have close relations with Jakarta and its military, which they view as essential to maintaining capitalist stability in the Indonesian archipelago. They have backed the Indonesian government against the Aceh independence movement, while expressing concerns about the effectiveness of the military assault.

Leading up to the imposition of martial law, U.S. ambassador to Indonesia Ralph Boyce told the press that Washington was "disturbed" by the likelihood of war but viewed the Aceh situation as Indonesia's "internal matter." On May 20, U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that the White House's stance is that "the problem of Aceh" is "not amenable to a solution by military force," calling on both sides to return to the negotiating table.

The Australian government has given Jakarta's offensive a more unqualified support. "Indonesia's got the perfect right to maintain its internal integrity and we regret that there are those who are in armed revolt," Australian defense minister Robert Hill said. "The violence perpetrated by the separatist movement is absolutely unacceptable," added Foreign Minister Alexander Downer.

An editorial in the May 21 *Australian* stated that Indonesia's "stability and territorial coherence are key elements in the stability of the whole of Asia, and central to Australia's national interests."

U.S. officials call for toppling Iranian gov't

Continued from front page

pers such as the *New York Times* have begun citing unnamed U.S. officials as saying that they have information "strongly suggesting that the Qaeda leaders said to be in Iran played a role in directing the bombings in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, that killed 34 people including 8 Americans."

Citing the Riyadh bombings, Washington canceled a meeting between U.S. and Iranian officials scheduled for May 21 in Geneva. Though the two governments have not had diplomatic relations since 1979, there have been some official contacts over the past months.

Iranian officials strongly denied the charge of "harboring" Al Qaeda cadres. "The only Al Qaeda members that we know of are the ones that have been expelled from Iran," government spokesman Abdollah Ramazanzadeh said. "If any exist in Iran they have entered illegally and we have no information about them."

On May 26 Iran foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said that the Iranian officials had detained a number of Al Qaeda members, but no "senior members of the group" such as those Washington claims are functioning in the country.

"Whether they are there with permission, not with permission, or what, it's the responsibility of the government to prevent those kind of people from coming to their country," stated U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher in response.

Members of Congress made the circuit of Sunday television programs May 25 to press the campaign against Tehran. "It would be in the interest of the world and most particularly of the Iranian people to have a regime change in Iran," said Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a Democratic presidential

candidate, on "Fox News Sunday."

The chair of the House Intelligence Committee, Republican Porter Goss, was on the CBS program "Face the Nation." He called for "isolating the bad guys" from the "reformists" in Iran, and "taking the levers of power away from them."

Rep. Jane Harman, the top Democrat on Goss's committee, stated that Iran is "more of a clear and present danger than Iraq last year."

Some of these legislators expressed concern that attempts to foster an "uprising" could backfire for the U.S. rulers. "We have to be a little bit cautious about...tossing out that term 'destabilize,'" Sen. Jay Rockefeller told a CNN news show.

U.S. hostility toward Iran since 1979

The increasing U.S. threats and accusations against Tehran are a classic attempt to build up pretexts to justify a course of economic and military aggression against Iran.

This course by the U.S. rulers is not new. Its roots go back a quarter century, to the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Until then, the U.S.-installed monarchy in Iran had been one of Washington's most reliable client states in the Middle East. Using brutal repression at home and one of the most heavily armed military forces in the region, the shah, or king, could be counted on to uphold the interests of U.S. capital.

But in 1978-79 Iran's workers and peasants—including many in soldiers' uniforms—entered the political scene in their millions, carrying out a popular insurrection. The shah was forced to flee. A working-class leadership capable of establishing a government of workers and farmers did not exist, however. Nonetheless, the capitalist government that came to power, headed by religious leaders who had opposed the shah's rule, was compelled to take a stance in opposition to U.S. imperialism. (For a detailed description of the Iranian revolution and its class dynamics, see the three-part series by Ma'mud Shirvani

in the April 21, April 28, and May 5 issues of the *Militant*.)

It's this history that has earned Iran a place on the "axis of evil" declared by President George Bush since before the invasion of Iraq. With U.S. troops occupying Afghanistan to the east and Iraq to the west, the imperialist rulers have decided now is the time to press harder against Iran.

Alongside the charges of "harboring terrorists," U.S. officials continue to accuse Tehran of developing "weapons of mass destruction." Washington claims that two plants designed to process fuel for a nuclear power plant under construction in Iran are proof that the Iranian government is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani pointed to the hypocrisy of the Bush administration's assertion that Iran should not need nuclear power for electrical generation because it has large oil reserves. He noted that before the 1979 revolution, the U.S. rulers had encouraged the development of atomic energy in the country under the shah's regime. "Why is it we needed atomic plants at a time when our daily oil production stood at 6 million barrels, and now that only 3.5 million barrels of crude is produced we do not need such plants?" he asked.

The U.S. big-business press also played up claims issued May 15 by the People's Mujahedeen that the Iranian government is producing "weaponized" anthrax and is experimenting with other pathogens, including smallpox. Based in Iraq, the People's Mujahedeen has carried out a campaign of sabotage, assassinations, and guerrilla attacks on the Iranian government since shortly after the 1979 revolution. The U.S. government continues to officially label the Mujahedeen as terrorist, but after occupying Iraq it signed a truce with the organization.

Meanwhile, some members of the U.S. Senate are promoting a bill dubbed the "Iran Democracy Act," which would provide funding for "pro-democracy," that is, pro-imperialist, broadcasting into Iran.

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Tehran book fair: a major cultural event

Pathfinder books of great interest

BY TONY HUNT

TEHRAN, Iran—Hundreds of thousands of people visited the 16th Tehran International Book Fair, a major cultural event in the world. For the 11th year in a row, Pathfinder Distribution London had a booth at the fair, exhibiting books in the foreign publishers' subsidized hall.

Interest was especially high in Pathfinder's books on the Cuban Revolution, women's rights, the imperialist war drive, and the roots of the conflict in the Middle East.

The book fair, held this year May 4–14, is an annual event that takes place at Tehran's sprawling trade-fair grounds, with mountains rising in the background. Books from Iranian and foreign publishers were on display in almost a dozen different halls. The crowded walkways between the halls were lined with food stands, giving the event a relaxed, festive atmosphere. In one area children participated in arts, crafts, storytelling, and other activities while their parents browsed the book halls.

The fair drew large crowds from Tehran as well as visitors from throughout the country. The Pathfinder sales team met visitors from Gilan province in the north near

represented in this section.

In the other foreign publishers' hall, sales were subsidized by the government. University students, professors, librarians, publishers, and other book fair visitors with certain qualifications could buy books in rials through a central payment system. The publishers receive the full price in hard currency.

This system for providing access to books that many people could not otherwise afford, like the book fair as a whole, is a gain of the 1979 popular revolution in Iran. This year the government subsidy was significantly less than in previous years, which had an impact on sales for most of the publishers, but the subsidized prices were still less than half of the cover price.

'What's your view about the war?'

The best-seller at the Pathfinder booth was *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, with 16 copies sold, followed by the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Other best-sellers included *Malcolm X Talks to Young People, Israel and the Arab Revolution* by Gus Horowitz, and issue no. 7 of *New International*, a magazine of

Marxist politics and theory, which features the article "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," by Jack Barnes. Sixteen copies of different issues of *New International* were sold.

In all, people attending the book fair bought 236 books and pamphlets from the Pathfinder stand.

"What's your view about the war?" was a question posed to the Pathfinder sales team early in the 11-day event, about the recent invasion and occupation of Iraq by U.S. and British forces. "Why is Washington accusing Syria of having nuclear weapons?" asked some students. "They are just making these things up."

Some believed that Washington's war moves stemmed from the character of the Bush administration. They read with interest passages in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, where the author details the record of Bush's predecessor, William Clinton, and how it paved the way for Bush.

Another visitor asked why London had supported Washington in Iraq and why peace demonstrations had failed to stop the war. Two young women asked for books on "the relationship between wealth and war" and considered buying *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes.

A few visitors to the Pathfinder stand said the recent U.S.-led war in Iraq had been necessary to "free" the Iraqi people from the Saddam Hussein regime. They were interested in the explanation offered in "The Opening Guns of World War III" that the war waged by the U.S. rulers and their British allies in 1991 had not been to liberate Kuwait—which had been occupied by Iraqi forces—but to further U.S. and British imperialist interests and deal blows to their rivals in Europe.

One man, an engineer, looked at *The Revolutionary Perspective for the United States* by James P. Cannon. "That's a strange title," he said, explaining that he thought the center of politics in the world was the growing conflict between "Europe and America." He thought the term "axis of evil" was used by Washington to prepare the ground to attack other countries. One student said, "There's a lot of economic and political problems in Iran, but if the U.S. comes [to invade] everyone will fight."



Main gate to the grounds of 16th Tehran International Book Fair, May 4–14.

Among Pathfinder's customers this year were students of technical, scientific, and medical subjects, professionals working in those disciplines, and humanities and literature students, as well as members of the different nationalities within Iran. Others included off-duty soldiers and a deck officer from a cargo ship.

Titles on Cuban Revolution top sellers

Some individuals bought several titles. One student from out of town visited the booth and went away with a catalog. He returned a few days later with a hand-written list and, after talking with the sales team, bought eight books and pamphlets, including *Capitalism's World Disorder*, promising to come back for more next year.

Books on the Cuban Revolution, and particularly by Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of that revolution, were once again the top sellers for Pathfinder. Many people at first wanted biographies of Guevara or Fidel Castro, or were initially attracted to the heroic "image" of Che. Members of the sales team explained how Pathfinder's titles contain an accurate record of the history of the Cuban Revolution through the words of its main leaders and participants and an explanation of their political ideas.

One young man, who wanted books on Guevara and Castro and on U.S. policy in the world and the outcome of the Cold War, decided to buy *To Speak the Truth* by Castro and Guevara, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and *New International* no. 10.

