

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

At line dividing Korea, history of struggle against imperialism

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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MAY 20, 2002

## Meat packers and coal miners struggles wrest union victories

### Vote for UFCW in Nebraska will aid organizing drive

BY LIZBETH ROBINO

OMAHA, Nebraska—By a decisive 252-126 margin, production workers at ConAgra's Northern States Beef plant voted to be represented by Local 271 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). The May 3 vote is the first union victory among production workers at one of the big packinghouses here and will aid the drive to organize the more than 4,000 meat packers in Omaha.

"The kill floor! Fabrication! We fought and we did it!" chanted jubilant plant workers to thousands of spectators who lined the parade route for the Cinco de Mayo celebration in South Omaha. In recognition of the victory, members of the local carpenters union shared space with the meat packers on their parade trailer. The unionists held up hand-lettered signs in Spanish that read, "We won the union at ConAgra!" and "United we triumphed!" People responded with thumbs up, applause, and shouts of "¡Sí se puede!" (yes we can).

"We marched to show, first of all, that if we fight, we can win. The crowd responded very positively to our fight," said Rubén Sandoval, a kill floor worker with 24 years at the plant.

This election win was a rebound from a representation election in November 2000

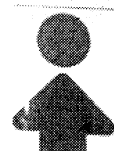
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### 6,000 workers mark struggles in May Day march in Montreal



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Militant/Al Cappe

Contingent of workers from cable company Videotron in May Day march in Montreal. They are fighting bosses' demand for concessions and contracting out.

BY AL CAPPE AND SÉBASTIEN DUMAIS

MONTREAL—More than 6,000 trade union members, youth, and others marched here May 1 in an action marked by working-class resistance, with major

contingents composed of workers involved in struggles.

The march was led off by about 150 members of the Canadian Auto Workers union from the GM auto assembly plant

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### After seven-year fight, bosses at Maple Creek sign national pact

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—In a big victory for mine workers here, Maple Creek Mining Inc., has signed the 2002 National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement (NBCWA). This important win for the union nationally comes as a result of seven years of struggle by members of the mine workers union and their solidarity in face of a company anti-union drive.

Two weeks ago Maple Creek bosses handed miners layoff notices in what the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) described as a "cruel game" aimed at intimidating them into accepting concessions demanded by the company. The miners didn't budge.

In response to Maple Creek's decision to sign the NBCWA contract the union organized two membership meetings May 3. Both meetings were well attended, and

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## 'Militant' and 'PM' 'are selling like crazy'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Campaigners for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in several areas report that the two publications "are selling like crazy" at working-class actions and political events on college campuses and elsewhere.

"We're doing too good," wrote John Naubert from Seattle, who said that campaigners there had run out of papers twice in two weeks. Like a number of other distributors, socialist workers in Seattle have raised their weekly bundle so they don't face

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## What lessons should working people draw from the elections in France?

The results of the presidential elections in France hold important lessons for working people around the world. They point to the need to construct revolutionary work-

working people in country after country, out of which proletarian leaderships are beginning to be forged. Assessing events such as those in France, Venezuela, Argentina, or the Middle East is essential to begin to chart a road forward out of the devastation and wars that increasingly mark capitalism in decline.

The results of both rounds of voting in the presidential elections in France have deepened the crisis of all bourgeois parties in the country, along with the Socialist Party. The elections also confirmed the bankruptcy and dead-end roads represented by the various "left," "socialist," and "communist" groups who pose as alternatives for the working class. Their wholesale capitulation

to bourgeois lesser-evil politics, the middle-class "antifascist" hysteria, and the "defeat Le Pen, vote Chirac" drive led by social democratic forces show how long ago they lost any connection to proletarian internationalism or integration with the living resistance of workers and farmers.

It is these intertwined crises that are sharply revealed in the elections and the political whirlwind that broke in their aftermath. Far from the threat of a resurgent fascist movement, the vote for Le Pen and dismal showing of the governing Socialist Party and Jacques Chirac's rightist Gaullist party simply illustrate the results of the political convergence of the major parties and their more-than-decade-long bipartisan shift to the right.

The vote received by Le Pen increased only slightly over several previous elections. In local, regional, and national ballots since 1997, both Chirac's Gaullist Rally for the Republic and the Socialist Party (SP) have been buffeted in the polls, indicating just how fed up working people are with the ongoing assaults by the French rulers. This time, the first round of presidential voting recorded a precipitous drop in support for both parties as workers and farmers stayed away from the polls or cast their ballot for one of the many small centrist or ultrarightist organizations.

To workers and farmers who are resisting the impact of the capitalist economic crisis and the assaults by the employers and their government, the policies of the major

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## EDITORIAL

ing-class leaderships rooted within the struggles and organizations of workers and exploited farmers.

From one side of the globe to the other, capitalism's world disorder continues to generate economic, social, and political crises. It is also a breeding resistance among

cines to chemical and biological agents.

