

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

How bosses' profiteering
cost lives of GIs in World War II

—PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 23 JUNE 13, 2005

Florida garment workers denounce war profiteering

Point Blank bosses sold faulty body armor to Marines

BY MARK HAMM

MIAMI—Point Blank Body Armor has become the focus of a controversy. The company sold the U.S. Marine Corps 19,000 bulletproof vests that failed the military's own quality tests, heightening safety concerns among GIs deployed in combat situations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In face of damaging media coverage, on May 4 the Marines recalled about half of the 10,000 faulty vests that were given to U.S. troops.

The company has reaped hefty profits from Washington's wars and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. DHB Industries, Point Blank's parent company, has expanded dramatically to meet the military's demands for one million vests. It opened two new, nonunion factories in Florida last year in addition to its now unionized plant in Oakland Park, just north of Ft. Lauderdale, near Miami, and saw its revenue jump from \$130 million in 2003 to \$230 million last year.

A number of workers at Point Blank were not surprised to hear about the Marines' recall of vests. In a number of interviews, workers at the Oakland Park plant said the recently reported quality defects are the result of top management decisions and policies aimed at maximizing profits.

Workers at that plant fought a hard battle to organize into the UNITE garment workers union in response to abusive working



Garment workers rally July 19, 2002, outside Point Blank's Oakland Park, Florida, plant at start of their struggle for union recognition. The workers struck during wartime and condemned bosses for selling defective bulletproof vests used by U.S. soldiers.

conditions and low wages. During that fight workers themselves pointed to the company's responsibility for quality defects and how these problems potentially jeopardized soldiers in combat. At the same time, they rejected the company's demand that they end their union fight in the name

of backing the war effort. After a two-year-long struggle, including a six-month strike, the workers won their first union contract in April 2004.

Workers said they have had firsthand experience with the bosses' chiseling

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Utah miners plan picket, other actions to press union fight

BY KATHERINE BENNETT

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Co-Op miners told the press May 31 they decided to hold another picket line on June 2 at the Co-Op mine near this town to press their fight to get their jobs back and win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The action follows a picket line that miners and their supporters held on May 23 at the road that leads to the mine, which is owned by C.W. Mining.

The miners said they had just learned that a boss at the mine has been calling a few of the Co-Op miners and offering to rehire them. The miners have been fighting the company for more than 20 months to organize a union and win living wages, decent working conditions, and dignity on the job.

In addition to the picket line, the miners

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'Militant' backers campaign for endorsements in fight against coal bosses' suit

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—Attorneys for the Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret Morning News, Utah's main daily newspapers, and the Militant will argue June 7 in front of Federal District Court judge Dee Benson here to dismiss a "defamation" lawsuit filed by the owners of the Co-Op mine. Lawyers for the company, C.W. Mining, and its allied International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU) will be there to argue for going ahead with the suit.

Leading up to the hearing, supporters of the Militant are campaigning across the United States to win endorsements for the fight to defend free speech and freedom of the press that's an important part of this case and win much needed contributions for the Militant Fighting Fund. The fund was set up last year to help the Militant and Socialist Workers Party defend themselves against this harassment suit by the Utah mine bosses.

"Regardless of the outcome of the June 7

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Partisans of 'New International' to step up drive to sell Marxist magazine

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Supporters of *New International* are preparing to step up their campaign to sell copies of the two most recent issues of this Marxist magazine over the next two and a half months.

A total of 1,750 copies have been sold since the campaign was launched March 26. This two-month period was combined

with the just-concluded drive to sell *Militant* subscriptions, which won nearly 1,400 new readers to the socialist paper.

Drawing on that initial experience, the focus of the campaign can now be directed to getting *New International* and the Spanish-language *Nueva Internacional* into the hands of as many workers, farmers, and

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French, Dutch 'no' votes doom EU constitution

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a May 29 nationwide referendum voters in France rejected the proposed European Union (EU) constitution by a 55 percent to 45 percent margin. About 70 percent of those eligible cast ballots, a relatively high turnout. As this issue went to press, a similar referendum was decisively rejected in the Netherlands.

These results increased instability in Europe, making the adoption of an EU constitution improbable. While dealing a further blow to the EU's Franco-German center, the no votes also presented greater difficulties for Washington's push to expand the European Union in order to weaken it and minimize the ability of the main imperialist powers in the EU to compete against the U.S. rulers.

Chauvinism and anti-Americanism

Continued on Page 3

SWP convention to feature classes on Marxism

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Nine classes, presented by leaders of the communist movement, will be among the features of the upcoming national convention of the Socialist Workers Party, scheduled for June 9–11 in Oberlin, Ohio.

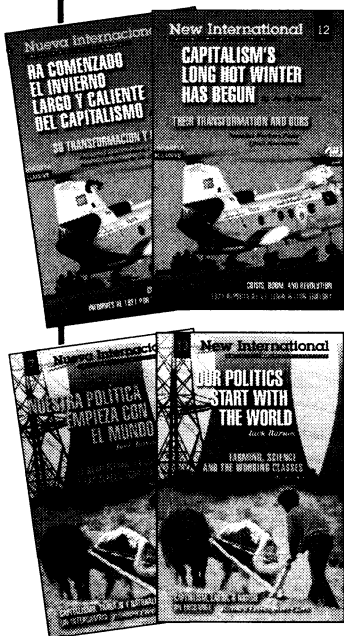
Some 400 people have already registered to attend the gathering, the heart of which will be the discussion and decisions by the delegates to the convention, the party's highest decision-making body. The SWP

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—Jack Barnes

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Brazil: 12,000 march demanding land

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

A two-week march for land reform in Brazil was capped off May 17 with a protest of 12,000 in the streets of the country's capital, Brasilia. Organized by the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST), demonstrators targeted the U.S. embassy and the Central Bank and finance ministry. The police injured dozens of protesters when "mounted officers made repeated baton charges in the worst protest violence seen in Brasilia in years," Reuters reported.

The marchers are part of the struggle in Brazil to reverse one of the most unequal distributions of land in the world: 1 percent of the population of 175 million owns 40 percent of the land, while the 40 percent of Brazilians with the lowest income own less than 1 percent.

The Workers Party (PT) government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, known as Lula, the winner of a landslide election in October 2002, has come under increasing pressure in recent months to fulfill its promises to provide jobs and land to workers and peasants. The new administration promised the "resettlement" of 400,000 landless peasant families during its four-

year term.

The MST-led protest called on the Workers Party to make good on its campaign promises. Only about 60,000 families per year have received land since the PT came into office, fewer than were settled under the previous administration.

In fact, the social-democratic regime has based its policies on promoting the growth of the capitalist giants that dominate the economy. The Lula administration says it hopes to achieve capitalist stability in this semicolonial nation through an increase in wealth for Brazilian manufacturers and agricultural exporters that will supposedly produce a trickle down of jobs and improved conditions for workers and farmers.

The PT government has so far succeeded in carrying out measures to boost the profit margins of big business without touching off sustained mass popular protests.

"We have no doubt that Lula is our friend," Marina Dos Santos, an organizer of the MST march, told Reuters. "We don't want to break with him. We have to change his economic policies."

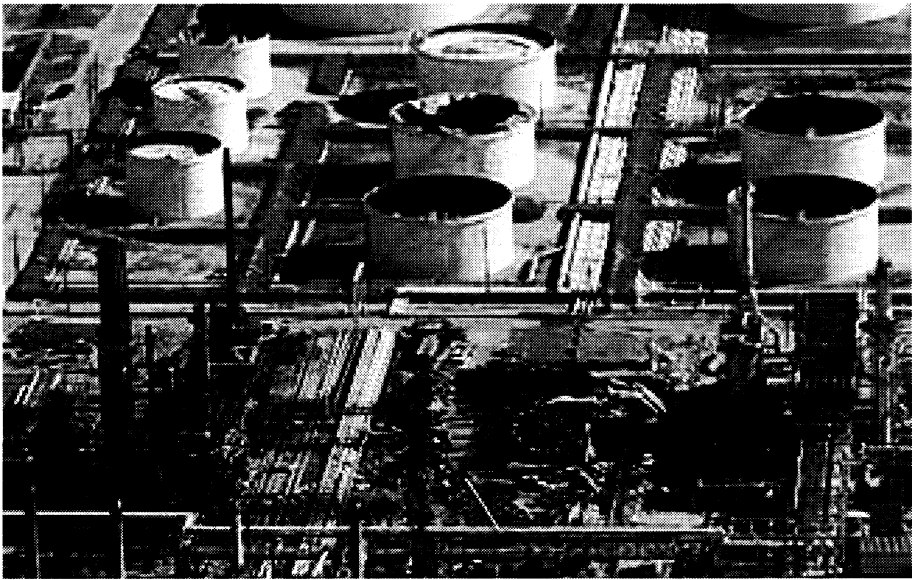
In April the MST led a series of land occupations, as they had a year before. Early



Peasants and others protest May 17 in front of Brazil's Congress in country's capital, Brasilia, to demand acceleration of land distribution. The rally, called by the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST), culminated a two-week-long march.

in the month, Reuters reported, landless workers launched 12 takeovers involving 5,000 families in the state of Pernambuco in the northeast of the country. "The occupations have so far been restricted to abandoned land and on only one occasion did the occupiers withdraw after a group of men with guns turned them off the land," the news agency said.

Large landholders routinely use such gun thugs to safeguard their vast holdings. In the May 17 protest in Brasilia, PT government forces played a direct role in suppressing the fight for land. Nearly all of Brasilia's police forces were involved in the attack on the MST demonstration. The cops injured some 30 marchers outside the Congress building.



View of British Petroleum's Texas City refinery showing flattened unit in foreground that exploded March 23. The blast ripped a hole in chemical storage tank 300 yards away, above center. The hole allowed benzene to evaporate into the air.

Company report covers up causes of BP Texas City refinery explosion

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—An interim report released May 17 by British Petroleum (BP) on an earlier explosion at the company's refinery in Texas City, Texas, blames operators and unit managers for the deadly blast and fire. The report by the company's own "investigation team" on the March 23 explosion that killed 15 workers and injured more than 170 has fueled outrage among working people and others in the area.

"We all knew they would say that," Bud McLeod told the *Militant*. "They never take responsibility, and they always blame us and the plant operators." McLeod worked for contractors doing maintenance and other tasks at the BP refinery in Texas City up to the time of the explosion.

A week after issuing the report, BP backtracked. The company stated that while it stands by the report it should have explained its conclusions differently. The company statement says BP is taking disciplinary action, ranging from "warnings to termination of employment," against workers it has deemed responsible for the blast.

The March 23 explosion was the third deadly accident at BP's Texas City refinery in the last 20 months. This refinery is one of only two in the nation that has had three fatal incidents—the blast in March, a steam explosion that scalded two workers to death last year, and the 2001 asphyxiation of a maintenance worker. BP leads the refining industry in on-the-job fatalities

over the last decade, with 22 deaths since 1995—more than a quarter of those killed in all refineries nationwide. Nineteen of these deaths at BP facilities occurred in the last 18 months. This figure includes the Texas City refinery workers, as well as those who died in seven other incidents, including one in Washington State in mid-May.

Despite the growing number of deaths and injuries, BP has paid a mere \$20,000 in federal and state fines in connection with four of these fatal incidents.

BP's May 17 report on the Texas City explosion ignores company responsibility for the cold-blooded decision to continue to release dangerous and flammable vapors from a ventilation stack at the refinery. When asked why the unit was not changed to a safer design, BP president Ross Pillari stated, "There is no documentation as to why this didn't happen."

Documents reported in the media, however, do show that the company twice rejected—in 1995 and 2002—recommendations to replace the 50-year-old vent stack with a flare system. Instead, the company rebuilt the stack in the isomerization unit in 1997.

According to the company's own report, overheating of this unit led to the most recent deadly explosion. In weighing even temporary losses of profits against the gamble on losing lives, the company found it most cost effective to take measures that ended up sacrificing the lives of 15 workers on March 23.

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March 24 picket at Sterling Laundry in Washington, D.C., for union recognition.

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CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 WEST 37TH ST., 10TH FL. NEW YORK, NY 10018.

The Militant

Vol. 69/No. 23

Closing news date: June 1, 2005

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Published weekly except for one week in January, June, July, and August.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899; Fax (212) 244-4947.

E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The Militant website is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$35 to above address.

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Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: Send \$65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Protesters in Bolivia: ‘Nationalize oil, gas’

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Thousands of workers and peasants have joined demonstrations in La Paz, Bolivia’s capital, and across the country in recent weeks to demand the nationalization of the country’s vast oil and natural gas reserves. These protests have been met with violent repression by the government, which has deployed troops and riot police to quash the mobilizations.

The latest round of protests erupted after Bolivia’s Congress passed legislation that would raise the taxes foreign energy monopolies pay to the state from 10 percent to 32 percent, in addition to existing royalties of 18 percent. Protesters’ demands range from calls for a 50 percent tax to the nationalization of oil and natural gas exploration and production.

The Bolivian ruling class is divided over the new measure. Congress approved the bill by a 59-48 vote, partly as a concession to mass protests over the past year. Bolivian president Carlos Mesa called the bill “suicidal,” saying it discourages foreign investment. He had called for a 12 percent tax.

The Movement Toward Socialism, one of the main opposition parties in parliament and a force involved in the protests, has pushed

for a hike in the tax to 50 percent instead of nationalization, reported the Bolivian daily *La Razon*. Other organizations, such as the Federation of Neighborhood Committees of El Alto and the Bolivian Workers Federation, have called for nationalization of the gas and oil industries.

On May 16, the day before the bill was signed, some 10,000 people marched on La Paz from the industrial city of El Alto, near the capital. A week later, an eight-day, 120-mile march from the rural town of Caracollo culminated at the center of La Paz with a rally that included tin miners, teachers, and students. By May 24 protesters had blocked highways leading into La Paz.

