

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The social roots of the crisis
in the Catholic Church

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Argentine workers protest deepening social crisis

As imperialists demand 'reform,' joblessness and pauperization grow

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

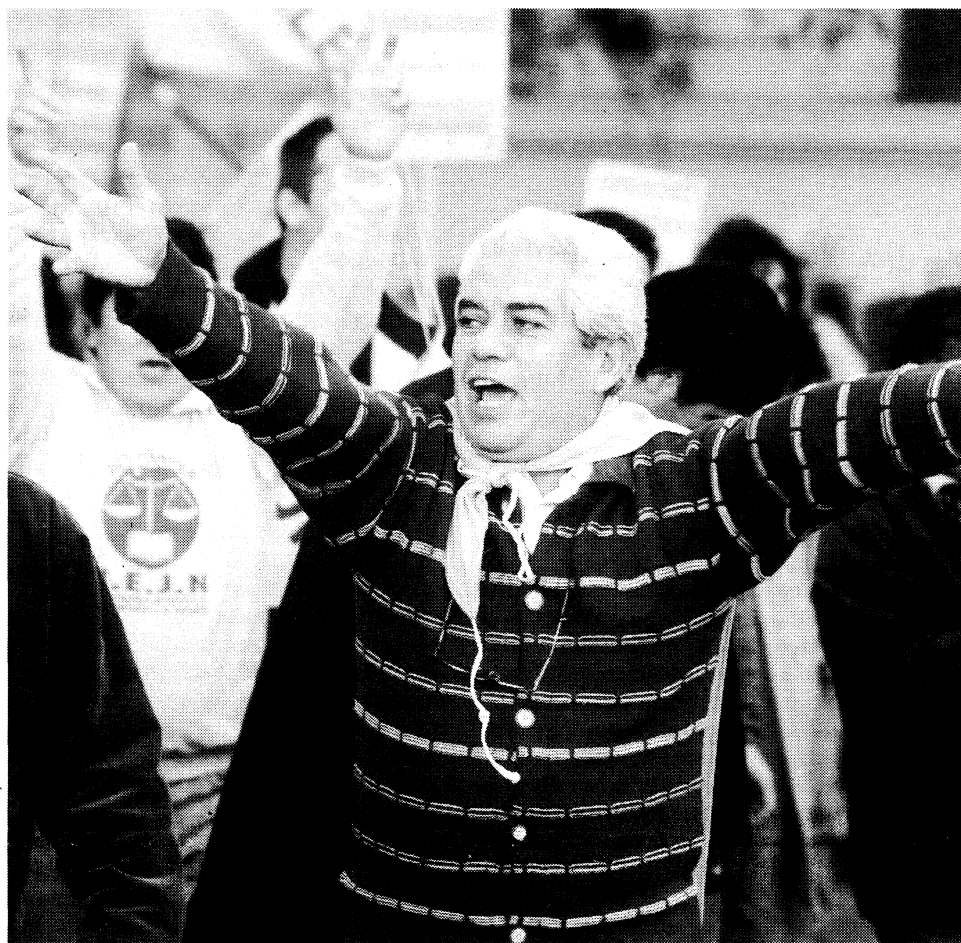
In renewed protest actions in Argentina over the past few weeks working people have been demanding the government of President Eduardo Duhalde take steps to address the deepening disaster the capitalist collapse has brought upon Argentines.

Union members and other workers in the country held a limited 12-hour strike May 22 to oppose the government's austerity policies that have loaded the burden of the capitalist economic crisis onto the backs of working people. While the government scrambles to find a way acceptable to the lenders to resume interest payments on its \$141 national debt owed to imperialist banks and institutions, a growing number of working-class and farm families face joblessness, a daily scramble for subsistence, and even hunger.

The strike was called by a dissident wing of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). The federation had called off a strike scheduled for a week earlier because of widespread flooding. Nevertheless, groups of *piqueteros*—unemployed workers and others—organized occupations of the Panamerican highway and other roads and bridges leading into Buenos Aires.

Similar actions were organized May 20, which was designated a "day against hunger and misery." In La Matanza, located on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, some 3,000 people gathered to demand "food, soup kitchens, the provision of jobs, free medicines, and the preservation of PAMI (the institute of social assistance to the retired)." The rally was called by an organization of

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Above, thousands of striking union members rallied May 22 in Buenos Aires outside the presidential palace. Similar protests against the deepening crisis for working people were organized May 20, which was designated a "day against hunger and misery." In La Matanza, located on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, some 3,000 people gathered to demand "food, soup kitchens, the provision of jobs, free medicines."

AP

Young Socialists in Haiti organize weekend forum

BY JACK WILLEY

More than 50 students participated in a two-day forum of young socialists in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, May 17-18. The event, held at the University of Haiti, was marked by a lively give-and-take about the central questions facing working people today. The hunger for ideas and answers to burning social, economic, and political questions was reflected in the sale of 53 books written by working-class leaders during the conference and another 20 to students the following Monday.

Some of the Haitian students first met Young Socialists members from Canada and the United States at the 12th Congress of

the Organization of Caribbean and Latin American Students in Havana in April 2000. These students, who were members of the Federation of University Students of Haiti, participated in the anti-imperialist world youth festival in Algeria last August, where they met up with the Young Socialists again.

The group has rejected the social democratic and bourgeois liberal parties that claim to speak in the interests of working people in Haiti and have set out on a course to build a new organization. They decided to adopt the name "Young Socialists" and invited leaders of the communist movement in North America to their founding conference.

Some conference participants traveled

three to seven hours to join the event. Three people came from the city of Gonaïves, another from Jérémie, and another from Nippes where he works with a peasant organization.

In the 20 minutes before the opening of the YS event, the table with revolutionary literature published by Pathfinder was mobbed by students. The nine books of classic works of communist leaders Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin were sold out in minutes.

The forum opened with a welcome by YS leader Vogly Pongnon and the singing of the national anthem of Haiti. Jack Willey, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, gave the first presentation under the title, "Fighting imperialism from within the United States."

Willey opened his remarks by pointing to the recent labor victories by meat packers at ConAgra's Northern States Beef plant in Omaha, Nebraska, and by coal miners at the Maple Creek mine in western Pennsylvania. Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists are directly involved in these struggles and part of the cadre that form the emerging working-class vanguard resisting the assaults by the bosses today, he said.

He spoke about the social crises gripping both the imperialist and semicolonial world, pointing to the example of the Argentine economy which went into a free-fall in December, devastating the livelihood of wider layers of working people and the middle class with each passing month.

"The central aim of the YS, published in *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 6, is to build a revolutionary youth organization and communist party that can help lead the fight to establish a workers and farmers government that will abolish capitalism in the United

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500 rally in Pennsylvania to back strike at Hershey Foods

BY BERNIE SENTER

HERSHEY, Pennsylvania—Five hundred striking workers at Hershey Food Corp. and their supporters attended a spirited rally May 16 as part of their fight against a cost-cutting antiunion drive by the company. When you drive into this town the sign says, "Welcome to the Sweetest Place on Earth." But the sign on stage at the rally read, "The Greediest Place on Earth."

The 2,700 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Local 464 have been on strike against the nation's largest candy manufacturer since April 26. One of the main strike issues is the company's intention to double the amount workers pay on their health care premiums.

The rally, which coincided with the re-opening of negotiations, was addressed by leaders of the strike, representatives from other local unions, and politicians. A small contingent of steelworkers from the Bethlehem plant in Steelton, Pennsylvania, came to the rally after leafletting their factory gate the day before. Representatives from the teachers union, unionized government workers, United Food and Commercial Workers, and others pledged their support for the strike.

"For me, I'm single," said John Long, Jr., a machine operator with Hershey for 12 years. "It doesn't bother me as much," referring to the proposed increased medical costs. "I try to look at the big picture and

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Steel bosses deny health and pension benefits to retirees

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

PITTSBURGH—If Dante, the great Italian poet, were alive he would find horrors worse than those he described in the *Inferno* in today's steel industry. The human magnitude of the crisis was brought home to many this spring when tens of thousands of retired steelworkers lost their health-care benefits. Many took a sharp cut in their pensions as well. Lifetime promises from the steel companies were not worth the paper they were written on.

"We should have had this for the rest of our lives," said James Gilliam, a retired 66-year-old steelworker from Pittsburgh. "They're messing us over, treating us like animals." Gilliam worked 35 years for LTV. He is one of 12,000 LTV retirees and dependents in the Pittsburgh region who have had their health benefits eliminated. Altogether, 85,000 LTV workers are being forced to shop for replacement health-care coverage. Some 45,000 of these retired workers live in Pennsylvania.

"We live a long time but our life is not a good one," said Rosalee Melgari, a widow of an LTV retiree with a heart condition. Now in her 80s, the only compensation

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Bush affirms U.S. bipartisan embargo against Cuba

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. president George Bush reaffirmed Washington's decades-long embargo against the Cuban Revolution in May 20 speeches in Washington and Miami. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, his remarks marked the end of a "five month administration review of U.S. Cuba policy" and issued a definitive answer to sections of both parties who call the trade sanctions a failure and who urge that more "effective" methods be pursued to undermine the revolution.

In his speeches Bush used the familiar language of 10 successive U.S. administra-

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Carpenters waged a united two-week strike in Connecticut

BY CANDACE WAGNER

HARTFORD, Connecticut—Union members gathered at the hall of Local 43 of the Carpenters Union May 18 to hear a report and debate a proposed settlement of their two-week strike. Earlier in the day members of Local 210 in Norwalk and Local 24 in Yalesville attended similar meetings.

"I agree with the proposal," explained Peter Pascale, Jr., prior to the meeting. "It's good for guys like me that have a lot more years to work." He reported that other construction trades honored the carpenter's picket lines.

Another young carpenter planned to vote against the contract. "They didn't meet us in the middle," he argued. "They gave us a little more but extended the contract from three years to four." He, like others, support the gain in the proposed contract that would bring the carpenters who work on road construction up to the salary of building construction, a central aim of the strike. "But this is the second most expensive state in the country" to live in, he explained.

By a vote of 835 to 236, union members approved the contract. The agreement raises the wage and benefits package for building workers by \$7.85 per hour and of highway workers by \$10.40 an hour over the life of the agreement.

Some 3,000 carpenters were on strike statewide. Another 2,000 members, whose employers agreed to abide by any contract negotiated with the union, were not called out by the union leadership.

This strike is the first by all three Connecticut locals. A number of union members pointed out that the process of synchronizing the contract expiration dates and wiping out a tradition of lower wages in some parts of the state has strengthened the union.

Mike Goodman, with 15 years on the job, didn't like the proposed contract because of the extension to four years. He spoke to *Militant* reporters at the Norwalk Local 210 hall. "Construction workers face the risk of injury and death. We don't get sick days, paid holidays, or paid vacations," he explained. Goodman said he is helping to form a local chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade

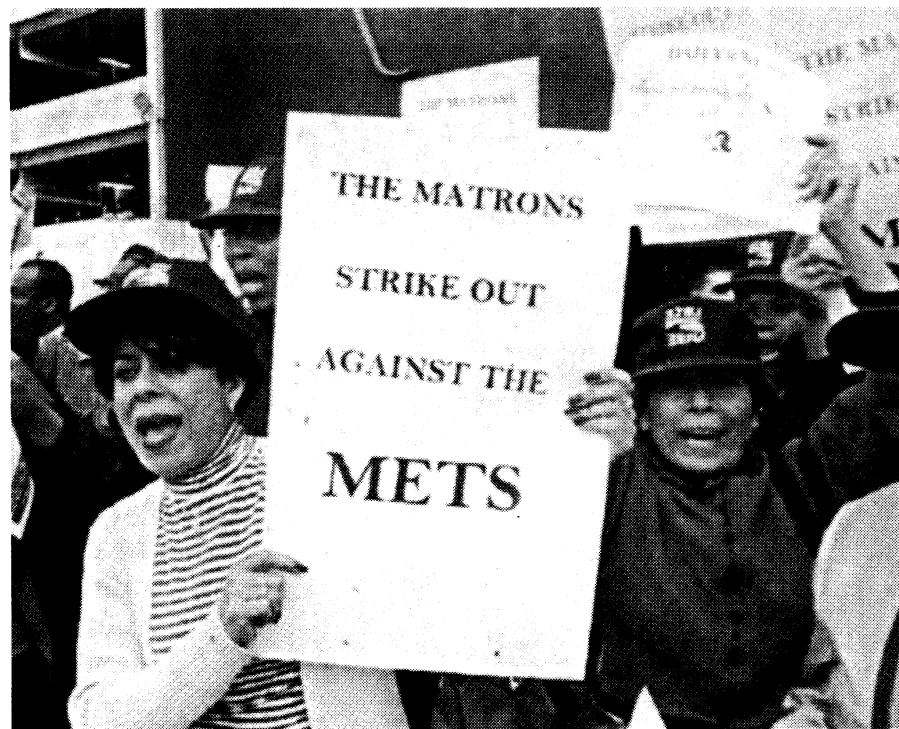
Unionists to push for more minorities in union offices to help strengthen the union.

Bob Violano has 30 years in the trade. A year and a half ago he was seriously injured when a beam fell on him. He discovered that in the state of Connecticut companies are not required to pay health benefits for workers who are disabled on the job. Violano receives 75 percent of his net pay while he recovers and is paying \$500 a month for his health care. He will also lose out on pension benefits for the time he is out of work.

Several members of Local 210 said the union has been on a campaign to reach out to workers who have not traditionally been union members. Mike Robinson, an apprentice instructor who was staffing the voting operation in Norwalk, said Spanish-speaking instructors have been hired and there are eight women in the current class. He reported that there are 70 women in Local 210.

"The union is becoming very mixed, very fast," explained Erik Kowalski. "I'm 33 and since I've been working I've seen a lot more Blacks and Hispanics," he said. "When I see

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Matrons at Shea Stadium organized a picket line outside the Mets' game against San Francisco May 8 to protest the abrupt termination of their jobs as restroom cleaners during the team's 81 home games. About 24 women are employed in the positions as part-time workers. The workers said the owners had yet to offer them new jobs. The *New York Times* quoted Orelvis Santin, who was heading into the game with his daughter and son. "They charge \$5 for a soda and, like, \$6 for a beer here," he said. "How can they not pay these people?"

Michael Fishman, president of Local 32B-32J, which organizes about 200 workers at the stadium, said the union would try to get the matrons reinstated. The matrons earn \$13.50 an hour, according to the *Times*.

Las Vegas hotel workers authorize strike

BY GREG McCARTAN

Housekeepers, bartenders, bellmen, and other workers at Las Vegas hotels voted 18,654 to 877 May 16 to authorize a strike June 1 in their fight to defend the health plan and to cut growing workloads. Union photos show cheering union members celebrating the vote, held at the Thomas & Mack arena. The agreement between the union and the bosses covers 40,000 workers on Las Vegas's strip.

The workers are members of Culinary Union Local 226 and have a long history of struggle organizing the hotel and casino industry in Las Vegas. It has been a bitter battle, including strikes in 1970, 1976, and 1984. The latter was for 67 days and saw hotel owners bring in strikebreakers as they

tried to keep business flowing.

Since then the population of the city has grown from 550,000 to 1.5 million and there has been a sharp consolidation of companies that run the show in Las Vegas. Most casinos in 1984 were owned by individuals or partnerships. But today three companies—MGM Mirage, Park Place Entertainment, and Mandalay Resort Group—operate more than two-thirds of the estimated 73,000 hotel rooms in the city.

During the 1984 strike the hotel owners funded overtime for the Metropolitan Police Department, which arrested nearly 1,000 strikers and other union members during the walkout.

The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* described the scene at the arena where the vote was held: "The gatherings had the feel of political rallies, with many offering pro-union chants while others walked in small groups, discussing the split between union and industry negotiators."

"I really don't want to, but if we don't have a choice we have to strike," said Paris bus person Juan Ayala.

"Shop stewards spoke in English, Spanish, and a mix of Asian languages through bullhorns, steering voters to the arena's doors."

"An estimated 9,000 housekeepers make up the largest share of the 45,000-member Culinary union, with 80 percent of the housekeepers coming from Latin America. The union represents about half of the Strip's workforce," the paper reported.

"Inside, employees sat in separate sections, the colors of the housekeepers' work

uniforms creating clear geographic borders between the electric blue of the Rio, the pastel green of the Luxor, the burgundy of The Mirage, and the black of Caesars Palace and Paris.

"The crowds were energized by rhythmic clapping, NBA-style music and a tape of ring announcer Michael Buffer's ubiquitous call to battle, 'Let's Get Ready to Rumble.'"

The local paper quoted worker after worker who explained the issues in the strike and their determination to stand up to the bosses.

The union is mainly seeking increased employer contributions to health insurance benefits, and little in the way of higher wages. Another central issue in the negotiations is the growing work load on housekeepers who say their work conditions have rapidly deteriorated. Hotels are increasing the size of rooms and number of amenities in them without a corresponding drop in how many rooms housekeepers are required to clean.

"It's a struggle for human decency," Paul Femia, a bartender, told the paper. "It's a statement of solidarity. This is about taking care of each other."

An article on the union's web site quotes Debra Jeffries, a cocktail server, who said union members "went on strike in 1984 to get good health insurance for our families, and we may have to do it again to protect what we won."

Adelia Hernandez, a housekeeper, said, "We're united, and we want them to respect us and the rights that each one of us has."

THE MILITANT

International labor struggles

Metal, auto, and assembly workers in Germany faced down the bosses by mobilizing their ranks to demand higher wages. Read the 'Militant' for coverage on the struggles of working people around the world who are resisting the offensive by the capitalists and their governments.



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Arms treaty prepares Bush-Putin summit

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

U.S. president George Bush announced May 13 that Washington will sign a treaty with Russian president Vladimir Putin at a summit meeting between the two leaders at the end of May that registers their agreement to reduce each of their country's nuclear arsenal by two-thirds, to between 1,700 and 2,200 missiles over the next 10 years.

A day later, foreign ministers from the 19 NATO countries meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, reached agreement on the creation of a NATO-Russia Council that would give Moscow a voice in setting joint policy on issues such as counterterrorism; proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; and missile defense. The NATO ministers denied Moscow any veto power over any military actions they decide to undertake.

Both of these decisions are to take effect just days before the June 1 deadline for Washington's withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty signed with Russia. Over the past year and a half, Bush has accelerated the effort started under former president William Clinton to build and test an antiballistic missile system that Washington hopes can one day be used to shoot down missiles launched toward the United States or its military forces.

During his election campaign Bush said he intended to drastically cut the number of warheads in the U.S. nuclear arsenal—currently at nearly 7,300. This restructuring has bipartisan support and has met little dissension in the U.S. ruling class. The nuclear weapons cut reflects the weakening of Russian military power, will make more efficient use of Washington's vast nuclear arsenal, and allow the Pentagon to reduce costly maintenance on warheads and upkeep of delivery systems, in particular long-range bombers.

According to the Arms Control Association, Washington currently deploys 600 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile launchers with 2,151 warheads; 448 Sea-Launched Ballistic missile systems with 3,616 warheads, and 295 strategic bombers with 1,528 warheads.

The Russian government of Vladimir Putin reciprocated the announcement by the White House by stating its intention to also cut the Russian arsenal to between 1,500 and 2,200 warheads. Currently trying to maintain nearly 6,100 nuclear warheads, Moscow is eager to implement the reductions to slash the mounting expenses involved in maintaining and upgrading the aging weapons in their arsenal.

The three-page accord on nuclear weapons, the signing of which is to be the centerpiece of Bush's first trip to Russia from May 23–26, gives the Pentagon "enormous flexibility," noted the *New York Times*. No reductions have to take place before 2012, the year the treaty is to expire unless both sides agree to extend it. In addition, the agreement can be terminated by either party with just three months' notice. The treaty sets no pace for dismantling the weapons, stating only that the total number of strategic weapons must not exceed 2,200 in 2012.

Washington insisted on its right to store rather than destroy those warheads it does dismantle, a point that is incorporated in the treaty despite disagreement from Russian government officials on this point. Moscow also lost its argument that the treaty should incorporate wording stating that any missile defense system deployed by Washington would not weaken the nuclear deterrent posed by Russia's offensive weapons. The Bush administration offered only verbal assurances to Russia along these lines when it announced in December that it was withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty.