Cuban representative Luis Fernández told the press the accusations are a "big lie and a big slander" and noted the Bush administration had produced no evidence to back up its claim.

Bolton strung a series of unrelated facts together to try to bolster his assertion: Cuba has advanced biotechnology research and production facilities; Cuban president Fidel Castro visited countries Washington considers "rogue states" such as Syria and Iran; and Castro made political statements such

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## Washington targets Cuba with smear over biological weapons

BY GREG McCARTAN

In a new attack against the Cuban Revolution, a top U.S. government official said Havana is developing biological weapons. U.S. under secretary of state for arms control Richard Bolton told an audience at the Heritage Foundation that the "United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited offensive biological warfare research and development effort" and has "provided dual-use biotechnology to other rogue states."

"Dual-use" technology is the term the imperialists give to facilities that can be used to produce a range of products from vac-

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# 6,000 workers mark struggles in May Day march in Montreal

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in Boisbriand, just north of Montreal. Earlier in the day 800 GM workers had gathered outside the plant offices to protest the closing of the factory, the only auto assembly plant in Quebec.

Stepping in behind the GM workers was a contingent of more than 150 from Radio-Canada, the federal-government-owned French-language TV network. The members of the Quebec Confederation of National Trade Unions have been locked out since March 23 following a one-day strike.

For Elsa LeGault and Judith Boivin, editing assistants in the newsroom of Radio-Canada, the central question is job security. "I have worked for R-C for nine years," LeGault explained, "but I am still not a permanent employee. I don't even have a temporary contract that can be renewed. I can lose my job like that," she said, snapping her fingers. "And if ever I do become permanent, my seniority begins then. The nine years I've put in don't count."

Behind the Radio-Canada workers came more than 100 steelworkers. Among them were 40 members of Local 7625 who made the 45-minute trip down from Sorel, an industrial town east of Montreal. They are on the picket line at La Fonderie Perle fighting a new owner trying to push back past gains of the workers and seriously weaken the union. A similar fight is taking place at Permacon in Montreal. Steelworkers from that plant also joined the march.

"The foremen act like they're the principals of an elementary school," said Johanne Molaison, as she marched in the contingent of 150 striking aircraft workers from Bombardier, the world's third largest civil aircraft manufacturer. "They won't let you miss work if one of your kids is at home sick or because of a snowstorm."

Molaison has worked for a year as an assembler. She summed up the feelings of a number of young workers who are the targets of disciplinary action by the company and were the driving force behind the first strike in 37 years at the company.

Joining the march were about 70 unionists employed by the cable company Videotron. Some 2,200 workers at the company, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, are scheduled to go on strike May 8 in a fight for job security and against contracting out of jobs. The bosses are demanding \$300 million in concessions from the union, as well as the contracting out of work by the technicians, who would see their wages cut by as much as 34 percent.

## Thousands march in Los Angeles

Chanting "*Sin licencia, no hay paz*" (No license, no peace) and "*Si, se puede*," several thousand people marched here May 1 in support of equal rights for immigrants and to celebrate the international workers' holiday.

"Davis: *licencia!*" was another popular chant, directed at California Gov. Gray Davis, demanding the right of the undocumented to obtain drivers licenses. The march went through downtown Los Angeles and ended in a rally at the federal building, which houses the main offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in this city. As the march made its way through El Centro, the downtown garment and jewelry district, hundreds of workers just getting off the job watched from the sidewalks. Dozens heeded the invitation of marchers to join the demonstration. Among those marching were hotel workers, gardeners, garment workers, teachers, janitors, and students.

Members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union; the Service Employees International Union; the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; the Immigrant Workers Union; and the Southern California District Council of Construction Craft Laborers marched with signs and banners identifying their unions. "*Trabajo, si; migra no*," "One drivers license for all," and "*La clase obrera no tiene frontera*," (The working class has no borders) read some of



Militant/Al Duncan

Thousands of union and nonunion workers marched through the streets of downtown Los Angeles on May Day in support of equal rights for immigrants.

the signs carried by participants. In one 12-story building containing factories on each floor, a large banner was hung outside the factory window about six stories up that read, "*Latinos unidos por la legalization*" (Latinos united for legalization).

Patricia, a housekeeper who drove from Orange County to participate in the action, said she came because the fight is important. "And if we keep doing what we're doing today, I know we are going to win what we're fighting for," she said.

The march, which was sponsored by the Multiethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON) and a coalition of other groups, was the third annual demonstration of its kind.

## Millions rally in Cuba

Throughout Cuba, some 7 million people joined the May Day celebrations. Cuban president Fidel Castro addressed a huge gathering at Revolution Square in Havana. Castro spoke about the recent vote engineered by Washington at a UN-sponsored meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, slandering Cuba for so-called human rights abuses.