Police barricaded Murillo Plaza, where the presidential palace and Congress are located, to prevent protesters from approaching. Mesa dispatched three troop carriers to reinforce the riot police already in the capital. The cops fired tear gas, rubber bullets, and water cannons on protesters, injuring several. The bus company in the capital suspended service into the interior of the country because of roadblocks in La Paz and other cities, the daily *El Deber* reported.



Workers and peasants rally in La Paz, Bolivia’s capital, May 23 to demand nationalization of the country’s vast oil and natural gas reserves.

Meanwhile, a group of junior army officers calling itself the “Generational Military Movement” appeared on national television May 25 calling for Mesa’s resignation and for a “government of the people.” Defense

Minister Gen. Gonzálo Arredondo called the officers “seditious” and said they could be expelled from the army, the Bloomberg news service reported.

Protests over natural gas reserves led to President Gonzálo Sanchez de Lozada’s ouster in October 2003, when his plans to export gas through Chilean ports was met with mass protests. Popular outrage erupted after Sanchez de Lozada deployed the military to break up the demonstrations, and the army shot and killed 80 protesters.

Bolivia is rich in minerals and other natural resources. It is a leading producer of tin and has the second-largest known reserves of natural gas in South America, after Venezuela. Imperialist investors and domestic capitalists have profited from the plunder of the country’s resources and exploitation of its labor. At the same time, about half the population gets by on less than \$2 a day and 70 percent of the people live below the official poverty line. Workers and peasants are also being squeezed by never-ending payments on Bolivia’s \$5.3 billion foreign debt, which transfers the nation’s wealth into the coffers of banks in the imperialist countries.

“We have the right to defend our natural gas, our natural resources,” Maria Valdiviezo, a 37-year-old peasant who joined the recent protests in La Paz, told reporters there, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. “We live from our land. Our children can only study up to the fifth grade, and then they’re left to their own devices.”

French, Dutch ‘no’ votes doom EU constitution

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marked both those who campaigned for yes and those who advocated a no vote. Both camps bickered on how best to defend the interests of “France” against its main competitors in Europe and beyond.

The EU constitution was officially adopted by government representatives in the European Union in October 2004. Before taking effect, however, it has to be ratified within two years by each of the 25 EU member states, either by a parliamentary vote or in a referendum. The no vote in France, one of the most powerful imperialist countries in Europe, dealt a virtual deathblow to its implementation.

No rejoicing in Washington

“The derailing of the European Union’s constitutional project means a trace of undesired uncertainty in the [U.S.] administration’s dealing with the Europeans,” noted a May 24 *International Herald Tribune* article by John Vinocur titled, “Politicus: If EU constitution fails, U.S. won’t be gloating.”

“A negative outcome requiring Europe to rethink its future path very likely means slowing down the entry process of Turkey and Ukraine into the EU—both projects for Europe’s future that the Americans stand behind,” Vinocur said. “The more advanced candidacies of Romania and Bulgaria...could falter too.”

In campaigning for a greater and more rapid expansion of the EU, Washington seeks to further weaken the ability of German and French imperialists to use the EU as an alternative competitive bloc to U.S. finance capital in the drive for markets and raw materials. With expansion of the EU, Washington also seeks to force its allies in Europe to bear the cost of integrating into the world capitalist market and imperialist military alliances the countries of Central and Eastern Europe—where capitalist social relations were overturned after World War II—and increasingly the former Soviet republics as well.

“The decision of France inevitably creates a difficult situation for the defense of our interests in Europe,” said French president Jacques Chirac, who had campaigned for approving the EU constitution.

Other French government officials were more blunt. “This is the first time in 50 years that the French and Germans have diverged in Europe on a fundamental issue,” said French foreign minister Michel Barnier. “Without this constitution, Europe is broken down politically.”

So far nine governments have ratified the treaty—those of Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain. Eight national referenda are scheduled to take place. The next one, which was held June 1 in the Netherlands, also resulted in a resounding defeat. An exit poll broadcast by state-financed NOS TV there reported the EU constitution was rejected by a vote of 63 percent to 37 percent.

The French vote also showed that national

boundaries cannot be erased by declaring a “union” of capitalist states.

The EU is in reality not a “union” but a body marked by shifting state alliances and conflicts as rival national capitalist classes compete over markets, capital, and labor. The admission of some of its newest members, which include states in Central and Eastern Europe, also further accentuates economic, social, and political disparities among industrially advanced capitalist countries and those with more economically underdeveloped regions. At the time 10 additional governments—in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta, and Cyprus—were admitted into the EU in May 2004, they had an average per capita national income that was less than half that of the other 15 members.

One of the simmering disputes within the EU is over Ankara’s application to join. Turkey is a semicolonial country with a population of some 69 million people, which would be second only to Germany in the EU. A number of capitalist politicians

in France and other EU member states have been outspoken against admitting Turkey, arguing that it will allow Muslims to predominate against “Christendom.” “Do we really want the riverbed of Islam to enter the riverbed of secularism?” French prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said last September. Raffarin, who led the French government’s campaign for a yes vote on the EU constitution, submitted his resignation two days after the May 29 referendum. While Chirac has stated he’s officially in favor of Turkey joining, he has vowed to hold a national referendum in France on this issue.

Among those who campaigned for a no vote in France were ultrarightist National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, as well as the Stalinist Communist Party, and some leaders of the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party was divided down the middle over the issue. Although the social-democratic party officially adopted a position for a “yes” vote, a number of leading members, like former prime minister Laurent Fabius, campaigned for a no vote.

German chancellor calls for early elections, as capitalists try to accelerate cuts in social wage

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder took the unusual step on May 22 of calling for national elections to be held in September, one year ahead of schedule.

This decision stems from the inability of Germany’s rulers to drive forward fast enough in making substantial cuts in social programs such as unemployment insurance and welfare, which the capitalist class needs to shore up declining profit rates and compete more effectively with U.S. and other capitalist rivals. This crisis has its roots in the German rulers’ inability to swallow the former German Democratic Republic in the East. Since the 1990 reunification, Berlin has been saddled with huge annual outlays to pay for social programs in the East in order to avoid a social explosion.

Schröder’s governing Social Democratic Party (SPD) has pushed through initial “reforms,” that is, cuts in the social wage, which do not come close to what German capitalists need. While surveys indicate the declining popularity of the SPD, the party’s leadership is hoping that early elections will give them the best chance to return to power on the federal level and use an electoral victory as a mandate to accelerate the attacks on the working class.

Schröder’s announcement followed a major defeat for the Social Democratic Party in the regional vote held in the country’s biggest state, North Rhine–Westphalia. The SPD had held power in this heavily industrialized region for the past 39 years. As on the national level, the government there has been run by an SPD-Green coalition. The

Christian Democrats won nearly 45 percent of the vote, the Social Democrats 37 percent, and the Greens and rightist Free Democratic Party each received about 6 percent.

Schröder’s electoral maneuver involves setting a vote of confidence in parliament, which is expected July 1. If the government loses the vote as planned, parliament will then be dissolved and new federal elections will be set.

“With this bitter election result for my party in North Rhine–Westphalia, the political support for our reforms to continue has been called into question,” Schröder said in announcing the plan for early elections.

Schröder’s Agenda 2010 “reform” program, which he announced after winning reelection in 2002 by a narrow margin, targeted cuts in unemployment and social welfare benefits. This year he has also promised to cut the corporate tax rate.

A new law that took effect in January limits the payment of jobless benefits to 12 months, after which those still unemployed receive a greatly reduced amount in welfare payments. Before implementation of this law, unemployed workers were paid 60 percent of previous earnings for the first 32 months they were out of work, and 55 percent thereafter. The long-term jobless are now also forced to take workfare-type jobs paying one or two euros per hour or lose welfare benefits altogether.

The official unemployment rate in Germany is now at a post–World War II high of 12 percent, with more than 5 million people officially listed as being without jobs. In the eastern part of the country 20 percent of the

workforce is unemployed.

Since 1990 the German rulers have been compelled to pour more than \$1.5 trillion into the eastern section of the country in an effort to spend their way out of a showdown with workers and farmers there. Three-quarters of these funds have gone to cover the cost of pensions, unemployment benefits, make-work projects, and other social programs. Berlin has had to borrow massive sums to finance these outlays.

Rather than ushering in a period of greater power for the German bourgeoisie, the reunification of the country has resulted in its relative weakening in relation to its rivals, with flat economic growth, skyrocketing government debt, and persistent high levels of unemployment.

The Green Party, which has been in government coalitions with the SPD since 1998, is “in a mess,” noted a May 25 *International Herald Tribune* article. “The Social Democrats are divided over running any election campaign on a red-green ticket. But so are the Greens. Each feels damaged by each other’s policies.”

Fueling this conflict are disagreements over how fast to move on the so-called reforms. The Greens “want social and economic changes to go much farther while the left-wing of the Social Democrats want to slow down the reforms because of rising unemployment,” the *Tribune* article reported. “Indeed younger and more leftist Social Democratic parliamentarians...have often blamed the Greens for the growing unpopularity of [their] party because the Greens want further reforms.”

Militant Fighting Fund

Continued from front page
hearing, we will help build on the support won for the freedom of the press rights of the *Militant* to bolster the fight by the Co-Op miners and the United Mine Workers of America to turn back the legal attack against them by the mine owners," said Norton Sandler, a national organizer of the Militant Fighting Fund. "The attempt to stifle the fight of the miners through the courts is at the heart of this harassment lawsuit by the company."

Attorneys Randy Dryer and Michael Petrogeorge will represent the *Militant* at the June 7 hearing. Dryer has a long history in defending clients whose freedom of the press rights have been challenged in court. The Salt Lake *Deseret Morning News* will be represented by Attorney Jeffrey Hunt. Michael O'Brien will represent the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

On August 1 the court will hear a second round of oral arguments by attorneys representing the UMWA, 16 Co-Op miners, and other trade unions and labor organizations that have backed the Co-Op miners' 20-month-long struggle to win UMWA representation. In addition to charges of "defamation," the miners' union and the individual Co-Op miners are cited for "unfair labor practices" for trying to organize a union at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah. In all, C.W. Mining and the IAUWU, which workers describe as a company union, are suing nearly 100 participants and supporters of the Co-Op miners' fight.

A blatant attack on freedoms

The Los Angeles chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) added its voice this week to those protesting the coal boss lawsuit, calling it "a blatant attack on freedoms."

"LCLAA strongly opposes the lawsuit brought by C.W. Mining against the miners at Co-Op Mining and the supporting newspapers," reads a May 31 statement that LCLAA president Raymond España sent to the Militant Fighting Fund. "The fight to defend the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the *Deseret Morning News* and the *Militant* is a necessary and important battle to protect every American's right to freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the right to organize."

The company filed the civil lawsuit last September. It amended its legal complaint and refilled it days before the December 17 union representation election at the Co-Op mine, when the workers were to decide between the UMWA, the IAUWU, and no union. Eight days before the vote, the company also fired nearly every worker known to support the UMWA. The company has contested the votes of the fired workers. A ruling by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) on the matter is pending.

Critical importance to the media

Resolving the C.W. Mining lawsuit "is of critical importance to the news media," says the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News* legal brief backing the motion by the two dailies to dismiss the case. "This sweeping lawsuit in which Plaintiffs claim they have been 'defamed' by virtually everyone that has ever said anything critical about the Co-Op Mine, poses a dangerous risk of chilling...the news media's vigorous

and constitutionally-protected reporting of this controversy."

Attorneys for the *Militant* newspaper have further pointed out, "The time and expense associated with protracted litigation is a particular concern for small, independent, weekly newspapers with limited financial resources like *The Militant* (which, as stated on its masthead for decades, is 'A socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people'). The potential of frivolous defamation suits to chill First Amendment rights is even greater for these media outlets."

Arguments by the three newspapers

The newspapers will present a series of arguments, backed up by previous court rulings, for why the C.W. Mining lawsuit should be thrown out of court. These include:

1. The newspapers are protected by Utah's public interest privilege, which covers publications concerning public health and safety and the functioning of government bodies, so long as the reporting was not made with malice.

2. Given the context of a heated labor dispute many similar cases have been decided in Utah and other courts nationally involving spirited public debates where charges and counter-charges cannot be taken as defamatory.

3. Statements of opinion are constitutionally protected. Aside from editorials, which are clearly expressions of opinion, the remaining allegedly defamatory statements cited by the company are reports of the opinions, claims, and positions of the workers participating in the union-organizing fight at the Co-Op mine.

4. Newspapers are protected against defamation claims when reporting on official government proceedings, such as NLRB hearings and related rulings.

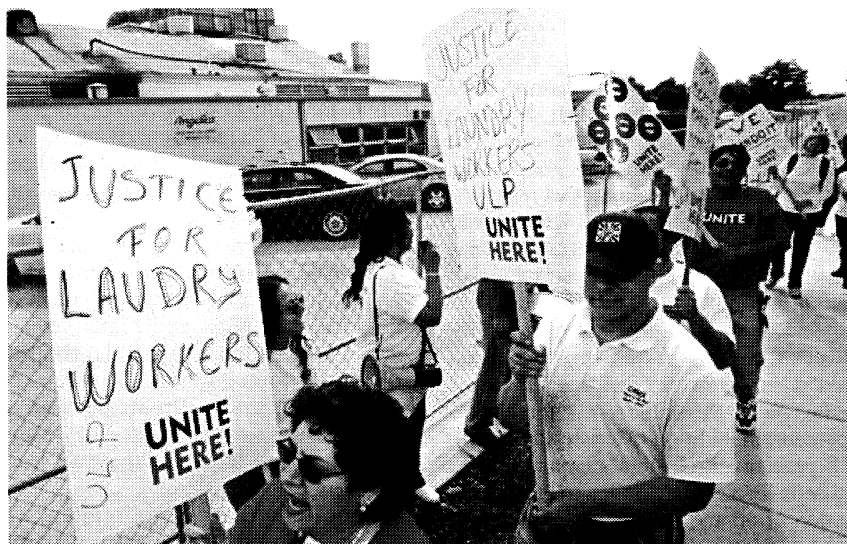
5. The company cannot sue on behalf of 23 individually named managers at the mine, since reporting by the newspapers about the dispute was focused on the actions of the company, and not the individual plaintiffs cited in the company's lawsuit.