The Bush administration at first argued that there was no need for a written agreement, but conceded to Moscow's request that it take the form of a treaty. "Although the administration met Russia's request," noted a *Washington Post* article, "the president did not agree to anything he had not pledged to do unilaterally."

"This treaty will liquidate the legacy of the cold war," claimed Bush. Added Democratic senator Joseph Lieberman, "Both countries have enough nuclear weapons to destroy each other and most of the rest of the world, even after this agreement." Russian president Putin pronounced himself "satisfied" with the agreement, while his foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, described the accord as not an "overly ambitious document."

The agreement to form the NATO-Russia Council was a modest step taken by U.S.

imperialism to appease the opposition of the pro-capitalist ruling layer in Russia, sections of which have voiced unease over the eastward expansion of NATO and Washington's drive to deploy a modest antimissile system.

Bush and other administration officials have both told their Russian counterparts that Washington will move ahead despite their objections, while at the same time offering some military and economic incentives to go along with the plan.

'Integrating' Russia into Europe

In a speech last June in Warsaw, Poland, Bush said Europe's "great institutions—NATO and the European Union (EU)—can and should build partnerships with Russia and all countries that have emerged from the wreckage of the former Soviet Union." He also called upon the EU countries to cover the cost of this effort.

The Russian government under President Putin has taken consistent steps to converge with Washington along these lines, and to cede Moscow's earlier pretensions of dominating the republics that made up the former Soviet Union. Instead, economic integration into the world capitalist market has become the goal of the ruling layers in ascendancy in Russia today.

On a military level, Moscow over the past few months has backed Washington's assault against Afghanistan and gave a nod of approval to steps undertaken by U.S. imperialism to gain access to military bases in the former Soviet Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Most recently, Putin gave Washington the green light for deployment of some 200 U.S. special forces to the Republic of Georgia.

Under the agreement with NATO, which President Putin and heads of government

from the 19-member NATO nations will formally sign outside Rome on May 28, Moscow will for the first time be called an "equal partner" in discussions and actions of NATO on a variety of issues.

The arrangement, however, "amounts to considerably less than full membership," noted the *New York Times*. NATO members will maintain full control over "core military decisions" and "can vote to restrict discussion of any topic they choose." Nonetheless, this is a change from the previous arrangement under a Permanent Joint Council, which simply solicited Moscow's views on issues being discussed by NATO.

While the capitalist media reports no public pronouncements within Russia of opposition to these agreements, an article in the *Financial Times* quoting an unnamed NATO official who notes that "Putin has to get his own defence ministry, still suspicious of NATO, to recognise such cooperation with NATO would not be seen as a threat."

Expanding NATO membership

The perspective of the U.S. rulers is to expand NATO membership to include many of the former Soviet republics. Nine nations in Eastern Europe have already requested to join, with Croatia recently adding its name to the list. In 1999, NATO admitted Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, extending the imperialist military alliance to the borders of Russia. At a meeting scheduled for this fall in Prague, several of the new applicants are expected to be taken into membership.

One of the big issues in dispute between Washington and the European-member nations of NATO is the growing gap between the power and reach of the U.S. military and the capabilities of the forces fielded by other European imperialist rulers. This was most

recently seen in Afghanistan where U.S. forces ran the military campaign in the air and on the ground, with troops from Germany, France, Britain, and other nations being assigned follow-up housecleaning operations.

In recent remarks Powell warned about the "creation of a two-speed NATO," stated a *New York Times* article, "in which the United States takes care of an immediate crisis with overwhelming high-tech military power while other nations are largely reduced to being bystanders."

In early May, the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee approved a \$393 billion defense bill for next year—an increase of \$50 billion, or 15 percent over this year. This will boost U.S. military spending even further above the 3 percent of the gross national product that it has been at in recent years. Nine NATO members now spend less than 2 percent of their GNP on the military. Spokespeople for several governments, including the United Kingdom, France, and Spain, have made clear that it will not be so easy to convince working people in their respective countries to support increased military spending, as Washington is strongly urging must be done.

Despite these moves toward closer military cooperation, trade tensions between Washington and Moscow, as well as with and among the European Union member states, point to future conflicts. The Russian government has joined the EU in opposing Washington's recent imposition of 30 percent tariffs on steel imports, for example. The Russian foreign ministry issued a statement saying that these tariffs "could have a serious impact on the atmosphere of Russian-American relations." At around the same time Moscow banned all U.S. poultry sales to Russia from March 10 to April 10.

Federal court rules 20-month lockout of steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum illegal

BY JOHN NAUBERT
AND CECELIA MORIARITY

SEATTLE—Federal administrative law judge Michael Stevenson issued a 65-page decision on May 14, ruling that 2,900 striking steelworkers were unlawfully locked out for 20 months by Kaiser Aluminum and should be paid back wages as a result.

On Sept. 30, 1998, members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) struck Kaiser's plants over wages, retirement benefits, outside contracting, and the company demand to cut 400 jobs. After three and a half months the union offered to return work. In response, the bosses locked out the strikers and hired replacement workers.

In their two-year battle the steelworkers kept up their picket lines and reached out to the labor movement to back their fight. They often traveled to support other picket lines and labor actions around the country. The union and company agreed to a five-year contract in September 2000.

In his ruling, Stevenson said that Kaiser Aluminum Corp. must repay or "make whole" the workers who were locked out in the company's five facilities in Louisiana, Ohio, and Washington State. Some 2,500 of the strikers worked at Kaiser's plants in Tacoma, Mead, and Trentwood in Washington.

According to the news release issued May 15 by the USWA, the judge wrote in his decision, "By wielding the hammer of the lockout...Kaiser (engaged in) actions which constituted illegal coercion of the union."

The USWA also noted that "Kaiser's illegal 20-month lockout, which began January 14, 1999, is only part of a larger pattern of lawbreaking by the company, including persistent air quality violations; serious violations of workplace health and safety standards; and impeding a federal investigation of the July 1999 explosion, which substantially leveled its Gramercy, Louisiana alumina refinery."

According to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Kaiser chief executive officer Jack Hockema said, "We disagree with the decision of the judge and look forward to a vigorous pursuit of an appeal." The appeals process could take several years and go through the federal court system to the Supreme Court.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Locked-out Kaiser steelworkers protest May 2000 in Houston at Kaiser shareholder meeting. In their two-year battle the steelworkers kept up their picket lines and reached out to the labor movement to back their fight.

Hundreds of workers never went back to work after the strike and hundreds were laid off when Kaiser shut down smelters in order to sell back power at a profit during the peak of last year's energy crisis. More have been laid off since then and the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in February.

Floyd Pleger, a member of USWA Local 338 and an electrician at the Kaiser Trentwood rolling mill near Spokane, Washington, said, "With the company in bankruptcy no one is holding their breath of getting any money."

Joe Sexton, of USWA Local 338 at the Trentwood plant, also doesn't think that the steelworkers will receive any money. Sexton reported that the Trentwood mill is down to 350 workers from a high of 1,100 before

the strike and more will be laid off by the end of the month. Sexton himself has been laid off since August.

Bill Fabyunkey, of USWA Local 7945 and a metal products helper before the shutdown of the Kaiser foundry in Tacoma, said he'd be "awfully surprised to get any money."

Dick Marsden, also of USWA Local 7945 and now retired said, "I thought it was a good decision," referring to the ruling that the lockout was illegal. "I don't think we're going to see any of the money but in the end we're coming out ahead because the company wasn't able to break the union."

Cecelia Moriarity is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 81.

French president pushes anticrime campaign

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—The 60,000 sports fans almost filled the Stade de France stadium for the French Cup national soccer championship which pitted teams from Lorient, in Brittany, and from Bastia, in Corsica, against each other. At an event that is normally an occasion for French nationalist speeches and patriotic gestures, newly reelected president Jacques Chirac was visibly shaken as the French national anthem was greeted by a rising crescendo of whistles and catcalls.

"Where are they coming from?" he asked his newly appointed prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin. "I think it's the Corsicans, sir," replied Raffarin, equally shaken. Red-faced, Chirac, who has promised to restore the authority of the Republic, stormed out of the presidential box, followed meekly by three cabinet ministers. "I cannot accept these attacks on the essential values of the Republic," he fumed.

"It was overdone but well-played," said an admiring Dominique Voynet of Chirac's nationalistic theatrics. Voynet is the leader of the Green Party, part of the defeated Plural Left governmental coalition led by the Socialist Party.

No one in France has forgotten how the Marseillaise was booed by the overwhelming majority of the tens of thousands of young sports fans at the October 6 match between France and Algeria. The fans, raised in France and for the most part born here, showed their support for Algeria against France as well as their critical opinion of the "fundamental values of the French Republic." Now young Corsicans have made a similar demonstration.

In the presence of reporters, Chirac ordered Claude Simonet, the president of the French Football Association, to give his official apologies "to France" for the insult. "Do it," Chirac ordered, using language more commonly employed by an army gen-

eral in addressing his lowliest subordinate. Simonet "did it" and was promptly greeted by another round of whistles and catcalls.

A final attempt to sing the Marseillaise was drowned out by yet another round from the Corsican side. The Corsican team lost the match 1-0, but the 50 or so young Corsican nationalists who are accused of having planned the incident and who were spontaneously joined by thousands of others, had clearly won an important political point. The Corsican question has returned to haunt the newly elected government as it has managed to do to virtually every government elected over the last quarter-century.

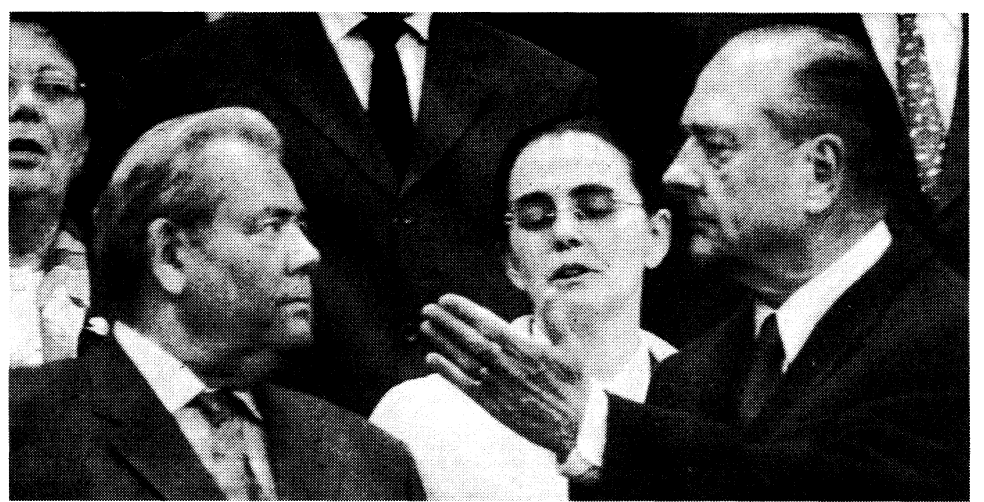
Corsican national aspirations

Hopes in Corsica were high when the previous Socialist Party-led government of premier Lionel Jospin opened negotiations with the various Corsican nationalist groups in December 1999. Many Corsicans managed to hide their disappointment when the "Matignon negotiations" produced a law granting only extremely limited autonomy to the island. The Constitutional Council promptly declared even this modest transfer of power to the Corsican assembly to be anti-constitutional.

In subsequent negotiations, Jospin agreed to move towards an amendment of the constitution—in the year 2004. Chirac has opposed any amendment to the constitution concerning Corsica.

Abstentions in Corsica in the second round of the recent presidential elections, with Chirac opposing the extreme rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen, reached a record high of 33 percent in one of the two Corsican departments, the highest rate of abstentions in the second round.

Three days after the elections, a bomb went off in Karachi, Pakistan, killing 11 French civil employees of the Direction des Constructions Navales (DCN). They were



President Jacques Chirac, right, orders football association president Claude Simonet to apologize "to France" for booing by Corsican youth of French national anthem.

working on a contract building submarines for the Pakistani government.

"There can be no sanctuary for terrorists," Chirac piously proclaimed. Seizing the opportunity to promote France's imperialist interests in the world, he promised that the authors of "the monstrous crime will be punished. We will not yield to threats and blackmail. This is the struggle of democracy and freedom. It is the struggle of France, of Europe, of the United States and its allies. In our territory and throughout the entire world our army, our intelligence services, our police and gendarmes are defending our security and our citizens."

Appeals to nationalism

Addressing the memorial service at the Cherbourg arsenal, where the workers and technicians had been employed, Chirac gave the "thanks of the nation" to those who "have paid the heavy price for spreading the influence of France and defending its interests."

The new government has also been driv-

ing full steam ahead with its domestic "law and order" campaign. A new ministry of Internal Security has been established combining the different police and intelligence organizations under one administration. Nicolas Sarkozy, the new security minister, has been visiting police commissariats and crime sites in well-televised daily appearances. "The police force should be treated with consideration, respected, I would even say they should be loved," he said.

Sarkozy has announced the immediate formation of 28 Regional Intervention Groups combining the national police, *gendarmerie*, and customs and tax agents into a strike force to "fight crime and the parallel economy" that is allegedly prevalent in the suburban working class and immigrant housing projects.

One of the minister's most publicized appearances was at Corbeil-Essonnes. The police claim that during the previous evening a police car and its three occupants had been attacked by 30 young people wearing hoods. They were apparently among those who do not "love" the police. The car's windshield was shattered, the brick conveniently left inside to be found by Minister Sarkozy, who immediately announced that "since the local police are being attacked the government has decided to give you the means to eradicate the explosion of violence you face." The police will henceforth be armed with flashballs, a type of rubber bullet.

The Socialist Party has objected to Chirac taking full credit for the idea of combining all police forces under one administration, given that similar measures had occasionally been adopted by SP-led governments. They have also claimed paternity rights concerning the newly formed Regional Intervention Force.

Metalworkers deal blow to German bosses

BY RÓGER CALERO

Acceding to union demands for a 4 percent wage increase, companies in Germany's southwestern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg set the stage May 15 to end a series of one-day industry-wide rolling walkouts by members of IG Metall, the metalworkers union.

Unionists in the eastern states of Berlin and Brandenburg won a settlement on the same terms four days later after some 1,500 workers stopped production in five plants to press for an agreement. Contract talks are still proceeding in the states of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt.

In addition to the wage increase, the workers won a one-time payment of 120 euros (\$108) for May, and a 3.1 percent wage increase for next year.

The agreement came after 10 days of one-day strikes by more than 100,000 workers,

who paralyzed production in more than 88 plants in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

The settlement is expected to be adopted by the rest of the industry. Some 3.6 million workers in the auto, electronics, steel, and machinery industries in Germany are covered by the IG Metall union contract.

The bosses' federation had previously insisted that their offer of a 3.3 percent wage increase and a one-time payment of 190 euros was the best they could do. They claimed that any further increase would damage Germany's economic recovery and their companies' competitiveness, and threatened further job cuts if they were forced to pay more.

Otmar Zwiebelhofer, a negotiator for the employers, said at a press conference following the talks that as a result of the agreement, "firms will cut their costs more aggressively, rationalize their operations more

intensely and look for cheaper suppliers abroad." Julian Callow, of Credit Suisse First Boston in London, called the increase high but "tolerable," asserting that "the pay increase can be met by productivity growth."

In the meantime, Germany's central bank announced May 21 a slight upturn in the country's economy of 0.25 percent in the first quarter of the year. The central bank also reported that in the same period German companies continued to reduce production capacity and use up inventories.

Talks are under way in the construction and printing industries, where workers have joined work stoppages to press their demand for a 6.5 percent wage increase. Members of the service employees union are also discussing strike action after rejecting a paltry 1.7 percent pay increase from the bosses.

Supporters contribute \$3,300 in Seattle

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

With a May 18 event entitled, "Capitalist rulers face resistance," Seattle supporters of the May 1-June 15 international fund drive for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have helped set the pace for partisans of the fund around the world. The fund runs through to June 15, and aims to cover a part of the costs of publishing the English-language weekly and Spanish-language monthly.

"The meeting drew a full house to the Seattle Pathfinder bookstore," wrote Dave Ferguson, who helped organize the event. "The participants heard a talk by Joe Yates, a meat packer from Vancouver, British Columbia, covering many of the fronts where workers and farmers are resisting the attacks of capitalism and imperialism—from Argentina and Venezuela to France and Palestine, and here in the United States and Canada.

"We raised \$3,300 in pledges and cash for the fund," reported Ferguson. "Before the meeting we put on a well-attended dinner, and afterwards many people joined a social event at a nearby apartment where the political discussion continued."

Supporters in a number of areas have informed the *Militant* of preparations to hold similar public meetings for the fund.

Having just returned from participating in a May 17-18 forum of university students

and young socialists in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Socialist Workers Party representatives Jack Willey and Rollande Girard, Young Socialists leader Arrin Hawkins, and Natalie Seguin of the Young Socialists and Communist League in Canada, have been in strong demand to speak on "Prospects for building an international socialist movement of working people and youth." Supporters in New York, New Jersey, Western Colorado, Florida, Washington, D.C., and Vancouver are all planning meetings in the next two weeks at which one of the four will speak.

Other leaders of the socialist movement will appear as special guests at meetings elsewhere. *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martin Koppel will speak in Boston on June 9; Joel Britton, a meat packer and SWP leader in Chicago, will speak in Detroit; and Ma'mud Shirvani, the Farsi-language editor of Pathfinder Press, has been invited for a weekend of events to build the socialist movement in the Twin Cities. YS leader Romina Green will be the featured speaker at the Chicago event on May 26, while the Cleveland meeting on May 31 will include a coal miner, unionist, and member of the Socialist Workers Party.

At each of these events a supporter of the socialist press will take some time to explain the importance of the fund in ensuring that

the *Militant* and *PM* can be published, and can continue to carry the kind of working-class reporting and analysis that makes them effective weapons in the hands of working-class fighters.

Far from drawing on the backing of big business or on advertising revenue, the socialist press depends on sales income and on the contributions of workers, farmers, and other readers to cover the substantial costs of publication. Just the printing costs of the *Militant* alone, for example, have increased by almost 100 percent over the last year to reach a figure of more than \$65,000.

This week's chart, the first published in the campaign, shows that the international total has sailed over the \$50,000 mark. So next week's chart will feature a new and higher goal! By next issue the chart should also reflect the results of the concentrated work that supporters are beginning to put into winning pledges and contributions, as the fund marches in step with the international circulation drive (see page 5).

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial May 1—June 15 International Fund Drive

	Goal	Paid	%
Brooklyn	1,800	750	42%
Charlotte	2,700	750	28%
Chicago	3,000	500	17%
Miami	1,000	150	15%
Washington DC	1,600	145	9%
NY Garment District	4,000	340	9%
Newark	2,000	100	5%
Los Angeles	5,000	200	4%
Allentown	800	0	0%
Atlanta	2,000	0	0%
Birmingham	2,000	0	0%
Boston	1,850	0	0%
Cleveland	1,000	0	0%
Des Moines	1,000	0	0%
Detroit	1,500	0	0%
Houston	2,800	0	0%
Omaha	660	0	0%
Philadelphia	1,500	0	0%
Pittsburgh	2,000	0	0%
San Francisco	4,000	0	0%
Seattle	3,600	0	0%
St. Paul	3,500	0	0%
Tampa	800	0	0%
Upper Manhattan	2,500	0	0%
Western Colorado	2,000	0	0%
Other	0	75	0%
New Zealand	630	173	27%
Australia	875	0	0%
Canada	1,900	0	0%
Int'l Total	58,015	3,183	5%

'Militant' campaigners plan for target week

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Campaigners for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are planning a target week June 1-9 to bolster sales of the socialist press and get the circulation drive on schedule. After slipping behind over the past two weeks, now is a good time to build up the momentum needed for a successful subscription effort.