Malcolm X titles were also in demand. A couple of visitors came to the stand looking for books on "Black culture" and were pointed to the collections of his speeches. While many have seen movies or documentaries, knowledge of Malcolm X's ideas and political evolution is sketchy or nonexistent.

Pathfinder's books on women's rights were the second-most popular subject. But there was welcome competition from good-quality Farsi translations that exist of two Pathfinder titles: *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women* and *Problems*

of *Women's Liberation*, published by the Iranian publisher Golazin. Of these Farsi editions, 2,000 copies of *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women* and more than 3,000 of *Problems of Women's Liberation* have been sold to date.

Growing range of Farsi translations

Many people who currently speak or read little English visited the foreign publishers' hall. Groups of high-school-age youth were often attracted into the Pathfinder stand by the displays of enlarged copies of covers of Pathfinder titles. Some of these youth were happy to learn that they could obtain Farsi translations of some of Pathfinder's titles at the stands of two Iranian publishers—Golazin and Talaye Porsoo—in the local section of the fair. Talaye Porsoo has published Farsi translations of 13 Pathfinder titles, three of which sold more than 50 copies at the book fair, the publisher reported.

There appeared to be a broader interest and wider availability of books by and about Karl Marx than in previous years. Several new Farsi-language translations of writings of Marx were on sale, including *Grundrisse*, written as part of Marx's preparation of *Capital*. Translations of the Marxist classics *Reform or Revolution* by Rosa Luxemburg and *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* by Georgi Plekhanov had also been published within the last year.

At the Pathfinder stand, *Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* by George Novack, which features a picture of Marx on the cover, was frequently picked up. Other titles by that Marxist writer also sold well, including *The Origins of Materialism; How Can the Jews Survive? A socialist answer to Zionism; and Revolutionary Dynamics of Women's Liberation*.

Many customers at the Pathfinder booth were glad to learn about the increased availability of such books in Farsi. Several said they would look for the next publication from Talaye Porsoo, due out in a couple of weeks. That book is *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War* by Jack Barnes, a translation of the lead article from issue no. 11 of *New International*.



Stand at Tehran Book Fair of Golazin, an Iranian publisher that has produced editions in Farsi of two Pathfinder titles on women's rights—*Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women* and *Problems of Women's Liberation*.

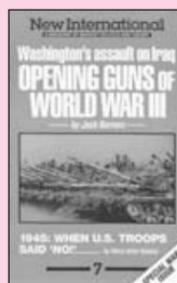
the Caspian sea, Sanadaj in Kurdistan, and the cities of Isfahan and Shiraz. Schools brought their classes and many families attended. This year the attendance on Friday, May 9, was reported to be one of the largest single-day turnouts in the history of the book fair.

According to *Iran News*, publishers from 35 countries were represented at the book fair this year, along with nearly 2,000 Iranian publishers. Two large buildings were filled with the stands of local publishers and booksellers carrying titles of general interest—from novels and poetry to books on history, computers, religion, and art. These halls were often packed, and on the weekend they stayed open an extra hour until 8:00 p.m. Other buildings featured scientific and technical books, teaching materials, and books in Arabic.

At a simultaneous press fair, newspapers and magazines set up booths to promote interest in their publications. As part of this, newspapers from other towns and cities, including publications in the languages of oppressed nationalities, were on display. The struggle of the Palestinian people was featured at the fair through an exhibition depicting the resistance in the Jenin refugee camp and the massacre by Israeli forces there.

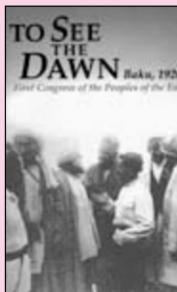
Books from foreign publishers were available in two halls. In the unsubsidized hall, publishers sold books directly to customers in the national currency, the rial. A number of organizations and embassies also set up booths in this section. Many countries from the Middle East were represented. Publications from France, Germany, and Switzerland were on display at an extensive, central stand. The embassies of Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela staffed a smaller joint booth. The Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad were

From Pathfinder



Communism, the Working Class, and Anti-imperialist Struggle: Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War

Two documents with introduction by Samad Sharif
Revolutionists in Iran present a class-struggle perspective on the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary war by Baghdad against the Iranian Revolution. In *New International* no. 7. Special offer \$10 with *Militant* sub (see ad on page 15).



To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920—First Congress of the Peoples of the East

How can peasants and workers in the colonial world achieve freedom from imperialist exploitation? By what means can working people overcome divisions incited by their national ruling classes and act together for their common class interests? These questions were addressed by 2,000 delegates to the 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East. \$19.95

Order on line from www.pathfinderpress.com. Please include \$3 for shipping and handling. Also available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Chemical workers in Texas strike Dow to defend right to job

BY STEVE WARSHHELL

FREEMPORT, Texas—More than 1,000 workers walked off the job at Dow Chemical's facility here May 20 to defend job security at the company's largest chemical plant.

At stake in the fight is whether union members will have any effective rights through the contract and seniority system to jobs in the plant. One picket told *Militant* reporters that a large number of women who work at the plant—from plant operators to loaders—were involved in picketing. One of the company's intentions is to subject all of the workers with 25 years of seniority or less to testing to prove their "competence"—those deemed "incompetent" by the company would be replaced by new hires.

"The company has no right to take these jobs away from us," said Charles Singleterry, business manager of Operating Engineers Local 564. "Their proposal means

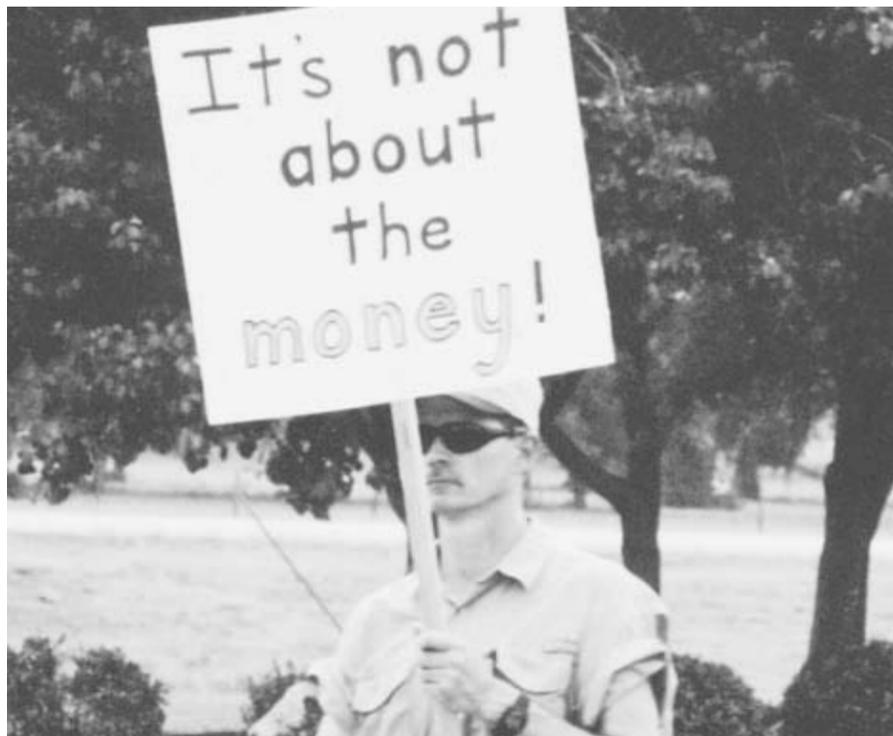
no bid rights of any kind—and you'll have to be the fair-haired child of the company bosses to get a bid job. That's what the members voted against."

Workers reject two contract offers

The union members had rejected an earlier contract offer by a two-to-one margin, Singleterry said. The union leadership had recommended a no vote. "The second offer was even a little worse, and yesterday we decided to make no recommendation and let the members decide. They voted 'no' by a total of 463-409. We had already decided to strike immediately if the contract was rejected."

The first picket volunteers were at the gates 30 minutes after the vote count was finished at 11:00 p.m. May 20. Round-the-clock picketing is being organized by union members.

The company had already taken steps to prepare for a strike. Union members



Militant/Steve Warshell

Member of Operating Engineers pickets Dow plant in Freeport, Texas, May 20.

reported that the company and salaried employees had been following them around for weeks learning their jobs in preparation for a walkout. Singleterry said that after he informed company officials of the strike

vote, management "had the audacity" to request the union hold off on striking for five days after the vote so the salaried operators-to-be could "be given some relief before going on the job."

The city government has come to the aid of the company. The local newspaper in Brazosport, *The Facts*, reported that Lake Jackson police chief Paul Hromadka had already announced his "fear" of future picket-line violence, especially if there are solidarity visits by fellow unionists from outside Brazosport County. "The problem we see is when union strikers come in who are not from this area," he said. County deputy sheriffs are assigned to patrol the plant entrances, and the company has hired a private security company.

One union member objected strongly to the police and company's violence-baiting. "You put in 25 years," Mark Westmoreland said, "then the company treats us like we're terrorists."

The union local welcomes messages of solidarity and donations of food and funds, picketers said. These can be sent to: IUOE Local 564, 127 Circle Way, Suite A, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566.

Tom Leonard contributed to this article.

N.Y. joblessness hits industrial workers

BY RÓGER CALERO

Long-term unemployment in New York City is on the rise, while the number of workers without access to jobless benefits has increased.

Unemployment in New York City jumped from 5.7 percent in 2000 to 8.2 percent last year. In the August-December period alone bosses eliminated 41,000 jobs.

The New York-based Community Service Society (CSS) reported in February that one out of five unemployed workers in the city had been out of work for more than nine months in 2002.

In 2000, some 59 percent of the unemployed in New York City were out of work for less than 13 weeks. Last year that percentage declined to 47 percent, while the number of longer-term unemployed rose.

The CSS report illustrates that—contrary to claims that the current economic slump is a "white collar" recession, resulting from a "dot-com collapse"—job cuts came largely from manufacturing, construction, and other industrial jobs, as well as retail businesses and repair services.