6. Attorneys for the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News* will also argue there is a strong case for protection of their clients under "neutral reporting" rules backed by a number of courts.

Attorneys for the *Militant* have reserved the right to use this particular argument. In their written response to the C.W. Mining lawsuit, Dryer and Petrogeorge wrote, "The 'neutral reporting' privilege... is satisfied by accurately reporting what was said or done by participants in the course of a newsworthy public controversy." The privilege has been ruled valid even when an author publishes an entirely one-sided view of people and events.

Attorneys for the three newspapers will also argue C.W. Mining should be held accountable for their attempt to use the courts

Angelica laundry workers hold one-day walkouts



Workers at two commercial laundries owned by Angelica Textile Services held one-day strikes in May to protest the company's foot dragging in contract negotiations with the UNITE HERE union. Workers walked out at the company's Batavia, New York, plant May 31 and its Wichita Falls, Texas, facility May 25. At the Texas plant the company responded by locking the workers out for a day following the walkout.

Angelica is the largest commercial laundry servicing the U.S. health-care industry. UNITE HERE is waging a campaign for improved conditions and to extend unionization to all of the company's 35 facilities nationwide. Currently, 24 of the plants are unionized. Workers at seven plants in California, New York, and Texas were set to strike May 5, but did not walk out after union negotiators reported an improvement in the talks. The photo above is from a May 5 rally at the company's Antioch, California, laundry.

to chill the news media's reporting of the dispute. They will press for awarding the newspapers attorneys' fees and court costs incurred in defending themselves against the company's meritless claims.

Since all of the defendants have been charged with defamation, "The company's ability to press its attack on the miners who are at the center of this fight, and the UMWA, and other defendants, will be weakened if the court rules favorably on the motions by the three newspapers to dismiss the lawsuit," Sandler said. "We have no way of knowing now how soon the judge will rule on the newspapers' motions to dismiss the suit."

Campaign for endorsements

Supporters of the *Militant* are campaigning now to garner as many endorsements and contributions as possible before the June 7 hearing. Material with updated endorsers' lists will be regularly posted on the *Militant*'s website (www.themilitant.com) so that anyone interested can download them and use them.

At the end of May, some 40 union officials attending the Utah AFL-CIO executive board meeting in Salt Lake City received material urging support for the *Militant* Fighting Fund in their delegate packets. Partisans of the *Militant* Fighting Fund will be following up with phone calls and visits.

"As a long-time union member in both the Writer's Guild of America and the

Director's Guild of America, I support the *Militant* Fighting Fund's campaign against the Utah coal owners' harassment lawsuit," wrote Nick Castle, a film director in Los Angeles, in a May 25 letter. "We in the Hollywood film community have a stake in spreading the word about the issues in the lawsuit filed against the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party."

The SWP is cited in the lawsuit on charges of defamation based on the false claim by C.W. Mining bosses that the party owns and controls the *Militant*.

"I am deeply angry at the phony defamation suit that C.W. Mining has filed," Castle's letter says. "The charges against the miners and their supporters, Utah's main daily papers, the *Militant* newspaper, and others are a blatant attack on freedom of speech and freedom of the press."

After pointing to the *Militant*'s long record of consistent coverage and support for labor struggles since the paper was first published 77 years ago, Castle concludes: "That's why everyone who upholds civil liberties should win support—both political and financial—for the legal and public defense of the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party against this lawsuit. Such attacks on the First Amendment should not be tolerated."

Endorsements and contributions should be sent to the *Militant* Fighting Fund at P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, Utah 84152-0994. E-mail: MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com

Miners plan picket line to press union fight

Continued from front page

they would send a delegation to the June 5 commemoration of the 1914 Ludlow massacre of coal miners by company goons and the National Guard. The event will take place near Trinidad, Colorado. The workers have also been invited to attend the annual picnic of a UMWA local in Window Rock, Arizona.

The miners say they have no indication that any of the dozens of Co-Op miners fired by the company last year for union organizing have returned to work after being called by the bosses. The workers said they are calling on UMWA supporters and other partisans of their struggle to join them in these activities. The Co-Op miners will hold their picket line at the same site where they started a 10-month strike following the lockout by the company on Sept. 22, 2003, of 75 workers. C.W. Mining bosses fired the workers at that time after they protested the dismissal of one of their fellow miners and demanded safe working conditions and better wages. The miners won their jobs back in July 2004, after the National Labor Relations Board ruled in favor of charges filed by the UMWA that the miners had been fired illegally.

The workers said they are using the picket

lines to demand that the votes of the pro-UMWA miners be counted from a union representation election held at the mine December 17. Faced with a likely victory by the UMWA, C.W. Mining fired more than 30 miners, most Mexican-born, in the weeks leading up to the vote. The company alleged that many of these workers did not have valid documentation to work in the United States. The dismissed workers point out that they had been working with the same documents for years, and that their validity became an issue only on the eve of the union certification election.

Co-Op miners said they have also firmed up plans to attend the June 5 annual commemoration of the Ludlow massacre, which will take place about 75 miles south of Pueblo, Colorado. On April 20, 1914, Colorado National Guard troops and coal company thugs attacked a tent colony set up by striking miners in Ludlow, in southeastern Colorado. Twenty men, women, and children were killed, many of whom were Greek and Italian immigrants.

In 1918, the mine workers union built a memorial to the victims of the Ludlow massacre directly to the east of the pit where these workers were killed. That monument—depicting a striking miner, a

woman, and a child—stood unmolested for approximately 85 years. It was vandalized two years ago, including the decapitation of the statues. At the ceremony the monument will be restored to its original state through the efforts of the UMWA. Donations for the restoration came in from around the world.

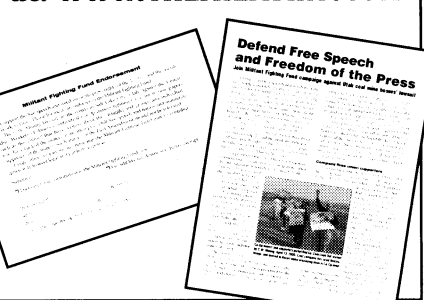
The miners were striking against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I). John D. Rockefeller Jr., from the billionaire Rockefeller family, owned a controlling interest in the CF&I. The CF&I owned many mines and a steel mill in Pueblo at the time of the massacre.

The Sunday rededication ceremonies, which include a barbecue luncheon, start at 10:00 a.m., June 5. "We sent invitations to 500 donors, who raised more than \$80,000 to restore the monuments and expect the largest turnout we've had in several years," said Mike Romero, president of UMWA Local 9856 based in Trinidad. UMWA international president Cecil Roberts is expected to attend and be the keynote speaker.

The Co-Op miners also plan to send a delegation to the annual picnic of UMWA Local 1332 at the McKinley mine. The picnic, which is held in Window Rock, Arizona, will take place July 24.

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**Send contributions/endorsements to:
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Salt Lake City, UT 84152-0994
MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com**

'New International' sales

Continued from front page youth as possible between now and August 15. The campaign ends at the conclusion of the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students that will take place August 7-15 in Caracas, Venezuela.

By then, the two new issues of the French translation of the magazine, *Nouvelle Internationale*, will be off the presses as part of the effort.

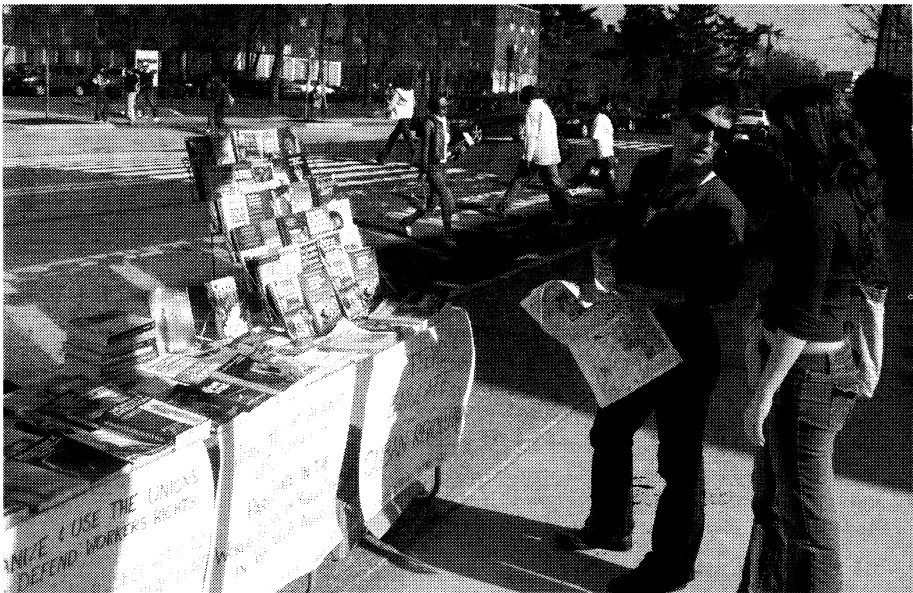
From Houston, Jacquie Henderson says campaigners there have stepped up *New International* sales as they study the new issues and gain experience in explaining the political questions in them. A number of copies of *New International*, she says, have been sold to *Militant* subscribers. The hundreds of new or just-renewed subscribers are an important group of potential readers of *New International*.

"César, a construction worker, bought issues 6 and 7 of *Nueva Internacional*, when he renewed the *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription he had first bought at the Socialist Workers campaign table set up at a flea market," Henderson writes. "He had been thinking about getting the Marxist journals

before the socialist workers came to his house. 'I read about them in *Perspectiva Mundial*,' he said.

"A student from Austin, Texas, who bought *NI* 12 two months ago purchased no. 13 last week to be able to participate in the classes in Houston on that issue. He has been reading in the *Militant* about the coal miners fighting for a union in Huntington, Utah, and the C.W. Mining lawsuit against the unionists, the *Militant*, and the Socialist Workers Party." This got him interested in studying the *New International*.

Jorge Ortiz, a young socialist in Chicago who is working with others there to organize a delegation to the world youth festival in Caracas, wrote that some of these youth recently drove up to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for a film showing on Venezuela. He spoke with a student who also plans to attend the festival. "After the film, we discussed the defense of the Cuban Revolution, organic farming in Cuba, the transformation of the U.S. armed forces, and the growing capitalist crisis," he said. The student decided he needed both new issues of *New International* and bought them



Militant/Tom Baumann

Angela Lariscy (second from right), Socialist Workers candidate for New Jersey governor, campaigns at Rutgers New Brunswick campus using *Militant* and *New International*.

along with a *Militant* subscription.

In Newark, New Jersey, Angela Lariscy reports that over the last couple of weeks socialist workers and young socialists

concentrated on door-to-door sales as part of the *Militant* subscription drive. "We always took with us copies of the two new *NIs* in both languages," said Lariscy, who is the SWP's candidate for governor of New Jersey. "We sold four copies to people who decided to purchase *Militant* subscriptions." In addition, a construction worker they met at a street table purchased *Nueva Internacional* no. 7 and decided to participate in the weekly classes in Newark on the two issues. In many cities, the class series has not yet completed the two *New International* issues, so these will provide good material for classes through June.

At the same time, supporters of the communist movement have been on a complementary campaign to sell *New International*, as well as Pathfinder books, to libraries and bookstores. They set a goal of visiting 185 book centers by June 9.

Several have remarked that the graphs and charts in *New International* no. 12, which illustrate the evolution of the capitalist economic crisis and the transformation of the U.S. military, have helped convince buyers and librarians to place orders.

Going into the next phase of the campaign between now and August 15, "We are looking at our initial goal in light of the possibilities we have now," reported Steve Warshell from Houston. Campaigners in every city will also be reviewing local quotas and mapping out plans to meet them.

SWP convention will feature classes on Marxism

Continued from front page National Committee has submitted a draft resolution, "Their Transformation and Ours," to be voted on. It is publicly available in issue no. 12 of *New International* magazine (see front-page ad).

The classes will be an opportunity for discussion by all participants.

Four classes draw on the section in "Their Transformation and Ours" that describes the broad social and political trends increasing the strength of the working class, historical trends that increasingly mark this century:

- "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Black Workers in the United States," presented by Joel Britton. Martin Koppel will give this class in Spanish. The main reading for it is a 1933 discussion that Leon Trotsky, a leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, held with SWP leader Arne Swaback. It appears under the title "The Negro question in America" in the Pathfinder title *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination* (pages 23-34).

- "Back to the Foundations of Marxism: Women, Class, and Family," by Mary-Alice Waters. The main reading is the 1979 resolution, "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation" contained in the first of the three-volume Education for Socialists bulletin titled

"Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation" (pages 37-61).

- "U.S. Capitalism and the Internationalization of the Working Class," by Anne Kelly.

- "Capitalism, Proletarian Solidarity, and the Declining Hold of State-Enforced Religious Obscurantism," by Richard Taylor and Ma'mud Shirvani.

- Other classes drawing on the communist movement's political continuity and themes central to "Their Transformation and Ours" include: "Bolshevism and Stalinism, the Proletarian Struggle for Power, and the Political Counterrevolution that Marked the 20th Century," by Steve Clark. The suggested reading is the 1937 article "Stalinism and Bolshevism," contained in *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1936-37*.

- "Defending the Vanguard of Our Class: The Bosses, Their Courts, and

Imperialism's Offensive Against Labor," by Róger Calero.

- "The Working Class Confronts War Profiteering: from the Liberty Ships and Port Chicago, to Point Blank Body Armor Today," by Maggie Trowe and Omari Musa.

- "1938-45: Proletarianization of the Party and the Test of World War II," by Dave Prince.

Another class is on "The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: An Introduction to Socialism," by Olivia Nelson in English and by Brian Taylor in Spanish. The class is based on the pamphlet by Jack Barnes of the same name.