At the midpoint of the international sales drive, socialist workers and young socialists have sold 456 *Militant* subscriptions, 195 *PM* subscriptions and 225 copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. Sales need to be stepped up. It is a perfect complement to a subscription, offering a working-class answer to the bosses' assaults on workers' rights and living standards.

Participants in the campaign can use the target week to organize special sales to areas where textile mills and

on getting back there this week," she added. "We want to start selling at this plant every week."

Best week yet for sales in Des Moines

BY PETE SEIDMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa—This past week we sold five subscriptions in the working-class district where the Pathfinder bookstore is located and three subscriptions in Perry, Iowa, where hundreds of co-workers at the nearby giant IBP packinghouse live. It was our highest one-week total yet!

One new *Militant* subscriber is a former Titan Tire striker who told us he'd seen the paper on the picket line and at their monthly union meetings during the strike and really appreciated it. He asked his wife to add an extra \$2 to the check she was writing for the subscription as a contribution to the *Militant* fund drive.

When *Militant* campaigners knocked on one door and explained a little about the paper, the person who answered interrupted when we mentioned the paper covers fights against police brutality and racism. "Wait just a second," he said. Then a man in a wheelchair came to the door and invited us to come inside their home. He told us how just a few days earlier the cops had come into his home, brutally beaten him, and jailed him overnight. They wouldn't let him have access to toilet facilities—and subjected him to other humiliations.

After a discussion on how this brutality is part of the broader fight by workers to stand up to assaults by the ruling rich, the man bought a subscription and said he looked forward to coming down to one of the *Militant* Labor Forums at the bookstore, which is only a few blocks from his home.

This past weekend a sales team went to Perry, Iowa, where they sold one *Militant* subscription at an apartment after talking with three Sudanese co-workers from IBP. The team also sold two *PM* subscriptions, one to a co-worker at IBP who is from Mexico and the other to a worker from Guatemala who also bought the Spanish edition of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Socialism and Man in Cuba*.

We also learned about the impact the *Militant* has on workers behind bars during a visit to a trailer park near the IBP plant in Waterloo, Iowa, the week before. A woman was considering buying a subscription to the *Militant* when another person in the house told her what a good paper it was. "I read it while I was in prison," he told her. She asked, "Would you recommend it?" He answered, "Definitely." That cinched the subscription sale. She also purchased a copy of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*.

Sales at Haitian Festival in Brooklyn

BY SARAH KATZ

BROOKLYN, New York—*Militant* supporters spread out across the city as part of the effort to win new readers to the socialist press and to build our upcoming *Militant* Fund event, "From Haiti to the United States: Prospects for Building an International Socialist Movement of Working People and Youth." After setting up a literature table in the Haitian community near Brooklyn College, someone told us to move the table several blocks up the street to a Haitian festival. French language titles from Pathfinder then flew off the table.

We sold two copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, and several different issues of the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*. A young Haitian guy who knew Pathfinder books, but hadn't seen us in a while, bought the new pamphlet of speeches by Thomas Sankara in French. He also decided to buy *Capitalism's World Disorder* and the issue of *Nouvelle Internationale* featuring the article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." In addition to selling more than \$130 worth of books, we sold one *Militant* subscription and 18 copies of the paper. We are now getting ready for the Haitian Day Parade this weekend.

At another table set up at a regular spot in the workers district here two new subscribers came by the table to join the sales effort. One of them pledged \$20 to the *Militant* Fund. At that table supporters sold one *Militant* subscription, a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, and \$40 worth of literature.

Socialists visit poultry workers

BY JANICE LYNN

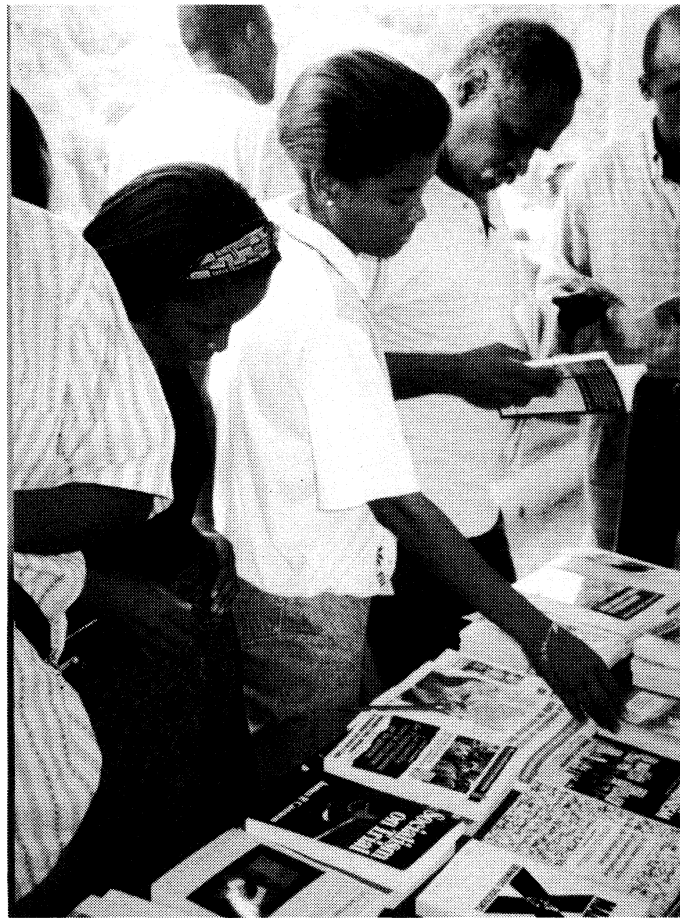
WASHINGTON—Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* from Washington and

Philadelphia traveled to Georgetown, Delaware, on the Delmarva peninsula May 18. The team visited homes at a trailer park near the Perdue plant to talk to poultry workers and others about the recent victory won by Perdue chicken catchers who had just ratified their first union contract. The sales team also talked about the Perdue poultry workers who had just won a class action lawsuit granting back pay for some of the time it takes to put on and take off the protective clothing needed to perform their jobs.

Many workers had heard of these developments and were interested in some of the other struggles by workers fighting for a union and better wages and working conditions around the world that are covered in the socialist publications. A few had not heard of the settlement and were eager to learn about it.

We met workers from Guatemala, Mexico, and Haiti as well as Black workers. Most were poultry workers at the Perdue, Allens, or Mountaire plants in the area. One was a chicken catcher who worked for Tyson. Another worked at the Vlastic Foods plant, organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union, told us about some of the issues workers there were concerned with.

The team sold 14 copies of the *PM* and one subscription as well as two *Militant* subscriptions and three copies of the newsweekly. One Perdue worker, originally from Haiti, bought the French edition of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, along with a subscription to the *Militant*. He was eager to read about upcoming coverage in the paper of the recent conference held in Haiti.



Militant/Jack Willey

Sales table at Young Socialists meeting in Haiti

meatpacking plants are located and in the coalfields. Workers in these areas and elsewhere would be interested in reading the *Militant* and *PM* coverage of labor struggles, like the recent victory by 25,000 current and former poultry workers who will be receiving some \$10 million in back pay for the unpaid time used in putting on protective gear to perform their jobs.

The *Militant* has been well received in places where workers are involved in labor battles and other social struggles. Susan LaMont from Birmingham said she and other supporters traveled to West Virginia this past weekend, where a Black Lung conference was taking place, and sold three *Militant* subscriptions. Consistent sales on the job to co-workers and at plant gates are also starting to net results. In some places socialists are getting help from co-workers who point out others in their workplace who may be interested in subscribing to the *Militant* or *PM*.

"I sold a *PM* subscription to a Mexican co-worker who I haven't had much political discussion with in the past," reports Don Mackle, a meat packer in Detroit. "Another co-worker told me about him, explaining that during political discussions taking place on the boning line where they both work, this co-worker who is very quiet, seems to come down on the right side of most questions. So when I caught up with him in the parking lot after work one day and showed him the *PM* he decided to try a subscription."

Militant supporters from New York teamed up to visit two union halls in Connecticut where carpenters were voting on a new contract, reports Dan Fein from the New York Garment District. "The Carpenters Union had been on strike throughout the state since May 1 and had gathered in three locations to discuss and vote on the new contract offer by the bosses," he said. "We sold one subscription to the *Militant* and two copies of the paper to union members inside the union hall in Norwalk. And later we sold four subscriptions to unionists waiting for their afternoon meeting in Hartford to begin."

Cecelia Moriarity from Seattle said partisans of two publications in that city traveled to Toppenish, Washington, to sell the socialist press at the Washington Beef plant gate where workers had lost a hard fought strike. "We sold several copies of the *Militant* to meat packers and later that day we met three of the strike leaders who were subsequently fired, but won unemployment benefits. We had dinner with them and each bought a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*," she said.

Moriarity said some Indians from the Yakima Nation also stopped by while they were selling the paper at the meatpacking plant and purchased a *Militant* subscription.

Arlene Rubenstein in Atlanta said she and others sold three copies of the *Militant* and six copies of *PM* at a nearby Excel processing plant. "Several workers told us they would consider subscribing after they read an issue and we plan

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 13-June 23 (week 5)

Country	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden							
Gothenberg*	16	12	75%	3	2	9	6
Stockholm	10	7	70%	3	2	5	3
Sweden Total	26	19	73%	6		14	9
United Kingdom							
London	35	19	54%	12	5	20	12
Dundee		2					2
UK total	35	21	60%	12	5	20	14
Canada							
Toronto	30	18	60%	6	2	15	10
Montreal	15	7	47%	5	3	16	11
Vancouver	30	13	43%	6	1	20	8
Canada total	75	38	51%	17	6	51	29
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	6	60%	1		5	2
Christchurch	8	2	25%	1		3	2
N.Z. total	18	8	44%	2		8	4
United States							
Los Angeles	35	27	77%	15	7	10	4
Seattle	30	21	70%	12	4	16	8
Washington	25	16	64%	12	8	15	11
Allentown*	25	14	56%	8	5	10	1
Tampa	25	14	56%	6		12	4
Miami	30	16	53%	15	1	15	3
Detroit	40	21	53%	13	9	20	12
NY Garment Dist.	80	42	53%	40	14	50	19
Brownsville	8	4	50%	3	1		3
Philadelphia	25	11	44%	10	4	15	1
Brooklyn	45	18	40%	35	10	35	9
Cleveland	25	10	40%	5	2	20	11
Tucson	5	2	40%	1			
Newark	55	20	36%	25	10	35	10
Pittsburgh	45	16	36%	5		20	1
Twin Cities	50	17	34%	25	23	25	3
Charlotte	18	6	33%	7	2	10	1
Western Colorado	18	6	33%	8	4	12	4
Des Moines	40	13	33%	25	17	21	6
Birmingham	20	6	30%	8	6	10	3
Houston	30	9	30%	12	6	20	10
San Francisco	30	13	43%	18	4	15	1
Upper Manhattan	75	22	29%	50	21	40	21
Omaha	9	2	22%	15	8	10	1
Atlanta	40	8	20%	15	6	30	7
Chicago	35	7	20%	20	6	25	8
Boston	30	4	13%	15	4	20	4
U.S. total	893	365	41%	423	182	511	166
Iceland	6	2	33%	1		4	1
Australia	20	3	15%	4	2	12	2
Int'l totals	1073	456	43%	465	195	620	225
Goal/Should be	1050	525	50%	460	230	625	312
IN THE UNIONS							
Country	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Canada							
UFCW	7	2	29%	1		4	2
UNITE	3		0%	2	1	3	
Total	10	2	20%	3	1	7	2
United States							
UMWA	15	6	40%	2	2	10	1
UFCW	50	6	12%	50	27	50	12
UNITE	50	4	8%	45	4	50	1
Total	115	16	14%	97	33	110	14
New Zealand							
NDU	1		0%			1	1
MWU	2		0%				
Total	3		0%			1	1
Australia							
AMIEU	3		0%			3	
MUA	2		0%			3	
Total	5		0%			6	
raised goal*							

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' 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 Textiles Employees

Steel bosses deny benefits to retirees

Continued from front page

Melgari will receive from LTV is a paltry pension of \$117.60 a month. Like thousands of other retirees, Melgari must now rely solely on Medicare, which doesn't cover the costs of prescription drugs.

Steelworkers, like other industrial workers, feel entitled to lifetime health care. Every steelworker knows the toll working in the mills and coke ovens takes on the body. "We worked hard. We worked in coke ovens. There was benzene there, sulfuric acid," said one LTV worker who was forced to retire from the Hazlewood mill in Pittsburgh.

Earlier this year a federal bankruptcy court in Ohio gave LTV permission to protect its assets and cut off health-care ben-

(56,000), Indiana (45,000), and Illinois (30,000).

With one active steelworker to every three retirees, the steel industry has "nearly triple the [ratio] of most other major basic manufacturing industries," according to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Steel prices have been at a 20-year low, a result of price competition among capitalist rivals, as they contend over limited markets. The industry is plagued by overproduction and excess capacity. Overproduction is not measured in relation to social needs, but by what can be sold at a price high enough to realize a competitive profit.

'Retirees are the losers'

The *Wall Street Journal* featured a front-page article whose title accurately summed up the view of the steel bosses: "Retiree Costs Drive Big Change in Steel; Retirees Are Losers." The big-business paper said that the "American steel industry is in the midst of a quiet but potentially profound transformation driven by companies' costly obligations to retirees."

The paper continued, "U.S. steelmakers face an estimated \$10 billion in costs for the health care, life insurance and pensions they promised in the past to retirees, who now far outnumber active steelworkers. These expenses, known as legacy costs, make it harder to compete with imports and are a key reason many companies can't earn a profit."

The steel bosses at US Steel Corp. are pushing a mega-merger plan. But this is conditional on getting union concessions and an agreement by the federal government to pay health benefits for thousands of retired workers.

Bethlehem Steel Corp., which has 10 retirees or dependents for every active worker, plans to become a holding company, but remain in bankruptcy. This would force retired steelworkers to compete for its assets in bankruptcy court. Few believe that the so-called legacy costs of steelworkers would take precedence over the claims of Bethlehem's bondholders.

Bethlehem also plans to contract out steel-making. The company is reportedly close to a deal with a Brazilian steelmaker, which would pay fees for operating Bethlehem's modern Sparrows Point plant in Maryland. The catch to the whole deal is that the Brazilian company wants no part of paying retirees' health-care costs.

Since LTV has stopped making steel, its attention has focused on selling its steel plants. It found a buyer, W.L. Ross and Co., right off. LTV is now called International Steel Group. This group of capitalists, according to the *Journal*, "won't have to pay the legacy costs because it didn't buy a company but simply its carcass."

The new company claims this arrangement will lower the cost of each ton of steel by \$20 to \$40. The owner of the buyout group, W.L. Ross, says that he "hopes to have a unionized workforce" as long as the "the union is sufficiently flexible." His health care and retirement plan doesn't go beyond offering a 401(k). But in the post-Enron fallout, more and more workers know these seemingly secure plans can go up in smoke in a heartbeat.



Worker feeds coil of steel into tandem mill at Wheeling-Pittsburgh plant in Pennsylvania. Whether by maneuvers to end contract obligations, or by making government bear costs, the steel bosses aim to increase competitiveness by ending payouts to retirees.

AS I SEE IT

efits to its retirees—even though this was a clear violation of the labor agreement with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), the union that organizes workers at major U.S. mills.

In the wake of this disaster, thousands of retired and laid-off LTV workers attended informational meetings organized by the union. The meetings were filled to capacity. At some, hundreds were turned away for lack of space. Anger, more than any other emotion, was the prevailing sentiment at these overflowing meetings.

Anger at the bosses' inhuman stance. And anger because these meetings organized by the union officials put forward no proposals about fighting for their rights. Instead, they were given "insurance options" and "counseling" from the likes of insurance agents, and other hangers-on of the misnamed health-care industry.

"If we don't receive some kind of help, we are going to have a lot of trouble," said one retired LTV worker, adding that his only option for continued coverage is the Federal COBRA program, which at \$1,300 a month exceeds his monthly pension of \$1,240. COBRA is the acronym for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985.

According to the union, about 50 percent of retired steelworkers receive a pension of between \$500 and \$900 a month; about 20 percent make monthly pensions of \$1,300 or more; and almost 20 percent receive less than \$500 a month.

Unfunded retiree benefits

In the recent period, 33 steel companies have filed for bankruptcy, either to liquidate or reorganize. Some 17 have liquidated, resulting in more than 125,000 workers losing their health-care benefits. But the crisis doesn't stop there. Unfunded retiree benefits in the current nine unionized steel companies amounted to \$9 billion at the end of 2000. Some say today it is as high as \$13 billion. While the industry employs about 200,000 workers, there are approximately 600,000 retirees and dependents who rely on the steel industry for health-care benefits. The state with the largest percentage is Pennsylvania (115,000), followed by Ohio

As in the nonunion minimills, which now employ some 120,000 workers, Ross is seeking a labor agreement that ties wages to plant productivity. It will be similar to the plan in place at Nucor Corp., the industry's "most profitable player." Ross has appointed a former Nucor executive to head the International Steel Group.

At the same time that steel bosses are restructuring, steelworkers are accused of being "greedy" and "unyielding" at a time when the steel bosses needed "concessions to stay afloat." But this turns reality on its head. In fact, a strong argument can be made that the unions have yielded too much. Last year LTV workers agreed to defer \$1.50 an hour in wage increases and made other concessions, only to see the entire company shut down. And some 3,000 workers at the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. company ratified a labor agreement that cut their wages by 15 percent, only to see 1,500 steelworkers laid off a couple of months later.

The USWA is lobbying for the government to pay retirees' health-care costs. In Congress they are seeking cosponsors of the Steel Industry Legacy Relief Act of 2002. In the Senate, they are supporting West Virginia senator Jay Rockefeller's bill, "The Steel Industry and Retiree Benefits Protection Act of 2002." The union officials agree with Rockefeller, who blames the crisis on foreign "illegal subsidies" of steel.

The congressional bill, in addition to providing health insurance benefits, calls for strengthening "the American steel industry." The steelworkers' union is also in favor of removing "the weight of 'legacy costs' as a barrier" to the merging of "American" steel companies. The bill concludes by saying that "it is in our military and national security interest for the United States to have a strong steel industry for years to come."

The thoroughly American nationalist framework of the USWA leadership was summed up recently by the union's international president, Leo Girard. "Do we want to have a strong domestic steel industry and be able to rebuild America's infrastructure?" he asked. "Do we want the next World Trade Center to be built with American steel?"

Opposition to the bills

Many within the U.S. ruling class are opposed to the bills. In the steel industry, opponents include the owners of the minimills and the American Institute for International Steel, whose president said, "The domestic steel industry has been a corporate welfare queen for 30 years."

In Washington, they are opposed by bourgeois politicians such as Sen. Philip Gramm, who has described the use of federal money for this purpose as "piracy."

As expected, President George Bush announced May 10 that he is against federal assistance to finance health insurance for retired steelworkers. After intense steel industry lobbying backed by the USWA, the Bush administration in March agreed to impose tariffs on steel of up to 30 percent for three years. This move ratcheted up the already tense trade relations with Washington's rivals in Europe, as well as in the semicolonial world. At home Bush's move was opposed by the auto barons, who favor lower prices for steel.

The USWA's response to the plant shutdowns, mass layoffs, and cutting of health benefits has been woefully inadequate. In-

stead of mobilizing its members to defend the union and fight for a program to unify workers worldwide, the steelworkers' officialdom supports the protectionist policies of finance capital and ever more onerous trade restrictions. Such a course will only magnify the unequal terms of trade intrinsic to the world capitalist market, under which the semicolonial world is hit the hardest.

One impact of the current crisis is the shredding of employer-fostered illusions in "promises" of retirement and health benefits. In *New Internationalist* magazine, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, Jack Barnes took up this question in a 1994 talk entitled, "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War."

"Never think that you have a pension, that you have a medical plan," he said. "What you have is the capitalist's *promise* of a pension, the *promise* of a medical plan. You have a *promise* based on the 'value' of the paper holding in a 'trust.' And trust it you should not!"

In another talk, published in the Pathfinder book, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, Barnes says, "Workers should rid ourselves of the illusion that anything we or fellow working people have put somewhere—in a bank, an insurance policy, a pension fund—is secure."