Workers in New York who are Black and Latino have been affected disproportionately by the economic slump. While they are slightly less than half of the city's workforce, they account for nearly 60 percent of the unemployed.

Likewise, younger workers are the hardest hit by the job squeeze. Workers aged 16-24 make up 13.4 percent of the city's labor force but comprise 29 percent of the unemployed.

All these figures underreport the real picture, since the government does not count as unemployed those who have stopped seeking work.

Under these depression conditions, working people are bumping into the restrictions on unemployment insurance that capitalist politicians have instituted.

According to a report by the National Employment Law Project, government statistics show that 357,000 New York workers have run out of state unemployment benefits in the past 12 months—double the figure for 2000.

More than half of New York's unemployed have exhausted all 26 weeks of state benefits, the limit. Payments average \$276 a week.

Nationwide, more than 1 million people have already exhausted both their 26 weeks of regular unemployment insurance and the 13 weeks of extended federal benefits. Another 900,000 will exhaust this extension by the end of May.

Jobless benefits are routinely denied to many workers because of "an insufficient work history" or countless other bureaucratic obstacles. As a result, less than half of unemployed workers in New York City actually collect unemployment benefits. Largely because of these obstacles, only 58 percent of the jobless apply for benefits.



Unemployed workers picket May 21 at office of Olga Mendez, N.Y. state representative for East Harlem and south Bronx, demanding extension of unemployment benefits.

Study: asthma rates among children in Harlem are four times national average

BY PAUL PEDERSON

One fourth of Harlem's children suffer from asthma—more than four times the U.S. average of 6 percent—reported a study released in April by Harlem Hospital. The deteriorating conditions in which millions of working people are increasingly forced to live, and unremitting government cuts in health-care personnel and facilities, are behind the disproportionate impact of the disease, which kills 5,000 people a year nationwide, mostly in urban working-class communities.

Steven Nicholas, director of pediatrics at Harlem Hospital, initiated the study after treating a steady stream of asthma patients at the hospital over the past several years. The problem is "twice as large as we thought it was," Nicholas said.

Asthma causes swelling and blockage of the airways into the lungs, which makes it difficult to breathe. The condition can be controlled if properly treated, but there is no cure. The rates are higher in Black and Latino communities, especially along the East Coast. Nationwide some 20 million people suffer from the disease—more than double the number who did in 1980. Deaths from the condition have tripled in the same period.

"I come home from work and Kharysma's wheezing, Khovani's wheezing, and they can't breathe, so my immediate reaction is panic. The thing that I do is I get them dressed and we all rush to Harlem Hospital emergency," said Alfred Dawkins, whose five children all suffer from asthma.

As more working people are denied access to health care, those afflicted with asthma increasingly go untreated or are forced to make a trip to the emergency

room to get help. About 70 percent of asthma sufferers in Harlem end up getting treatment at the local emergency rooms, said Jean Ford, head of the Harlem Lung Center.

Robert Mellins, director of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, said lack of access to health care may be in part behind the disproportionate impact of this disease in Harlem and other working-class communities. "Sometimes lack of access to care leads to a delay in seeking care. So, what starts out as a mild, easily treated situation becomes much more serious."

"Other factors," Mellins continued, "include crowding, poor living conditions, cockroach infestation, lack of adequate ventilation and sometimes the use of excessive amounts of gas cooking or using gas to heat, which can result in toxic gasses in the home.... Those are some of the reasons. There may be others. Bus depots sometimes are concentrated in poor sections of the city, and diesel fumes may serve as triggers."

"There are schools we know of in New York City where it is not unusual to find that close to 20 percent of the children



Child in Harlem uses breath-testing device. Asthma rates among oppressed nationalities far exceed national average.

have been prescribed inhalers," said Jean Ford. "What's particularly striking about asthma is that a disease that is so common and so simple to treat, given our understanding of it, is running rampant like this in our community." The study, which tested 2,000 children under the age of 13 in a 24-block area, also discovered a large number of kids who suffered from the disease but had never been diagnosed with it. "We found that a lot of kids are floating through life without anyone knowing they have asthma," said Nicholas. If similar testing were done elsewhere, he remarked, "the rates might be much higher than suspected in any number of inner-city neighborhoods around the country."

Reporters committee covers Calero fight

Continued from front page

Homeland Security announcing the federal government's intention to drop its effort to deport him from the United States, stating that the immigration police's efforts to deport Calero "is no longer in the best interest of the government." The second victory was registered two weeks later, when the government quickly returned Calero's Nicaraguan passport and resident "green card" to him, after a request by his attorney.

Supporters of Calero's fight are now pressing for a favorable ruling by a New Jersey immigration judge on the federal government's motion to terminate the exclusion proceedings against him.

Meanwhile, support for the case continues to build and news about the victories Calero has scored are beginning to spread. The front-page article announcing Calero's initial victory in the May 26 *Militant*, for example, has been posted on the website of the Cuban weekly *Granma International*.



BY KATHLEEN DUNPHY

May 20, 2003—Journalist Róger Calero, associate editor at monthly Spanish-language news publication *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for socialist newsweekly the *Militant*, received his permanent green card and his Nicaraguan passport from the Department of Homeland Security May 15 after a six-month legal battle that started when he was stopped at customs when he tried to re-enter the United States.

The dispute began when the Immigration and Naturalization Service detained 34-year-old Calero for ten days after he returned to the United States through George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Dec. 3, 2002, following assignments in Cuba and Guadalajara, Mexico.

His detention was based on a 1988 conviction for selling marijuana to an undercover police officer. The conviction was waived in 1990 by INS when Calero applied for, and was subsequently granted, permanent resident status in the

United States.

Calero's case went to DHS, to which many of the bureaus of the Immigration and Naturalization Service went when the new department opened Jan. 24.

The Róger Calero Defense Committee, created to organize support for Calero, first announced victory May 1 when DHS moved to terminate the deportation case against Calero. Newark Immigration Judge William Strasser ordered DHS to elaborate on its motion to terminate, which consisted of one sentence citing INS rules and contained no other explanation, according to Claudia Slovinsky,

Calero's attorney.

Twelve days later DHS clarified the motion, saying the INS was correct in waiving the marijuana conviction, and had properly granted Calero permanent residency in 1990, invalidating the removal proceeding.

Slovinsky said she is hopeful the latest termination motion will be granted, ending Calero's legal battle.

"It's significant that the government goes back and says [the green card] was properly issued and they can't come now and kick him out of the country," Slovinsky said.

The Róger Calero Defense Commit-

tee attributed the decision to terminate the proceedings to the large support base behind Calero. The committee organized petitions and letters after Calero was detained, and continued their efforts during the legal case.

Calero's defense committee now plans to raise funds to help with his legal and publicity fees.

According to a report in the *Militant*, Calero called this development an important victory for worker's rights, and added that he hopes to go back to concentrating on the work he did for both publications prior to being detained.

Strike at Tyson Foods enters 4th month

Continued from front page

Greenfield, Wisconsin, which is also being used by the company to hire scabs.

Kolodzne stated that even though scabs are also being bussed into Jefferson from Chicago, there are fewer on the busses than previously.

Meat packers in the region continue to organize union solidarity with these fighters. During the week of May 19-25, members of Local 271 at the Swift meatpacking plant in Omaha took up an in-house collection for the strikers. Some \$250 was donated to the strike fund.

On Saturday, May 24, UFCW Local 179 organized a benefit/dance in Cherokee, Iowa, for the Tyson strikers. Cherokee is the site of another Tyson factory, where the contract expires next March. This is considered the sister plant of the one in Jefferson. Workers here think that what happens in Jefferson will have an impact on their contract negotiations.

Manuel Tejada, 36, a production worker with two and a half years in the plant, originally from El Salvador, attended the benefit. "We are supporting Jefferson strikers tonight," he said. "But we are also preparing ourselves because our contract is up in March 2004 and we know it will be a fight to win a new contract we can accept. Alone, I am pretty sure that they



March 16 solidarity rally for meat packers on strike at Tyson in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

can't win. But if all the locals pitch in, I know they can win."

Lyle Martin, 72, is a retired Tyson worker with more than 29 years in the plant here. He said that in Cherokee, like

in Jefferson, pensions are in the cross-hairs of Tyson. "Because of the completely inadequate health insurance for retirees, I lost my entire life savings in four days to pay bills for a serious medical complication," Martin stated. "If they eliminate my pension, I will lose my house, which is all I have to show for all those years of work. They say this is a free country. Don't tell me this is freedom."

Tyson's takeback demands at the Jefferson facility include a two-tier wage scale cutting hourly rates for new hires from \$11.09 to \$9, and freezing pay for others over a four-year period; eliminating pensions for new hires and freezing benefits for the rest; increasing health-care premiums by as much as \$40 a week and eliminating health-care supplements for retirees; cutting back sick leave and disability benefits by more than half; reducing vacations; eliminating two paid holidays for new hires; taking away the right to severance pay if the plant closes; and ending a profit-sharing program.

In a letter to the editor of the Cherokee newspaper *The Chronicle-Times*, Tyson worker Troy Chindlund wrote, "Even though our current contract doesn't expire for a little under a year, and our wages and benefits are currently the same, John Tyson's intent to reduce our pay, eliminate our pensions, and slash our benefits, is quite clear to all of us. We can hear this train coming down the tracks."

Kolodzne and others attended an Interfaith Conference of clergy in Washington, D.C. May 18-19 to get out the word about their strike. She said that they urged those in attendance to become part of the Adopt-A-Family program, which helps workers pay their bills during the walkout.

Howard said that strikers traveled to Phoenix, Arizona, to a Pizza Hut convention to urge the chain not to use Tyson pepperoni on its product.

Both strikers told the *Militant* that another solidarity rally was being planned for June 22 in Jefferson. They are urging people to come to show support to the strike.