The classes are designed to encourage further reading and study. Those attending the convention will be able to expand their own libraries by taking advantage of a special book sale offering big discounts—up to 50 percent off (see ad below).

Steep discounts at SWP convention on titles distributed by Pathfinder include:

New International magazine—50% off if you buy 4 or more

Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism—\$13 **\$8**

Four volume Teamster series—\$19 **\$11** each, and 3 for \$57 **\$28**

Communist Continuity & the Fight for Women's Liberation—\$30 **\$15** series; \$40 **\$6** each

Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1936-37 —\$35 **\$21**

Seizing on rightist Fulani's role in backing Bloomberg, Democrats probe curbs on ballot rights in New York

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK—Mayor Michael Bloomberg's campaign announced May 28 he will accept the endorsement and ballot line of the New York Independence Party in his bid for reelection. In response, sections of the Democratic Party establishment here have seized on the controversy over one of the prominent figures in the Independence Party, Lenora Fulani, to press for further restrictions on the right of parties other than Democrats and Republicans to get on the ballot and endorse candidates of their choice.

"Boot the Fake Parties" was the headline of an April 17 *New York Times* editorial. It called for changing the state election law that allow a political party to endorse candidates of other parties by turning over its ballot line to them. This would make it easier to "get rid of all these pretend political parties cluttering the ballot," the *Times* stated.

The paper's editors justified their proposal by pointing to Fulani's prominence in the Independence Party and noting its role in adding votes to Republican candidates—including Bloomberg, who won the 2001 elections with 60,000 votes on the Independence Party line. They highlighted Fulani's refusal to retract anti-Semitic statements that Jews "had to sell their souls to acquire Israel" and were then forced to "function as mass murderers of people of color."

The *New York Post* on April 18 reported that Sheldon Silver, the Democratic leader in the New York state assembly, commented that a move to repeal the law allowing such endorsements is "something I would look

at. It's probably not a bad idea."

Martin Koppel, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, said May 31, "Our campaign opposes any effort to restrict the right of parties to endorse the candidates they choose and in this way to limit their right to appear on the ballot.

"Such a move represents an attack on working-class parties. It is an attempt to reduce the space for working people to engage in debate, advance their own class interests in the electoral arena, and break from the stranglehold of capitalist parties."

Koppel noted that the proposed restriction could be used to try to prevent the SWP or another party from using its ballot space to endorse an independent working-class candidate if such an opportunity arose.

Socialist Workers campaigners will hit the streets in July to collect 20,000 signatures—well above the required 7,500—to place the working-class slate on the ballot for the November elections.

New York state's election law allows candidates to run on multiple lines, which has allowed cross-endorsement of Democrats or Republicans by smaller capitalist parties. It's through such "fusion tickets" that Republican candidates have been able to win major offices in New York, long dominated by the Democratic machine. Besides Bloomberg, his predecessor Rudolph Giuliani used the endorsement of the Liberal Party to win election in 1993. The previous two Republican mayors here, Fiorello LaGuardia (1934-45) and John Lindsay (1966-74), also ran on fusion tickets.

The demise of the Liberal Party has led to the formation of the Working Families Party, which runs "pro-labor" candidates while endorsing the Democrats for major races.

The New York Independence Party grew out of the electoral apparatus set up by billionaire Ross Perot for his 1992 presidential bid. It still draws on elements of Perot's anti-establishment demagoguery, which attracts middle-class elements fearful of the growing economic uncertainty.

Fulani's Jew-hating comments are part of the stock-in-trade of the rightist political organization of which she has long been a leader. That group, whose guru is Fred Newman, originally identified itself as Marxist, with Maoist influence. Over the decades it evolved sharply rightward, using radical demagoguery sprinkled with socialist verbiage, race-baiting, anti-Semitism, and conspiracy theories.

The Newman-Fulani outfit briefly joined Lyndon LaRouche's fascist outfit in the mid-1970s. As the New Alliance Party, it ran Fulani for president in 1988 and 1992, and became notorious for using the courts to try to throw communists and other third-party candidates off the ballot.

The New Alliance Party dissolved and its cadres oriented to the Perot milieu, including the New York Independence Party. Fulani briefly allied herself with fascist-minded politician Patrick Buchanan, serving for a time as cochair of his 2000 campaign. Since then her group has based itself in the Independence Party, capturing some key positions in it.



Country	Goal	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	35	38	109%
London	120	121	101%
UK total	155	159	103%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	50	42	84%
Christchurch	20	14	70%
N.Z. total	70	56	80%
CANADA	120	94	78%
SWEDEN	40	28	70%
UNITED STATES			
Miami	70	63	90%
Omaha	32	28	88%
Washington	100	70	70%
Houston	100	70	70%
Los Angeles	200	135	68%
Chicago	100	67	67%
New York	250	166	66%
Cleveland	40	26	65%
Seattle	90	57	63%
NE Pennsylvania	40	25	63%
Atlanta	100	60	60%
Detroit	60	34	57%
Tampa	60	33	55%
Pittsburgh	100	52	52%
Twin Cities	105	54	51%
Craig, CO	40	19	48%
San Francisco	185	87	47%
Boston	120	53	44%
Des Moines	80	34	43%
Newark	125	53	42%
Philadelphia	75	31	41%
Price, UT	65	25	38%
Birmingham	50	17	34%
Salt Lake City	15	2	13%
Other		109	
U.S. total	2202	1370	62%
AUSTRALIA	50	27	54%
ICELAND	32	16	50%
Int'l totals	2669	1750	66%

How bosses' war profiteering cost GIs' lives

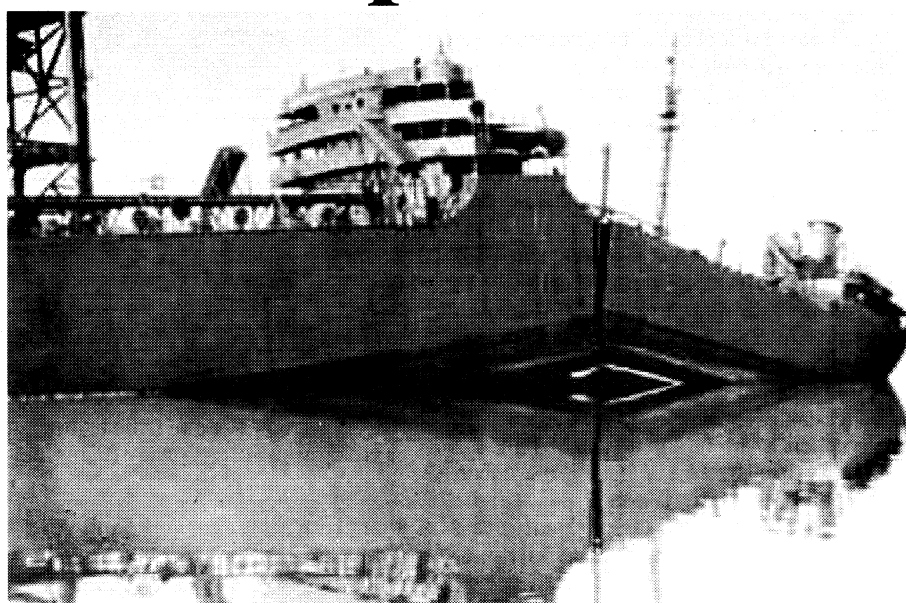
Reprinted below are excerpts from an article on war profiteering during World War II, titled "Wartime Crimes of Big Business," which appeared in the December 1943 issue of Fourth International, a predecessor of the Marxist magazine New International. We are publishing this article as part of the column that appears regularly this year—the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II—to tell the truth about the second worldwide interimperialist slaughter. Copyright © New International. Reprinted by permission.

BY GEORGE BREITMAN

Big Business spouts patriotic speeches about "the boys in the foxholes" every time the workers ask for a wage increase to meet the rising cost of living. But Big Business patriotism is only a hypocritical cloak for self-interest. Profits always come first with the capitalists—even during a war which they want to win. To get profits and more profits they do not even hesitate to endanger the lives of the men in the armed forces of this country and its allies. Here is the proof:

On Jan. 17, 1943—more than a year after Pearl Harbor—the S.S. Schenectady snapped in half and sank off the West Coast, only a few hours after it had been delivered to the Maritime Commission. The American Bureau of Shipping reported the sinking was due to the steel plate on the ship which was "brittle" and "more like cast iron than steel." The U.S. Senate's Truman Investigating Committee took over the case and at a hearing before this body in Washington on March 23, 1943, the truth came out: The defective steel had been supplied by the Carnegie-Illinois Corporation, subsidiary of the giant United States Steel Corporation, whose officials had willfully and consciously delivered faulty material to the Navy, Maritime Commission and Lend-Lease administration and had falsified the steel test records to cover up their tracks.

Testimony before the Truman Committee showed that the faking of tests had covered at least 28,000 tons of substandard plate; that minor officials and employees who had complained to their superiors about the faking of tests had had their "ears pinned back"; that high corporation officials "instead of cooperating (with the Truman Committee)... attempted to delay and obstruct the investigation." U.S. Steel officials naturally "deplored" the situation, describing it as "so unnecessary" and tried to put the blame on "a few individuals" with good intentions



SS Schenectady sits in harbor in Portland, Oregon, January 1943 after snapping in two because of faulty steel supplied by U.S. Steel Corp. Dozens of companies were indicted during World War II for selling defective war equipment. Most of them, especially the biggest companies, got off with a slap on the wrist.

who had grown "lax." This alibi, however, was decisively rejected by a federal grand jury in Pittsburgh in May, which refused to indict four individual employees offered as scapegoats and indicted the Carnegie-Illinois Corporation itself....

[There was also] the case of the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, subsidiary of the huge Curtiss-Wright Corporation,

"To get profits, capitalists do not even hesitate to endanger the lives of the men in the armed forces."

holder of the second largest war contracts in the country. Wright's Lockland, Ohio, plant (financed by the government)—was accused by the Truman Committee in July 1943 of falsifying tests on airplane engines, destroying records, forging inspection reports, changing tolerances allowed on parts, skipping inspection operations, etc. Inspectors who complained were intimidated or transferred. These activities were aided, abetted and covered up by Army inspectors and important Army officials influenced by the corporation. The result, according to the

committee's report, was:

Engines were built and sold to the government which were leaking gasoline.... Unsafe material has been discovered in completed engines ready for delivery. The company's own reports from its field representatives indicate that these parts had failed in a substantial number of cases. A substantial number of airplanes using this engine have had crashes in which engine failures were involved.... More than 25% of the engines built at the Plant have consistently failed in one or more major parts during a three-hour test run. Spare parts were shipped without proper inspection....

Accused of exaggerating the gravity of conditions at the Lockland plant, Truman retorted: "The facts are that they were turning out phony engines and I have no doubt a lot of kids in training planes have been killed as a result. The Committee was conservative in its report, in order to prevent too much alarm over the situation."

A number of other and smaller companies were accused of the same crime during 1943: the Bohn Aluminum and Brass Corporation of Detroit, charged with fraud for willfully violating specifications for engine castings used in Rolls Royce airplanes; the Sandusky Foundry and Machinery Company of Sandusky, O., whose officials pleaded guilty to faking tests on propeller sleeves used on Navy vessels; the National Bronze and Aluminum Company of Cleveland, convicted for selling the government defective sand and aluminum mold castings which are used in combat planes; the Antonelli Fireworks Company of Spencerport, N.Y., indicted for deliberately selling the Army faulty hand grenades and incendiary bombs; the Collyer Insulated Wire Company of Rhode Island, indicted for conspiring to avoid government inspection and deliver defective wire and cable.

Biddle's admissions

Nor does this exhaust the list. In a speech in Chicago on Aug. 23, 1943, Attorney General Biddle reported that Big Business frauds in this war are "much bigger than they were in 1917 or 1918"; he declared that 123 federal indictments had already been filed, with 1,279 investigations pending. Biddle did not indicate how many of these indictments and investigations involve fraud endangering the lives of servicemen but there can be no doubt that a substantial number do....

The explanation for the policies and activities of the monopolies and corporations is always to be found in the profit motive. No employer keeps his factory running unless there is profit to be made from it. This is as true in wartime as in peacetime, with only one difference: in wartime there is usually more profit to be made and the capitalists, maddened by greed, sweep aside all restraints and obstacles in the way of ever greater profits. Rare indeed is the case of an employer who has said: "I have got enough." The tendency of the ruling class is always to go after more and more. Billions are being made on war contracts,

but even the most powerful corporations do not disdain to pick up a few millions extra by manufacturing substandard products and then palming off the defective material as the article for which they are being paid such generous prices.

Critical shortages

There are shortages of aluminum, binoculars, critical chemicals, magnesium, tetracene, dyestuffs, tungsten, carbide, etc., all important materials in wartime. The reason? Because Standard Oil, du Pont, General Electric, ALCOA, General Motors and the other big corporations forged cartels with their fellow monopolists in Germany, Britain, France, Japan, etc. for the purpose of restricting production, maintaining monopoly and raising prices. More lives have been lost in this war because of these cartel deals than because of the sale of defective material.

Other shortages affecting the war program can be traced directly to the fact that the big corporations have hogged the great majority of the government's war contracts. As Assistant Attorney General Tom C. Clark has reported:

"At the start of the war program in this country 175,000 companies provided 70% of the nation's manufacturing output, while today, two and a half years later, the ratio has been reversed to the point where 100 corporations hold 70% of the war and essential civilian contracts. This group, he declared, has obtained the bulk of the fourteen billion dollars worth of new plants built at government expense." (New York Times, April 23, 1943.)....

Other wartime blessings for which the workers can thank Big Business are: the speedup, which resulted in 1942 in a greater number of casualties on the industrial front than on the military front; an artificially created manpower shortage—due to labor hoarding by the manufacturers and big agricultural interests, discrimination against Negro and women workers, managerial inefficiency—which is used to justify freezing the workers to low-paid jobs; an aggravation of the housing crisis in many war production centers resulting in increased sickness, disease, child delinquency and disruption of family life; food shortages designed to force price rises.