"We were condemned in Geneva by those who believe that this sea of people gathered here, which can be seen from every corner of the globe, has been deprived of its human rights," Castro said. "I am certain that not one of those Latin American countries that promoted, cosponsored, or supported this project could gather even 5 percent of the number here in their respective capitals."

"Our people's glorious tradition of rebellion and patriotic struggle," continued Castro, "to which we must today add a full and profound understanding of freedom, equality, and human dignity; their solidarity and internationalist spirit; their self-confidence and heroic conduct; 43 years of tenacious and unrelenting struggle against the powerful empire; a broad and solid political culture and an extraordinary humanism—all of these qualities cultivated by the Revolution—have made Cuba a unique country."

"Wretched indeed is the destiny of hundreds of millions of people in this part of the world, who, from a truly human perspec-

tive, have been as yet unable to emerge from humanity's prehistory," stated Castro. "And it will not be possible for them to escape such conditions while the pillage that slaughtered tens of millions of their native ancestors, successively turning their countries into colonies, neocolonies, and economically dependent and underdeveloped countries, continues to govern their destiny."

"Latin America exhibits the greatest differences between the richest and the poorest," the Cuban president pointed out. "The enjoyment of wealth, education, knowledge, and culture are the preserve of those who, accounting for a tiny fraction of the population, receive the larger parts of the goods produced in their countries."

Castro emphasized, "To those who so foolishly speak and repeat the imperialists' slogan that no democracy and no respect for human rights exist in Cuba, let me repeat: no one can question the fact that, despite being very small, our country today is the freest, fairest, and most supportive country on the planet. It is also by far the most democratic."

"There is only one party," he said, "but this neither nominates nor elects candidates. This is completely forbidden: it is the citizens from the grassroots level who propose, nominate, and elect candidates. Our country enjoys an enviable and ever more solid and indestructible unity. The media is public and does not and cannot belong to private individuals. It carries no commercial advertisements and it does not promote consumerism; it entertains and informs, educates and never alienates."

## Action in Greece back Palestinians

In Athens, Greece, a May Day march, organized by the Athens Labor Center with the participation of the General Federation of Workers of Greece and the public sector unions, assembled at the U.S. embassy and marched to the Israeli embassy to protest the continued occupation of Palestinian towns and villages by the Israeli army.

"There is no peace without justice—a state for Palestine now!" chanted the several thousand participants, along with slo-

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## THE MILITANT

### Miners' contract a victory for labor

By standing up for years against the union-busting Maple Creek mine owner, the United Mine Workers scored a victory for all working people. From the Maple Creek fight to the black lung widows' walk, the 'Militant' is there to cover developments in the unfolding social movement in coal communities across the country.



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# U.S. joblessness hits eight-year high point

BY RÓGER CALERO

The official unemployment rate in the United States rose to 6 percent in April, its highest level in nearly eight years. The number of workers without a job registered an increase over the 5.8 percent during recession. The already disproportionately high levels of unemployment among Black workers rose to 11.2 percent and among Latino workers from 7.3 to 7.9 percent.

Earlier government reports indicated there had been a growth in the number of jobs available in April. But the U.S. Labor Department issued revised figures showing job losses for each of the first three months of the year. Among the 41,000 people hired last month a substantial majority were temporary workers in the service industry.

Bosses in construction cut the most jobs last month, putting 79,000 workers on the street. The 19,000 manufacturing jobs eliminated in April marked one of the lowest monthly cutbacks since the employers began a wave of layoffs in July 2000 that led to 1.7 million factory jobs being wiped out.

These and other figures concerning the economic recovery in the United States show that for working people an upturn has yet to begin.

"Our major emphasis continues to be on implementing restructuring," said David Farr, chief executive for the manufacturing giant Emerson Electric Co., referring to the company's plan to close down 30 of its production plants this year. The appliance manufacturer posted a 27 percent drop in profits for 2001, ending a 43-year streak of uninterrupted profit growth.

Other large employers, like San Francisco-

based apparel manufacturer Levi Strauss & Company, have announced they will be laying off workers. Levi Strauss is closing down six of its U.S. factories, laying off 3,300 workers. This is the company's third round of cutbacks since 1997. By the time the shut-downs are completed in October, the company will have two plants left in the country.

Delphi Corp., the biggest manufacturer of auto parts, said in April that it would cut 6,100 more jobs this year. Since March 2001 the company has eliminated 17,540 jobs. At the same time the company has driven through a 3 percent productivity increase this year.

For around two decades the capitalists have been unable to expand their productive capacity enough to trigger the kind of economic boom that would reverse the downward trend in industrial profit rates. They have instead sought to boost their returns by "downsizing," reorganizing production for "just-on-time" delivery, and use of technology to produce more with less workers. This remains the main feature of the current tentative U.S. recovery from the recession.

## Productivity increases

The U.S. government is reporting record rises in labor productivity the past two quarters. Productivity, or the amount of goods and services produced for each hour worked, rose at a 5.2 percent annual rate in the last three months of 2001 and at an 8.6 percent rate in the first three months of 2002. Meanwhile, the number of hours worked by production workers and other non-management employees dropped by 0.3 percent last month.