In a deep crisis, Barnes says, "nothing 'stands behind' these institutions, no matter what we have been told about alleged government guarantees."

Experience of coal miners

One experience that steelworkers should take to heart is the decades-long battle United Mine Workers miners have fought to maintain their health care. These benefits were won through a mass mobilization of coal miners beginning in the 1940s. The government made a "promise" to ensure that miners receive cradle-to-grave health benefits. Many times the government, egged on by the coal bosses, has tried to renege on its pledge.

Each major challenge has been met head-on by the coal miners. They have fought many strikes—from the 111-day 1977-78 national strike to the battle against Pittston in the late 1980s—to defend their right to a lifetime health card. The most recent protest took place in May 2000 when 12,000 miners converged in Washington under the banner, "Defend the Coal Act! Keep the Promise." The miners' determination to defend their right to a health card points to the need to win a health card for the working class as a whole.

The recent developments in the steel industry have another message too. "With retired workers living longer, this is increasingly a hugely expensive proposition," is how a leader of the National Association of Manufacturers put it.

The capitalist market system with its dog-eat-dog values, was not designed with the idea that workers should live long after they retire. On average, workers live some 10 years longer than retirement age. This poses a big crisis for the capitalist rulers.

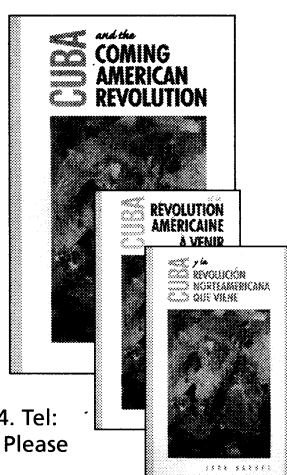
This disaster comes, ironically, from human progress. After thousands of years, human labor has made huge advances in medical science. Human beings are living longer. Instead of a great development to celebrate and make further advances on, the increased longevity of humanity is posed as a grave crisis. This is the best the capitalist world has to offer.

CUBA and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes

There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba — Fidel Castro, March 1961

"The working class must fight to increase the minimum wage. Moreover, this wage must be universal, one that no worker is denied whether in a factory or in a prison. Everyone must be guaranteed full health, disability, and pension benefits. That is the only way to promote working-class unity and solidarity, not sabotage it." — Jack Barnes, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. In English, Spanish, and French.

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SPECIAL OFFER—\$10

In Miami, supporters of fired socialist celebrate success of workers' rights fight

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

MIAMI—"The recent victory of meat packers in Omaha, Nebraska, who voted in the union; the resistance of the miners in Pennsylvania, who after a seven-year fight just forced the coal boss to sign the national union contract; and the irrepressible struggle of the Palestinian people all show the way forward for the defense of workers' rights," said Michael Italie at a May 11 celebration here.

"The fight against my firing and to defend workers' rights," the socialist said, "has been part of this resistance by working people against the deepening disorder of world capitalism."

The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights sponsored the meeting, which drew 20 people to the Dessalines Community Center in the Little Haiti section of Miami. The event celebrated the gains won by Italie and his supporters through the seven-month fight against his firing by Goodwill Industries last October as the U.S. rulers accelerated their assault on working people at home and abroad in the wake of the September 11 events. Touring North America, Italie was able to speak to thousands of people across the United States and Canada and join with many workers who were standing up to the firings, intimidation, and attacks on the job by the bosses and U.S. government.

Kay Sedam, a rail worker and treasurer of the committee, chaired the meeting and pointed to the large map in the back of the room that pinpointed the more than 40 cities Italie visited as part of the campaign in defense of workers' rights.

Italie was the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami in the November 2001 election. On October 22 Goodwill Industries of South Florida fired him from his job as a sewing machine operator after he spoke out in a televised debate against the U.S. war in Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution. The Goodwill bosses told Italie that "because of your views of the U.S. government, which are contrary to those of this agency, you cannot work here anymore."

Joining Italie in discussing the continuing struggle for workers' rights was Leonor Garcia, a garment worker, who was among

the first to join in the fight against the firing. Speaking in Spanish, Garcia, who is from Argentina, explained: "I work in the garment industry and I am in solidarity with Mike. When I heard of his situation it was hard for me to believe that an American could be fired for his political ideas in a country that is supposedly 'democratic' and where workers have a lot of rights. This made me think that if an American can be fired for his political ideas, what awaits undocumented workers in this country?"

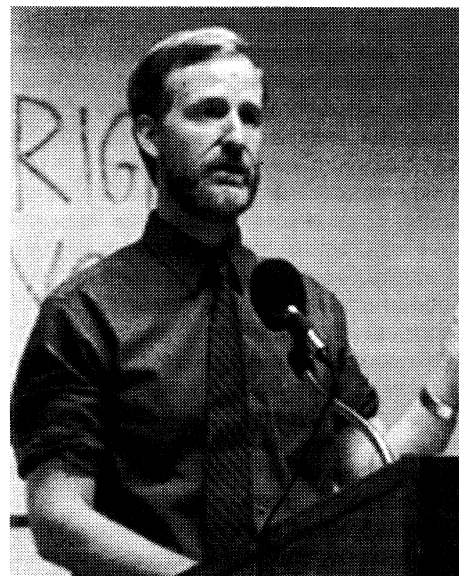
"That's why it's so important," she said, "to devote ourselves to unite in every kind of work and place. As a garment worker who has worked in three different workplaces I have seen many injustices. And I've also seen that many of my co-workers are afraid and don't know how to fight against the exploitation we find ourselves subjected to. I know that lawyers don't have the laws to defend workers very well. But it would be good if lawyers could defend exploited workers instead of state interests. Mike gave us an example."

Ray Taseff, an attorney and member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), spoke about Italie's victory over Goodwill's challenge to his unemployment benefits. Taseff represented Italie in this fight.

"I wish I could take credit for forcing Goodwill to back down," Taseff said. "The fact is I never got to a hearing. They stopped before that. I believe Goodwill didn't want to give Mike another opportunity to expose their hypocrisy." Taseff said the ACLU will host a forum on civil liberties on July 18 at Books and Books in Coral Gables where Italie will be one of the featured speakers.

Also speaking at the event was José Martínez, a truck driver and member of Alianza Martiana, an organization made up largely of Cuban Americans who fight to demand the U.S. government normalize relations with Cuba. He spoke about the five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by Washington who are serving long prison sentences in U.S. jails.

"The stories of the five young *compañeros* who have been jailed," Martínez said, "are part of the struggle of the Cuban people for decades to defend their sovereignty and defend themselves. The five



Militant
Michael Italie at meeting in Los Angeles

infiltrated counterrevolutionary terrorist organizations in the Miami area in order to prevent crimes and assassinations against the Cuban people and their leadership. Despite having no proof of espionage," he said, "the five were convicted. Michael and the five Cubans are examples for us of those who will not stop fighting."

'Effective way to fight imperialism'

Lawrence Mishek, a meat packer and leader of the Young Socialists, pointed out that "the fight to defend Michael Italie was one of the most effective ways to fight the imperialist war in Afghanistan. Italie was able to speak at three high schools and eight college campuses around the country, in addition to meeting with meat packers and other workers to discuss their developing battles. The May 3 union victory of meat packers in Omaha shows that the resistance continues."

Mishek read a recent letter of solidarity from meat packers in Omaha to the imprisoned Cubans and the responses from the five. The exchange is an example of links formed in struggle between working people that have inspired youth to join the revolutionary socialist movement.

Italie explained that he was fired by Goodwill at the height of the imperialists' "war on terrorism," whose purpose was to break workers' will to resist the devastating consequences of the capitalist economic crisis. "While the 'anti-terrorism' scare of the bosses did have some effect," said Italie, "I learned in the course of this fight that the impact was superficial from the beginning. Seven months later it has run its course."

In December 2001 the socialist candidate visited the picket lines of 5,000 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in Connecticut who had just gone on strike against aircraft engine manufacturer Pratt and Whitney. Italie pointed out that "these strikers proudly told me of how they stood up to company tricks to undermine the strike. The bosses said, 'you can't go on strike, there's a war going on.' But the strike remained solid and the strikers pushed back company takeback demands. In the course of talking to the pickets about our common struggles," he said, "each of the nine unionists I talked to signed a petition calling for Goodwill to reverse my unjust firing."

'Immigrants haven't backed down'

Key goals of the imperialists' assault on working people was to intimidate immigrant workers, Italie said. The bosses hoped immigrants in the United States would bow to the bosses' demands under threat of arrest and deportation. They also sought to drive a wedge between workers in struggle in the United States and the Palestinian and Arab national liberation struggles.

"Meat packers in the Midwest, who are largely immigrants," Italie said, "have not weakened in their determination to fight against the bosses. Immigrants I met from Omaha to Minneapolis have played a central role in union-organizing efforts, and are not allowing the bipartisan offensive to break their will to fight. And just two weeks ago 75,000 people turned out in Washington for a rally in solidarity with the Palestinian people, by far the largest of its kind in U.S. history. The 'war on terrorism' has lost its political punch as a tool for the imperialists."

The program concluded with the reading of statements of support from some of the fighters Italie had met over the course of his national tour. They included Juan Serrano, a meat packer fired during a strike against Washington Beef in Spokane, Washington; Alia Atawneh, a Palestinian woman living in San Francisco who was fired at Macy's when she didn't back down in the face of anti-Arab comments by customers; and Ian Harvey, a high school teacher from Naples, Florida, who was transferred out of his teaching position because he helped organize protests against the U.S. war in Afghanistan that involved several of his students.

Afterwards many of the participants gathered for a party to relax and celebrate the gains of this important struggle to defend workers' rights and freedom of speech.



On a visit to Massachusetts April 18-21 Italie spoke with workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He was interviewed on a local radio station about his case by Jose Balbuena, who then hosted an event at the Nobel bookstore which he owns. Some half dozen people, mostly workers from nearby Malden Mills, came to the program. Many had heard about the case from two workers circulating a petition to support Italie's fight for his job. More than two dozen workers signed the petition.

Italie also spoke at Milton Academy, a private high school school, where many students live in dorms on the campus. One person asked was whether the right to privacy extended to students like them. They had recently been subjected to unannounced inspections by school officials demanding the students exit their rooms so a search for contraband items could be made. Many students were outraged and wanted to know if they could fight this.

Several dozen people came to hear Italie speak at the Zumix community music center in East Boston. He was greeted by Edgar Barrios, who was involved in a struggle of janitors at Harvard University. Barrios told Italie, "They wanted to silence you but they ended up making you more well known."

Strikers at Hershey rally to defend union

Continued from front page

think about the impact on those with families and my other co-workers."

Deb Porter told the *Militant*, "If you don't take a stand now, you'll lose a little bit every time."

After the rally, union members organized a car caravan past many of the 23 picket lines in the town of Hershey staffed 24 hours a day by the strikers. With horns blaring, workers drove down Chocolate Avenue where street lamps are shaped like Hershey Kisses candy; past ChocolateWorld and Hersheypark, the Disneyland-like amusement facilities next to one of the factories; by the Milton Hershey School for orphans set up by the company founder and philanthropist; to the Hershey Cemetery where he is buried. The rally concluded at Milton Hershey's grave site where speakers blasted the current bosses' confrontational approach with the union.

After years of flat profits and anemic stock performance, Hershey hired new bosses headed by Richard Lenny. The board of directors hoped that Lenny's brand of cost cutting, attacks on the workers, and downsizing would improve the bottom line. They needed a departure from the one-big-happy-family routine.

Workers at the plant have the same kind of attitude toward Lenny as did strikers at Eastern Airlines and other companies where the top boss had led an assault on the workforce. When the building trades unions donated a giant inflatable rat as the strike started, the strikers dubbed it "Lenny."

Hershey has been waging a war for public support by running frequent ads in area newspapers. They claim they can do nothing about skyrocketing medical costs except pass the expenses onto the workers. The company points out that 10,000 nonunion Hershey employees "accepted" the increase



Militant/Tom Mailer
Unionists on strike at Hershey hold rally in Hummelstown, Pennsylvania, May 16.

in medical costs. The union notes that these workers didn't "accept" anything; the increases were imposed on them.

The company hopes that the fact that their workers get paid more than many area workers, starting at around \$15 per hour, would isolate the strikers. But this has not been the case and many strikers noted how pleasantly surprised they are at the support they have received.

In Hummelstown where the rally was held some workers commented that although they know union members at Hershey are paid more than they are, they want the striking workers to win because the health care issue is so crucial today for all workers and they hope the union can hold the line. This was echoed by some workers at the Hershey's plant in Hazleton where the contract runs out next year.

"For every one person who drives by the picket line with their thumbs down," mentioned Long, "15 have their thumbs up, honk their horns, and yell 'Give 'em hell.'"

Strikers have pointed to numerous gestures of solidarity. Workers from an area donut shop have brought donuts to the picket lines. Construction workers have helped build a site where the union will set up a food bank. Retirees have joined in the picketing. A local gas station refuses to sell Hershey chocolates. Some doctors have provided their services for free.

Dominick Divittore, who went through the last strike in 1980 noted how much more unity there is this time around.

The rally breathed life into the point made by Local 464 business agent Bruce Hummel who said, "The smell of solidarity is stronger than the smell of chocolate."

Social roots of crisis in Catholic Church

BY GREG MCCARTAN

The crisis facing the Catholic Church today, far from being a "sex scandal" as it is depicted in the big-business media and by many pundits in the bourgeois press, has deep social roots, particularly in relation to the advances made in the battle for women's liberation.

For several decades now the fact that official church doctrine teaches that women are inferior has put the institution more and more at odds with the views and beliefs of growing numbers of women and working people not only in the United States, but in Ireland, Italy, and elsewhere.

As women increasingly became part of the U.S. workforce and fought their way into "nontraditional" jobs after World War II, the battle for women's equality gained momentum and scored important victories, like the 1973 Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing abortion. For women, the right to control their own bodies, including the use of birth control and access to abortion, became one of the central features in the struggle against their second-class status and the systematic discrimination they face as a sex.

A recent Gallup Surveys poll reported changes in the attitudes of men and women in the Catholic Church from 1987 through today. Between 1987 and 1993 men and women's support for the church's teachings against the use of birth control and abortion continued to erode. In 1987, more than 60 percent of all Catholics thought that individuals could still be "good Catholics" without obeying the church's teachings on birth control. By 1993 70 percent of respondents held that view. Today only 14 percent of men and 7 percent of women agreed that church leaders should have the final say on whether the practice of birth control is right or wrong.

Views on abortion rights

Similar trends are evident in the abortion debate. In 1987, about two-thirds of the women and half of the men surveyed said that "good Catholics" needed to obey the church's ban on abortion. In spite of the rulers' bipartisan campaign to undermine a woman's right to choose, after a decade less than half of both men and women thought it essential to adhere to Rome's dictates. And by 1999 only 22 percent of men and 18 percent of women said that church leaders should have the last word on whether women who are Catholics can advocate free choice regarding abortion.

In a 1996 editorial following the reelection of William Clinton as president, the liberal *National Catholic Reporter* described the course of some among the Catholic Church hierarchy as "the latest episode in a lesson, now 23 years long, on how the politics of the Catholic leadership has done little but neutralize and marginalize the Catholic presence in U.S. society."

The paper said that it "appears once again

all the gambles taken on behalf of opposing abortion above everything else came up empty." Cardinals John O'Connor of New York and James Hickey of Washington backed the Catholic Campaign for America, which was organized to oppose the reelection of Clinton by mobilizing antiabortion forces. "In the end," the paper stated, "Catholic voters largely ignored all the hot button rhetoric and were one of the largest factors in the Clinton victory."

The open and raging debate reflected in the *Reporter* articles surfaces in many other ways.

One incident along these lines happened in 1999, when Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, who figures prominently in the recent exposure of church officials' cover-up for priests who sexually assaulted minors, banned a Catholic group that advocates women's ordination from church-affiliated buildings. The Massachusetts Women-Church group had gotten local Jesuits to cosponsor two conferences on the role of women in the church that were held on Jesuit property and were attended by some 450 people. Law ordered the Jesuits to deny use of their facilities to the organization.

Barbara Maher, a leader of the women's group, told the press that the controversy will "raise consciousness that there are reform-minded, faithful Catholics who do not feel comfortable with the language and direction being forced upon us by the hierarchy. There is no dialogue about the future of women and women's place in the future."

'Women robbed of our dignity'

A year later sister Elizabeth Johnson, a church theologian, told a meeting of 3,700 people in Milwaukee that "women have been consistently robbed of our full dignity as friends of God and prophets" due to "theories like [Catholic Saint] Augustine's who claimed a man taken alone was fully in the image of God, but a woman was fully in the image of God only when taken together with man who is her head; or philosophies like [Saint Thomas] Aquinas's which argued that women are misbegotten males with weak minds and defective wills." Johnson is a professor at Fordham University in New York and a former president of the Catholic Theological Society.

Another reflection of how the Catholic hierarchy is crossways with the advances in the fight for women's rights was seen during the debate on stem cell research last year. The National Conference of Bishops supported a prohibition on "embryo-destroying research entirely," claiming that an embryo is a person—the same basis they use for opposing the right to abortion.

One opinion columnist in the *Wall Street Journal* noted last July that U.S. president George Bush got himself into "a hole playing political games with embryonic stem-cell research" because the White House "confuses the Catholic hierarchy with rank-and-file Catholic voters. There is really no longer a distinct Catholic vote in America; on issues like stem-cell research and abortion, Catholic views are little different than non-Catholic views."

Marriage and the family

The teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage, its opposition to divorce, and views on the family are increasingly at odds with the reality of life for working people in the United States and other countries.

Over the past half-century a historic change in the family structure has taken place. The number of children born to women who are not married now stands at 31 percent in the United States. The percentage of households headed by married couples dropped from 80 percent in 1990 to little more than 50 percent today. And there has been a sharp increase in the rate of divorce since 1960.

Between 1950 and 1998 the percentage of working-age women who hold jobs outside the home nearly doubled, rising from 33.9 percent to 59.8 percent. The number of women incorporated into industrial production increased dramatically in the second half of the 20th century, with a notable rise in the number of women who began to fight their way into jobs from which they



Militant/Eva Braiman

Today the gap between the church hierarchy and the real views, practices, and doubts of the "faithful" has never been wider. Advances in the battle for women's liberation mark the growing divide in the Roman Catholic Church.

had traditionally been excluded. Women who are raising children account for most of the increase since 1994, with the proportion of working women who have children less than one year in age rising from 49.5 percent in 1990 to more than 55 percent in 1996.

One reflection of the consequences of these trends came in Ireland in 1995, when a referendum on making civil divorce legal passed by 9,000 votes, ending a decades-long ban. The votes from the working-class districts in Dublin weighed heavily in the outcome, but even in rural areas the "no" vote was 15 percent lower than in a similar referendum in 1986. It was the most serious rebuff to the influence of the Catholic church on legal and political life in some years, in a country whose population is 93 percent Catholic.

Even with the divisions between the views of the Catholic archbishops and cardinals and lay people in the United States, the U.S. church is seen as something of a renegade by Rome. Syndicated columnist Peggy Noonan, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, pointed out that the pope chose "not to govern the church strictly," mostly because he knew that "the American cardinals...tend to view his directives as suggestions."

Bourgeois lives

The church hierarchy used its power and money to cover up cases of sexual abuse by priests and acted above the law, wrote Noonan. There is the "racketeering dimension," she noted, "the fact that a RICO suit has been brought, could be brought, against the church, charging that it acted as an institution to cover up criminal behavior by misleading, lying, and withholding facts. The church has long attempted to keep priest abuse cases quiet through the paying of hush money—estimated at a billion dollars so far—to families instructed to sign confidentiality agreements."

Another problem for the church hierarchy as the gap grows between its stance and the real views, practices, and doubts of the "faithful," is the hoarded wealth of the church and the lifestyles of many bishops, archbishops, and cardinals—never mind the pope and his retinue.