Government cooperation

Even after Pearl Harbor the government was still trying to get industry to discontinue illegal practices hampering war production. Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold complained in his report to Congress on Jan. 3, 1942, about:

"...the attitude of powerful private groups dominating basic industries who have feared to expand their production because expansion would endanger their future control of industry.... There is not an organized basic industry in the United States which has not been restricting production by some device or other in order to avoid what they call the 'ruinous overproduction after the war.'"

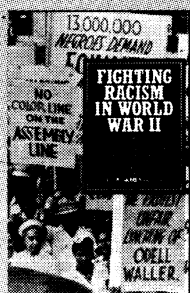
The government pleaded with the corporations to cooperate, to discontinue their cartel deals and violations of the anti-trust laws, and to let other companies use their patents for war production; the corporations flatly refused. Early in 1942 the government—in order to prevent the complete breakdown of the war program, that is, in order to protect the interests of the capitalist class as a whole—was finally compelled to institute a series of suits against a number of monopolies, making public the damning facts about which the government had been aware for many years.

The corporations had been caught red-handed. But the government, once having gotten their promise to permit the use of the patents during the war, dropped the charges and let these corporations escape virtually unpunished. Standard Oil, for example, whose restriction of synthetic rubber production had blocked the whole war production program, was permitted to plead nolo contendere and was given a \$50,000 fine (which amounts to about the average profit this corporation makes every hour). The other corporations got away even more easily. To make the government's at-

For further reading

Fighting Racism in World War II

by C.L.R. James and others



Week-by-week account of the struggle against racism in the United States in 1939-45. Includes coverage of the 1944 court-martial of 50 Black sailors found guilty of mutiny for objecting to loading ammunition onto ships under unsafe conditions following the Port Chicago disaster in which 327 men—mostly Black sailors in "labor battalions"—were killed. \$21.95

The Socialist Workers Party in World War II

by James P. Cannon

How the communist movement in the United States stood up to the patriotic wave inside the workers movement supporting the imperialist slaughter and campaigned against wartime censorship, repression, and antiunion assaults. \$24.95



Teamster Bureaucracy

by Farrell Dobbs

How the rank-and-file Teamsters leadership organized to oppose Washington's involvement in World War II, racism, and government efforts to gag class-struggle-minded workers. \$18.95

Socialism on Trial

by James P. Cannon

In testimony during the 1941 Smith "Gag" Act frame-up trial against leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters and Socialist Workers Party leaders, Cannon explains the communist movement's revolutionary working-class course. \$16

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Vests in World War II

itude unmistakably clear, Arnold, Biddle, Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of the Navy Knox wrote Roosevelt on March 20, 1942, in the midst of the public revelations about the cartels, and said that "some of the pending court investigations, suits and prosecutions under the anti-trust statutes by the Department of Justice, if continued, will interfere with the production of war materials.... In those cases we believe that continuing such prosecutions at this time will be contrary to the national interest and security." This was some more "blackmail," a threat to hold up on production if the prosecutions were continued, with government officials covering up for the corporations. Roosevelt answered: "I approve the procedure outlined in your memorandum to me...."

Labor must act

The trade union and liberal press have protested against most of the Big Business crimes and have often criticized government officials for their behavior. But they continue to regard each of the crimes and whitewash moves as a unique incident, isolated from all the others and caused by bungling or some other bad quality of individual capitalists and government officials. That is one reason why the union leaders and liberals are unable to work out a program to effectively combat such crimes.

The workers who are seriously concerned about the present situation must take another approach. They must learn to look at all the crimes of capitalism together as a whole and to understand that each individual "scandal" is part of and flows from the biggest scandal of all—Big Business domination not only of the war program but of the whole national economy. They must recognize that Big Business could not get away with its crimes were it not for the collusion or at best indifference of the government officials. Only on this basis can they determine on effective counter-measures....

To get to the root of the problem, the Socialist Workers Party advocates that the ownership and control of industry be taken out of the hands of the capitalists. This course of action will be regarded by Big Business as far more drastic than any bill providing the death penalty and it will be fought by them with every weapon they have, but it is the only practical answer to capitalist mismanagement of industry.

At its June 1943 meeting in Toronto, the international executive board of the United Auto Workers, CIO, drew up a series of proposals designed to ensure full employment in the post-war period. One of these called for government ownership after the war of "monopolistic industries and of industries strategically essential to the national safety."

This is a sound idea, and offers the key to the solution not only of unemployment, as nationalized production has shown in the Soviet Union, but also of the criminal practices of the capitalist class. Let industry be owned by the government and operated under the control of committees democratically elected by the workers. The profit motive would be removed, and with it would be removed the incentive to produce and sell dangerously defective products. The costs of production would be lowered and the workers' committees, having no interest in exacting profits from the blood of the soldiers, would guarantee production and honest testing in the interests of the masses of the people....

The question of who is to own and operate industry is a political problem. To make the change that is necessary the workers will have to conduct a political struggle against Big Business. The employers already have their political organizations, the Republican and Democratic Parties, and to fight them successfully the workers will have to create a political organization of their own. The capitalist parties are last-ditch supporters of the system of private property and private profit which enables the employers to do what they wish with the means of production. The workers need a party which will be just as firmly devoted to the program of government ownership and workers' control of industry. That means

an independent labor party, based on the trade unions and running its own labor candidates in elections.

The present government has already shown where it stands on this question. The billions of dollars worth of factories, properties and equipment now owned by the government are going to be turned over at bargain prices after the war to the employers, who will use them to swell their profits and to further strengthen their monopoly control. That is why the workers and their party must fight for the creation of a new kind of government, one which will aid, not oppose the struggle for government ownership and workers' control, a Workers' and Farmers' Government.

The wartime production crimes have torn away the mask from the rapaciously greedy countenance of Big Business. Now the working people must tear out of the capitalists' hands the power to continue their criminal activities.



Soldiers from 101st Airborne Division in Afghanistan, June 2002. U.S. Marines accepted 19,000 bulletproof vests manufactured by Point Blank Body Armor that had failed government tests. Faced with media exposure, the Marines recalled some of them.

Point Blank sold faulty vests to U.S. Marines

Continued from front page

tactics and efforts to cut corners in order to squeeze out more profits. Old, broken-down sewing machines, for example, make their jobs harder and unsafe.

Before the union victory, the company would grant no wage increases beyond a 50-cent raise after the first six months of work, which brought wages to \$6 an hour, workers report. In their first contract last year, the unionists won annual pay raises—a gain that workers at the company's other plants in south Florida said was extended to them as well.

Union condemns defective products

During their union fight, workers pointed to the company's use of outdated bullet-resistant textiles in vests sold to the New York City police. The company felt compelled to replace 1,000 vests free of charge.

In a September 2002 press release, during the strike, UNITE quoted workers at Point Blank who said they were "routinely told by management to sew incorrect size labels into bulletproof vests, and to fill orders with improperly sized vests after switching the labels." The union noted the problems that the sizing of the protective gear created for soldiers in Afghanistan.

The union statement also noted "problems documented by a U.S. Army survey of troops in Afghanistan" regarding improper sizing of body armor used by the soldiers.

The company responded by suing UNITE officials in December 2002, claiming they had defamed Point Blank with false and misleading information about the safety of the vests. The suit was settled as part of the agreement that resulted in union recognition at the Oakland Park plant, according to UNITE press secretary Amanda Cooper.

This year, police departments in the southern United States won a settlement from Point Blank to replace vests manufactured with Zylon, a material that loses its resistance to bullet penetration after only six months when exposed to light.

While some workers expressed concern that quality questions might jeopardize their jobs by hurting the business, most of those interviewed by the *Militant* said the revelations vindicated the union's stance. "The Marine Corps should refuse to buy Point Blank

vests if they think they are no good," said one union member, who asked not to be identified by name.

Unionists maintain that quality defects are the result of top management decisions, not worker incompetence, and should be corrected. "Whatever she says, that's what quality control does," another worker said, referring to Point Blank chief executive Sandra Hatfield.

Failed quality tests

According to the May 9 *Defense News*, last year "the Marine Corps accepted 19,000 Interceptor outer tactical vests (OTVs) from Point Blank Body Armor that failed government tests due to 'multiple complete penetrations' by 9mm pistol rounds" and other quality checks. Ballistics specialists at two government agencies, the Army Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Massachusetts, and the Defense Contract Management Agency, recommended the Marines reject the questionable vests.

One of the 800 internal memos released to the *Marine Corps Times* under the Freedom of information Act as part of an eight-month investigation, states, "The technical office is obligated to report...what we believe are major performance and quality assurance problems with this contractor. Ballistic failures started to occur in January 2003.... [Other agencies] have also identified major quality assurance deficiencies within Point Blank but without resolution to the satisfaction of either agency or the government COTR. (Contracting Officer Technical Representative). The COTR highly recommends disciplinary action against the contractor to resolve the issue. Instances of this nature have been occurring regularly over the past year.... I urge immediate action since this technical office has little confidence in the

performance of the items to provide the contracted levels of protection."

Instead, company executive Hatfield and Lt. Col. Gabriel Patricio of the Marines signed waivers allowing the purchase and delivery of the body armor.

On May 4, however, faced with the imminent publication of a growing body of evidence by the *Marine Corps Times*, the Marines recalled 5,277 Interceptors—about half of the rejected vests that were issued to the soldiers.

The president of DHB Industries, Gen. Larry Ellis (Ret.), dismissed doubts about the quality of the vests. "We categorically stand behind the quality and effectiveness of Interceptor OTVs manufactured by Point Blank," he said in a company press release.

"The vests are performing in the only test that matters—live combat," DHB executive vice president Col. Ishmon Burks (Ret.) told the press.

The Marine Corps has made no purchases from Point Blank so far in 2005, although it has an order for 9,000 vests outstanding.

The Army, which says it has never waived test results for body armor, continues to do business, however, having accepted 500,000 vests to date and providing the bulk of a half billion dollar backlog of orders.

Despite Point Blank's surge in profits in 2004, its stock plummeted by more than 60 percent in the first three months of this year. This drop followed a massive sell-off in December by DHB executives, shortly after a big U.S. Army contract was announced.

On May 3, the day before the Marines announced their recall of Point Blank vests, DHB announced it had named a new president, retired army general Larry Ellis.

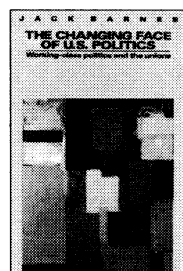
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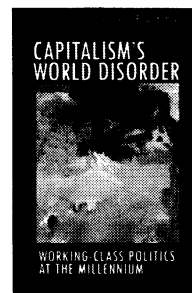


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Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

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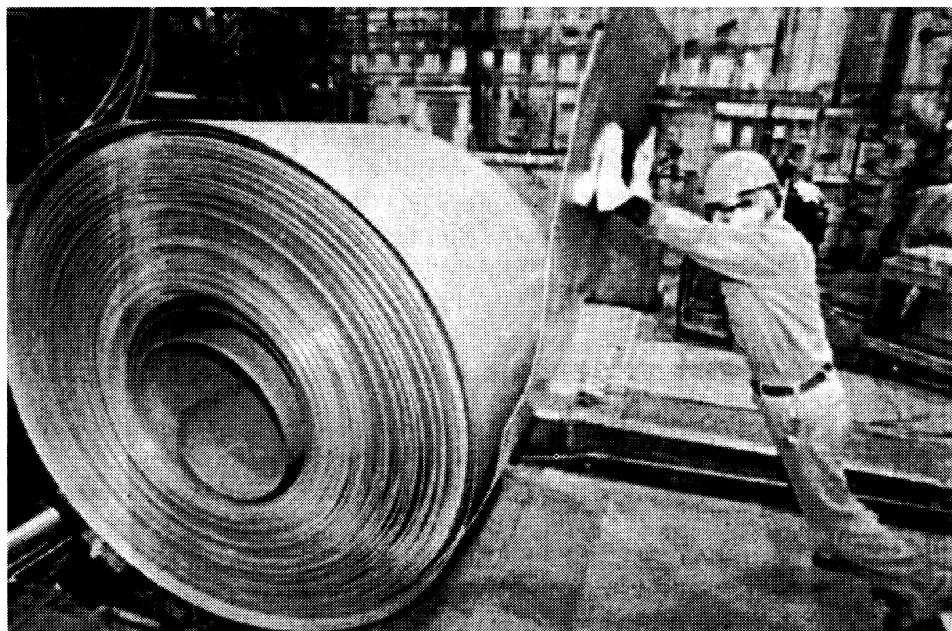
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How capitalists take surplus value from workers

Below are excerpts from *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. It is one of the most concise expositions of the elementary principles of Marxist political economy available. It elucidates the basic categories of Marx's economic doctrine from the emergence of the social surplus product to the labor theory of value. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY ERNEST MANDEL

In the last analysis, every step forward in the history of civilization has been brought about by an increase in the productivity of labor. As long as a given group of men barely produced enough to keep itself alive, as long as there was no surplus over and above this necessary



Worker feeds coil of steel into Tandem Mill at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel plant in Allenport, Pennsylvania. The added and uncompensated value by workers during the production process is the origin of wealth confiscated by the capitalist rulers.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

product, it was impossible for a division of labor to take place and for artisans, artists or scholars to make their appearance. Under these conditions, the technical prerequisites for such specialization could not possibly be attained.

Social Surplus Product

As long as the productivity of labor remains at a level where one man can only produce enough for his own subsistence, *social* division does not take place and any social differentiation within society is impossible. Under these conditions, all men are producers and they are all on the same economic level.

Every increase in the productivity of labor beyond this low point makes a

small surplus possible, and once there is a surplus of products, once man's two hands can produce more than is needed for his own subsistence, then the conditions have been set for a struggle over how this surplus will be shared.

From this point on, the total output of a social group no longer consists solely of labor necessary for the subsistence of the producers. Some of this labor output may now be used to release a section of society from having to work for its own subsistence.