"If productivity is rising as robustly as the Labor Department's latest report sug-



Workers leave JPS Apparel plant in South Boston, Massachusetts, that shut down last August. While U.S. economy shows signs of recovery, workers are seeing hard times.

gests, it means businesses are squeezing more and more output out of fewer workers," wrote the *Wall Street Journal*.

Capitalist economists have pointed to investments made by the employers in the 1990s in labor saving machinery as a major factor in being able to carry out the "faster-than-usual" payroll cuts and the resulting productivity gains. "It is not a situation where we're producing more with less, we're producing less with a lot less," David Ingram, from Economy.com in West Chester, Pennsylvania, told *Investor's Business Daily*. "Firms will try to meet an increase in demand by working their existing

labor force harder, until managers are convinced that the upturn is real," added Ingram.

The *New York Times* reported April 24 that "American business is beginning to increase spending on new machines and equipment," but noted that "the reason for investing in these tools of production is to cut costs rather than expand output. And despite a modest uptick in company payrolls, large-scale hiring is still off in the future."

It pointed to Intel, which spent \$12.8 billion the last two years on capital improvements to build two new factories. "The driving force behind Intel's latest expenditure, however, is not to expand sales but to cut costs," the *Times* noted. Intel cut another 5,000 workers from its payroll last year, bringing the number of people it employs to 82,000.

Likewise, in its takeover of the Compaq computer company, bosses at Hewlett Packard plan to lay off 15,000 people to make the combined company more "efficient" and profitable.

The capitalist class is watching capital spending closely because purchases of machinery, computers, trucks, aircraft, and other such expenditures account for \$1 trillion a year in the U.S. economy. A 1.75 percent decline in capital spending in the fourth quarter of 2001 helped limit economic growth to 1.7 percent.

## Profit levels hard hit

The April 1 *Wall Street Journal* highlighted the fact that despite the 2001 recession turning out to be one of the mildest on record in terms of a downturn in gross domestic product, "it was one of the harshest in memory when measured in changes in profit levels." The capitalist daily reported that even though the gross domestic product (GDP) grew last year by 1.2 percent, corporate profits declined by 15.9 percent, one of the worst drops since World War II.

Likewise, *Forbes* reported that the country's 500 most profitable firms showed a 23 percent drop in total profits last year, the worst performance in the 34 years the magazine has been keeping track of such trends.

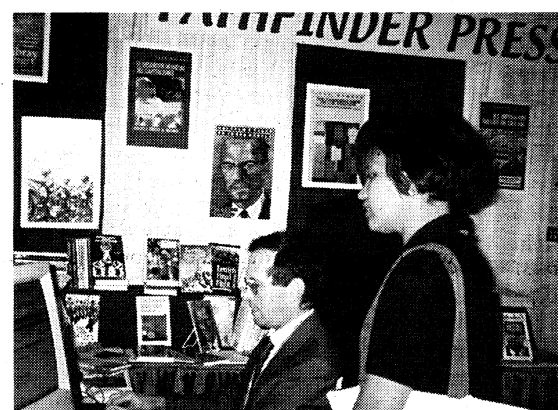
# Pathfinder supporters prepare to top sales goals

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

NEW YORK—Supporters of Pathfinder Press are organizing around the world to take advantage of growing interest in revolutionary books to go over the \$500,000 18-month sales goal by the June 30 deadline. Over the next few weeks the *Militant* will be reporting on this campaign, highlighting the positive results and experiences distributors of Pathfinder books are getting as they sell Pathfinder titles from street tables, in new bookstores, to commercial accounts, and at book fairs and political events.

The challenge of maintaining an increased level of sales has been enthusiastically embraced by socialist workers, young socialists, and supporters of the communist movement internationally. Part of the drive is campaigning with the newly released *From the Escambray to the Congo*, by Cuban revolutionary Victor Dreke, and *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, by Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes. So far 148 copies of the latter title have been sold as part of the international subscription effort for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Pathfinder supporters in Canada and the United Kingdom have weighed in with some impressive results in the overall campaign to meet the \$500,000 goal. Pathfinder representatives in Canada more than doubled sales so far this year and efforts in the United Kingdom have led to a 10 percent jump in sales.



Militant/Maggie Trowe

At May 3-5 New York Book Expo, Pathfinder sales reps signed up book buyers for online ordering.

reported selling \$1,400 and \$1,000 respectively in April, in part a result of numerous demonstrations and protests in that city in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The London bookstore reported sales of £1,028 (\$1,645) last month, with titles on the Palestinian struggle being four out of the five best sellers. *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes was also at the top of the list. London also sold 60 Pathfinder pamphlets to a Palestinian group in Belfast after the group quickly sold out their first order of 20.