Writing on the eve of the pope's meeting with American cardinals, Noonan stated that the pope should know that "many of the cardinals he will speak to have grown detached from life as it is suffered through by ordinary people," a fact that is not new in the church. "The princes of the church live as princes of the world," she wrote. "They live in great mansions in the heart of great cities, dine with senators and editors.... They are surrounded by staff who serve them, drive them, answer their call." In short, they live bourgeois lives.

Protecting vast real estate holdings

In face of a growing number of lawsuits, the church has moved to shield its land holdings from plaintiffs seeking damages for the actions of church officials. The *Wall Street Journal* recently ran an article entitled, "Besieged Church Tries to Protect Vast Real Estate." In Rhode Island, where 38 sexual abuse suits are pending in state court, the Providence diocese has stated that its Aldrich Mansion and attached 85-acre estate is owned by a nonprofit corporation cre-

ated more than 100 years ago. The church-owned company holds real estate valued at more than \$44 million.

In Stockton, California; Dallas, Texas; and other cities, church officials have acted to move similar holdings into legal setups so they cannot be considered in awards settlements.

Another tack is being taken in Chicago, where Cardinal Francis George suddenly announced last week that he was considering selling the \$15 million Queen Anne-style mansion, located in a plush neighborhood two blocks from Lake Michigan. A *New York Times* article noted that Cardinal Law in Boston "has been pressured to sell the chancery's 15-acre compound, including his residence, to offset mounting legal expenses." The falling fortunes of Law, once one of the leaders of the church in the United States and an outspoken opponent of a woman's right to abortion, reflects the social roots of the crisis.

Some on the right are using the crisis to press forward the culture war and urge a return to traditional "Catholic morals."

Rod Dreher, writing in the *National Review*, pointed out that the "overwhelming majority of priests who have molested minors are not pedophiles.... They are, rather, 'ephobophiles'—adults who are sexually attracted to post-pubescent youths, generally aged 12 to 17." Dreher discussed the extent of homosexuality among seminarians and priests and the fact that "Rome has explicitly discouraged the ordination of homosexuals since at least 1991... to little avail in most U.S. dioceses."

'A conservative reform'

Dreher concluded by arguing that there "is every reason to believe that a conservative reform—replacing dissenting or milquetoast bishops with solid, no-nonsense men; making the seminaries safe places for heterosexuals loyal to Church teaching; and restoring the priesthood to a corps of chaste, faith-filled disciples—would result in a tide of good men seeking holy orders."

In a May 8 column entitled, "Anti-Catholicism at the *New York Times*," Ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan took issue with a piece by Bill Keller, whom he termed an "apostate Catholic who enjoys being called a 'collapsed Catholic.'"

Buchanan slammed Keller for stating that "probably no institution run by a fraternity of aging celebrities was going to reconcile itself easily with a movement that embraced the equality of women, abortion and gay rights. Most Catholics ignore the pope on contraception as they do on divorce and remarriage, abortion, sex out of wedlock, homosexuality and many other things Rome condemns as violations of natural law."

The church is in crisis today, responded Buchanan, "not because it failed to adjust its teachings and practices to the sexual revolution, but because it tried both to be true to its teachings and to keep in step with an immoral age, which is an impossibility. The way for the church to restore its lost moral authority is to retrace its steps, even if it means leaving lost souls like Bill Keller howling in the wilderness."

Although the church and its hierarchy have long since ceased to be an independent social force, a ruling-class force in its

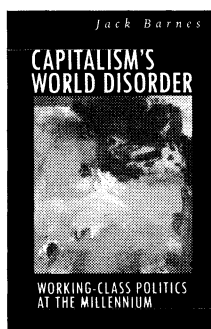
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from Pathfinder

Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

BY JACK BARNES

"The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. They offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future."



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Argentine workers protest deepening crisis

Continued from front page
the unemployed and the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA). Protests were also organized in at least 10 other cities.

The May 22 action was the first national strike organized against the government of President Eduardo Duhalde of the Peronist Justicialist Party, which received the backing of the top union officials on its formation in January. The CGT spokespeople are now objecting to Duhalde's ongoing negotiations with International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials.

After 46 months of recession, the official unemployment rate has risen to 25 percent. But since last December at least 3.2 million people have joined those classified as poor, making a total of up to 18 million people, or one-half of the population. As the government jumps from one proposal to the next to try to find a way to satisfy the imperialist bankers and bondholders, there is no end in sight to the downward spiral.

The prices of staple goods like flour, cooking oil, and meat have risen by at least 35 percent. Meanwhile, the peso has crashed by around 70 percent against the U.S. dollar since its devaluation in January. "Millions now rely on barter to feed and clothe their families, while shantytowns are multiplying," reported the BBC. The economy is expected to contract by 15 percent this year.

In Argentina, "one of the world's biggest producers of wheat, beef, and soybeans," reported Reuters on May 13, "the children of the growing ranks of unemployed are...going hungry." Teachers in Berazategui, a working-class town south of the capital, said that some of their students have fainted from hunger. "Half of my students are in a precarious situation, with parents out of work," said one. One priest who helps organize 13 soup kitchens in Jujuy province said he estimates 40 percent of children in the area are suffer from hunger.

Problems 'defy solutions'

An article in the *Washington Post* outlined the extent of the crisis, as well as the willingness of U.S. officials and wealthy coupon clippers to let the situation unravel even further.

"The crisis in Latin America's third largest country, entering its 46th month of recession," the paper wrote, "is worsening beyond all earlier projections, with the peso sharply devaluing, the banking system nearing collapse, and close to 8,000 people a day falling below the poverty level line—defined as an income of \$2 a day...."

"Top experts say the economy in what was once the region's wealthiest nation may shrink by as much as 15 percent this year, three times worse than Russia's economic contraction after its 1998 debt default and one-and-a-half times worse than Mexico's contraction during its currency crisis of 1995."

"More frightening to many financial experts and citizens here," the article said, "is the growing sense that Argentina faces a convergence of problems that appears to defy solutions." Noting the economic measures demanded by the IMF would cause "sacrifice now," the *Post* adds that the resistance of working people makes it "politically impossible for any administration to take action and survive."

"The situation is hopeless," the article quotes Bruno Boccara, Standard and Poor's director of Latin American sovereign ratings, as saying. Another pundit adds that the solution lies in getting people in the South American country to lower their expectations. "Argentines thought they were living in Italy or Spain," Boccara said. "But now Argentines are waking up to the fact that their economy is closer to Bolivia than Europe. Their denial of reality is part of the problem."

Imperialists' demands

The stance of the imperialist bankers and government officials in Washington has so far been to state their demands and let the crisis deepen, hoping the economic "contagion" will not spread.

On May 16 IMF spokesman Thomas Dawson said that the Argentine government would be given an extra year to pay a \$130 million installment, originally scheduled for the end of May, on its IMF debt. The previous day, Argentina's congress had amended a bankruptcy law that had drawn the ire of



imperialist officials by placing legal limits on creditors' ability to put the squeeze on debtors for outstanding loans. Dawson described the law's passage as "a step in the right direction."

Paul O'Neill, the treasury secretary of the U.S. government, the dominant power in the IMF, said the Argentine government does "seem to be making some progress, however fitful, in moving forward and doing the things that are necessary to achieve a sustainable condition." He repeated demands that the country's government now proceed to amend the "economic subversion" law that places limits on the banking sector and on foreign investors. According to news wire reports, O'Neill also said that "Argentina must also continue to cut government budgets to meet IMF targets."

Following the IMF decision, World Bank officials said they would "prepare new loan operations." The Argentine government is still pleading with the bank, another Washington-based institution, to allow the postponement of \$800 million in loan payments that came due in mid-May.

A recent study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., contradicts the claims of IMF officials that "spending by provincial governments was the cause of Argentina's economic crisis," reported the *Weekly News Update on the Americas*. The study pins the blame on "debt service, largely to foreign investors."

On occasion, these governments—faced with widespread protests by government workers, piqueteros, and others—have balked at the budget cutbacks demanded of them by Buenos Aires. A number have begun printing their own scrip as a substitute for dried-up national funds in order to pay their employees.

"From 1993 to 2000," wrote the *Update*, "Argentina's primary government spending—for salaries, government programs, and operations—was essentially flat, while interest payments on the government debt rose threefold." The March 24 *Miami Herald* observed, "It is this debt trap—not overspending by the government—that caused the crisis."

Banking crisis

The actions of the Duhalde government, caught between the never-ceasing demands of imperialist banks and governments, and the refusal of workers and farmers to submit meekly to imperialist-foisted austerity measures, have begun to reek of desperation. After abandoning a plan to convert billions of dollars in frozen bank deposits into government bonds, Duhalde's new economy minister, Roberto Lavagna, said, "We're

now back to Square 1," to which the *New York Times* added that the "government was out of ideas." The *Times* story was headlined, "Argentine Foundation Keeps Crumbling."

On May 20 the Argentine national bank took over the Suiquia, Bisel, and Entre Ríos banks, which function primarily in the farming sector and had previously been controlled by the giant France-based Crédito Agrícola. Three days earlier the French company withdrew funding from the banks, saying that they had lost \$500 million in recent months. The takeover "will be temporary," said the head of Duhalde's cabinet, Alfredo Atanasof, "until these banks can return to private hands. The government does not plan to nationalize the banking system."

The *Financial Times* reported that the government had come under pressure to take over the banks from grain-growing provinces where bank loans and credits are essential for farmers and capitalist export companies.

In the five months since the government drastically limited bank withdrawals, some better-off people have withdrawn hundreds of millions of dollars stored in accounts in neighboring Uruguay—fully 15 percent of the deposits in that country's banks. Added to the decline in Uruguay's trade with Argentina, which previously took one-fifth of its exports, and a steep drop in tourism, that drain in value is having a growing impact on the Uruguayan economy.

Uruguay president: 'Grit your teeth'

Neighboring countries of Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay have been affected by the deepening crisis, but have so far avoided the kind of collapse that has been sweeping Argentina.

President Jorge Batlle lectured the 3.4 million people in Uruguay not to "be swept up in the worsening mood," according to the May 16 *Wall Street Journal*. "I want to tell you not to watch so much Argentine television and to have confidence in your country," he said as he announced a series of "emergency" budget cuts. "Grit your teeth and don't believe that things that happen someplace else are going to happen here."

The *Journal* reported that "defenders insist Uruguay has a more manageable public debt than Argentina, a far more stable political system and an even-keeled populace that isn't given to the kind of bloody street protests that brought down a series of Argentine presidents following the banking freeze." The big-business paper noted that the government in Montevideo had "responded to Argentina's devaluation by speeding up the controlled rate at which its peso falls."

While the economic contagion appears to be under control for the capitalists at the moment, there is little talk of the possibility of a political crisis that could set off a collapse in confidence by imperialist investors.

But some nervousness is being registered over the possible outcome of the October elections in Brazil, Argentina's giant northern neighbor. Workers Party (PT) candidate Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva has been rising in the polls and is currently ahead of the candidate of the ruling Social Democratic Party. While da Silva has emphasized that he would continue payments on the country's foreign debt and has pointed to the PT's record of stable government at the state and municipal level, working people are likely to have higher expectations of any PT government.

The British *Economist* wrote that spokespeople for Brazilian big business have "complained of a lack of detail on how

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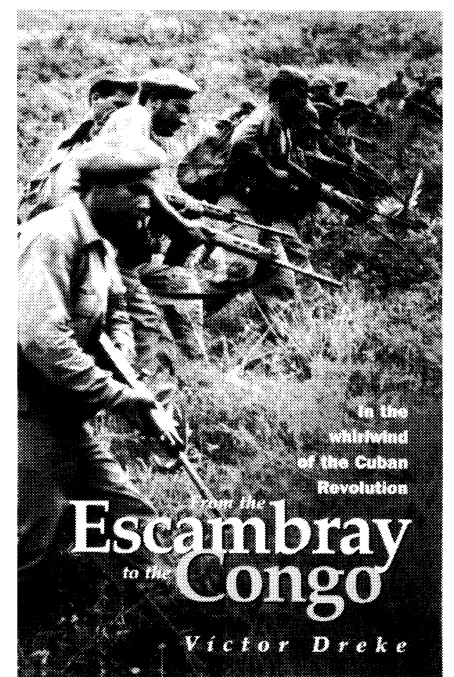
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Bush affirms U.S. embargo of Cuba

Continued from front page

tions which have sought, through military threats, invasions, embargoes, and other means, to reverse the gains of the 1959 workers and farmers revolution in the Caribbean island. "Full normalization of relations with Cuba, diplomatic recognition, open trade and a robust aid program will only be possible when Cuba has a new government that is fully democratic," he said, meaning a pro-capitalist regime.

Although U.S. officials usually don't publicly admit to the fact that elections are regularly held in Cuba, Bush called on Havana to allow "independent observers" to monitor nationwide voting next year for members of the country's National Assembly. He added that Washington would ease restrictions on "humanitarian" assistance by U.S. religious and other organizations to non-governmental groups in Cuba. Bush said the U.S. government will provide groups with "direct assistance" for such programs.

Press reports leading up to Bush's speech indicated that the president would announce new anti-Cuba measures. But the *Wall Street Journal* noted that the remarks were "in direct contrast to what many hard-line supporters of the embargo had expected."

Bush's remarks were made two weeks after Richard Bolton, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control, accused the Cuban government of pursuing "at least a limited offensive biological warfare research and development effort" and providing "dual-use biotechnology to other rogue states."

A front-page article in the London *Financial Times* several days later extensively quoted an unnamed senior White House official who said that the Bush administration is "examining ways to force the Cuban government to open its research pharmaceutical facilities to weapons inspectors."

'Not surprised by such lies'

Cuban president Fidel Castro refuted Bolton's slanderous accusations point by point in a May 10 televised speech. Referring to the U.S. government's propaganda preparations for an invasion of Cuba in the early 1960s, Castro said, "Anyone who remembers the 15 incredible pretexts, known today through declassified official documents, that were elaborated at the end of 1961 by the high U.S. authorities to undertake a direct military attack against Cuba



Rally in Manzanillo, Cuba, protesting the U.S. embargo, July 1, 2000.

would not be surprised by such a sinister lie" as that told by Bolton. "We demand proof," Castro said. "Let them produce even the tiniest bit of evidence! They do not have any, and they cannot have them because they simply do not exist."

Bolton's speech came during the buildup to the visit to Cuba by former U.S. president James Carter, undertaken at the invitation of the Cuban government. Castro told Carter that he could visit any of the country's biotechnology research facilities in addition to the genetic engineering center already on the itinerary.

"If you are interested and if you wish, you may have free and complete access, together with any specialists of your choosing," he told Carter, "to that or any of our most prestigious scientific research centers, some of which have been recently accused...of producing biological weapons."

During a visit to Cuba's Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Carter told Castro and top Cuban scientists that he specifically asked U.S. State Department officials on more than one occasion, "Is there any evidence that Cuba has been involved in sharing any information to any other country on Earth that could be used for terrorist purposes? And the answer from our experts on intelligence was no."

Washington's slanderous attack on Cuba coincides with its moves to enforce its existing restrictions on travel to and from the island. The U.S. State Department recently refused to grant visas to Adriana Carr Pérez and Tania Crombet Ramos, researchers at Cuba's Molecular Immunology Center, who were planning to travel to Orlando, Florida, to participate in the May 18-21 annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. The two women are specialists in the development of new vaccines and antibodies for treatment of cancer.

"The U.S. government is trying to impede frank, open and constructive debate among specialists from various parts of the world desirous of sharing their experiences, scientific research results and other aspects of the fight against this disease, which kills more than half a million people in the United States every year," said a statement by Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in response to the exclusion.

Washington is also stepping up its prosecution of people who travel to Cuba from the United States. Last year the Treasury Department issued 766 civil penalties to U.S. citizens, more than four times the number imposed the previous year. Criminal penalties for violating the sanctions range up to 10 years in prison, \$1 million in cor-

porate fines, and \$250,000 in individual fines. Civil penalties of up to \$55,000 per violation could also be imposed.

At a Congressional hearing last February, Sen. Byron Dorgan presented the cases of two travelers who were fined \$7,500 each. Marilyn Meister, a 75-year-old retired schoolteacher, went on a bike trip to Cuba, and Cevin Allen scattered his missionary parents' ashes at the Cuban church they helped found.

U.S. residents are barred by the Trading with the Enemy Act from spending money in Cuba, which in effect imposes a travel ban. Under U.S. law today, residents can visit Cuba only by obtaining a license from the Treasury Department. There are three categories of exceptions to the travel ban: general licenses, specific licenses, and "fully hosted" travel. Those authorized to travel with a general license include government officials, "regularly employed" journalists, full-time professionals involved in academic research, and those visiting relatives in Cuba, as determined by U.S. officials.

The specific license, which requires written permission from the Treasury Department, covers licensed humanitarian donations, professional research or participation in meetings that do not meet the criteria for a general license, and religious activities.

Carter's tour of Cuba

While in Cuba, Carter called for easing travel restrictions between the two countries. At the same time he rehashed Washington's propaganda claims about the alleged lack of "democracy" in Cuba. "Almost every country in the Americas is a democracy," he declared. Carter pointed to the recent vote in the United Nations Human Rights Commission that passed a U.S.-organized resolution slandering Cuba as a violator of human rights, saying that its government "must meet universally accepted standards in civil liberties."

In a nationally televised speech at the University of Havana, Carter encouraged internal opposition to Cuba's revolutionary government. "People are not permitted to organize any opposition movements," he arrogantly stated. Carter praised the so-called Varela Project—a petition drive that has collected 11,020 signatures backing a national referendum on the country's elections, amnesty for prisoners jailed for committing criminal acts against the revolution, and the right to own private businesses. Supporters of the petition used the opportunity of Carter's visit to win international coverage of their turning-in of the signatures.

Talking out of both sides of his mouth, Carter assured the Cuban people that he "did not come...to interfere in Cuba's internal affairs," but then urged them to allow the International Committee of Red Cross to visit the nation's prisons and to permit the UN Human Rights Commissioner to address "such issues as prisoners of conscience and the treatment of inmates."

Several university students in the audience responded to the attack on their revolution. Chemistry student Daniel García asked Carter if his conception of democracy includes the social conditions faced by masses of people in Latin America that have "killed millions of children from hunger and disease," and the governments that "have embezzled their peoples' money."

Another student mentioned the five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails who were framed up by Washington on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage.

Referring to the Varela petition, a law professor in the audience asked the former president if Washington would allow such a small group of people to change its founding principles.

Carter proposed setting up a "blue ribbon commission" to resolve "the 40-year-old property disputes with some creativity," an oblique reference to the measures taken by Cuba's revolutionary government expropriating property owned by U.S. corporations and wealthy counterrevolutionary Cubans. U.S. companies at the time possessed 90 percent of Cuba's mineral wealth, 80 percent of public utilities, and virtually all the cattle ranches and industrial enterprises.

"Most U.S. companies have already absorbed the losses, but some others want to be paid," he declared.

In 1977 after taking the presidential oath of office Carter undertook small steps toward easing frictions between Washington

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Minnesota meat packers at Dakota Premium organize to fight for dignity, union contract

BY SAMUEL FARLEY

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—The bosses at Dakota Premium Foods have once again pushed workers at their slaughterhouse here to organize a fight for dignity. The latest struggle began May 9 after supervisors repeatedly denied the request of a young female worker in the kill department to go to the bathroom.

An issue of *Workers' Voice*, the in-plant newsletter of the union organizing committee, explained that "the results were predictable. The worker soiled herself. As if that wasn't bad enough, the supervisor that wouldn't let her go actually made an inappropriate comment about going and buying

Carpenters union

Continued from page 2

Mexicans on a site I'll bring up the union with them. The union magazine has articles in English, Spanish, and French. I leave it around." Kowalski also reported that he now sees union organizers come onto nonunion sites where he's working.

In March 2001 Doug McCarron, national president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, led the union out of the AFL-CIO. The July 23 *Fortune* magazine noted that McCarron's "defection highlighted Big Labor's central crisis: declining membership. The AFL-CIO spends a lot of money on public relations, lobbying, campaign contributions, and bureaucratic featherbedding—funds McCarron believes would better be spent on recruitment."

Under McCarron the Carpenters reversed substantial losses in membership, growing from 349,000 in 1995 to around 550,000 in 2001.

her a clean pair of panties. He thought the entire episode was funny."