Whenever this situation arises, a section of society can become a ruling class, whose outstanding characteristic is its emancipation from the need of working for its own subsistence.

Thereafter, the labor of the producers can be divided into two parts. A part of this labor continues to be used for the subsistence of the producers themselves and we call this part *necessary labor*; the other part is used to maintain the ruling class and we give it the name *surplus labor*.

Let us illustrate this by the very clear example of plantation slavery, as it existed in certain regions and periods of the Roman Empire, or as we find it in the West Indies and the islands of Portuguese Africa starting with the seventeenth century, on the great plantations which were

established there. In these tropical areas, even the slave's food was generally not provided by the master; the slave had to produce this himself by working a tiny plot of ground on Sundays and the products from this labor constituted his store of food. On six days of the week the slave worked on the plantation and received in return none of the products of his labor. This is the labor which creates a social surplus product, surrendered by the slave as soon as it is produced and belonging solely to the slavemaster.

The work week, which in this case is seven days, can be divided into two parts: the work of one day, Sunday, constitutes necessary labor, that labor which provides the products for the subsistence of the slave and his family; the work of the other six days is surplus labor and all of its products go to the master, are used for his sustenance and his enrichment as well.

The great domains of the early Middle Ages furnish us with another illustration. The land of these domains was divided into three parts: the communal lands consisting of forest, meadows, swamps, etc.; the land worked by the serf for his own and his family's subsistence; and finally, the land worked by the serf in order to maintain the feudal lord. The work week during this period was usually six days, not seven. It was

divided into two equal parts: the serf worked three days on the land from which the yield belonged to him; the other three days he worked on the feudal lord's land, without remuneration, supplying free labor to the ruling class.

The products of each of these two very different types of labor can be defined in different terms. When the producer is performing necessary labor, he is producing a *necessary product*. When he is performing surplus labor, he is producing a *social surplus product*.

Thus, social surplus product is that part of social production which is produced by the laboring class but appropriated by the ruling class, regardless of the form the social surplus product may assume, whether this be one of natural products, or commodities to be sold, or money.

Surplus-value is simply the monetary form of the social surplus product. When the ruling class appropriates the part of society's production previously defined as "surplus product" exclusively in the monetary form, then we use the term "surplus-value" instead of "surplus product."

As we shall see later on, however, the above only constitutes a preliminary approach to the definition of surplus-value.

How does social surplus product come into existence? It arises as a consequence of a gratuitous appropriation, that is, an appropriation without compensation, by a ruling class of a part of the production of a producing class. When the slave worked six days a week on a plantation and the total product of his labor was taken by the master without any compensation to the slave, the origin of the social surplus product here is in the gratuitous labor, the uncompensated labor, supplied by the slave to the master. When the serf worked three days a week on the lord's land, the origin of this income, of this social surplus product, is also to be found in the uncompensated labor, the gratuitous labor, furnished by the serf.

We will see further on that the origin of capitalist surplus-value, that is to say, the revenue of the bourgeois class in capitalist society, is exactly the same: it is uncompensated labor, gratuitous labor, which the proletarian, the wage worker, gives the capitalist without receiving any value in exchange.

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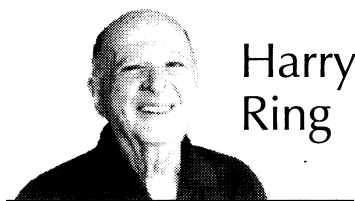
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A proud family—In Montgomery, Alabama, Alysha Cosby, a student at a Catholic high school, was given her diploma but was



Harry Ring

told she could not participate in the graduation ceremony because she is pregnant. Ms. Cosby decided to walk across the stage with her

classmates. This evoked applause and cheers in the audience.

Her mother and aunt came to the ceremony but were removed by two cops. Their daughter declared, "I worked hard throughout high school and I wanted to walk with my class." Her parents voiced solidarity. Her mother declared: "I can't believe something like this is happening in 2005."

In a way, it's consistent—Also a classmate of Cosby, the father of her child, was authorized to participate in the graduation ceremony.

UK: Next, big biz bankruptcy

only?—"Record numbers of bankruptcies and continued stagnation in the housing market were stark reminders...of the mounting economic challenges that Labour faces in its third term.... Personal bankruptcies in England and Wales reached 13,229 in the first three months of the year, marking a 28 percent rise on the same period last year and the fifth quarterly increase in a row."—*The Times*, London.

A true believer?—President Bush beats his gums a good deal, but he sure seems to practice some of what he preaches—like buying into the system. In a re-

quired disclosure, he reported he has at least \$4.85 million in Treasury notes, plus another million scattered among various savings accounts.

Death row breakout crushed—"Colorado Springs, Colorado—The city manager ordered an investigation when police fired up to 120 rounds in a residential neighborhood to kill five buffalo that escaped from a slaughterhouse. Bullets struck evacuated homes. No people were injured."—News item

'Terminator' keeps busy—

Last January, California's Governor Schwarzenegger presented an "overhaul" on workers compensation benefits. Now an independent study for the insurance industry finds that workers permanently disabled on the job will have their benefits slashed more than 50 percent.

Help Wanted—Clippings from various places give this column greater diversity. And, we think, a brighter column. Mail clippings to Pathfinder Books, 4229 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90011. E-mail to: thegreatsociety@sbcglobe.com

Trial record found in 1955 murder of Emmett Till

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

The FBI announced May 17 that it had acquired a transcript of the 1955 trial of the two racists who murdered 14-year-old Emmett Till. The case of the kidnapping and lynching of Till was reopened after a documentary on his killing drew renewed attention to the case last year.

The transcript had been supposedly "lost" and is the only publicly known record of the trial of Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, the two men involved in Till's murder. "The transcript presumably records the defense argument that prosecutors had not proved that the body was Emmett's, and that there was therefore no proof of his murder," notes a *New York Times* article. Both Bryant and Milam were acquitted of the charges and died free men. FBI agents in Jackson, Mississippi, have not disclosed, however, how the transcript—described as "a copy of a copy of a copy"—was found.

The brutal lynching of Emmett Till and the case surrounding his murder helped sparked the civil rights movement that brought down Jim Crow segregation in the United States.

On Aug. 24, 1955, while visiting family in Mississippi, Emmett Till and his cousins went into a local store in the town of Money. According to Till's cousin, Emmett whistled at a young white woman behind the counter, Carolyn Bryant, who ran the store with her husband Roy Bryant.

Four days later, Roy Bryant and his brother, J.W. Milam, went to the home where Emmett Till was staying, and took him away at gunpoint. Bryant and Milam whipped him with a .45 caliber pistol, shot him in the head, and tied a 75-pound fan from a cotton gin around his neck with barbed wire. They then threw his body into the Tallahatchie River. His mutilated body

was discovered several days later by men fishing in the river.

Till's killers, Roy Bryant and Milam, were arrested and tried for murder, but acquitted in just one hour by an all-white jury. Several months later in an interview with William Huie published in the Jan. 24, 1956, issue of *Look* magazine, they confessed to his murder. J.W. Milam told *Look*, "We were never able to scare him." Huie writes that Till would not back down and said to Milam and Bryant, "You bastards, I'm not afraid of you, I'm as good as you are." Milam, who pulled the trigger, said, "Well, what else could we do? He was hopeless."

The body of Emmett Till was so disfigured that Mamie Till, Emmett's mother, identified the body of her son by the ring he wore around his finger. At an open casket wake in Chicago, more than 50,000 people viewed the body and saw the reality of racial violence inflicted on Blacks.

Lynchings—the mutilations, hangings, and burnings of Blacks—were a part of the reign of terror and extralegal violence carried out against Black men and women all over the United States. They were a method used to drive Blacks off the land, to "teach a lesson" to "uppity" potential Black leaders, and anyone else who challenged Jim Crow segregation.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, the documentary *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*, released last year, and other new information indicate that Bryant and Milam had accomplices in the murder who may still be alive, including Carolyn Bryant.

The FBI now plans to exhume the body of Emmett Till and perform an autopsy to find the cause of death. Bertha Thomas, a cousin of Till's, told the Associated Press, "They had over 40 years to do this, and my



Trial jury that in one hour acquitted Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, the killers of Emmett Till, in 1955. Inset: 14-year-old Emmett Till prior to his visit to Mississippi.

major question to the FBI, the Department of Justice and the anybody else involved, is why now?"

The Till case is not the only prominent lynching case that has recently been reopened. On Jan. 7, 2005, Klansmen Edgar Ray Killen, 79, who was responsible for the murder of three civil rights work-

ers—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—in Neshoba County, Mississippi, in 1964 was charged with three counts of murder, 40 years after their killings. The three young activists were involved in organizing Blacks to vote as part of a nationwide "Freedom Summer" campaign.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

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

June 13, 1980

MANAGUA—Thousands of people turned out in Nicaragua's main cities May 23 to protest the cold-blooded murder of a young teacher in the literacy campaign, Gregorio Andrade. "Against every aggression, more revolution!" was their chant.

Former National Guardsmen of ex-dictator Anastasio Somoza slipped across the Honduran border to carry out the assassination. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) called for mass mobilizations to answer the outrage, and in less than forty-eight hours there were close to 100,000 marchers here in Managua.

The literacy workers, despite the counterrevolutionary terrorism aimed at them, have a higher morale than ever. Six *brigadistas* from the People's Literacy Army (EPA) who were with Gregorio Andrade when he was kidnapped and murdered were in the grandstand at the Managua demonstration. They vowed to continue with their work in the literacy campaign—known here as the second people's insurrection.

Andrade was savagely tortured and stabbed more than fifteen times by the counterrevolutionaries. But the *brigadistas*—youths of thirteen and fourteen years old—reflect the inexhaustible will to struggle of the Nicaraguan people.

Popular anger at Andrade's brutal murder was indicated in the demonstration with shouts of "To the wall! To the wall!"

A law introduced by the July 19 Sandinista Youth, and approved by the Council of State, has fixed penalties at double the normal ones for anyone attacking *brigadistas*.

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

June 13, 1955

Confronted by growing popular opposition to its witch-hunting measures, the Newark City Council last week tabled indefinitely a motion to investigate "Communist" activity among city employees.

At the June 1 Council meeting speakers representing the CIO, the Americans for Democratic Action and the Newark Teachers Union (AFL) opposed the probe as well as provisions for loyalty questionnaires and oaths. The latter two measures were adopted by the Council two weeks ago.

Ever since the middle of May, when the House Un-American Activities Committee conducted a probe in Newark, witch-hunters and opponents of the witch-hunt have been engaged in open battle.

The witch-hunters sought to continue attacks on civil liberties in Newark which were started by the Un-American Committee. Mayor Leo P. Carlin and Board of Education President William C. Ricigliano teamed up to suspend three teachers—Dr. Robert Lowenstein, Perry Zimmerman and Miss Estelle Laba—because they invoked the Fifth Amendment before the Un-American Committee. And the City Council Committee voted to institute oaths, questionnaires and probes.

Civil liberties defenders, on the other hand, took courage from the spirited opposition waged against the Un-American Activities Committee at its hearings. At that time, 1,500 United Electrical Workers members picketed the committee on the first day of hearings and nearly 1,000 people attended a protest meeting sponsored by the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee two days later.

'Che Guevara Talks to Young People': Greek edition launched at book fair

BY THEO MISAILIDES

KATERINI, Greece—More than 60 people of all ages attended the book presentation of the new Greek language edition of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, held in the park here in this northern city of Greece.

The presentation, which took place on May 18, was part of the sixth annual book festival. The festival program was organized by the Municipality, three local cultural organizations, as well as the city's four bookstores. The presentation was one of three scheduled for the weeklong book fair. A half-page article in the city's daily *Topiki* reprinted a press release by the publishers that announced the publication of the new book. The event was also covered by the other city daily paper, *Olympio Vima*.

Katerini is a city of 70,000 in the province of Macedonia. It is the main center in an important farming region. Books from Athens publishing house Diethnes Vima, which published *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, have been sold at farm protest actions here and in the neighboring region of Thessaly this winter. In March, at a 1,000-strong farm event in Killeler, an hour's drive from here, a team of volunteers from Athens and Katerini sold 17 books of which seven were *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. Distribution teams

from Athens have visited the province three times this winter and spring. Two bookstores in Katerini carried the Che book. As a result of the presentation the other two have also opened accounts.

Natasha Terlexis, one of the Greek-language editors and president of Diethnes Vima, was the featured speaker. She was followed by the local musical group Sol y Sal, which played Cuban songs. Terlexis presented Che as he was and as he comes across from his speeches in the pages of the book—a revolutionary who thought, acted, and evolved as an integral part of the broader revolutionary leadership of the Cuban Revolution.

The discussion at the end concentrated on Cuba today and the future of the revolution. "Since its fundamental institutions are deeply rooted and alive—the revolution will live," commented an older meeting participant from the audience.

A book table was staffed by a volunteer from Katerini. A total of 17 copies of the book's Greek edition were sold along with one copy of the Spanish edition and one copy each of *The Second Declaration of Havana*, *Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War*, and *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*—all in their Greek edition.

Diethnes Vima's titles are to be displayed throughout the fair.

Oppose faulty gear for GIs

We join with workers at Point Blank Body Armor in Florida who, in the course of organizing and defending their union, UNITE, have condemned the production and sale by the bosses of defective bulletproof vests used by U.S. soldiers. Equally responsible are the Marine officers who, together with company executives, signed waivers allowing the delivery of protective gear that failed quality tests, increasing the dangers facing GIs stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We condemn this war profiteering as we continue to campaign for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world where Washington is pursuing its imperial interests.

During their successful two-year battle for a union, workers explained that the Point Blank bosses, in their quest for profits, were not only keeping wages at unlivable levels and refusing workers even the right to drink water in order to cut down on restroom use. The company was also disregarding quality standards and thus jeopardizing the lives of soldiers who were issued the bullet-proof vests. At the same time, and during wartime, workers rejected the company's demand to subordinate their struggle for a union to the employer's profit prerogatives supposedly in the interests of "American patriotism." They took the moral high ground, setting an example for the entire labor movement.