Spring is traditionally the time book fairs and trade shows are scheduled, and Pathfinder supporters around the world are getting a good response at them. For example, people attending the *Los Angeles Times* Book Fair in late April bought \$2,000 worth of books and pamphlets. A team is staffing a booth for Pathfinder at the Teheran Book Fair. Supporters are also gearing up for the Printers' Row Fair in Chicago, Book Expo in Toronto, and the Book Fair in Edinburgh, Scotland, next month.

About 20 volunteer Pathfinder sales representatives staffed a large and attractive Pathfinder booth at the giant Book Expo May 3-5 in New York City. More than 100 people gave the sales reps there business cards for follow-up calls and/or visits. The Pathfinder volunteers made a real push to introduce book buyers to the new Pathfinder website at [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com) and registered close to 40 book buyers as online customers who will be able to place orders and check their accounts electronically. The website, which has itself been a source of sales during the campaign, can now be used by commercial customers to help streamline ordering and order fulfillment.

# Supporters give fund appeal a solid start

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Within days of reading the article launching our \$50,000 international fund appeal last week, three supporters of the *Militant* sent in contributions totaling \$1,300, helping to get the campaign off to a solid start. The fund drive for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, which runs through June 15, will help cover the annual costs of publishing the English-language weekly and Spanish-language monthly.

"I am donating \$200," wrote Dana Garrison, a reader in Pennsauken, New Jersey. "I have kept abreast of events by reading the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press, and believe that publishing the *Militant* as well as a Spanish-language newspaper is of the utmost importance. No one else tells the truth about the Middle East, France, Venezuela, Argentina, while standing in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. We must get these publications into the hands of as many workers as possible."

Mindy Brudno, a rail worker from Troy, New York, sent in a note with a check attached. The donation was an unexpected windfall of several hundred dollars, she

wrote, "plus some money that I was planning to donate in any case. Best wishes for the growth of your paper. It is needed now more than ever."

*Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martin Koppel said that the three workers set a great example and encouraged "readers and supporters to respond in the same generous way. Send in a donation or make a pledge as soon as you can."

Local organizers of the fund drive have begun contacting subscribers and longtime readers of these publications and are discussing their goals for the appeal. The increased sales of the *Militant* and *PM* in the first weeks of the circulation drive show the potential to win contributions on the job, at picket lines, and from other fighters involved in social protests and union struggles. Putting a can on street corner tables where the *Militant*, *PM*, and Pathfinder books are sold will generate additional contributions.

To help with this effort, the *Militant* is sending out a one-page bilingual flyer to distributors, who can mail it to supporters of the socialist publications, hand it out at work, and give it to interested people at sales

tables. Headlined, "Contribute to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* May 1-June 15 International Fund Drive," the flyer introduces the appeal and includes a coupon for contributors to fill in. It also lists the national address of the appeal and includes space for local details.

Socialist workers in New York's Garment District, who have organized daily sales in the current target week of the circulation drive, report that they have gotten a taste of the potential for gaining donations from workers and others who stop to discuss politics at their literature tables. Several people offered donations to the *Militant* and *PM* at one table in the district, said Ellen Brickley. "I'll make sure there's a clearly marked fund appeal container on the tables in the future," she added.

One of the best ways to raise funds is to plan a special Militant Labor Forum over the coming weeks, taking up major developments in the crisis of capitalism and the resistance of working people around the world. Supporters of the fund in local areas are encouraged to send in their goals by the end of Tuesday, May 14.

## Sales from Pathfinder bookstores

Pathfinder bookstores are the largest source of sales of titles distributed by the revolutionary publishing house. Many have recently relocated to communities where supporters anticipate a greater receptivity to books and pamphlets on Marxism, struggles of the oppressed and exploited, and speeches by revolutionary leaders. Regular sales tables in working-class areas surrounding the bookstores have netted increased sales—especially since the weather is getting better.

The reach of Pathfinder will be extended in the coming months with the opening of two new Pathfinder bookstores—one in the Hazleton/Wilkes-Barre area of Pennsylvania and the other in Tampa, Florida.

Many bookstores are reporting brisk sales of titles relating to the struggle of Palestinians for their rights and the Jewish question. Janice Lynn, the Washington, D.C., bookstore director, reported that nearly \$650 of the \$900 April sales were at demonstrations and teach-ins in support of the resistance of the Palestinian people against attacks by Israel. In New York City the bookstores in the Garment District and Upper Manhattan

# Massive subsidies in farm bill will aid capitalist exploiters

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The U.S. House of Representatives approved a farm bill May 2 that would increase the massive annual subsidies given to capitalist farmers and corporations by more than \$7.3 billion over the next six years. While legislators spent the past few months discussing the proposed bill, thousands of farmers from Montana to New Mexico were thrown deeper into crisis by a devastating drought. Many have already been driven off the land.

While providing a pittance to some layers of working farmers, the overall aim of the measure is to subsidize capitalist farmers and corporations and reinforce the ability of a handful of agricultural monopolies to export food and fiber on the world market by undercutting competitors around the world.