The fight over this incident at Dakota is the latest in a two-year effort by meat packers at the beef slaughterhouse to organize a union. The struggle began with a successful seven-and-a-half-hour sit-down strike in June 2000. Among the workers' demands were that the boss slow down the line speed and end the practice of forcing employees to continue working while they are injured. Simultaneously workers began a struggle to organize a union in the plant. Seven weeks later, the big majority of workers voted to become members of Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW).

The company, however, has stalled negotiations with the union by filing several appeals with the National Labor Relations Board, hoping to wear down the union members and ultimately reverse the results of the vote. A number of fights and skirmishes have been initiated by workers in the plant in order to defend their rights and interests.

After being denied the right to use the restroom, the young woman went to talk to Evelyn Acosta, the head of personnel, who told her that no bathroom breaks are allowed for the job she holds. The worker and others from the kill department went to the union hall after work that day to discuss how to respond to the attack on their dignity.

The May 10 *Workers' Voice* reported on the meeting, noting that "several of the workers stated that it's difficult to find the human resource person to deal with these matters. They said, 'It's like being in a prison.'" The meat packers decided to get out an issue of *Workers' Voice* to tell the story of what happened. Union president Bill

Pearson wrote up the article over the weekend and union supporters distributed it to co-workers on Monday, May 13.

Workers at the meeting also decided to organize a delegation to go to meet with company officials to show their collective opposition to the actions of the boss and their determination to stand up for their rights.

The company responded by calling a meeting of all the workers in the kill department the following day. According to Obdulia Flores, a worker in the kill department, the boss said the company "could not permit workers simply to go to the bathroom when they needed to. However, they would permit workers to go to the bathroom if they signed a list, so that the company could keep track of who was going to the bathroom, for how long, and for how often."

The company is also on a productivity drive at its beef slaughterhouse in Long Prairie, Minnesota. According union member Carlos Salinas, the bosses at the plant are pressing workers to increase production to 900 head of cattle a day. Workers in the kill department at the plant are also not permitted to go to the bathroom.

Last year workers in the boning department at Long Prairie organized a two-hour sit-down strike in order to beat back the increased line speed in the plant. Both plants are owned by Rosen's Diversified, a meatpacking and chemicals company.

UFCW Local 789 president Pearson issued another *Workers' Voice* May 17 to report that very initial talks had begun between the company and the union over the possibility of a contract and arrangements had been made for further discussion.

Samuel Farley is a worker at Dakota Premium Foods.

Roots of conflicts among imperialist powers

Printed below is an excerpt from "U.S. Imperialism has Lost the Cold War," by Jack Barnes. The document was discussed and adopted by delegates to the 35th national convention of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States in August 1990. Barnes is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

The resolution was published in 1998 in *New International* no. 1, with footnotes updating evolution of competition and conflicts among the imperialist ruling classes and the impact on semicolonial countries of the interimperialist trade rivalries and the world economic crisis.

What stance workers and farmers should take towards economic and military pacts by the imperialist powers was addressed by Barnes in a speech in New York City four days after the 1992 presidential elections in the United States, in relation to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that was being hammered together by the superwealthy U.S. ruling class.

"How do class-struggle-minded workers answer the trade union bureaucrats' demagogic cry that NAFTA will result in losing 'American jobs' to Mexico?" Barnes asked. "There is only one answer: There is no such thing as an 'American job' or a 'Mexican job,' only workers' jobs. Workers in the United States have to get together with workers in Mexico and with workers in other countries and organize ourselves to defend our interests as a class, as part of the vast toiling majority of humanity."

"We must not support policies that strengthen our common class enemy," he said. "If workers give any other answer, the bureaucrats and the liberals and the reactionaries will win the argument. If workers give any *national* answer, our exploiters will only strengthen their power over all those who work for a living."

Barnes pointed out that class-conscious workers oppose NAFTA and all economic and military pacts entered into by the imperialist government at home with other capitalist regimes. "But we do so from an internationalist standpoint," he said, "rejecting any notion of common interests with the employing class in bolstering their competitiveness against their rivals or helping them reinforce the pariah status and superexploitation of immigrant workers."

"The only 'we' we recognize," the SWP leader said, "is that of working people and our allies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico—and the rest of the Americas and the world. Not 'we' Americans, 'we' English speakers, 'we' the white race, or anything else that chains us to the class that grows wealthy off the exploitation of our labor and that of our toiling brothers and sisters the world over."

Barnes's 1992 speech can be found in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, published by Pathfinder Press. The excerpt below is from *New International* no. 11. Copyright © 1998 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission.



C. Shifts in post-World War II imperialist alignments and intensifying capitalist competition

1. Shifts in the post-World War II international alignment of class forces have been and continue to be marked above all by alterations in the degree and character of Washington's economic, political, and military dominance within the imperialist system.

2. The preparations for the organization of a fourth Reich have once again placed Germany at the center of European and Atlantic politics and signal a fundamental change in international relations among the imperialist powers.

a) The accelerating intertwining of the monetary and economic prospects, political alignments, and class struggle in the imperialist Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the workers state, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), marks the biggest shift in interimperialist relations and conflicts in Europe and the Atlantic Alliance. It also has a greater impact than any other single development on the deepening economic and political crises in the Eastern and Central European workers states and their relations with the Soviet Union.

b) These changes reflect first and foremost the relative strengthening of German finance capital within the imperialist system.¹

(1) The industrial and trading power of German finance capital is the source of the strengthening mark and growing weight of the German central bank in capitalist Europe and beyond.

(2) The capitalist rulers of the FRG are moving inexorably to bring their world political and military power more in line with this strengthening economic position relative to U.S. imperialism and European capitalist rivals.

c) The accelerating rapidity of steps toward the FRG's economic and monetary union with the GDR further undermines prospects for: 1) the growing integration and homogenization of the member capitalist nations of the European Community (EC) as 1992 approaches; and 2) the dampening of labor and working-class struggles in West Germany, the linchpin of capitalist Europe.³

(1) The even greater economic, political, and military dominance of German imperialism vis-à-vis

its European rivals (in and out of the EC) will sharply exacerbate the disequilibrium, conflicts, and contradictions that stand in the way of any harmonious course toward an integrated capitalist Europe.

(2) The pre-World War II reality of a Central Europe dominated by German finance capital is also being pursued, as the rulers of the FRG seek to complement their position in capitalist Europe by also establishing an edge in economic relations with the governments of the European workers states.

(3) Steps toward yoking together the imperialist and workers states of Germany in economic union set the German bourgeoisie on a more direct collision course with the working class of the East as well as the West, while facilitating united action of the working class in Germany.

d) Britain's capitalist rulers are less able to lean on a "special relationship" with Washington as a counterbalance to the growing dominance of Germany in Europe and the continuing decline of British imperialism.

(1) The pound has fallen victim to Thatcher's nearly decade-long pretense that the foundations of Brit-



Workers at Bombardier plant in Vetschau, Germany, participating in strike March 25 for a pay raise. SWP 1990 resolution points out that yoking together the imperialist and workers states of Germany sets bourgeoisie on more direct collision course with working class in both east and west while facilitating united action of workers.

ish capitalism are stronger than they are. The pound will now inevitably become increasingly pegged to the German mark rather than the U.S. dollar.

(2) The strength of British capitalism and support for Thatcherism continue to be eroded by the highest inflation and interest rates in capitalist Europe, combined with growing resistance to employer and government attacks, notably to increasingly regressive and onerous taxation.

(3) The 1982 Malvinas War, far from showing that British imperialism remains a world power, proved the opposite. The war against Argentina could not have been sustained, let alone won, by Britain without decisive intelligence and logistical support made possible by Washington's decision to put U.S. air and naval power at London's service for the duration of the conflict.⁴

3. Interimperialist competition (both in trade and the export of capital) continues to sharpen, increasing protectionist pressures and related world political conflicts and tensions.

a) The European Community is seeking to end all internal barriers to trade, labor, and capital movements by 1992 and present a common front against other imperialist rivals. In response, the United States and Canada have taken steps to create a similar bloc. The Australian and New Zealand ruling classes have formed their own "free trade zone" as well.

(1) This growing protectionism, by further closing markets to the semicolonial countries, reinforces their economic devastation.

(2) It will also kick back into explosive divisions within the imperialist trading blocs themselves under the pressure of any sharp economic crisis.

b) Mounting interimperialist rivalry and its trade-war consequences can be dramatically illustrated by the U.S. rulers' escalating assault on their Japanese imperialist rivals.

(1) Washington's protectionist assault takes place in the context of the 1990 collapse of Japan's superinflated stock market; the fall in the value of the yen measured against the mark and the dollar; the instability of sky-high real estate prices; and the effects of inflated prices of food and other necessities on the extreme class skewing of income distribution. Japanese capitalism is more vulnerable to partial economic crises and world economic fluctuations than it was during the 1980s.

(2) At the same time, Japanese finance capital continues to buy up factories throughout East Asia and Southeast Asia at a rapidly accelerating rate, and to offer stiffer competition to U.S. imperial-

ism for domination over markets in the Asia and Pacific region.

(3) Protectionist assaults against Japanese capital by its imperialist rivals have racist, anti-Asian overtones that the U.S. rulers play on, aided by the trade union bureaucracy, in particular, as well as by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois misleaders among the oppressed nationalities.

(4) Japanese imperialism continues to build up its military forces (it maintains the largest military budget of any imperialist power other than Washington). At the same time, it has no nuclear arsenal or short-term prospects for one, and thus remains subordinate to U.S. strategic air and naval power in the Pacific.⁷

¹ The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, in face of growing popular mobilizations across the German Democratic Republic against the regime. In August 1990 the East German parliament voted to reunify under the terms of the FRG's constitution. But formal reunification—which took place on October 3, 1990—did not register "a relative strengthening of German finance capital within the imperialist system." In fact, the single biggest shift

in world politics since this resolution was written in 1990 has been the relative weakening of the German bourgeoisie both economically and politically in capitalist Europe, especially vis-à-vis its imperialist rival in France. While the resolution accurately points to the sharp economic and social contradictions posed for German imperialism by its effort to swallow and absorb the workers state in the east, it fails to draw the only conclusion consistent with these facts—that is, anticipation of the rapid and debilitating consequences for Germany's capitalist rulers of this effort to unify two states with antagonistic social relations.

² Bonn has transferred some \$100 billion a year to eastern Germany since that time, roughly 5 percent of western Germany's annual GDP, and 40 percent of the GDP of the former GDR. Most of these funds have been spent on jobless benefits and other social payments, not capital investment. The German government has shut down much industry in the east, resulting in official unemployment that topped 20 percent in early 1998 (and substantially higher if low-paying government make-work plans are not counted). Reflecting the strains on German capital and deflationary pressures across Europe, unemployment in western Germany reached its highest levels since the early 1930s in 1997–98.

German capital is also much more vulnerable than its imperialist rivals to the economic effects of the deepening crisis in Russia. German banks in mid-1998 were owed \$30.5 billion by the government and other institutions in Russia—more than four times the outstanding Russian loans of U.S. banks, and more than 40 percent of all Russia's debt to foreign banks. Some 14 percent of the capital of German banks is exposed to loans to Russia.

³ Bonn's decline since 1990 vis-à-vis Paris and London spoiled plans by German capital to exploit the strength of the mark in order to dominate a strong European currency by the end of the decade, simultaneously placing Germany's stamp more forcefully on foreign and military affairs across Europe. The "euro," scheduled to begin being used to denominate stock, bond, and banking transactions across eleven European countries on January 1, 1999, will be a weaker and more unstable currency than the mark, which has itself become much weaker since 1990. Actual "euro" notes are to replace marks, French francs, and other national currencies in circulation in 2002. The rulers of the United Kingdom, as well as Denmark and Sweden, have opted for now to retain their national currencies.

⁴ Given the relative weakening of German imperialism since 1990, and the approaching replacement of the mark by the euro, the rulers of the United Kingdom have pressed the "special relationship" with Washington with renewed vigor to bolster their position vis-à-vis rival powers on the European continent. In particular, the Tory government of John Major acted as Washington's most solid ally militarily and politically during the 1990–91 Gulf War, and the Labour Party government of Anthony Blair as the White House's most reliable backer during its renewed war moves against Iraq in late 1997 and early 1998.

⁵ The U.S. and Canadian imperialist rulers, together with the Mexican bourgeoisie, launched the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994. It was preceded by a trade pact between Washington and Ottawa signed in January 1988. For a discussion of NAFTA, especially its place in intensifying the superexploitation of the peasants and workers of semicolonial Mexico, see "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes in *New International* no. 10, pp. 269–76.

⁶ Japanese capitalism has been in a deflationary crisis throughout the 1990s. The Tokyo stock market collapsed from 40,000 at the end of 1989 to below 14,000 in August and September 1998. In 1989 Japanese shares in dollar terms accounted for 45 percent of total world stock market prices; by mid-1998 the figure had fallen to about 10 percent. Land values in Tokyo in mid-1997 were roughly one-fifth their level at the opening of the decade. Unemployment is at its highest post-World War II levels.

⁷ The countries with the world's top seven military budgets as of 1996 are the United States (\$265 billion); Russia (\$48 billion); Japan (\$45 billion); France (\$38 billion); the United Kingdom (\$33 billion); Germany (\$32 billion); and China (\$32 billion).

YS forum in Haiti

Continued from front page

States and join in the worldwide fight for socialism," he said.

Willey explained that the SWP consists mainly of industrial workers, who are the main target of the capitalist offensive in the United States. The communist movement is concentrated among the social movements developing among working people and places sales of the *Militant*, and books and pamphlets by revolutionaries at the center of its work. The SWP and Young Socialists is part of constructing a world communist movement, participating in events that attract other anti-imperialist youth such as the Algiers festival, and draws on the lessons from the victorious socialist in Cuba, he said.

One person asked how socialists can confront a capitalist system that is stronger today. Another asked why socialists in the United States do not see elections as the most effective method of making change in society, as the Socialist Party in France does.

Willey said that imperialism is in fact growing weaker as it is driven to carry out more bloody wars and to place troops in a growing number of countries to try to defend its economic and strategic interests. He also pointed out the bosses must continue to squeeze more out of working people to try to bolster their sagging profit rates, which fuels greater resistance by workers.

Regarding elections, he said that while the SWP runs candidates in many bourgeois elections, its candidates point out the only fundamental advances for working people and the oppressed have come through

struggle—from the labor battles in the United States in the 1930s that forged the industrial trade unions to the civil rights movement that smashed Jim Crow segregation in the South in the 1950s and '60s. There is no lack of courage to fight against the brutalities of the capitalist system, he said. The greatest challenge is building a communist party in time that is capable of leading the toilers in a revolutionary fight for power.

On the second day of the conference, Pierrot Exama, a leader of the Young Socialists in Haiti, reported on "The contribution of women and youth in the revolutionary struggle."

He spoke about the place of women in one of the most powerful bourgeois revolutions of its time, which won independence for Haiti in 1804. During the war, women were responsible for guarding weapons and many also spied on the colonial masters, he said.

One person asked whether socialist revolution is possible, especially with Haiti's dependence on imperialist countries for trade and goods.

Exama said that after the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. and European imperialists claimed the strength of capitalism would open a period of prosperity. The majority in the world, however, is growing poorer, not richer, he said. Health care is declining and life expectancy is dropping in many countries. Capitalism is breeding more wars as the curve of capitalist development is in a decline.

The Cuban people made a revolution and are now building socialism. "I don't say we can make a revolution, but we can join the masses, especially the peasants, to build a movement that can fight to take people out of their misery," Exama said.

Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League in Canada and the director of French-language publication for Pathfinder, spoke on the "History of American Trotskyism." The talk was based on the book of the same name soon to be published in English, French, and Spanish with a 24-page spread of photos of struggles from the 1920s and 30s.

Prairie said the continuity of the communist movement goes back to the Russian Revolution, where workers and peasants took power, "showing that they were not only victims of exploitation, but actors in



Militant photos: top left and bottom right, Arrin Hawkins; top right, Jack Willey

Top left, Rollande Girard, Jack Willey, and Vogly Pongnon during the forum session, "Fighting imperialism from within the United States." Bottom right, participants in the forum. Top right, Arrin Hawkins speaks to Haitian youth near the table with communist literature. Fifty-three books were sold to students who continued their discussions after the formal sessions.



the transformation of society."

Coming out of the devastation of World War I, imperialist invasion, and years of civil war, a layer of the Bolshevik Party degenerated and began applying policies against the interests of working people, he said. As that layer began to take hold of the leadership of the Communist International and carry through a counterrevolution, Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian Revolution, led a consistent fight to defend

the course of the Bolshevik Party.

As the book explains, "Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine, but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian Revolution and in the early days of the Communist International," he said.

One participant said there were two opposing classes in Russia—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but in Haiti there's a very

Continued on Page 14

MILITANT/PM FUND EVENTS

OHIO

Cleveland

Coal Miners Fight to Defend the Union and Black Lung Benefits. Speaker: Frank Forrester, underground coal miner, member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248, representative of Socialist Workers Party. Sat., June 1, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 11018 Lorain Ave. Donation: dinner \$5, program \$5. Tel: (216) 688-1190.

From Haiti to the U.S. and Canada: Prospects for Building an International Socialist Movement of Working People and Youth

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Speaker: Arrin Hawkins, Young Socialist leader, participant in May 17-18 meeting of university students and young socialists in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Sat., June 1, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd Floor. Donation: dinner \$5, program \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Garment District

Speaker: Jack Willey, Socialist Workers Party leader, participant in May 17-18 meeting of university students and young socialists in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 548 8th Ave., 14th Floor. Donation: dinner \$5, program \$4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

Brooklyn

Speaker: Arrin Hawkins. Fri., May 31, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. Donation: dinner \$6, program \$5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Upper Manhattan

Speaker: Jack Willey. Fri., May 31, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: dinner \$6, program \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

CANADA

Vancouver

Speaker: Nancy Seguin, Young Socialists and Communist League, participant in a May 17-18 meeting of young socialists and university students in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Sat., June 1, 4:00 p.m. 2645 East Hastings, 2nd Floor. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Support the Militant and Perspectiva Mundial. Sun., June 2, 4:00 p.m. 1st floor, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

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ALABAMA

Birmingham

Why Washington's War on Cuba Doesn't End. Speaker: Brian Taylor, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Mine Workers Local 2133. Sun., June 2, 3:00 p.m. 3029-A Bessemer Road. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Meat Packers' and Coal Miners' Struggles Wrest Union Victories. Speaker: Paul Pederson, Socialist Workers Party, meat packer and member of United Food and Chemical Workers union. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5 program, \$6 dinner. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Upper Manhattan

Why Washington's "Cold War" against

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St.,

Cuba Doesn't End. Speaker: Romina Green, Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

NORTH CAROLINA

Kannapolis

Oppose U.S. Government Attacks on Workers' Rights. Speaker: Steve Wolfe, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., June 1, 7:00 p.m. 2001A N. Cannon Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (704) 932-0821.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Prison Goon Squad Reveals True Face of Capitalist Justice. Fri., May 31, 7:00 p.m. 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

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Hope he gets to try it—Under the welfare “reform” act those deemed impoverished and able-bodied are required to accept sweep-and-mop



Harry Ring

jobs in return for a welfare pittance check. Says a federal welfare director: “Before welfare reform many people expected you could sit and do nothing and get benefits for the rest of your life.”

You don’t despise capital-

ism?—“When you talk to employers they will tell you they are not looking for people with ready-made skills....What they need are people that have the ‘soft’ skills—[Those] who know it’s important to get up every day and go to work on time.... They know how to react to a supervisor’s suggestion to get on to another task.”—Same sick mouth as previous.

Safety second, whatever—Voicing concern for safety, 200 nurses went to Trenton, the capital of New Jersey, demanding limits on the number of patients to be cared for by each nurse. For the intensive care unit, the state mandates a limit of two patients per nurse. But in emergency units, medical-surgical wards, and others, no number. The

state Hospital Ass’n said it opposes limits.