Point Blank's sale of defective vests is not an isolated case. Such consequences of war profiteering have marked every imperialist war. In the U.S.-led war and occupation of Iraq, some of the best-known cases of bid-rigging, fraud, and delivery of faulty parts involve companies such as Halliburton, Bechtel, and Boeing. A recent report by the Pentagon inspector general blamed Lockheed-Martin for 33 deficiencies in a C-130J transport plane, including cracked propellers.

Similarly, throughout World War II the *Militant* exposed the U.S. bosses' war profiteering, which led not only to price-rigging and shortages at home, but to war supply ships breaking up at sea because of defective steel plates,

faulty airplane engines, and other flagrant violations of production standards—often covered up by falsified reports—that threatened the lives of soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

The owners of capital are driven to maximize profits at all cost—in times of war as well as peace. The only difference is that in wartime they can sometimes make even bigger profits.

Just as they push to slash wages and benefits and cut corners on job safety, the capitalists, along with their government and the military brass, show callous disregard for workers and farmers in uniform, whom they throw into combat as cannon fodder for their wars of plunder, as they have in Iraq today and will continue to do in future imperialist wars. Despite pious pronouncements about their concern for the troops, they consider the lives of working people expendable.

War profiteering is inherent in capitalism. It has prevailed under Democratic and Republican administrations alike, and will not be ended through government commissions, fines, or other proposals for "corporate reform" advocated by liberal groups and the middle-class left. It will come to an end—together with imperialist wars abroad and the employers' anti-working-class offensive at home—only when working people organize a movement that takes political power out of the hands of the ruling billionaire families and establishes a workers and farmers government, joining with fellow toilers worldwide in the fight for socialism.

The exposures about Point Blank underscore workers' need to organize trade unions and use their potential power as the only way to defend ourselves from the bosses' assaults.

The labor movement must follow the example set by workers at Point Blank and oppose the employers' profit-driven efforts to sacrifice the safety of soldiers through shoddy production. At the same time, it should campaign for bringing all the troops home now from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Korea, Haiti, Colombia, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Washington uses UN conference to target Iran

BY SAM MANUEL

Washington used a monthlong conference at the United Nations, which was supposed to strengthen the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), to press its campaign to prevent countries like Iran and north Korea from developing nuclear energy.

Days later, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice publicized some details of how Washington is using the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), under which the U.S. military and its allies conduct piracy on the high seas using the mantra of "nuclear non-proliferation," with Iran as a particular target.

At the same time, many reports in the media indicate that Tehran's effort to diversify energy sources by developing nuclear power is a matter of national pride in Iran, and is backed even by opponents of the Iranian government.

Signaling the limits of what it could achieve at the UN conference, the White House decided not to send Rice to the meeting, leaving advocacy of U.S. policy to midlevel diplomats. The meeting, which ended May 27, failed to reach any agreement on changing the NPT.

In opening remarks at the conference, the head of the U.S. delegation, Stephen Rademaker, emphasized the PSI's importance in preventing the transportation of "weapons of mass destruction (WMD)," or materials that could allegedly be used to build such weapons.

To highlight the second anniversary of launching the Proliferation Security Initiative, Rice invited foreign diplomats to the State Department May 31. She said some 60 governments now support PSI with about 40 participating in interceptions. She welcomed the newest member states—Argentina, Iraq, and Georgia—and asked other diplomats to urge their governments to join. "In the last nine months alone, the United States and 10 of our PSI partners have quietly cooperated on 11 successful efforts," Rice said. "For example, PSI cooperation stopped the transshipment of material and equipment bound for ballistic missile programs in countries of concern, including Iran. PSI partners, working at times with others, have prevented Iran from procuring goods to support its missile and WMD programs, including its nuclear program." The Iranian government was the only one Rice identified specifically as a target of PSI operations.

In other steps to put pressure on Tehran, the U.S. government has expanded aid to Iranian "pro-democracy" groups. Through the National Endowment for Democracy, the State Department has channeled \$500,000 to aid such groups. The endowment was set up in 1983 and receives funding from the U.S. Congress. Washington has also increased Voice of America broadcasts into Iran.

U.S. officials arrogantly assert that Iran does not need nuclear power because of its vast oil and gas reserves. For this reason they claim Iran's efforts to develop nuclear technology can only have a military purpose. But the same imperialist powers, Washington and London in particular, went out of their way for nearly a century to prevent Iran from taking control of its oil reserves. When the government of Mohammad Mossadegh nationalized Iran's oil in the 1950s, Washington engineered its overthrow with a 1953 coup and restored the rule of the shah. It took another 26 years for the Iranian people to bring an end to that brutal, U.S.-backed monarchy through the 1979 revolutionary upheaval, during which oil workers played a central role.

Iran's growing energy needs

The Iranian government says it needs to develop nuclear power to meet the country's growing energy needs. Even opponents of the Iranian regime agree with this assessment. In a column in the June 25, 2004, *Wall Street Journal*, Ardeshtir Zahedi, Iran's foreign minister under the shah between 1967 and 1971, wrote that as early as 1970 projections showed Iran might need all of its oil production for domestic consumption by 2010. Zahedi said Iran cannot be denied "the right to develop and use nuclear energy," a project that began in the 1950s.

"As its economy grows, so does Iran's demand for electricity," wrote *Power Engineering International*, an industry magazine in its online edition. Iran has the biggest power market in the Middle East, constituting a quarter of the region's electrical capacity. By 2020 Iran will need to spend \$96 billion to meet expanded energy needs, a figure "beyond Iran's budgetary capacity," the magazine noted.

In addition, petroleum is becoming more difficult and expensive to extract. Oil fields do not produce evenly until the last drop is gone. After the first half of reserves have been sucked from the ground, the second half becomes harder and more costly to extract. Many oil companies then abandon these fields and move on. University of Houston professor Kishore Mohanty, for example, estimates that as

Continued on Page 11

Endorse Militant Fighting Fund

With only a few days to go before a June 7 court hearing, we are urging readers across the United States and internationally to step up their efforts to win new endorsers and contributors to the Militant Fighting Fund. Trade unionists, fighters for Black rights, and many other defenders of freedom of the press and freedom of speech can be convinced to lend their name and make a donation to this high-stakes battle to defend the Bill of Rights.

Attorneys representing the *Militant*, *Deseret Morning News*, and *Salt Lake Tribune* will argue before a federal judge in Salt Lake City for dismissing the lawsuit by C.W. Mining and the International Association of United Workers Union (see front-page article). At a second hearing on August 1, attorneys representing the United Mine Workers of America, 16 Co-Op miners, the Utah AFL-CIO, and other defendants will press for dismissing the same harassment lawsuit.

Civil suits of this type are a tactic employers will increasingly rely on when they are challenged by the effective use of union power.

Through this lawsuit C.W. Mining is asking the court to move the jurisdiction over disputed issues between the UMW and the company away from the National Labor Relations Board and into the federal court system.

The mine owners seek to silence newspapers that report what the workers say in their own words about the conditions they face on the job and why they want to be represented by the UMW. The coal bosses' lawsuit challenges the right of the papers to also express editorial opinion favorable to the miners. The bosses and the company-run union claim in court papers that their dispute with the miners and the UMW is a "private" matter, and they challenge the constitutional protections afforded newspapers that report on a public controversy. The plaintiffs insist that any interpretation of rulings by

the National Labor Relations Board other than their own falls outside protections afforded the media that report on the proceedings of governmental bodies. The C.W. Mining owners also assert that the various defendants who have allegedly "defamed" the bosses are part of a vast "conspiracy" to harm the company.

This suit is designed to have a chilling effect on the right of a newspaper to cover what workers say during a strike and related activity without being sued. It has the further goal of trying to tie up all the defendants in lengthy, intrusive, and expensive "discovery."

The *Militant* is a prominent target in this lawsuit because of our weekly coverage of this fight since it began in September 2003, and our unwavering support for the Co-Op miners' just struggle to organize a union.

This is the most important labor battle in the United States today. It is having an effect on other miners, coal haulers, and other workers in the area and beyond. C.W. Mining's millionaire owners are using their lawsuit to shift this battle into the courts, away from the terrain of picket lines and solidarity actions organized by the miners. They seek to undercut the example of the mobilization of union power on the part of the Co-Op miners that has inspired other coal miners, trade unionists, and many workers who are now unorganized. The miners and their leadership have refused to be intimidated by this harassment lawsuit and other company tactics, as their recent picket lines at the mine and at a coal shipping depot owned by C.W. Mining demonstrate.

Likewise, the *Militant* has not, and will not, be intimidated. We will continue providing the facts about this battle. And our editorial voice will keep backing the 16 Co-Op miners, the UMW, and the other defendants in this case regardless of the outcome of the June 7 hearing. We urge each of our readers and every supporter of the Militant Fighting Fund to do the same.

Changes in *Militant*

Beginning with next week's issue, the *Militant* will start publishing in Spanish, as well as English. As we explained in the editorial "We're going bilingual in June," in the May 2 issue, the monthly Spanish-language news magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* is being combined with the *Militant*. Every week a number of pages will be in Spanish, with lead articles and editorials appearing in both languages.

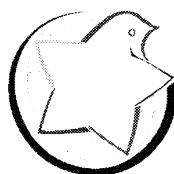
To make the paper more readable, we will simultaneously increase the type size and spacing between the lines.

Next week's *Militant* will be a two-week issue. It will be dated June 27 and printed on June 9. The following issue will be printed June 23. Please adjust bundle orders accordingly.

Apply now to join U.S. delegation to the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students
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Correction

The article "'Guest worker' bill aims to regularize superexploitation of immigrant labor" in the June 6 issue incorrectly identifies one of the sponsors of the "Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act" as Theodore Kennedy. The senator's correct name is Edward Kennedy.

After reelection, British gov't plans cuts in social wage

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—The re-elected Labour government outlined its legislative priorities for the new Parliament in the “Queen’s Speech” that the head of state delivered to parliament May 17. The list includes “welfare reform” to advance the government’s course of eroding the social wage and the introduction of compulsory identity cards and other measures that will undermine democratic rights in the name of fighting crime and “terrorism.”

Many political commentators had forecast that Prime Minister Anthony Blair would be a lame duck in a third term, citing the government’s reduced parliamentary majority and the prime minister’s announcement that he would stand down before the next election. Following his reelection, however, Blair reshuffled his cabinet, declaring that the government would “focus relentlessly” on “people’s priorities”—populist buzz signaling preparation for an assault on social programs.

Blair loyalist David Blunkett was returned to the cabinet as work and pensions secretary to oversee this assault. Welcoming the appointment, Blunkett said, “The department has some of the biggest issues that the nation faces in terms of welfare to work, in terms of pensions, in terms of incapacity benefit; the £12.3 billion we now spend on housing benefit.” (£1 = \$1.82.)

Andrew Adonis, Blair’s former education advisor, has been named the new schools minister. A former member of the Social Democratic Party, Adonis will push partly privatized “city academies,” which have freedom to use their budgets as they see fit, reducing state supervision through local education authorities to give parents a “choice.” Newly appointed health minister Patricia Hewitt will likewise extend the use of partly privatized Community Trust hospitals.

These projects in education and health are aimed at improving provision for the middle classes at the expense of working people and driving against wages and conditions of workers employed in the two sectors.

Weak government

The government’s determination to push ahead with its course of offloading the effects of the crisis onto the backs of working people shouldn’t be confused with strength, however. The Blair administration has been weak ever since it gained office in 1997. One expression of that weakness is the very “welfare reform” at the center of its new legislative proposals.

Before gaining office eight years ago, Blair had promised to “think the unthinkable” about welfare, the euphemism used here to describe the rulers’ plan to slash the social wage. Blair appointed Frank Field to do the unthinkable thinking in 1997, but then squeezed him out—despite Labour’s huge parliamentary majority at the time—judging that his radical anti-working class

measures were politically too dicey. What the government has *not* achieved—but that the ruling class needs—is driving the Labour Party’s legislative program today.

Even the less radical measures the government did adopt have cut heavily into Labour’s traditional electoral base. As hopes and expectations that a Labour government would reverse the effects of 18 years of the Tories were dashed, hundreds of thousands of workers abstained. According to the polling organization ICM, Labour has seen its vote among unskilled workers drop by 20 percent since 1997. Lower-paid workers are especially vulnerable to the erosion of the social wage.

Labour’s weakness has been masked by the absence of major labor struggles. Blair has also benefited from the long upturn in the business cycle—official unemployment is at 4.8 percent—which allowed the Labour Party to campaign on its “economic record.” Higher-paid, skilled workers perceived they had benefited from this upturn and stuck with Labour, attracted by its “stakeholder society” message that promised, at a time of economic insecurity, a better future and more choice for hard-working families. And in a move aimed at reinforcing this message, one of the first acts of the government following the election was to provide some (very precarious) funding for first-time house buyers.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown was given a high profile in the campaign, always at Blair’s side and widely touted as the person who will become Labour’s leader when Blair steps down.

Blair and Brown are the two leading architects of the New Labour project but have been rivals for the Labour Party leadership. Their main difference centers on what stance the government should take toward the European Union (EU). Both politicians favor London’s alliance with Washington. Blair, however, has also advocated “putting Britain at the heart of Europe,” including adopting the euro, which Brown opposes. During the election campaign Blair indicated that joining the euro would not be posed in the next Parliament. And after the no vote in France against the EU constitution Blair’s broader stance on the EU has been weakened. The day after the French vote, Blair indicated he might call off a similar referendum in his country that had been projected for next spring.

Riding the tide of a cyclical economic upturn cannot last much longer for the government, given the depression conditions spreading in world capitalism. The Office of National Statistics has announced that in March industrial output declined by 1.6 percent, the sharpest fall in three years. Government spending, which has contributed to the upturn, is to be cut back. Meanwhile, household debt stands today at 140 percent of disposable income. Any downturn will threaten the real estate bubble. Housing prices have

Washington sends Stealth fighters to s. Korea



Getty Images

F-117 Stealth fighter lands at Kunsan Air Base in south Korea, August 2004, after completing a training mission in the area.