Edwin Fruit is a member of UFCW Local 1149 and is a production worker at the IBP/Tyson in Perry, Iowa. Lisa Rottach, a UFCW member in Omaha, Nebraska; and Jenny Benton, a member of UFCW Local 789 at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, contributed to this article.

June 7 rally in D.C. to protest killing by cops

BY JOHN HAWKINS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—More than a dozen organizations and leaders in the Black community here have issued a call for a June 7 demonstration to protest the April 26 killing of Charquisa Johnson by the police.

Johnson, 23, an African-American mother of two, was shot in the chest at point-blank range by policeman John Fitch, who is white. Fitch has been placed on administrative leave with full pay while the D.C. police department investigates the shooting.

The June 7 rally is the second major action called to demand justice for Johnson. A May 14 march from the Galen Terrace apartment complex—where Johnson was killed as she stepped from her apartment into the hallway—to the Seventh Precinct police station drew nearly 200 people. Made up initially of friends and fellow residents of Galen Terrace, the action drew in dozens of passersby and onlookers as it made its way to the local police headquarters.

Other smaller demonstrations have taken place in the complex itself, including an April 28 candlelight vigil the Monday following her murder, where residents spoke out in protest against the killing by the cops. Below the window of Johnson's first-floor apartment residents maintain a memorial to her made up of flowers and stuffed animals.

In an attempt to justify the shooting, Fitch and three other cops on the scene claim Johnson had a gun and refused to drop it when ordered to do so.

Galen Terrace residents, however, tell a different story. The May 10 *Washington Post* reported that attorneys for Johnson's family, Gregory Lattimer and Malik Shabazz, announced at a news conference that they had three witnesses, including a six-year-old girl, who maintain Johnson had her hands up and was unarmed when Fitch shot her.

Numerous residents of the apartment

complex told the same story to *Militant* reporters who have visited the scene. Dacia Hammonds, the mother of the six-year-old who witnessed the killing, said her daughter is traumatized by what she saw.

"She keeps saying over and over, 'Thank you, Charquisa,'" Hammonds said. "She just doesn't understand why the media doesn't report the story the way she saw it."

Hammonds, Deborah Timms, and Rochelle Dobbins described to the *Militant* the sequence of events that led to the murder. Police, they said, were responding to reported gunfire near 15th and V Streets SE. Spotting two youths in the area, they followed them into the apartment complex. Children in the complex had been playing with firecrackers throughout the day. Anticipating the danger posed by confused cops, residents called out to them as they drove into the complex that the noise they were hearing was from firecrackers.

GE workers prepare contract fight

BY MAGGIE TROWE

LYNN, Massachusetts—Members of Local 201 of the International Union of Electrical Workers/Communications Workers of America (IUE/CWA) are publicizing a June 7 rally and caravan to support their efforts to push back attacks on their wages and working conditions by General Electric (GE). The union's national contract with GE expires June 15, and negotiations have begun that cover 24,400 workers in 13 unions.

Local 201 represents some 2,500 workers at the Riverworks aircraft engine plant in this town, north of Boston. The plant produces engines for military and commercial aircraft, including the Navy's F/A-18 fighter jet. General Electric employs 26,000 workers at plants around the world. The Lynn factory is the third largest, behind plants in Erie, Pennsylvania, and Schenectady, New York.

A flyer issued by the union local states, "Our fight for pension protection, job security, and to keep our medical coverage intact has taken on national significance. We are facing many of the same attacks as workers at Verizon, OFS (Lucent), and state and municipal employees." The union also calls for health care for all. Unionists here plan to rally at the plant at noon on June 7, then to drive through downtown Lynn in a car and bus caravan to a picnic at the nearby waterfront. Unionists and others throughout the area are invited to participate and show their solidarity with the workers at GE.

Workers at this and several other GE plants carried out a four-day strike in November 2002 around the same issues. Some 17,500 GE workers struck for two days in February 2003. During the latter walkout one striker in Louisville, Kentucky, was killed when a police car struck her near the picket line.

Jazz: Black music, white business

Printed below are excerpts from *Black Music, White Business* by Frank Kofsky, one of Pathfinder's June books of the month. This section is taken from chapter one, "The Political Economy of Jazz Then and Now." Copyright © 1998 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY FRANK KOFSKY

An inquiry more concerned to reveal than to conceal the fundamental nature

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

of the political economy of jazz would necessarily be compelled to explore such questions as alienation, underemployment, and racist contempt for black music; powerlessness and the qualitatively heightened exploitation of the black artist; the double standard for black versus white art music in the recording industry; ideological mystification in the jazz world; and so on. In the remaining pages of this introduction, I will merely sketch in broad strokes an outline of each of these aspects of the political economy of jazz, reserving a more complete discussion for the chapters that follow.

Alienation. The essence of the political economy of jazz has never been stated with greater succinctness than in saxophonist Archie Shepp's aphorism, "You own the music and we make it." Further clarification, should any be needed, comes from the comment of Rex Stewart I quoted earlier: "Where the control is, the money is. Do you see any of us running any record com-

panies, booking agencies, radio stations, music magazines?"

The technical term for this phenomenon, in which the ultimate disposition of the fruits of a person's labor is in the hands of his employer, is *alienation*. In the classic 19th-century sense in which the word is still used today, alienation occurs because the employer and not the worker controls both the means of production (factories, machines, tools, and the like) and the products manufactured by human labor through the operation of these means. A jazz artist, of course, does own the tools of his trade, so to speak, but is nonetheless alienated from what he himself has created by the fact that he must depend on those who control the means of *distribution*—nightclubs, festivals, concerts, radio stations and, above all else, booking agencies and recording companies—in order to bring his music before the public to earn a livelihood from it.

Two consequences flow directly from this situation: (1) the artistry of the jazz musician operates primarily to enrich not its possessor, but those white executives who own and/or manage the means of production and distribution within the political economy of jazz; and (2) the decisions of such owners and managers, particularly those involved in the recording industry, are absolutely crucial in determining both the total amount of employment for black musicians and which specific musicians will be granted access to it....

Even though black musicians themselves do not ordinarily employ the term "alienation," one should not make the mistake of thinking that they are unaware of the phenomenon. Thus, saxophonist and composer Ornette Coleman told author A.B. Spellman that

the problem in this business is that you don't own your own product. If you record, it's the record company that owns it; if you play at a club, it's the nightclub owners who charge people to listen to you, and then they tell you your music is not catching on. Let's say I've made eight albums; if one company owns six of them and the other owns two, then who do you think made the most money from them? Me or the two companies? ... This has been my greatest problem — being shortchanged because I'm a Negro, not because I can't produce.

Here I am being used as a Negro who can play jazz, and all the people I recorded for and worked for act as if they own me and my product. *They have been guilty of making me believe I shouldn't have the profits from my product simply because they own the channels of production [my italics].* ... They act like I owe them something for letting me express myself with my music, like the artist is supposed to suffer and not to live in clean, comfortable situations. ...

The insanity of living in America is that ownership is really strength. It's who owns who's strongest in America. ... That's why it's so hard to lend your music to that kind of existence.

Underemployment, contempt. The second most important fact to bear in mind is that, largely as a consequence of the alienated position of the jazz artist, un- and underemployment are chronic afflictions with which he must live and attempt to work (see chapters 3 and 4 for more on this subject). Which is to say that the persistent denial of a chance to earn a decent living comes about for jazz artists not primarily because of the prevailing conditions, but rather *because of the attitudes toward jazz and black music generally of the white executives who control the means of producing and distributing it...*

Powerlessness and qualitatively heightened exploitation. It is a truism in labor history that the ability of workers to improve the conditions under which they toil is always least during periods of high unemployment. In jazz, such periods are the rule. As a result, jazz musicians are perennially in the position of having to sell their creativity in a buyers' market, a state of affairs that, as they and the white executives who profit from their talents both are aware, drastically reduces their power to bargain for the kind of treatment that befits a serious musical artist....

While living in Los Angeles in 1946, saxophonist Charlie Parker, the founding father of bebop, underwent a psychological breakdown, was arrested and then sentenced for six months to Camarillo State Hospital for the mentally ill. As the period



Dial Records owner forced Charlie Parker to sign contract as condition for release from hospital.

of his court-ordered confinement wore on, Parker became increasingly restive and began threatening to attempt escape. To forestall that possibility, Ross Russell, the owner of Dial Records, a company whose *raison d'être* was to record Parker's music, "dug through the state mental hygiene code and found an alternative: upon recommendation of a board in Sacramento, it was possible for an [out-of-state] inmate to be released into the custody of an approved California resident."

Accordingly, after arranging for the necessary bureaucratic paper-shuffling, Russell was able to have the saxophonist discharged in his custody. Before Parker was released, however, Russell made certain to obtain, as a quid pro quo, the artist's signature on a renewal of his exclusive recording contract with Dial. Not that this prevented the executive from complaining subsequently, with considerable disingenuousness, that "this matter" became "the source of later bad feeling, Charlie contending that I 'wouldn't let him out until he signed the paper.'"

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Medal of honor—Elena Grice, a student in England, was suspended for 30 days for leading an antiwar protest. A justice of the High Court upheld the



Harry Ring

penalty and called Grice “a very silly girl.”

Faith-based—We’re late in reporting this. In mid-April, the Army’s chief of chaplains an-

nounced an inquiry into reports that a Southern Baptist chaplain in Iraq was offering GIs baths in exchange for baptisms. Applicants were required to listen to a 90-minute sermon prior to a one-hour baptismal bath. “It’s simple,” the chaplain said. “They want water. I have it—as long as they get baptized.”

Can’t fight Mother Nature—In the spiffy California beach town of Santa Barbara, environmentalists are pressing city officials to replace aging sewer pipes, some more than 100 years old. This year, three spills spewed nearly 10,000 gallons of sewage into the street and ocean. Regional water quality control of-

ficials said the city acted responsibly in cleaning up some of the mess, but not all the spills could be avoided.