No hiding place—To fill in the blank space on cellular phones, Disney and rivals will be transmitting TV and audio material. Declared a Disney exec: “We see it as an opportunity to reach customers anytime, anywhere.”

....meanwhile—It’s anticipated that over the next three years, U.S. cell phone users will toss them on the junk heap—a guesstimated 65,000 tons including toxic metal. When they switch services (“One million free calls a month”) they get a new phone.

By divine right—The queen of the United Kingdom won’t be required to pay inheritance tax on the

estate of her recently departed mom. The estate included racehorses, jewelry, and artworks valued at some \$73 million. Someone with ordinary blood inheriting that amount would be taxed 40 percent. A 1993 deal exempted kings and queens from the inheritance tax to assure “an appropriate degree of financial independence.” Royal rulers, it’s noted, can’t supplement their income by getting a job or engaging in business activity.

Careful probe—The FBI announced May 2 that it will check whether Orange County, California, sheriff’s deputies beat prisoners and then falsified jail records to cover up the crime. The beating allegedly occurred March 14 and was the fifth in 15 months. All five are still “un-

der investigation.”

‘Sorry, wrong soup’—To regain sagging sales, Campbell will market “Soup at Hand.” Once heated (the container is microwave friendly), you can sip it “on the run” through a hole in the lid. Now, if they can hook it together with the cell phone and Mickey Mouse...

‘Terrorists,’ big time—According to the latest figures we saw, the U.S. war machine had 363 “suspected terrorists” in the animal-type cages they have built at their naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba. In 1903 U.S. imperialism ripped off the seaport area on which the base was created and, to this day, defies yielding it. The current prison area is being expanded to hold “detainees” from a host of countries.

Meat companies in Scotland prepare round of layoffs

BY PETE WILLSON

DUNDEE, Scotland—Scotland’s meat companies are calling for government backing to carry out a program of plant closures that would put hundreds of workers out of a job.

Speaking at an April 20 conference of the Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers, its president, Neil Stoddart, called for a “de-commissioning scheme” of slaughterhouses to bring their number in line with beef and lamb supplies. There are currently 26 slaughterhouses and 6,700 workers employed in meat processing plants in Scotland.

At the same time that jobs of workers are being threatened, livestock farmers are also being shown the stick by the meat company bosses. Speaking at a meeting of farmers in Aberdeen last month, Donald Brown, a representative of the feed manufacturer Keenan’s, said Scottish beef farmers “have to ask if they can really call themselves quality meat producers.” Brown claimed 55 percent of the farmers’ livestock fails to meet the industry specifications.

Behind these moves has been a decline of meat processing over the last year, in part due to an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom during which some 6 million animals were destroyed and exports halted.

Two years ago slaughterhouses processed 2.16 million cattle in the United Kingdom, of which half a million were in Scotland. This year the total is estimated to fall to 1.9 million with 405,000 in Scotland. An even sharper decline has hit lamb. Two years ago the lamb kill for the United Kingdom was 16 million, with 1.9 million in Scotland. This year it is expected the UK kill for lambs will be 12.7 million with 1.6 million in Scotland. The number of pigs slaughtered in Scotland rose slightly to 800,000 over this time, but fell from 12.4 million to 10.6 million in the United Kingdom.

The decline in the total number of animals slaughtered has been impacted by a

growing rivalry and competition among the capitalist rulers in various European countries. In France, which in the past has been a major importer of UK beef and lamb, the rulers are using the foot-and-mouth disease and also BSE (mad cow disease) infection of the herds to both maintain a ban on beef from the UK and place prohibitive restrictions on lamb imports. Imports of red meat into the UK are rising, with pork imports up 50 percent over 1999. This sharpening competition has hit farmers particularly hard. For example, pigs are currently selling at 90p (1p=1.5 cents) a kilo, 10p less than the break-even point for the farmers.

The National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) has joined with the meatpacking companies and the Scottish executive, the government in Scotland, in responding to these moves by putting fuel on the protectionist fire. One step is a drive to reclassify what can be labeled Scottish beef. Currently if an animal has been in Scotland for 90 days it can be classified as Scotch, thus receiving a higher premium price than beef produced in the rest of the UK.

The NFUS proposal would restrict this designation to only animals born, reared, and slaughtered in Scotland. A May 10 opinion column in the *Inverurie Herald* endorsed this course, arguing, “Throwing our lot in with England, where the quality of beef generally leaves much to be desired, is not the way forward.”

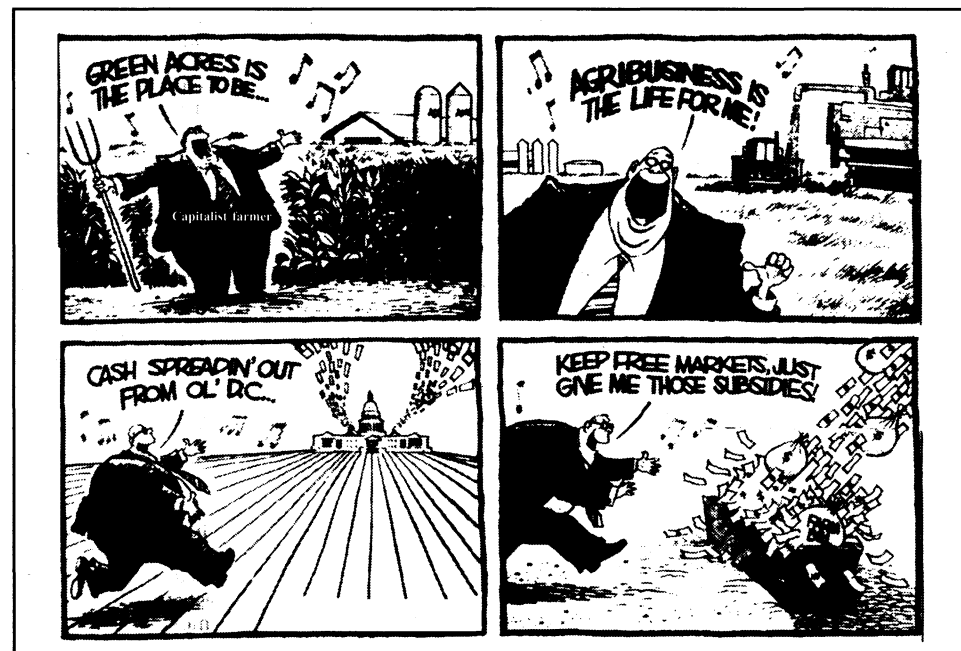
The growing mountain of regulations promoted by different capitalist rulers, using the excuse of foot-and-mouth and BSE, is affecting working people as well. For example, new regulations have come into force prohibiting “private” slaughtering facilities. These have been widely used by small tenant farmers, called crofters, in the outlying Western Isles of Scotland. The March 2002 closure of a slaughterhouse in Stornoway has added to the problems facing the crofters.

Donald Manford of the Scottish Crofting

Foundation said of the move: “Will this mean they [crofters] cannot slaughter animals unless they start transporting them to licensed abattoirs? These rules are in danger of making criminals of honest men and women.”

Workers in the industry have been hit hard by layoffs. At McIntosh of Dyce, in Aberdeen, 100 out of a total workforce of 300 have been laid off since February. Sepps

Gourmet Foods, the owners of the factory, which produces sausages and pies, blamed their drop in profits on the fallout from foot-and-mouth disease. In Newbridge, Edinburgh, Grampian Country Foods announced May 8 it will close its chicken processing plant, where 547 people work, and transfer production to other plants in Scotland. The company hopes to turn the factory site into a business park.



—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

June 3, 1977

STEARNS, Ky.—“We don’t aim to mine no coal until a contract is signed, and nobody else is going to either.”

That statement by a picketing miner here sums up the resolve of more than 160 men on strike for ten months against the Stearns Mining Company’s Justus mine.

Stearns and its parent company, the Blue Diamond Coal Company, will stop at nothing to keep the United Mine Workers of America out.

In March of this year, the company hired a private security firm—notorious for strikebreaking violence—and the shooting began. Since then it is a fact of life for Stearns residents. Every night, and sometimes during the day, there is a steady gunfire.

Although there is a court order against it, nobody denies that the fire is sometimes returned. “If they were shooting at you, what would you do?” one striker asked me.

Despite provocations, the strike remains strong and the miners claim total unity of their ranks. For them the real life-and-death question is not dodging the bullets of hired gun thugs, but the even more deadly issue of mine safety.

The Stearn miners voted to be represented by the UMWA on March 31, 1976. That was three weeks after two explosions at another Blue Diamond-owned mine—the Scotia mine in Kentucky—killed twenty-six men.

The main issue for the striking miners is safety. They want a union safety committee with the authority to remove miners from areas judged “hazardous to human life.”

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
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June 2, 1952

An epoch came to an end on May 19 when the British government notified the government of New China that British concerns in China, many of which have exploited the Chinese people for an entire century, were going to wind up their affairs and leave. Losses on the so-called “investments” of these imperialist corporations will be, according to varying estimates, between 840 and 1,400 million dollars.

Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden made his excuses for the exploiting corporations, citing conditions of “acute strain and anxiety” in China as the reason for the withdrawal. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who has asserted that he did not become the King’s first minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British empire, remained silent. He apparently sees that his empty boast cannot be redeemed by more grandiose rhetoric. “Preside over the liquidation of the British empire” he must; because the British are not really “withdrawing” they are being driven out.

The meaning of this loss to Britain can be seen by comparing the value of British imperialist property in China with Britain’s total empire. The remainder of British foreign investments abroad do not total, by the most favorable estimates, more than 5 1/2 billion dollars. This total is only about one-quarter of British foreign investments at their height in 1914. Now with the China liquidation, total British foreign investments are again cut by possibly another 25% of all remaining British investments abroad.

The revolution put everything at stake

Continued from Page 15

other time when a war broke out at such a distance between so small a country and such a great power as that possessed by the South African racists.

We put everything at stake in that action, and it was not the first time. I believe we also put an awful lot at stake in 1975 when we sent our troops to fight the South African invasion of Angola.

I repeat: we were there for fifteen years. Perhaps it should not have taken so long, because the way we saw it, that problem had to be solved; simply put, South Africa had to be prevented from invading Angola. That was our strategic conception: if we wanted peace in Angola, if we wanted security in Angola, we had to prevent South Africa from invading Angola. And if we wanted to

prevent the South Africans from invading, we had to assemble the forces and the weapons necessary to prevent them from doing so. We did not have all the equipment to do this, but that was our conception.

The truly critical situation occurred in Cuito Cuanavale, where there were no Cubans at the time because the closest Cuban unit was about two hundred kilometers to the west. This brought us to the decision to employ the troops and the weapons necessary—on our own initiative and at our own risk—and to send whatever was necessary, even if it meant taking it from here.

Cuito Cuanavale is the site that became historic, but the operations extended along a line hundreds of kilometers long, and out of these operations a movement of great strategic importance toward southwest Angola developed. All of this is symbolized by the name Cuito Cuanavale, which is where the crisis began; but about 40,000 Cuban and Angolan soldiers with more than 500 tanks, hundreds of artillery pieces, and about 1,000 anti-aircraft weapons—the great majority of these anti-aircraft weapons of ours were transferred from here—advanced toward Namibia, supported by our air force and an airstrip constructed in a matter of weeks.

THE MILITANT
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Pensions are steelworkers' right

After toiling in the nation's steel mills for decades with a contractual promise from the steel bosses that they would be provided with health and pension benefits for the rest of their lives, steelworkers are finding out that this supposed guarantee is really nothing more than a promise that isn't even worth the paper it's written on. And the Bush administration, along with most Democrats in Congress, have simply washed their hands of the matter.

The steel bosses in their drive to make profits are aiming to gut the benefits owed to some 600,000 retirees from the steel plants and their dependents. This is just the latest example of what the capitalist rulers have in store for working people as their system sinks deeper into crisis. For millions of workers—those currently employed as well as retirees—health and pension funds that were supposed to be set aside for them are simply being gambled away on the stock market by the employers and the government.

The bosses seek to use all the legal loopholes available to them to shed what's owed to the retirees, which they consider to be nothing more than a "debt burden," a drain on their profits. Bethlehem Steel, for example, the nation's third-largest steelmaker and one of 33 companies currently in bankruptcy, is planning to contract out its steelmaking, declaring itself to be a holding company, and informing these workers that they'll have to get in line for payment behind the bondholders.

For the boss class, working people have no value as far as they're concerned unless they're at work producing surplus value. The fact that working people, thanks to social and medical advances, are now living years past the age

of retirement is for the bosses a growing economic problem. But what this really points to is the social and political bankruptcy of the capitalist system.

We're also seeing the fruits of the disastrous policy that had been embraced by the union officialdom of tying workers benefits to the well-being of a particular industry, instead of fighting for government-guaranteed lifetime entitlements for all, regardless of the profitability prospects of a particular capitalist company.

Hand in hand with the rulers' assault on retirees' benefits is the rulers' drive to pass a newly revamped welfare bill that builds on the attacks made upon entitlement programs undertaken by the Clinton administration six years earlier. Their move to create more subminimum wage workfare jobs is aimed at further assaulting union rights and the dignity of those forced into these make-work assignments.

All working people should condemn both the steel bosses and the bipartisan gang in Washington for placing the lives and well-being of tens of thousands of steelworkers and their families on the line. What's needed to defend working people—and to keep the bosses from imposing devastating conditions on sections of the working class—is for the labor movement to take its place in the vanguard of a battle to demand the government provide jobs for all at decent union-scale wages, along with nationwide cradle-to-grave health care, retirement benefits, coverage for disabled workers and their families, government-funded child care, and national unemployment insurance at a livable level.

Argentine workers protest

Continued from Page 9

Mr. da Silva would finance ambitious plans to cut poverty and help industry." The *Washington Post* stated that the PT candidate "has tapped into the frustrations of millions of Brazilians," including with promises to defend Brazil's interests in a "more open and daring way," and with some criticism of Washington's aggressive military and trade policies.

Decline in trade with Argentina

The Brazilian trade ministry has announced that the country's exports to Argentina fell 69 percent in the first quarter of this year. Argentina, which is linked with Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay in the Mercosur trading bloc, now takes 3.6 percent of Brazil's exports, down from 9.8 percent a year earlier.

"Latin Americans," wrote the May 19 *Post*, "are upset about increases in U.S. farm subsidies, which will likely reduce agricultural exports from the region, and about tariffs on imported steel, a major export for Brazil and Argentina." In crisis-ridden Argentina, noted the paper, many middle-class people have vented their anger as "many U.S. banks have fortified their offices with steel

barriers and hired private security firms" to protect their businesses from angry crowds who stage frequent demonstrations.

Protests from Peru to Bolivia

Elsewhere in Latin America, working people have continued to organize protests and strikes against economic hardships and government austerity policies:

- In Peru, thousands of working people and youth mobilized for national strikes and protests on May 14. The strikes were called by the teachers union and the Peruvian General Workers Confederation to protest the policies and broken promises of the government of President Alejandro Toledo. The country's second largest city, Arequipa, was brought to a halt by the actions. The northeast department of Loreto, the central departments of Junín and Pasco, and the northern city of Chiclayo were also heavily affected. Among the strikers were teachers who demanded wage increases, the appointment of more staff, and a change in the anti-working-class course of the government.

- Toledo defeated the discredited strongman president Alberto Fujimori in an election eight months ago. Public opinion polls record a precipitate decline in Toledo's popularity from the first days of his presidency to the present. His failure to ensure economic growth and to generate the thousands of new jobs promised in his election campaign have aroused growing popular discontent.

- Primary and secondary teachers in the provinces of Francisco Morazán and Cortés in the Central American state of Honduras stopped work for one day on May 20, demanding a pay raise of 15 percent in 2002 and 16 percent in 2003. The government has replied with an offer of 12 percent in both years. The National Teachers Federation organized protest marches in the capital of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, the country's second largest city. Some 300,000 students went without classes for the day.

- More than 1,000 members of indigenous peoples in the east of Bolivia have completed the first week of a march from Santa Cruz to the capital of La Paz in support of their demand for the convocation of a constituent assembly. The action was called by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples (CIDOB).

Catholic Church

Continued from Page 8

own right, it remains a bourgeois institution upon which the superwealthy ruling class depends to help perpetuate its state power and its rationalizations for the continuation of the social order it dominates.

This point was brought home by an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, which admitted some shortcomings in the church, but defended the institution. "When we look across the breadth of modern American life, in short, we see the institution of the Catholic Church as one of our great assets. The current scandal will have served some purpose if it forces America's bishops to take more seriously accusations against their misbehaving priests. But we aren't about to join those whose real agenda is to leave the church crushed and humiliated."

History of American Trotskyism

by James P. Cannon

"Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine," says Cannon, but the restoration, the revival of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International."

In this series of 12 talks given in 1942, Cannon recounts an important chapter in the efforts to build a proletarian party in the United States. \$18.95

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Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today

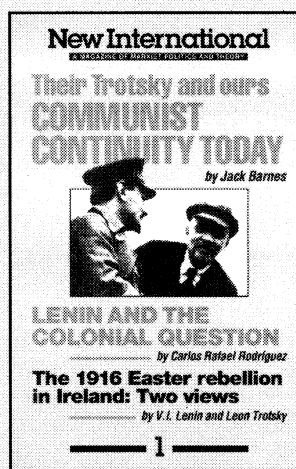
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Haiti forum

Continued from Page 12

small working-class. He asked how a revolution could take place under such conditions.

Prairie responded, saying that there were two revolutions in Russia—a democratic revolution and a socialist revolution. The big majority of the population were peasants and many lived in semifeudal conditions. One political tendency in the workers movement, the Mensheviks, argued the bourgeoisie must lead the democratic revolution against czarism and landlordism, while the Bolsheviks argued that the working class must build a communist organization and, together with the peasantry, lead the democratic revolution. Anything else would lead to the defeat of the struggle.

In October 1917 the Bolsheviks did lead the revolution, bringing a workers and peasants government to power that defended the interests of working people and oppressed nations. The government mobilized the population to carry out unfinished democratic tasks that would pave the road toward overturning capitalism. This process was accelerated under the impact of the civil war, he said.

Prairie pointed out that the Cuban Revolution in 1959 started as a bourgeois-democratic revolution, in which the leadership carried out measures such as agrarian reform, elimination of racist discrimination, and a literacy campaign before expropriating the factories, mines, and mills from the capitalists and the land from remaining large landowners.

Prairie's points were brought home to the U.S. and Canadian delegation during the trip. The majority of Haiti's population works in the countryside as peasants and agricultural workers. Most people are never taught to read or write. Life expectancy averages 50 years and nearly 5 percent of the population suffers from AIDS or HIV, according to official government statistics. In street after street in the capital of Port-au-Prince lines of working people sell fruits they grow, charcoal from wood cut down in the countryside, and other goods to earn enough money to scrape by on. Unemployment hovers above 70 percent. The poorest districts have no electricity or potable water.

The international YS delegation visited one home in the Pétion-Ville district, an area considered "bourgeois" in Haiti. The family faces blackouts ranging from four to 12 hours a day and family members live several people to a room in the modest house.

Hunger for ideas, revolutionary solutions

The forum discussions spilled into the hallway where a table with revolutionary literature was set up. Each day a couple dozen students stayed around for an hour or so after the program to discuss and debate political questions. Many were interested in the fight for women's liberation. After a lengthy debate over whether women should have the right to abortion, one person bought the pamphlet, *Abortion Is a Woman's Right* in Spanish. A couple of others bought the Education for Socialists booklet on the socialist revolution and women's liberation. All seven pamphlets and *New Internationals* with writings by Thomas Sankara were picked up.

Best sellers were *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, reflecting the rolling discussions over the character of the party needed to lead workers and peasants in revolutionary struggle.

Seven copies of *New International* were also purchased, including *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 1, which includes the SWP resolution, "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today." The resolution explains the need to build a communist party capable of leading the toiling masses in city and countryside in a revolutionary struggle against the conditions imposed on them by capitalism. It explains that in economically backward countries this struggle takes the form of a democratic revolution that, carried out to the end, opens the door for wresting by degrees the power of the capitalist class and landlords.