As a result, the bill has sharpened trade disputes between Washington and its imperialist rivals in Europe, Canada, and Australia, who have voiced opposition to the farm bill. Semi-colonial countries such as Brazil are especially hard hit by these predatory imperialist trade policies. After the House gave the go-ahead to the farm bill, the government in Rio de Janeiro reiterated its threat to file a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO), challenging its subsidy program.

If signed into law, the legislation would allocate \$180 billion in government funds over the next 10 years, largely to agribusiness and other corporate entities. This would be a reversal of the declared aims of the bipartisan 1996 Freedom to Farm Law, which the *New York Times* noted was supposedly going to "eliminate subsidies and let the market dictate prices and production levels." Instead, a series of "emergency payments" to wealthy farmers and capitalist enterprises over the last half decade increased by a record \$20 billion last year.

The amount of farm subsidies granted is proportional to the amount of sales, so the farmers with the largest sales benefit the most. For example, of the 2.5 million farmers in the United States, 1,290 of the wealthiest ones each received more than \$1 million in subsidy payments between 1996 and 2000, while working farmers, who make up the bottom 80 percent of farm sales, were paid an average of \$5,830.

## 'A big pot of money'

Tyler Farms, an Arkansas-based firm that controls 40,000 acres—an area as large as the nation's capital—received nearly \$24 million in subsidies over the past five years. "It's not like a welfare check," claimed executive Phillip Ring, with a modicum of truth, since no working person on welfare ever received such a payout. "It goes into this big pot of money that determines whether Tyler Farms is profitable," he added, trying to defend this government largess.

Fortune 500 companies such as Dupont (\$188,732), Caterpillar (\$171,698), Chevron (\$250,223), John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance (\$125,975), and many others have also received crop subsidies. Other "farm-

ers" who have lined up at the feeding trough for payments include billionaires Ted Turner, who owns the largest number of acres of any individual in the United States, and Chase Manhattan's David Rockefeller, who hasn't been seen near a field in years. Batting 100 percent in figuring out how to milk every possible cash cow in the country, Enron CEO Kenneth Lay received \$12,000 from the farm subsidy program.

Commenting on the House measure, Rudell Lee, who grows herbs on 40 acres in Oklahoma and has been involved in numerous struggles of working farmers to defend their land and livelihood, said the funds "will never come to small farmers like me. All that money is only for the big boys, the large corporations."

Lee said at one point he once tried three times to buy land through a government program, but "I was blocked by USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] officials at the local office. I used to raise hogs and cattle but there was one price for farmers who are Black and another price for whites, so I got out of that. Now white farmers are being forced off their land like Blacks have been."

## Provisions in farm bill

The main provisions hashed out by House and Senate negotiators include payments of \$40 billion to large cotton and grain farmers, a new \$4 billion federal subsidy for peanuts, and a new \$1.3 billion program for the dairy industry. Liberal forces pressed for the bill to include \$17 billion for a so-called land "conservation" program, in which farmers are paid not to grow crops and let the land return to its "natural" state. This latter measure is touted as a way for small farmers to receive some government subsidies.

The bill includes funding for food stamps and restores the right of "legal" immigrants to receive these benefits, which were cut off by legislation approved by U.S. president William Clinton in 1996.

As with earlier farm bills, the subsidies and other aspects of the program will be used to deepen class differentiation in the countryside and reinforce the domination of capitalist farmers and food monopolies in agriculture.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, an estimated 328,000 farm and ranch families will lose their land over the next decade. A recent report from the USDA stated that farm income will drop by 20 percent next year. The agency released a report noting that in 1999 farmers owning an average of 110 acres had a net income of minus \$3,384 in 1999. In contrast, large commercial farms, owning an average of 767 acres, made a profit of \$100,380 on average.

The government programs to "save family farms" have not alleviated worsening conditions of toilers in the countryside. One-fifth of children living in rural areas—more than 3 million—live in poverty. Meanwhile, the number of farm jobs fell 27 percent between 1975 and 1995 and is expected to drop by another 13 percent by 2008.

One crop subsidy doled out under the fed-



Wheat farmer John Stulp inspect soil on his farm in Lamar, Colorado, in midst four-year drought. New farm bill will do little to alleviate crisis of working farmers.

eral Commodity Certificate Exchange Program provides a lucrative loophole in federal rules limiting farm payments for the largest cotton and rice producers. Under this little-known scheme, which has existed for barely two years, farmers can take out a loan with their crop as collateral, and if world market prices fall below the loan rate the USDA allows them to buy a certificate that is valued at the world market price.

The certificate can be used to repay the loan in full. Because it costs less than the loan, the farmer pockets the difference and sells the crop, raking in a handsome profit. This program would be exempted from the final version of the farm bill negotiated by the House and Senate, which places a ceiling of \$360,000 a year that any farmer is supposed to be able to receive.