Own a house and be free—“Mortgages should come with a public health warning because the struggle to keep up with payments is making millions of people sick, the British Medical Association said,”—The *Times*, London.

How about better wages—The association of England’s train companies slammed the proposal for a new royal train as a waste of money better used elsewhere. They declared the Queen could travel with “her subjects” or, if need be, reserve an entire car for her entou-

rage on any scheduled run.

No ‘free trade’?—The governor of Illinois is pressing to get Hollywood to make more films in Chicago, once the backdrop for a good number of films. He said that in two years, 18 movies set in Chicago were actually filmed in Canada, where production costs are lower.

What price imperialism—More than 300,000 Iraqi children face death from acute malnutrition, twice as many as before U.S. forces invaded the country, the United Nations Children’s Fund warned. The agency said a survey of Baghdad indicated that seven percent of children under

five in the urban center suffered from acute malnutrition.”—*Los Angeles Times*, May 15

No comment—With increasing scarcity of lower cost homes, Los Angeles housing jumped 19 percent in a year. The median price—half above, half below—now stands at \$300,000 plus.

And the shredder was color-blind—In Flagstaff, Arizona, a federal judge threw out a suit charging that area cops stopped drivers on the basis of skin profiling. He advised that Arizona had lost or destroyed relevant records; therefore there was no proof. However, he assured, if the plaintiffs wished they could refile the suit.

New Liberal government is elected in Quebec

Does result of the ballot register a setback for pro-independence forces?

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—In the April 14 provincial election, the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ) led by Jean Charest became the new government in the Quebec National Assembly. It defeated the Parti Quebecois (PQ), which had been in office since 1994.

The PLQ took nearly 46 percent of the vote and 76 seats in the National Assembly,

PLQ in 1970–76 and 1985–94, and the PQ in 1976–85 and 1994–2003.

While the PQ was formed in 1968 by a section of the Liberals who split from the PLQ on the very question of Quebec sovereignty, over time the two parties have had rather similar, liberal programs on economic and social issues. After two mandates, there had been a noticeable wearing of power in the PQ government.

Despite its prosovereignty rhetoric, the government had not led any significant battle to defend the national rights of the Quebecois since the 1995 referendum, leading to cynicism and demobilization within the party’s ranks.

While for decades a significant proportion of Quebecois have supported Quebec independence as the way forward against their national oppression, the PQ never campaigned for independence. Its call for sovereignty is usually synonymous with demanding more power for the Quebec government in the framework of a redefined federation with the rest of Canada.

During its two mandates, the PQ government also carried out cutbacks in social services won in the big nationalist and working-class struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, thus increasing its unpopularity.

The Liberals took advantage of the weakened support for the PQ, campaigning on the need for a change in Quebec and on the theme of “the priority is healthcare.” The PLQ demagogically promised not to freeze the budgets of the ministries of health and education, while at the same time committing itself, with much less fanfare, to freeze the budgets of all other ministries.

Rise of right-wing ADQ

At the same time, the rise of the Democratic Action of Quebec represents a rupture with the bipartisan framework of the past several decades here. Although it is the product of a 1992 split led by a “moderate” nationalist section of the Liberal party, the ADQ has since then systematically evolved to the right.

While refusing to define the party as federalist, ADQ leader Mario Dumont repeated many times during the election campaign that, “sovereignty is outmoded.” The ADQ promised a substantial reduction in taxes, the privatization of part of the health-care system, and the issuing of vouchers to parents wishing to send their children to private schools. It also attacked the “excessive power” of the unions.

The growing percentage of the vote won by the ADQ in the last two elections and the support it has begun to receive in the past year among a layer of capitalists and middle-class Quebecois—such as lawyers, notaries, shopkeepers and small businessmen—has made this formation the first serious attempt since the beginning of the 1970s to consolidate a right-wing political party in Quebec with substantial support among the French-speaking population.

The three main union federations here campaigned among their members against the ADQ and the “rise of the right.”

In this framework, the leadership of the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ), the largest of the three, did not openly support the PQ as it has in past elections, offering it instead only implicit support by calling for a



Militant/Colin Mckay

Student demonstration in Montreal against cutbacks in post-secondary education Sept. 20, 1995. Despite its pro-sovereignty rhetoric, Quebec’s former PQ government did not lead any significant struggle to defend the national rights of the Quebecois since that time, which contributed to its election defeat.

vote for “the party closest to the workers.”

As for the leadership of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), it switched from its traditional policy of implicit support for the PQ to a call for a “strategic vote” in the April 14 elections, i.e. to vote for whichever candidate of the PQ or the PLQ was best placed in each electoral district to

defeat the candidate of Democratic Action. This is the first time since the consolidation of the Parti Quebecois at the beginning of the 1970s that the officialdom of one of the main union federations in Quebec has called for a vote for Liberal candidates.

Another grouping in the elections
Continued on Page 15

AS I SEE IT

the Parti Quebecois just over 32 percent and 45 seats, and Democratic Action of Quebec (ADQ) 18 percent and 4 seats. Traditionally, the PLQ has been Canada’s rulers’ party in Quebec against the PQ, a bourgeois party that advocates Quebec sovereignty.

While in power, the PQ organized two referendums on the issue of sovereignty, in 1980 and 1995, losing the latter by barely more than 1 percent—an outcome that sent tremors across the ruling class of Canada.

Quebec is the second largest of Canada’s 10 provinces, with a population of 7.4 million. Eighty percent speak French and face institutionalized oppression and discrimination on the basis of their language. The Quebecois have led sustained and at times massive struggles against this oppression and for their national rights.

The wearing of PQ’s power

The election of the PLQ “is very good for Canada,” said Jean Chrétien, Canada’s prime minister, the night of the election, “because the people across the world will see that Canada’s stability is here to stay.” Ernest Eves, Ontario’s Premier, claimed that the election results show that sovereignty is no longer an important issue in Quebec. “Landslide victory by Liberal Party in Quebec’s provincial elections is major setback for separatists,” the *New York Times* stated even more bluntly April 16.

However, this may be more a wish than a reality.

Despite its victory, there was no shift toward the federalist PLQ in the election. In fact, the Liberals lost a total of 17,000 votes compared to the last provincial election in 1998. The big difference is that a significant proportion of the traditional French-speaking PQ electors either stayed away from the ballot box the day of the election or voted for the ADQ.

On one hand, the abstention rate rose by 8 points, from 22 percent in 1998 to 30 percent this year, the highest in a Quebec provincial election since 1927. On the other, the ADQ gained 216,000 votes, an increase of nearly 7 percent among those who voted. The combined result was a loss of close to half a million votes for the PQ. This ensured the PLQ victory.

The PQ and the PLQ have dominated politics in Quebec for the last three decades through what in fact has been an uneasy two-party system—uneasy because of the PQ program for Quebec sovereignty, which has led to numerous conflicts and skirmishes with the federal government. Both parties have taken turns in office—the

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



June 9, 1978

French imperialism is today directly involved in three “dirty wars”—in Chad, in the Sahara, and in Lebanon.

The French invading force in Chad consists of 1,200 paratroopers and Foreign Legionnaires, accompanied by the inevitable squadron of Jaguar jets, not to mention the “advisers” and “professional soldiers” who have donned Chadian uniforms for the occasion.

In the Western Sahara, French Jaguars twice this week dropped napalm bombs on Polisario Front forces.

It seems that French intervention in the Sahara reached a new stage with the establishment of a joint Moroccan-Mauritanian headquarters, complete with French “advisers” at El Ayoun.

And then there is Lebanon. The French government is determined to impose a “just peace” on that part of the Mediterranean, and no one should think otherwise simply because the troops are hiding under the blue helmet of the United Nations.

Following last week’s encounters between Palestinian fighters and French troops, Lt. Col. Viard did not mince any words in explaining that, yes, the main job of the blue helmets in general and the French troops in particular was to prevent the Palestinians from moving through the security zone under UN jurisdiction.



June 8, 1953

A terrible and irreversible injustice may soon to take place in the Rosenberg case. Representatives of all sectors of the nation have rallied to the defense of the Rosenbergs, but labor has not been yet heard from. And the labor movement is the only power strong enough to stay the hand of the executioner.

The official leaders of the trade unions of America may feel that labor has no stake in this case. They may argue that only those who are sympathetic to “communism” or to the Soviet Union need to be concerned about the fate of the Rosenbergs. They are wrong:

There is very strong doubt that justice has been done in the case; strong enough to make the union leaders pause before dismissing it. Furthermore, the case is connected very closely with the McCarthyite method of trial by fury, in an atmosphere of hysteria.

Labor must recall the fact that Sacco and Vanzetti were adjudged innocent years after their execution by Felix Frankfurter, who now sits on the Supreme Court which refused to give the Rosenbergs a chance to present new evidence. Labor must recall that Tom Mooney, also sentenced to death in a hysterical atmosphere, was saved by the protest of labor and also later found to be innocent.

Build July Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange trip

During the last week of July, groups of young people from across the United States will visit Cuba as part of the Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange (see ad below). They will travel to Havana as well as Santiago de Cuba, where they will join hundreds of thousands of Cuban workers and young people in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada and Bayamo barracks by revolutionary forces led by Fidel Castro. That was the opening blow in Cuba's revolutionary war, through which Cuban workers and farmers overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, took power into their own hands, and embarked on a course toward building a socialist society.

Recently Washington tightened restrictions on travel to Cuba—announcing its decision to stop issuing “people-to-people” licenses that allow thousands of U.S. residents to visit Cuba each year. The U.S. government has applied long-standing policies that have encouraged a spate of hijackings of Cuban boats and planes in recent months. It has also orchestrated a propaganda campaign to brand the revolutionary government in Havana as a “repressive dictatorship” because of the arrests and convictions of 75 opponents of the Cuban Revolution on charges of collaborating with a hostile state power, Washington, in its campaign to subvert Cuba's sovereignty.