During the visit to Haiti, Michel Prairie and Nancy Seguin, a leader of the YS in Canada, were interviewed twice on Radio Galaxie, one of the three main stations in Port-au-Prince. Over the course of the hour and a half of air time, they were able to speak about the struggles taking place in Canada and the weekly activity of the communist movement.

At the end of the weekend, YS members for Haiti, Canada, and the U.S. met to assess the successful gathering and discuss further steps to deepen their collaboration.

Bush affirms embargo

Continued from Page 10

and Havana. A fishing rights agreement was signed, the U.S. government agreed to suspend its spy flights over Cuba, travel visas to Cuba for U.S. citizens were issued, and charter flights were reestablished. At Washington's request an interests section was set up in both countries to handle diplomatic affairs.

Most of these agreements, however, collapsed following Cuba's refusal to buckle to Washington's demands that it withdraw internationalist volunteers from Africa. In his 1980 State of the Union speech in which he announced the reintroduction of draft registration, Carter launched a new militarization campaign on behalf of the U.S. rulers. Over the previous decade Washington had been dealt body blows by working people around the world, from its military defeat in Vietnam to the 1979 anticapitalist revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua, and the Iranian revolution.

'The revolution put everything at stake'

Printed below is an excerpt from *How Far We Slaves Have Come!* by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro. The Spanish edition of the book titled *Qué legos hemos llegado los esclavos!* is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. The book contains speeches presented by Nelson Mandela and Castro at a July 26, 1991, rally of tens of thousands in Matanzas, Cuba, marking the 38th anniversary of the opening of the Cuban Revolution. Copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

In what way is apartheid different from the practice in effect for centuries of dragging tens of millions of Africans from their land and bringing them to this hemisphere to enslave them, to exploit them to the last drop of their sweat and blood? Who would know this better than the people of Matanzas, since here in this part of western Cuba there were perhaps more than 100,000 slaves. In the first half of the last century there were as many as 300,000 slaves in Cuba, and one of the provinces that had the most slaves was this one, which was also the scene of great uprisings. For this reason there is nothing so just nor so legitimate as the monument to the rebellious slave that has just been erected in this province. [Applause]

Apartheid is capitalism and imperialism in its fascist form and involves the idea of superior and inferior races.

But the Black people of South Africa not only have had to confront apartheid, they have also had to confront the most brutal inequality and political repression, and they have had to confront the cruelest economic exploitation. They have had to confront these three great tragedies. Because of this I believe there can be no greater cause in our era than the one headed by the ANC, Comrade Mandela, and the many other capable and brilliant leaders of that organization, several of whom we have had the privilege of meeting here in our country.

Today those in the West are trying to ingratiate themselves with Africa, trying to ingratiate themselves with those who hate apartheid. But the fact is that apartheid was created by the West, by the capitalist and imperialist West.

The real truth is that the West supported apartheid; they supplied it with technology, countless billions in investments, and vast quantities of arms; and they also gave it political support. No, imperialism did not break ties with apartheid, it did not blockade apartheid; imperialism maintained and continues to maintain excellent relations with apartheid. It was Cuba that had to be blockaded,¹ Cuba, where the vestiges of apartheid—that is, racial discrimination—disappeared a long time ago. Cuba had to be blockaded as punishment for its revolution, as punishment for its social justice—but never apartheid. They took some half-hearted economic measures against apartheid, which did not have the least significance.

And now, as Mandela himself told me, they are asking why the ANC is a friend of Cuba, why it has relations with Cuba and—as Mandela told me here—why it has relations with the South African Communist Party, as if the specter of communism were still haunting the world. [Applause] They are asking why it has relations with this small country that was always so loyal to the cause of the South African people in their struggle against apartheid? This shows the logic of the reactionaries and the imperialists.

It would not be right for us to emphasize Cuba's modest contribution to the cause of those peoples, but on hearing Mandela's speech, comrades, I believe that he paid the greatest and most profound tribute that has ever been paid to our internationalist fighters. [Applause] I believe that his words will remain, as if they were written in gold letters, as an homage to our combatants. He was generous, very generous; he recalled the epic feat our people performed in Africa, where all the spirit of this revolution was manifested, all its heroism and steadfastness.

Fifteen years we spent in Angola! Hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of Cubans went there and thousands more went to other countries. That was the epoch in which imperialism would have given anything to see Cuba withdraw from Angola and end its solidarity with the peoples of Africa. But our firmness was greater than all the pressures and was greater than any benefit our country might have gained had we given in to imperialist demands—as if



Above, this year's May Day rally in Havana, Cuba, of 1 million. "Our ideas extend beyond all borders," Cuban president Fidel Castro said in his speech in 1991 together with ANC leader Nelson Mandela. "We live in the world that was given to us and we are fighting for a better world, for a world such as that desired by Marx and Engels, where men act as brothers to each other rather than preying on each other like wolves."

there could ever be any benefit in abandoning principles and betrayal.

We are proud of what we have done, and our troops came back from Angola victorious. But who has said this the way he has? Who has expressed it with such honesty, such eloquence? What we have not said, because basic modesty prevented us, he has expressed here with infinite generosity, recalling that our combatants made it possible for the sister Republic of Angola to maintain its integrity and achieve peace; that our combatants contributed to the existence of an independent Namibia. He added that our combatants contributed to the struggle of the South African people and of the ANC. He said that the battle of Cuito Cuanavale changed the balance of forces and opened up new possibilities.

We were not unaware of the importance of the effort we made there from 1975 up to the last great feat, which was accepting the challenge of Cuito Cuanavale. This was at a distance greater than that between Havana and Moscow, which one can travel in a thir-

teen-hour nonstop flight. To get from Havana to Luanda is about a fourteen- or fifteen-hour flight, and Cuito Cuanavale was over in the southeastern corner of Angola, more than 1,000 kilometers [620 miles] from Luanda. That was where our country had to accept the challenge.

Revolution put everything at stake

As Mandela was telling you, in this action the revolution put everything at stake, it put its own existence at stake, it risked a huge battle against one of the strongest powers located in the area of the Third World, against one of the richest powers, with significant industrial and technological development, armed to the teeth, at such a great distance from our small country and with our own resources, our own arms. We even ran the risk of weakening our defenses, and we did so. We used our ships and ours alone, and we used our equipment to change the relationship of forces, which made success possible in that battle. I'm not aware of any

Continued on Page 13

Good time to contribute to Prisoners' Fund

BY GREG McCARTAN

Over the past few weeks supporters of the *Militant* have been able to read letters from five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States on frame-up charges. As their letters indicate, each are receiving subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The political content and proletarian spirit of the letters shows the strength of the Cuban revolution, the determination of the people of that country to stand up to the threats and assaults from Washington, and why U.S. imperialism has been unable to overturn the historic gains workers and farmers in Cuba have conquered since 1959.

The letter below from a worker behind bars in Connecticut, is another example of the need for the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* Prisoners' Fund. The fund makes it possible to send individual copies of the two socialist periodicals to prisoners who request them, and to provide a limited num-

ber of subscriptions at a sharply reduced rate. As long as there are funds available a prisoner can buy a six-month subscription to the *Militant* for \$6 and a one-year subscription for \$12. *PM* offers a six-month subscription for \$3 and a one-year subscription to prisoners for \$6.

The *Militant* finds its way into the hands of many workers incarcerated in capitalism's jails. Any contribution, large or small, helps make sure the *Militant* and *PM* can continue reaching working people behind prison walls.

Our current \$50,000 fund drive goes toward the regular ongoing expenses of publishing the two periodicals. Donations to the Prisoners Fund are still needed. The more contributions received, the more subscriptions we are able to send out at sharply discounted rates.

Please send a check or money order, earmarked "Prisoners' Fund," to: The *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

LETTERS

'Militant' is invaluable

I find the *Militant* increasingly invaluable for those seeking to chart a clear class-struggle orientation in today's world. The recent articles on the presidential elections in France were, in particular, spot-on in highlighting the reactionary role of those small centrist groups in calling for a pro-bourgeois Chirac vote under the guise of a hysterical "anti-fascism." Keep up the good work. I am sending in a contribution towards the fund drive.

Tony Roberts
London, England

Prisoner's discount?

I'm just writing to tell you what a fine newspaper you all have. A friend sent me several copies of the *Militant* and I couldn't put them down. Tell me, can I get a prisoner's discount or something like that if I order a subscription to your newspaper in the near future?

A prisoner
Somers, Connecticut

Novack on tribalism

I disagreed with one point in George Novack's article on the roots of the Civil War, that one of the tasks of the American Revolution was "to rid American society of its precapitalist encumbrances (Indian tribalism, feudalism, slavery)..." While I agree that the capitalist system needed to eliminate feudalism and slavery, I don't feel that what Novack called the "Genocide of the Indians" was in any way progressive.

While the struggle against British colonization clearly merited support, the genocide against Native peoples—which continues today—is an attack on all working people.

Steve Halpern
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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.

May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

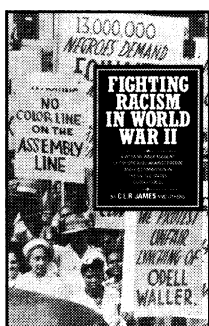
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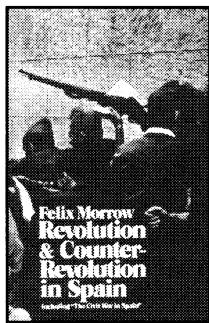


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Labatt bosses end lockout of brewery workers in Canada

BY PATRICIA O'BEIRNE
AND JOHN STEELE

LONDON, Ontario—After an all-day union meeting May 5, a single vote, cast by the business agent as a tie breaker, made the difference in the local approving a concession contract demanded by the bosses at Labatt Breweries of Canada here. The company locked the workers out four months ago after they voted by a 97 percent margin to reject the company's final contract offer.

The vote for the latest company offer was tied after 316 ballots were cast. George Redmond—the business agent who helped negotiate the seven-year contract—was asked by Randy Tapp to vote for the deal. Tapp is the president of the London local of the Brewery General and Professional Workers Union (BGPWU).

The two main issues for the union were the bosses' expanded use of temporary workers and the outsourcing of existing jobs. Temporary workers earn less than half of what full-time workers do, receive few benefits, and have little possibility of becoming full-time, permanent employees. Temporary workers had the right to vote on the latest offer, although none picketed during the lockout for fear of losing their jobs.

As workers left the meeting, several expressed their disgust with Labatt and the contract, calling it less than what they were offered before being locked out in January.

"It is brutal. We're very angry," said union member Jim Root. "They are the most profitable brewery in the world. They have the highest production plant in the country right here and all they put on the table is a concessionary contract. I don't understand it."

Kelsey Lawson, who has worked at Labatt for 25 years, said it was a classic "hold-your-nose-and-vote" contract because the workers feared being locked out for several more months. Workers were told the company threatened it would not bargain again until September if the latest deal was rejected.

Luc Guens, Labatt Breweries Ontario president, sent a letter to workers the day before the vote. "The cost of supplying the market during this dispute has reduced money available for wage and pension increases for this contract period," Guens claimed. "Each day the labor disruption continues the Company incurs more costs and the amount of available money shrinks." The letter also threatened that the company had to make long-term decisions that would

impact "when the London brewery will be needed to begin full production again."

Randy Tapp said that some retirees had been contacted at home by Labatt, asking if they would work if the lockout continued.

The seven-year deal offers a 14.6 percent base salary increase, which will rise if production targets set by the company are met. This would bring the average wage for full-time employees at the end of the deal to around Can\$30 an hour (Can\$ = US 65 cents). Several workers said that workers in the United States who are employed by Interbrew, a Belgium-based company which owns Labatt, get pay packages of Can\$40 an hour.

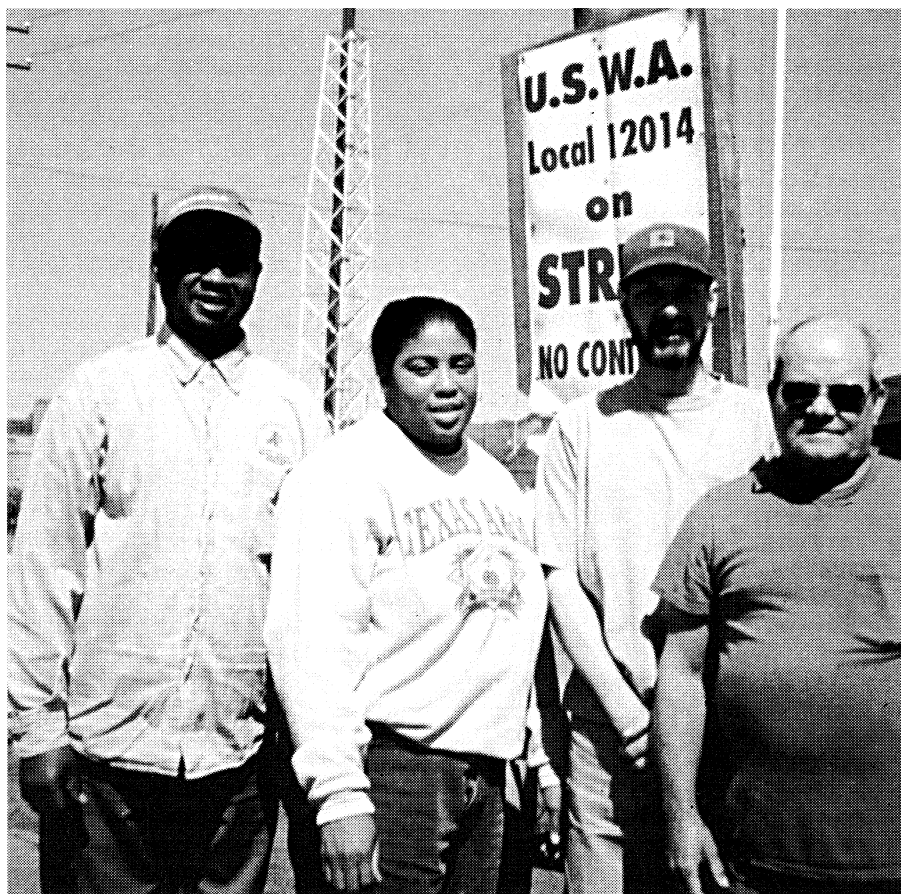
The contract includes a pension increase of \$600 over seven years. The number of temporary workers the company can have in the plant at any one time is restricted from 15 percent to 25 percent of the workforce, depending on the department. There previously were no restrictions on how many temporary workers the company could hire. The company will also hire six full-time workers from the temporary pool, which currently stands at about 80 people.

A return-to-work agreement will override the collective bargaining agreement for 45 days while the bosses recall workers. The pact says workers are considered to be on "an unpaid leave of absence" until they are back on the job.

It also states that "if not offered recall to work within 45 days of ratification, his/her status will change to layoff from leave of absence," and allows for supervisors to continue doing the work of unionized employees for that period.

Mike Derrough, who was in charge of organizing picketing for Ontario during the lockout said that since the contract passed "it's not very friendly in there. They laid off a bunch of workers this week and they're

Striking steelworkers resist bosses' concession demands in Alabama



Militant/Susan LaMont

Steelworkers at Sloss Industries in Birmingham have been on strike for five months, after rejecting a company proposal that would have eliminated medical coverage for retirees, instituted a two-tier wage setup, imposed other cuts in benefits, and included no wage increase. Some 250 workers at the coke plant, members of United Steelworkers of America Local 12014, went on strike in early December and have maintained round-the-clock picket lines since then. "I believe in what we're doing," said first-time striker Felita Reese (second from left), one of four women in the plant. Sloss is owned by Jim Walter Industries, which also owns several coal mines in Alabama.

ineligible for unemployment benefits for 45 days and the union can't file any grievances for 90 days after the 45-day period." Derrough said about half the workforce has been called back to work, temporary workers first, and that the company "pretty much controls the situation right now."

Several workers spoke about how their

fight will continue. Dave, a truck driver with 15 years seniority, said that "the company is reaching beyond borders so we have to reach beyond borders. I would like to know how they are treating their workers in Belgium. We need to reach out to them. There is Montreal. Their contract is up in January. They are next on the list."

Protesters demand release of jailed immigrants

BY DON HAMMOND

PATERSON, New Jersey—"INS, FBI, no more kidnaps, no more lies," was one of the chants enthusiastically taken up by 50 demonstrators outside the Passaic County Jail May 13. They were protesting the continued detention of hundreds of people from South Asia and the Middle East on immi-

gration charges.

Earlier in the evening 75 people attended a forum on the topic at Paterson Public Library. This meeting and the subsequent march were organized by Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM), the Coalition for the Human Rights of Immigrants, and the Prison Moratorium Project. DRUM (Desis means South Asian) is an organization defending the rights of South Asian immigrants in New York.

In her opening remarks DRUM organizer Monami Maulik said, "Why are people locked up when they have only visa violations? A visa violation is not a crime. We want our community to stop living in fear."

DRUM says that as a result of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the Anti-Terrorist and Effective Death Penalty Act the number of people detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) shortly before Sept. 11, 2001, was between 20,000 and 25,000.

This represented a fourfold increase of the 3,000 to 6,000 people held by the INS on any given day before the 1996 laws. Furthermore, since September 11, the INS has arrested 1,200 to 2,000 people of Arab, Muslim or South Asian background. Many are being held at the Passaic County Jail. Conditions at this institution can at best be described as rough.

Prisoners report the jail is overcrowded and dirty. Detainees are rarely taken out for fresh air, given access to direct sunlight, or allowed to exercise. Some cannot afford the clothes sold in the jail to keep them warm.

People are no longer allowed to give clothes to jailed family members inside. The kitchen has also been recently privatized.

Prison authorities have begun using dogs to move detainees through the prison. A former prisoner, Orel Bobb, said he witnessed one of these dogs attacking a detainee. In response, Sheriff Jerry Speziale, the official in charge of the jail, said, "We have to utilize dogs. Sometimes we have to move more than 300 people, if we don't use dogs it's going to create chaos. People may try to escape. We have found a window carved out. This is a jail, not a resort."

Several people directly affected by the cop raids also spoke at the forum. Mohammad Waqas, a young Pakistani, told the audience that his father was among those snatched up by the immigration cops after the events of September 11 and then deported.

"My father lived in the United States for 10 years with no legal problems," said Waqas. "When the police came to our house they told us he was being taken for questioning. Two days later he called and said he was in jail. He has a business and a house. The judge said he was illegal. Now it's been almost a month since he was deported. We have to sell the house and the business and the whole family will have to go back to Pakistan. I'm here to tell you people are not being treated right."

In her closing remarks Maulik said "We have to hold the police accountable for what they do. Local police departments are doing the dirty work for the immigration authorities. Families should not be begging for months and months to see their relatives."

Union authorizes strike at UPS

BY GREG McCARTAN

Members of the Teamsters union who work at UPS voted by a 93 percent margin May 18-19 to give their negotiating committee authorization to call a strike if "Big Brown" doesn't put forward an acceptable contract by July 31. Voting took place at 196 union locals.

Some 210,000 Teamster members work for UPS, the world's largest private parcel delivery company. In 1997 union members waged a decisive 15-day strike that shut the company down. The issue of the U.S. capitalists' growing use of temporary workers, who receive lower wages and often fewer benefits, galvanized support for the walk-out among tens of millions of working people in the United States. Workers also demanded wage increases and rebuffed a company attack on the union pension plan. In addition to the wage rise, the union won a pledge from the company to convert 2,000 part-time jobs to full-time positions each year for five years.

Ken Hall, the co-chair of the bargaining

committee in 1997, told the press that negotiations this year "have been moving forward at a very slow pace." The union strike vote is needed, he said, to help "step up the pace of negotiations. We have to send a message to the company that our members are serious and that our union is serious. These negotiations are not progressing at a pace to finish by July 31."

The union has increased dues recently to build up a strike fund that will give union members a weekly amount ten times their hourly wage—an increase over the \$55 they received in 1997.

After the union officials recommended approval of the strike authorization vote, the company settled a number of outstanding issues. Agreement was reached on about half of the 32 supplemental agreements, but the more substantial wage and other national issues are still outstanding.

The contract expires July 31. The union has established a website, www.trakups.org, where articles and updates on the negotiations can be found.