"Some in Congress assert they are capping payments to the biggest farms. That is false, they know that's false, and the data we're posting... prove it," said Kenneth Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group (EWG). "What they're actually doing is providing unlimited payments to the biggest farms, a pittance for the majority and a rip-off for taxpayers."

The web site for the organization ([www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)) shows how Dimmit Agri Industries in Texas collected \$2.2 million in 2000 and 2001 under the USDA commodity crop payment program. These payments came on top of the fat checks it received through regular subsidy programs since 1995, which totaled \$2.5 million.

The EWG list, which was drawn from figures disclosed by the government, irked capitalist politicians and industry heavyweights because it helped expose the class character of the "farm subsidy" program.

Seeking to avoid more embarrassing disclosures, Rep. Larry Combest, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, has introduced an amendment to the farm legislation that would prohibit the EWG from providing similar public information on who receives the \$38.5 billion in conservation subsidies to be passed out over the next 10 years, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. A Senate version of the same amendment says that the USDA "may" release the names of recipients and their payments.

## Peanut program

A debate in March over the \$4 billion peanut program provided another view of how farm subsidies serve wealthy farmers and corporate interests. Many working farmers depend on the quota system to keep farming. Others, who have farmed for years, sell their quotas in order to have a little income to tide them over.

Under the new plan the government would provide a 10-year entitlement of direct cash payments of \$3 billion to peanut farmers and pay an additional \$1.3 billion to buy out many of those same farmers and corporations that hold licenses known as "quotas" to grow peanuts. Under this scheme the government purchases the quotas from the owners, who could then continue growing peanuts under the new subsidy system.

The current peanut subsidy program allows the peanut quotas to be traded or rented. The majority have become part of investment portfolios for corporate investors who have no intention of digging one inch of dirt to grow one peanut. According to the *New York Times*, the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company of Boston, the larg-

est owner of peanut quotas, could receive up to \$2.1 million by selling its licenses that control 3.8 million pounds of peanuts grown in Georgia.

Democratic senator Zell Miller from Georgia, who is the chief sponsor of the peanut subsidy program, complained that it is "unfair to portray quota holders as just large corporations" when some of them are "small landowners, widows, and aging minority farmers in our country's poorest counties." Many of these farm families say they are coming out the losers in the new setup.

However, the buyout will be a boondoggle for the wealthy because the top 10 percent of peanut growers control 60 percent of the peanuts harvested in the United States.

## Trade frictions

The farm bill is also generating trade frictions with Washington's imperialist rivals in Europe and Canada. An official in the European Union said the EU was considering challenging the farm payments before the WTO. Ottawa's agriculture minister, Lyle Vancilief, said the increase in subsidies marked a "serious blow to the U.S.'s credibility" to negotiate lower trade barriers. Imported Canadian peanut butter, with lower-priced brands, has penetrated the U.S. market with a 45-fold increase. Without the new price supports, "American peanuts and peanut butter would price themselves out of their own market," the *New York Times* noted.

Brazilian government officials said U.S. subsidies mean U.S. monopolies can sell soybeans and cotton around the world at well below market prices, blocking off more than \$1.5 billion a year in exports from Brazil. Pedro de Carmargo Neto, secretary for trade at the Brazilian ministry of agriculture, said his government would seek at least \$1 billion a year in damages caused by U.S. soybean subsidies and more than \$500 million a year for cotton subsidies. Brazil's soybean exports totaled \$5.2 billion last year.

## Drought devastating farmers

As Democratic and Republican politicians worked out an agreement for farm subsidies, a four-year dry spell similar to the drought of the 1930s has devastated working farmers in the western plains from Montana to Texas. Thousands of wheat farmers in Montana have tossed in the towel rather than trying to nurse another crop from ground that has gotten less rain over the past year than many deserts get over the same time span. In some areas the soil is dry down to two feet deep.

Many businesses have folded and some small towns have lost their municipal water supplies.

"It's drier here than it has been for a hundred years," said John Stulp, a wheat farmer in Lamar, Colorado. "We've chiseled up the ground on land where we usually have wheat coming up, just to bring dirt clods up to hold the soil down."

The governor of Colorado has asked the federal government to declare the state a disaster area, which would make farmers eligible for subsidized loans. This measure is wholly inadequate, however, since few farmers desire to take on more debt.

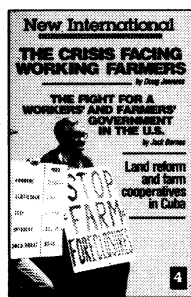
"We're in trouble," said Steve Wertz, who farms 3,000 acres of wheat and corn in New Mexico. "I've been farming for 25 years and never seen it like this."

## FROM PATHFINDER

### Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

DOUG JENNESS

Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain. \$3.50



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# 'Militant' sales drive

Continued from front page  
a repeat of that problem.