These policies and practices by the U.S. government are neither irrational nor new. Their fundamental character has not changed in the past 44 years. The example of the Cuban Revolution represents a deadly threat to the property interests and prerogatives of U.S. ruling families. Cuba shows that workers and farmers are capable of forging a revolutionary movement, taking power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters, and joining the worldwide struggle for socialism—becoming the makers, not just the objects, of history.

That's why since the first democratic measures instituted by the workers and farmers in power shortly after the 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution, such as a deep-going land reform, Washington launched a campaign of bombings, sabotage, attempts to assassinate Cuban leaders, the 1961 Bay of Pigs mercenary invasion, a threatened invasion and nuclear holocaust in 1962, and a brutal economic war that continues to this day. Through their determination, political consciousness, and organization, however, Cuba's working people have defeated all these attacks. They remain fearless in the face of U.S. imperialist aggression.

The determined defense of the Cuban Revolution by its communist leadership and the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people in response to the recent imperialist-orchestrated campaign of threats and provocations has helped stay Washington's hand once again. The White House, which last month floated the possibility of imposing new sanctions against Cuba—such as cutting off remittances by hundreds of thousands of Cuban-Americans to their relatives on the island and halting direct flights from U.S. cities to Havana—has not taken such measures so far.

Young people from the United States joining the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange this summer will be able to see Cuba for themselves, learning about the revolution and exchanging experiences and views with their Cuban peers about world politics. They will do so despite the tightened U.S. travel restrictions against Cuba—whose goal is precisely to minimize such exchanges.

Organizers of the Youth Exchange have secured the use of licenses through which the U.S. government authorizes educational travel to Cuba. This makes it possible for more students and other youth to take part. Getting out the word to involve more people—both those going on the trip and those who want to lend their help—in fund-raising, outreach to other groups, and study, are the main tasks now to make it a success.

Building the Youth Exchange over the next two months is one of the best ways of speaking out against Washington's slanders and provocations against Cuba. This can be seen in recent public meetings—from Miami to Philadelphia to Los Angeles—that have been organized to build the Youth Exchange and discuss the defense of the Cuban Revolution. Involving a broad array of student groups, Cuba solidarity organizations, and other political forces is the key to success.

For youth interested in how to fight to change the world for the benefit of the overwhelming majority of humanity, the Youth Exchange will provide an opportunity to learn a little more about how working people can transform society, and themselves in the process. The living example of Cuba's socialist revolution stands as a powerful argument that working people can make a revolution in the United States, too.

Strikes, rallies in France

Continued from front page

May 13, more than one million workers demonstrated and many state employees walked off the job in cities throughout the country. Six days later, 400,000 workers joined demonstrations. Many teachers have been on strike since May 14. Union officials have threatened further nationwide strikes.

The angry mood of the demonstrators and the size of the mobilizations, the largest since the Chirac-Raffarin government took office a year ago, registered the desire by many workers to wage a fight in defense of their social gains.

In pressing their assault, however, the French employers are taking advantage of the class-collaborationist “national unity” course of the union officialdom and virtually all the parties in the workers movement, which backed bourgeois politician Jacques Chirac in last year's presidential elections. Deepening that capitulation, those forces supported the anti-American, French nationalist stance of the Chirac government in its inter-imperialist conflict with Washington and London over control of Iraq and the Mideast oil wealth.

At the May 13 demonstration in Marseilles, dock workers, sailors, naval maintenance workers, and port authority employees joined in what one unionist said was the largest action on the docks since the 1995 strikes against a previous government assault on pensions. The port workers formed a 1,000-strong feeder march on the waterfront and marched to the assembly point in central Marseille. There they joined 100,000 other protesters, including steelworkers from Sollac, laid-off coal miners from Gardanne, postal workers, and rail workers.

The largest contingent came from public school employees. The government had just announced that 100,000 non-teaching staff will be transferred from the national system to local and regional administration, threatening their benefits and job security. Many of the banners and leaflets in this contingent, often hand-made, called on both state employees and workers at privately owned companies to join in a general strike against the attacks on the retirement system and other social benefits.

“Raffarin said on TV that the streets don't rule the country, but in fact we do have the power to change government policies and stop their attack on our retirement pensions,” said Frédéric Romanetti, 26, a machinist at the SNCM naval repair and maintenance yards in Marseilles. “I was glad to see that the subway workers and teachers continued their strikes. We need to go out all together.”

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin is proposing a “pension reform” that, over time, would make workers labor for 42 years in order to receive full benefits. Today, public employees must work 37.5 years, and workers at private companies 40 years, in order to retire with full benefits at age 60.

Some workers, including railroad workers, have early retirement programs allowing them to receive benefits starting at age 55 or in some cases 50, a gain the government has not yet attacked directly.

In 1995, similar plans to undermine the pension system sparked a wave of transportation strikes and other mass protests that forced the government of Chirac and then-prime minister Alain Juppé to back off.

But the worldwide capitalist economic decline—fueling competition between Paris, London, Berlin, Washington, and other imperialist powers—continues to push the French bosses to go after workers' jobs, wages, and social benefits.

Statistics for the first quarter of this year show the economies of Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands shrank, and the entire 12-nation “euro zone” experienced zero growth. Germany is officially in a recession and other European capitalist countries are not far behind. Alongside this, the U.S. dollar has dropped in value by almost one third relative to the euro, sharply increasing the competitiveness of U.S. exports to the disadvantage of capitalists in Europe.

Raffarin has announced tighter auster-



Militant/Nat London
Steelworkers contingent at May 25 rally in Paris

ity measures including a total freeze in spending by government ministries. The renewed attack on pensions is at the heart of these measures.

Working-class resistance to these measures has been hamstrung, however, by the labor misleadership. One year ago the French Communist Party, Socialist Party, and centrist groups such as the Revolutionary Communist League advocated a vote in the second round of the presidential elections for Jacques Chirac of the rightist Gaullist party, who outpolled ultrarightist politician Jean-Marie Le Pen. The lesser-evil argument for this wholesale capitulation was to “unite to defeat Le Pen” and “stop fascism.”

Over the past year, these forces have backed the French nationalist stance of the Chirac government in its opposition to Washington and London's attacks on Paris's imperialist interests in Iraq and elsewhere in the world. This course has allowed the French government to step up its attacks on workers' rights at home, such as the Vigipirate “antiterrorist” program.

Vigipirate is the name given to measures the French rulers took in the mid-1980's to beef up the police force with military personnel. Seizing on a series of bombings in Morocco, the Raffarin government recently strengthened Vigipirate, putting additional police and military forces onto the streets and other public places.

The French Communist Party (CP) and the CGT union federation have also vociferously joined the imperialist-promoted campaign to attack Cuba by falsely alleging human rights violations there. “The Communist Party condemns with the greatest firmness the repression carried out against Cuban dissidents,” read an April 8 statement from the French CP. “We demand that France and the European Union take action” to press Cuba around this question.

In this framework of “national consensus,” the officials of the various union federations have repeatedly stated that they accept the arguments of the government and the bosses' association MEDEF that the pension system is “in trouble” and that an aging work force makes “reform of the system” necessary. They have argued for a “true reform,” with the employers “sharing” the burden “fairly.”

Two days after the May 13 demonstration, one of the union federations, the Socialist Party-led CFDT, broke ranks and signed an agreement with the government granting some minor concessions. The CGT and FO federations and the teachers union have continued their demand that the government “reopen negotiations” on the pension system.

Not all workers accept the government's argument of an “age crunch” to justify the assault on retirement pensions. Akim Abdoul-Galil, a merchant seaman and on-ship engine mechanic at the SNCM, a state-owned French navigating company, insisted that “future generations need to have a decent retirement.” He told the *Militant*, “If people are living longer because of medical progress, then it should benefit workers and retirees—not be used against them. The government is trying to push back our social rights 60 years. They are aiming at our health-care system and want to turn welfare into workfare.”

Nat London is a retired auto worker in Paris. Marc Kinzel, a mechanic at the SNCM naval repair and maintenance shipyards in Marseilles and member of the CGT, and Jacques Salfati and Claude Bleton in Paris contributed to this article.

Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange Havana, Cuba July 24–July 31

Young people from across the United States will be traveling to Cuba in July to participate in the Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. They will meet with youth in that country, exchange ideas with them, and see firsthand the truth about Cuba's socialist revolution. They will take part in the 50th anniversary celebration of the assault on Moncada, which launched the revolutionary war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship. The project is hosted by the Union of Young Communists, Federation of University Students, and other youth organizations in Cuba. A national clearinghouse for information on the exchange has been set up in Los Angeles. Contact them at the e-mail address below to find out how you can join—**time is running out for new applicants, so act now!**



For more information contact:
cubasovereignty@aol.com

Corrections

The last sentence in the first paragraph of the article “Dairy farmers in the UK protest cuts in milk price” in last week's issue was factually incorrect. It should read: “Some 200 dairy farmers from throughout Scotland took part in the action at the Livingston depot of the LIDL supermarket chain.”

In the same issue, an error was introduced inadvertently in editing the article “19 immigrant workers die in truck in Texas.” The sentence in question read: “Immigration police block all roads into Texas from the Rio Grande Valley, encouraging elaborate smuggling measures.” It should have read: “Police block all roads in Texas coming out of the Rio Grande Valley, about 100 miles north of the border with Mexico, while *la migra* controls the border crossings, encouraging elaborate smuggling measures.”

New Liberal gov't is elected in Quebec

Continued from Page 13

called the Union of Progressive Forces (UFP) was formed after a regroupment last year of three organizations of the petty-bourgeois left in Quebec. The UFP put forward a program of reforming capitalism to get rid of its abuses and received about one percent of the vote. Refusing to call itself "socialist," the UFP is a heterogeneous formation. It includes former PQ supporters, forces and individuals who support Quebec independence such as the Regroupment For A Political Alternative and the Party of Socialist Democracy, and those who oppose independence such as the Communist Party of Quebec and the International Socialists.