BY SAM MANUEL

Rattling the saber against the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), Washington deployed 15 F-117 Stealth fighters to south Korea at the end of May, according to press reports. To reinforce the message, the U.S. government also suspended joint operations with the DPRK’s military to search for the remains of U.S. soldiers missing in action since the Korean War.

In a May 30 appearance on CNN’s Larry King Live, U.S. vice president Richard Cheney ratcheted up the discourse, calling DPRK president Kim Jong Il “one of the world’s most irresponsible leaders.”

On May 6 the White House charged that satellite intelligence suggested Pyongyang could be preparing to test a nuclear weapon, calling it “a provocative act.” Pyongyang denied the charge, reported the *China Daily*, and Beijing said it has no evidence supporting Washington’s claim. “The Chinese need to understand that it’s incumbent upon them to be major players here,” Cheney said on the CNN talk show.

Negotiations involving Pyongyang and Washington on north Korea’s nu-

clear program have been suspended for almost a year. The meetings, known as the six-party talks, had been hosted by Beijing and also include Seoul, Tokyo, and Moscow. Cheney said if the talks fail, another step “would be to go to the UN Security Council and seek the applications of economic sanctions.”

The search for the remains of U.S. soldiers is the only formal contact the U.S. military has with the north Korean armed forces. The Pentagon said it suspended the operations out of concern for the safety of U.S. personnel in light of the “uncertain environment created by North Korea’s unwillingness to participate in the six-party talks.”

Pyongyang has insisted it is developing nuclear arms to defend itself against the presence of 40,000 U.S. troops in south Korea and increased belligerence from Washington and Tokyo. According to north Korea’s official news agency, KCNA, a spokesman of the DPRK’s foreign ministry said May 22, “The DPRK remains unchanged in its stance of sticking to the goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula and seeking a peaceful negotiated solution to the nuclear issue.”

shot up 50 percent since 2002.

Tory Party crisis

Of more lasting duration is the crisis of the Conservative Party, the Tories, which had been the main party of British imperialism for over a century.

No longer a traditional conservative party with a substantial working-class vote, the Tories were transformed into a radical party by the “Thatcher revolution,” when then prime minister Margaret Thatcher took on the coal miners in open battle in the streets and defeated them, setting back the entire working class. But the Tories’ radicalism cost them votes—dropping from 14 million in 1992 to 9.6 million in 1997. This trend has continued. In the general election in May, despite winning more seats in the House of Commons, the Tories received less than 9 million votes.

In Scotland, where the weight of work-

ing-class resistance to the rulers’ austerity drive has been relatively greater, and where the Conservative Party is identified by working people as the main political instrument of national oppression by London, the Tories won just one member of parliament (MP); in Wales, three.

There is no way back to “one nation Toryism” for the Conservative Party, however. With the electoral victories of Labour, a party pledged to carrying out a similar anti-working-class course, the Tories have been unable to convince the ruling class that they constitute a better alternative.

The most authoritative big-business dailies, the *Times* and the *Financial Times*, called for a vote for Labour—however unenthusiastically—as did the *Economist* magazine. Conservative Party leader Michael Howard announced he will resign, which means that the party will have its fifth leader in a decade.

Washington targets Iran

Continued from Page 10

much as two-thirds of the oil in mainland U.S. reservoirs has been left untouched because it is too costly to extract.

Developing nuclear energy would also allow Iran to slash the costs of power production by tapping into another of its natural resources—reserves of uranium ore. Tehran’s opposition to demands by Washington and its allies in Europe to forego uranium enrichment—which is necessary for producing fuel for nuclear reactors—and instead import nuclear fuel from abroad makes sense to millions in Iran and elsewhere because doing so would impose another financial burden on the country and allow other governments to cut off supplies at any time.

Recent reports in the U.S. media show that broad cross sections of Iranians view the country’s right to develop nuclear technology as a matter of national pride. “Achieving the peaceful use of technology is really a matter of pride and we will not stop this for anything,” Ehsan Motagi, a seminary student in Isfahan, told the *New York Times*. A phone survey of some 2,000 Iranians by the Washington-based InterMedia said 55 percent of respondents backed

the country’s pursuit of nuclear technology and 46 percent strongly supported it.

On May 25 Tehran agreed to extend an agreement with Berlin, London, and Paris to temporarily suspend enrichment of uranium in exchange for economic incentives.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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NEW JERSEY

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Film Showing: “Lumumba” Fri., June 17, 8:00 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave. (973) 481-0077.

LETTERS

Stalinist Popular Front

In his article “Bolshevism versus class collaboration: a reply to Young Communist League’s defense of Stalinist Popular Frontism” (May 2 issue), Martin Koppel says that in the mid-1930s “Stalinist parties were instructed to support the ‘democratic’ imperialist governments in their military and diplomatic preparations for war against fascist-led imperialist regimes.”

This meant covering up U.S. imperialist war crimes. In a report to the Communist Party USA’s Central Committee in June 1937, party secretary Earl Browder said that in explaining “how to break up the false conception of [American] isolation and neutrality as the road to peace all efforts must be turned in this direction of merging the movement of the American people for peace together with the international movement, against the instigators of war, which means German and Italian fascism and the Japanese militarists, and

toward the creation of a united front of the democratic states against fascist aggressors.” (*The People’s Front*, by Earl Browder, 1938 International Publishers.)

Workers and peasants in China, Haiti, Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Philippines could only wish that “democratic” U.S. imperialism followed a policy of “isolation and neutrality” in the 1930s! U.S. troops in these countries were used to smash rebellions, fortify brutal dictatorships, and maintain a steady supply of super-profits back to Wall Street.

Bill Kalman

Albany, California

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.

Strikers in Finland win solidarity in Sweden

BY BJÖRN TIRSEN

BORLÄNGE, Sweden—"There are more workers in other industries who want to join in," Jan Nilsson, a shop steward and member of Pappers (the paper workers union in Sweden) Local 50, told the *Militant* May 27.

Nilsson, who works with machine servicing in the Kvarnsveden Stora Enso plant in Borlänge—employing some 900 workers—was referring to recent announcements by the Metalworkers Union, Wood Workers Union, Construction Workers Union, and Electrician Workers Union that they are joining the Paper Workers' Union in solidarity actions with some 25,000 workers in Finland locked out by the paper companies Stora Enso Oyj and UPM-Kymmene Corp.

"It would be terrible if the bosses pushed their demands through there, we are worried that they will try the same thing here," he said.

In mid-May the paper industry bosses imposed a four-week lockout on some 50 paper, pulp, and paper board mills, and on May 31 extended the shutdown to the end of June. They are demanding a range of concessions that include the introduction of two unpaid "quarantine days" for workers when they take sick leave, 12-hour shifts, production through the Christmas and mid-summer holidays, the hiring of service personnel like cleaners not tied to the contract, and the cancellation of a 10-year-old agreement that put some restrictions on



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Paperworkers at the Kvarnsveden plant in Borlänge, Sweden, participated in solidarity actions with 25,000 workers locked out by paper companies in Finland.

when the bosses can layoff workers.

After contract negotiations stalled, the Finnish Paper Workers' Union decided March 30 on an overtime ban. "We have a shortage of workers. It's enough if one or two are sick. That's why it's impossible for us to make a commitment to not stop the machines," said Kari Mietten, presi-

dent of the local at the Tainionkoski plant in Finland, April 29 to *Huvfudstadsbladet*, a Swedish daily newspaper published in Finland.

On April 28, 23,000 paperworkers went out on strike, shutting down the country's entire paper industry. The union then called a common strike for May 15-18,

again stopping production. The bosses responded with a lockout that started immediately after the strike ended.

As the strike came to a close, Finnish prime minister Matti Vanhanen said the government was prepared to intervene in the conflict. While claiming the government would not take sides, he assigned the head of the National Arbitration Board "to map out in which situations the paperworkers strike could affect peoples' health"—indicating that the government is looking for a pretext to act in the interests of the bosses.

In Sweden, the Employers Association is calling for an outlawing of solidarity strikes. "The Finnish paper conflict and the Swedish union's actions, including sympathy actions, illustrate well how unreasonable it is that sympathy actions are allowed," Ulla Hamilton of the Swedish Employers Association, said in a May 19 statement. "That's how much respect the Swedish unions have for one of the basic cornerstones in Swedish collective contracts—the no-strike pledge."

This refers to the law prohibiting any struggle against the bosses for the duration of a union contract. Solidarity strikes are exempted from that law. Forest and electrical industry spokespeople have joined in with similar attacks on workers' right to engage in solidarity strikes.

Well before the lockout, the representatives in the European Work Council for Stora Enso from Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Czech Republic, Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, Portugal and Finland met April 28 in Helsinki, Finland, and launched a call for solidarity with the Finnish workers. "The employer should consider that the actions in Finland could have an impact on the factories all over Europe. The Paper Workers' Union in Finland is not standing alone, but side by side with the whole international labor movement," said a statement the group released.

"I would be surprised if no paper machine stops because of this," said Lennart Olovsson, contract secretary of the Swedish paper workers union in a May 15 interview in *Svenska Dagbladet*. He was referring to the solidarity overtime ban in Sweden. "In Finland there's been an overtime ban for one month with more than 200 stops [in production]," Olovsson added.

Auto bosses target United Auto Workers with opening of new plants in U.S. South

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Hyundai Motors, based in south Korea, opened its first U.S. auto plant May 23 near Montgomery, Alabama, becoming the latest auto baron to follow a trend in building automobile factories in the U.S. South. Car manufacturers have dealt blows to the United Auto Workers union (UAW) by opening up nonunion facilities throughout the region. In particular, Japanese and south Korean auto makers, seeking to avoid Washington's tariffs and protectionist measures on imports by building plants inside U.S. borders, have been expanding production in southern states.

About one-third of U.S. automobile production is now based in the South, according to the American International Auto Dealers Association. Some 25 car manufacturing or parts plants have been built in the region over the past quarter century. This trend has received new

impetus as Asian-based auto makers such as south Korea's Hyundai and Japan's Nissan Motors and Toyota compete with their U.S.-based rivals—Ford Motors, General Motors, and the Chrysler Group of DaimlerChrysler AG—for a bigger share of the U.S. market.

Nissan set up a plant in Smyrna, Tennessee, in 1993 and another in Canton, Mississippi, in 2003. Toyota has a plant in Georgetown, Kentucky, and is scheduled to start production at another one in San Antonio, Texas, next year. Three auto manufacturing plants are located in Alabama—Mercedes-Benz in Vance, Honda in Lincoln, and the new Hyundai facility in Montgomery. These manufacturing and parts plants account for some 40,000 auto workers employed in Alabama alone. Despite organizing drives by the UAW at Nissan and DaimlerChrysler-owned Mercedes-Benz over a number of years, the growing number of foreign-owned plants in the South remain nonunion.

Meanwhile, membership in the UAW, as with other industrial unions, has declined—from a high of 1.5 million in 1979 to less than 625,000 members nationwide in 2003. Last year the union membership finally rose slightly, to 655,000. But the increase was mostly due to recruiting members in government, health care, education, and other service jobs, while members in auto plants continued to drop, according to the April 5 *Detroit News*.

Last November the UAW launched an organizing drive at the Plastech Engineered Products plant in McCalla, Alabama, by asking workers to sign union cards. Plastech makes plastic parts for the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance.

The union tops' "strategy" was to sign up members while avoiding a serious organizing campaign inside the plant. By the time the UAW got enough cards to gain recognition by the company without an election, a majority of workers at Plastech had signed a petition asking the National Labor Relations Board to have their cards revoked and demanding a vote on representation, the *Birmingham News* reported May 29.

The fact that workers in the South are

much less unionized than in the North is a result not only of the legacy of Jim Crow segregation but of the class-collaborationist policies of the top union officialdom. Despite much-touted campaigns—following World War II, and with the 1955 merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations—the union officialdom has refused to wage a concerted organizing battle in the South. The smashing of Jim Crow by the Black struggle in the 1950s and 1960s opened the way for the strengthening of the labor movement in the South and beyond.

Power workers on strike in Boston rally for safety, against benefit cuts

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—Hundreds of utility workers and their supporters rallied May 23 in front of NStar's corporate headquarters here. A week earlier, more than 1,900 members of Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) Local 369 struck NStar, a gas and electric company that services 1.4 million customers in eastern Massachusetts.

The company "should think of people's safety," said Barbara Adams, a striker at the rally. One of the central issues in the strike is the lack of adequate staffing and the forced overtime many workers have to put in.

Adams also pointed out she had to cancel a doctor's appointment when the company cut off medical coverage shortly after the strike began, even though the company had told workers their benefits would last 60 days.

A second issue in the strike is the company's demand to cut benefits for retirees. At the rally workers recalled the recent examples of the Polaroid and Gillette bosses in the Boston area, who slashed retirement plans. "This company made a lot of money last year, record profits," one worker said at the rally.

A large handmade banner read "Profits and Greed Before Workers in Need."

Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America, was one of the featured speakers at the rally. "It's time for labor law reform and the end of scabs and replacement workers in America," Roberts said.

Gary Sullivan, president of UWUA Local 369, chaired the program, which also included Donald Wightman, national President of the UWUA, and other local labor officials and politicians.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, the union negotiating committee and the company reached a tentative agreement. No details of the proposal were released before the membership voted on the offer May 31.

On May 29, NStar announced it had retroactively reinstated health benefits to the striking workers.

Compounding NStar's difficulty in keeping the gas and electric company operating with management personnel was a "nor'easter" on May 26. With its high winds and rain, the storm knocked out power to at least 20,000 NStar customers, the *Boston Globe* reported. Many had to wait 12 hours or longer for power to be restored.

Laura Garza contributed to this article.

For further reading
A Political Biography of Walter Reuther

The Record of an Opportunist
by Beatrice Hansen

A case history of the formation of a union bureaucrat, the former president of the United Auto Workers union.

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