One fact that best illustrates how uncertain federalist forces are regarding the "death" of pro-independence sentiment in Quebec was their noticeable silence during the Quebec election campaign. No federal Liberal Party minister or prominent federal or provincial politician came to campaign in Quebec or made any public statement in support of Jean Charest.

This is in striking contrast to the referendum of 1995 and the election of 1998. On those occasions, the arrogant interventions, threats, and blackmail of Jean Chrétien and several ministers and federalist politicians from English Canada aroused a strong reaction of national pride on the part of the French-speaking population, almost leading to the victory of the "yes" side in 1995 and certainly causing the defeat of Charest in 1998.

The election campaign was punctuated this year by several demonstrations opposing the U.S.-British assault on Iraq. These marches were much larger in Quebec than the rest of Canada. For example, according to estimates by organizers and the police, the March 15 peace demonstration attracted 150,000-200,000 people in Montreal, compared to tens of thousands in Toronto.

Several politicians and commentators saw this as the reason for the refusal of the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien in Ottawa to openly back the attack by Washington and London on the pretext "that it was not officially approved by the UN."

According to the Montreal daily *La Presse*, for example, Conservative Party leader Joseph Clark "accused Mr. Chrétien of having refused to join the war for fear of upsetting the Quebecois."

There are two things to point out regarding these assertions.

First, throughout the war the Canadian government maintained hundreds of sol-

diers and sailors in the Middle East in various support roles for the imperialist aggression. Secondly, the opposition of the Quebecois has never prevented Canada's rulers from going to war or resorting to their army when needed, including against the Quebecois themselves.

During World War I, Ottawa did not hesitate to use its army against a Quebec City march opposing conscription, resulting in five deaths and numerous injuries. In 1940, Canadian authorities imprisoned the mayor of Montreal, a leader of a very broad movement of popular opposition in Quebec to compulsory military service.

And in 1970, in an effort to break a rising wave of converging working-class and national struggles which were sweeping the province, Ottawa declared the War Measures Act, occupying Montreal militarily, carrying out 2,000 raids and arresting 500 union, nationalist and socialist activists.

While in fact participating in Washington's war against Iraq, Ottawa did not officially support it, primarily in order to defend its traditional role as "an international peace-keeping force," an image it has sought to maintain under cover of the UN for almost half a century.

As leaders of an imperialist power of secondary rank, Canadian capitalists have worked very hard to develop this particular niche in world politics—a niche that is today being called into question by the profound inter-imperialist tensions that have shaken the United Nations as an effective instrument for imperialism and more and more mark world politics.

As in the rest of the world, the demonstrations in Quebec against the war on Iraq had an essentially bourgeois, pacifist character. Politically, they were dominated by forces linked to the PQ and the Bloc Quebecois—a party that exist only in Quebec, associated with the PQ that presents itself as a defender of Quebec sovereignty in the Canadian parliament in Ottawa.

As in the rest of the imperialist world, the pacifist demonstrations in Quebec were broadly composed of middle-class forces. Because of the numerous and varied links—cultural, commercial and other—that this social layer has developed since the beginning of the 1960s with France, the self-interested campaign of French imperialism against Washington's war found a much more direct echo in Quebec than in English Canada or the United States. The illusion of Paris as the "peace party," therefore, received a more favorable hearing in

Quebec.

At the same time, protesters poured into the streets with thousands of Quebecois, not French or Canadian, flags. Moving among the crowd, *Militant* reporters noted a widespread identification with the history of mistrust of Ottawa and its wars, and the struggle of the Quebecois against such imperialist adventures.

The placards calling for Quebec independence displayed at literature tables of the Communist League and the Young Socialists aroused numerous positive reactions, especially among youth.

'A new Quebec model'

Since its victory on April 14, the Liberal government of Jean Charest has made clear that its priority is "to review the organization of the Quebec state in its entirety, from top to bottom," as the new provincial head put it during the presentation of his new cabinet on April 29.

"This will be the first re-engineering of the government of Quebec since the Quiet Revolution," he added, in announcing the nomination of several ministers specifically mandated to review all social programs.

The "Quiet Revolution" is the name used in Quebec to refer to the period of social change and modernization of the province that characterized the beginning of the 1960s here. It is associated in the minds of

many working people with a number of social gains won as a result of struggles against national oppression at that time, mainly in the areas of health care and education.

This shift in priorities of the new government from its pre-election promises came along with the "discovery" after the election of a "hidden deficit" of \$4.3 billion in the budget presented in March by the PQ regime. There is no question, said the new minister of the Treasury Council, Monique Jérôme-Forget, of "having one deficit after another" and "of spending money which we do not have." Since its election, the Liberal government's emphasis on the development of a "new Quebec model" represents a return to the course of attacking social services and trimming down the state apparatus first put forward by Jean Charest in his 1998 campaign. At that time the PLQ had rapidly backtracked in face of the opposition this course aroused.

It remains to be seen at what speed and on what fronts this assault will advance. One of the first key tests could be the next negotiations with the employees of the provincial state—government employees, teachers, nurses and hospital workers—whose contract expires June 30. The unions have already announced their intention to focus on reducing the general wage disparity between the jobs mainly held by women compared to those performed by men.

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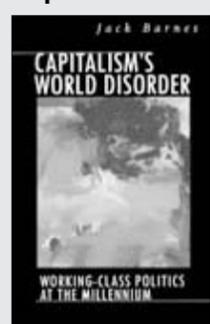
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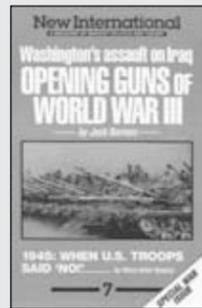
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LETTERS

In 'God we trust'?

These are the words that make me sit down when I am to say the pledge of allegiance. Well in Minnesota they are making it mandatory that public schools say it at least once a week. This is another example of the Republicans' hypocrisy in order to hold down the progressives.

Now I will sit! My peers will discriminate against me and call me unpatriotic. That is just not true. This is not only a step down from atheist; it is a shot at the heart of socialism. In a post 9/11 United States we need to stick together with one thing in mind, the progressive parties will not tolerate the setbacks of our oppositions.

I will sit. For our constitution's sake, who will sit with me?

Teddy Saxton

International Falls, Minnesota

Obligation to defend Cuba

The massacre of the Iraqi people and the occupation of Iraq by U.S. forces, heading a coalition with England, Spain, and other countries, without UN approval, and despite the marches by people around the world saying: No to War—this is nothing less than the beginning of the imposition upon the world, by force, of a new world order that the U.S. extreme right-wing and its lackeys have determined. Is this accidental? No. The failure of neoliberalism, the

big economic crisis that this has provoked in the world, has brought the extreme right to the conclusion that the capitalist system can only be maintained by force.

On the other hand, the cowardice of many governments, the opportunism of others, the inactivity of the parties on the left, and the low level of combativity of working-class leaders around the world, added to the limited effectiveness of the UN, have allowed for what we are seeing today, which is nothing more than the return of fascism as a threat to the world.

Cuba, a small country, blockaded and threatened for more than 40 years by the mightiest power in the world, has held the banner of socialism high, and has raised its voice to say No! to the new world order that they attempt to impose, demonstrating to both the left, and to the working class around the world the path to follow. This is the reason why they have fabricated an international campaign against it, led by the United States with the support of its lackeys in Latin America and the rotten OAS (Organization of American States), also counting on the bootlickers of the European Union, which has added itself to the blockade of the island to asphyxiate it economically, and through hunger and disease make it surrender.

This reality shows us that this is the moment for the beginning of the struggle by the world working

class against the new order and the first step is to save Cuba with the moral and economic support it requires.

The working class worldwide faces the danger of being enslaved. Cuba is its main bastion, let's not allow it to be crushed and destroyed. Let's defend ourselves by fighting for Cuba.

Proletarians of the world, Unite!

José F. Martínez

Miami, Florida

Farouk Abdel-Muhti

Several friends and supporters of New York-based Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti visited him at the York County Jail in York, Pennsylvania, on May 2-3.

Visitors are allowed into a special area where they can see him through a glass partition and talk to him through a telephone.

Farouk was dressed in an orange prison uniform with handcuffs on his wrists and shackles on his ankles. He was in remarkably good condition and spirit considering the treatment he has been getting. He is locked down for 23 hours, 15 minutes per day in what is called "the hole." He hasn't seen the sun for more than 60 days since his transfer to York. There is no recreation or exercise. The 45-minute relief from the "hole" includes a quick shower, telephone time, shopping at the commissary, etc. As compared with the jail at Pas-

saic [New Jersey], the York prison is cleaner, but the attitude of the guards is much worse. They treat him as a sort of scapegoat for the supposed evil suffered by Americans from "evil" Arabs and Muslims. His patience is being tried.

Bernie McFall

New York, N.Y.

Farouk was in good spirits, but slightly shaken up. As usual he had a lot of things to discuss, things he wanted us to do and people he wanted us to contact. However his slightly shaken-up state was due to a visit by two government agents the day before. He also was in handcuffs, and leg shackles, which I found to be slightly excessive, since he is behind a glass wall that separated him from us. The other detainees, I noticed, were not in handcuffs.

Farouk has been in York County Prison for approximately 68 days, and he mentioned that he would like for us to try to further publicize his case. I don't think he can stay in there much longer without there being adverse effects on his health and on his physical and emotional well-being.

Sharin Chiorazzo

Absecon, New Jersey

Farouk Abdel-Muhti, an outspoken advocate of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, was jailed without charges in April 2002.

Abdel-Muhti has been imprisoned indefinitely, first in several prisons in New Jersey, and more recently in a jail in York, Pennsylvania. He is facing deportation from the United States, where he has lived since the 1970's, and is appealing for public support to press the government for his release and drop deportation proceedings against him. Anyone interested can send a letter of protest to David J. Venturella, Assistant Deputy Executive Associate Commissioner, Office of Detention and Removal, tel. (212) 305-2734, fax (202) 353-9435, e-mail David.j.venturella@usdoj.gov. Please also call York County Jail warden Thomas Hogan at (717) 840-7580.

To write to Abdel-Muhti address correspondence as follows: Farouk Abdel-Muhti #75122, York County Jail, 3400 Concord Road, York, PA 17402-9580. Please send copies of your letters to the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti at freefarouk@yahoo.com.

—Editor

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.

Workers in Sweden strike for pay raise

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

SKENE, Sweden—Some 560 members of the Municipal Workers Union carried out a two-week strike in this town in the municipality of Mark in southwest Sweden. They are among the 46,000 MWU members on strike in 60 different municipalities.

The rolling national stoppages started April 23 and have so far involved 66,000 workers. The strike is already the biggest in the history of the union, which is demanding a 5.5 percent increase in wages.

Workers told *Militant* reporters who visited from Gothenburg in early May that 500 union members had attended the union's strike meeting in Skene the week before—that is, almost all the workers taking part in the stoppage. Around three-quarters of the participants were women.

The union has exempted some municipal workers, including ambulance drivers, fire fighters, and nurses for the handicapped and the elderly, from the stoppage.

Two cleaners and one cook on picket duty outside Parkskolan (Park School) in the town center spoke about the importance of the wage fight. The present wage rates give the workers absolutely no margins, they said. "The strike is important because you have to be able to live on your wages," said Agneta Lundqvist.

Mirja Hellström, who works as a cook in the cafeteria, agreed. "You should not have to depend on anyone else," she said.

Schools like this will not be cleaned for two weeks, the workers explained. With the cafeteria also shut by the strike, students bring their own food and eat in the classrooms.

"We get a lot of support from people who pass by, they honk and give us the thumbs-up. Only one person, yesterday, gave us the thumbs-down," said cleaner Lilian Abrahamsson.

Seven workers were picketing outside a school named Kunskapshuset, or House of Knowledge. "Our basic wage is 15,300 krona, but many of us only receive 90 or 97 percent of that wage, depending on how many weeks you work in the summer when the school is closed," said Anne Ahlgren. Her fellow cleaner, Eva-Lena Karlsson, said that because of this system her wage is only 14,800 krona (US\$1=7.8 krona). The workers picket in four-hour shifts between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. "The school is open in the evening, when there are courses taught here," said Ahlgren.

Students show support for strike

Students have expressed support, they said, even though after three days of the strike the school showed signs of the lack of cleaning. "Two students from the course for hotels and restaurants came out and told us that we are striking for them too, for the wages they will get when they graduate," said cook Maria Axelsson. "A young person who starts to work these jobs will get only 10,600 krona a month for a full time job," she noted.

Nurses and other MWU members who work at day-care centers are also on strike, although the centers have stayed partially open, since some of the workers belong to another union that is not participating in the strike. Picketing the Sandsvällsäng day-care center, nurse Pia Svensson told the *Militant* that she usually looks after eight children between the ages of one and eight in her own home.

"All the parents have had to find another way to look after their children these two weeks," she said. "But they say it is OK, we will figure something out, and they ask grandparents and others to help. They say they really hope we win."

The municipal employers' organization



Militant/Dag Tirsén
Strikers Pia Svensson and Mirsade Bekteshi picket day-care center in Skene, Sweden, May 14. Some 66,000 workers have participated in walkouts since April 23.

has said there is no money to pay for higher wages. "But after the day-care and hospital nurses demonstrated last year, suddenly there was money," said Svensson.

"The nurses got raises that time, and I really think it is important they did—but we

didn't," said Ahlgren, who, like Axelsson, had taken part in the demonstrations. So had Erika Guerrero, who works as a nurse with elderly people suffering from senility and is exempted from the strike. "We marched every month when the

municipal assembly had their meeting," she said. Day-care nurses initiated the marches, winning support from nurses and others in demanding a monthly raise of 1,000 krona. "They said then, too, that there was no money, but after a few months, they gave in and granted us 450 krona a month," she said.

"I wish we had marches like last year, we must be seen. This is far too quiet," said Guerrero, who earns 13,800 krona a month. The only march during this strike has been the traditional May Day demonstration when 150 municipal workers marched, far more than the usual number.

The nurses at Guerrero's workplace are not on strike, but because of the strike action, no new person can be hired there. At a recent social, Guerrero said, a patient's relative had given the nurses a boost by saying in a speech, "We relatives really support your struggle and think you should be paid accordingly for this important work you are doing."

The employers' stand against the wage raises fits into two decades of cuts in spending on health care and social welfare in Sweden. In 1981, around 37 percent of the GNP went to the so-called public sector, which includes schools, hospitals, and day-care centers. In the 80s, the figure fell to 31 percent. If further planned cutbacks are implemented the share is expected to fall to 29 percent in 2006.

London behind murder of Irish nationalists

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—British army intelligence agents and cops in Northern Ireland helped a loyalist paramilitary group murder Catholics in the 1980s, according to a report by Metropolitan Police Commissioner John Stevens. The report, published by the British government April 17, centers on the 1989 killing of Belfast solicitor Patrick Finucane by the Ulster Defence Association (UDA).

The report details the activity of the British army's Force Research Unit (FRU), which ran spies in loyalist organizations. "Loyalist" is the term applied to organizations that defend British rule in Northern Ireland. The report described how an FRU agent, Brian Nelson, supplied the UDA—a loyalist paramilitary organization—with information that led to the murders of several Republicans and nationalists, including Finucane. The investigation found that the FRU and officers within the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) Special Branch knew about the murder plot but did nothing to stop it from taking place.

In the report Stevens mentions an "allegation" that Douglas Hogg, the Home Office minister of the British government at the time, was given information by senior RUC officers that some solicitors were "unduly sympathetic to the IRA." Hogg repeated this publicly in the House of Commons, just three weeks before the murder of the Belfast solicitor.

Responding to the report's publication, Michael Finucane, the dead solicitor's son, said, "This report is widely believed to be...an examination of what went wrong in Northern Ireland and how that can be prevented in the future.... Nothing went wrong. The 'system' worked exactly as intended and, in the British government's eyes, it worked perfectly. The policy in Northern Ireland was—and may yet be—to harness the killing potential of loyalist paramilitaries, to increase that potential through additional resources in the shape of weapons and information, and to direct those resources against selected targets so that the government could be rid of its enemies."

Alex Maskey, Belfast's first lord mayor elected from the Sinn Féin party, said, "This is not about rogue elements within the British system. It is about a state policy sanctioned at the highest level." Sinn Féin

is the party leading the fight for Irish unity and for the withdrawal of the British armed forces from the north.

Stevens also recounted how in 1987 the FRU employed Nelson to steer a UDA hit squad away from killing a British agent operative inside the IRA code-named "Stakeknife." The British spy unit directed the squad toward an alternative target, pensioner Victor Notarantonio, fingering him falsely as the head of the IRA in Ballymurphy. Notarantonio, a 66-year-old father of 11, was gunned down by the hit squad in front of his wife as he lay in bed. Top UDA leaders told the *Observer* that if any of their men face charges for these crimes they would name the British agent in public.

In the weeks that followed the publication of the Stevens report, anonymous "security sources" named Belfast resident Freddie Scappaticci as "Stakeknife." The alleged agent was supposed to have penetrated the IRA at the "highest rank," according to a BBC item, which also reported that Scappaticci had fled to a safe house in Britain after the allegations were printed. In the days that followed, a flurry of speculation appeared in the British press, including suggestions that in order to protect his cover Scappaticci had executed other British agents working in the Republican organization.

Media justifies use of informers

The right-wing *Daily Telegraph* editorialized, "informers have always been an essential part of the state's armoury against terrorism...and their activity must necessarily be shady." It went on to condemn the British government for encouraging speculation about the functioning of its spies by opening "breast-beating inquiries into British conduct over the past three decades...as part of a process to appease the IRA.... It is impossible to see how anybody except the terrorists can benefit from opening them to the light."

The press was caught off guard when Scappaticci appeared at a press conference at his west Belfast home to deny the allegations. "Nobody has had the decency to ask me if any of these allegations were true and why the police had not come to question me about these allegations," he said.

Following Scappaticci's denial, Sinn Féin representative Gerry Kelly described

the charges as "unsubstantiated," although they had been "accepted and repeated as fact by a large section of the media without question.... These allegations are made by the same people who killed Pat Finucane; ran Brian Nelson and used him and other agents to control and direct loyalist death squads; continue to control and direct unionist paramilitaries; [and] continue to target and gather intelligence." Kelly demanded that the files of Britain's security agencies be opened up.

So far only a fraction of Stevens's report has been made publicly available. The material released makes no mention of the many other instances of collusion between British state forces and loyalists. An editorial in the Republican newspaper *An Phobacht* called for the report to be published in full.

In the days following the publication of the excerpts, the British government announced that it would postpone the May elections for the Northern Ireland Assembly, which had been established by the 1998 agreement among the British and Irish governments and political parties in Northern Ireland.

The justification for the move was the alleged "lack of clarity" over the IRA's willingness to disarm. Before the 1998 deal and many times since then London has used the IRA's refusal to surrender weapons as both a pretext to obstruct agreed-on steps and an attempt to force the capitulation of those fighting British rule. Last fall, the government closed down the assembly for the fourth time in its short existence, using the pretext of supposed IRA spying.

Sinn Féin condemned the postponement. "Hold the elections now and let the electorate have their say," said Mitchell McLaughlin, the party's chairperson. "The British government is ducking the central issue," he said. "They will put questions, they will be answered, and then they will hit you with another round of questions."

Reminding people that for decades London had denied Catholics the same voting rights as Protestants, McLaughlin said, "We are back to a 1969 scenario of demanding the right to vote."

Meanwhile, loyalist paramilitaries continued their activity, with reports in April that UDA members were forcing Catholic families in south Belfast to leave their homes.

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