"Our highlight for this week was selling two *Militant* subscriptions, a *PM* subscription, and two copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* at the May 1 demonstration for immigrant rights," wrote Naubert. "The march and rally drew close to 300 people, a majority of whom were Mexican and other Latino workers. There were contingents of carpenters, drywallers, and painters. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) sent some of its members from Sacramento, California. One SEIU member bought a copy of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* and later decided to purchase a *Militant* subscription. Two young guys who stopped at our literature table came by later in the week to the Pathfinder bookstore to have more political discussion."

From eastern Pennsylvania Betsy Farley called, asking, "Did you get our e-mail message? We've pretty much met our subscription goal already, so we're raising it this week!"

George Chalmers in Philadelphia reported on a visit by two *Militant* supporters to a picket line in Hershey, Pennsylvania, where 2,700 members of Chocolate Workers Local 464 are on strike against Hershey Foods Corp. "We showed pickets the *Militant's* front-page coverage of their strike, sold nine copies and also received several dollars in donations. When one picket offered \$5 for a paper we sug-



Militant/Glova Scott

Sales table at immigrant rights rally in Washington

gested that she and another interested striker pool their money to get an introductory subscription, which they did. The strikers' morale is very good and is boosted by constant honking by passing drivers."

Sales of the *Militant* and *PM* are starting to pick up at plant gates in a number of cities across the country where regular visits have led to workers becoming familiar with the two publications and getting to know the socialists. From New York, Richard Sorrentino reported that socialist workers sold five copies of the *Militant* and one copy of *PM* this past week at the entrance to the Hunts Point packinghouses in the Bronx. "One worker, a truck driver who bought the paper, remarked that he has seen us there several times before," said Sorrentino.

Three weeks into the circulation drive, campaigners are slightly ahead of target with sales of *Militant* subscriptions, which stand at 322, and slightly behind the pace needed to

make the goals set for *PM* subscriptions and copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. With an extra push during the May 4-12 target week we can get ahead of schedule with all three publications.

Experiences so far show that the sales campaign is building up momentum.

"We sold 15 copies of the *Militant* to coal miners who were attending meetings to discuss their new contract with the Maple Creek Coal Company," said Omari Musa in Pittsburgh.

"Last week we went to Edinboro University to celebrate May Day," he continued. "We had participated in political forums and held discussions with students on previous occasions. This time we had dinner on campus and spoke with students and professors about the recent demonstrations in San Francisco and Washington demanding the withdrawal of the Israeli military from the West Bank.

"We explained the necessity for a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Israeli regime that would pave the way to establish a democratic, secular Palestine," Musa said. "After the discussions we sold several Pathfinder titles, including *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, *Two Speeches by Malcolm X*, and *From the Escambray to the Congo*.

"On the invitation of the students and teachers we returned to the campus for a meeting involving a presentation on the Palestinian struggle. The event was attended by nearly 70 people. One supporter of the fight for a united Ireland said we need to keep our fire on the U.S. government and demand that Washington cut all aid to Israel," Musa wrote. "I told the meeting that Israel is a death trap for Jews and a class-divided society where Palestinian fighters will find co-fighters among the ranks of Israeli working people.

"By the end of the meeting we had sold five *Militant* subscriptions and several Pathfinder titles, including *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*."

## Sales at May Day in Iceland

May Day actions in cities across the world proved to be good venues for sales of the socialist press. At the event in Reykjavik, Iceland, socialist workers and young socialists sold two *Militant* subscriptions and 18 copies of the paper, reported Atli Freyr Friðbjörnsson and Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdóttir. "After the demonstration, which attracted 10,000 people," they wrote, "several participants, including an aluminum worker, came to the Pathfinder bookstore to talk to us and buy books. They purchased nearly \$100 worth of Pathfinder titles."

Below is an article reporting on sales in the coalfields of Utah and Colorado. The *Militant* encourages reports from the field, along with pic-



Militant/Peter Buch

Literature table at Cinco de Mayo event in Oakland, California. The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are "selling like crazy" in several cities.

tures of partisans of the circulation drive in action selling the publications at plant gates and elsewhere.

## Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 13-June 23 (week 3)

Country	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden							
Gothenburg	13	11	85%	2	1	8	6
Stockholm	10	6	60%	3	2	5	3
Sweden Total	23	17	74%	5		13	9
Iceland	6	2	33%	1		4	
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	4	40%	1		5	1
Christchurch	8	2	25%	1		3	
N.Z. total	18	6	33%	2		8	1
Canada							
Toronto	25	12	48%	6		15	5
Vancouver	30	7	23%	6	1	20	6
Montreal	15	3	20%	5	2	16	7
Canada total	70	22	31%	17	3	51	18
United Kingdom	35	10	29%	12	4	20	8
United States							
Los Angeles	35	26	74%	15	6	10	3
Tampa	25	14	56%	6		12	4
Brownsville	8	4	50%	3	1		3
Seattle	30	15	50%	12	3	16	5
Allentown	25	12	48%	8	4	10	1
Washington	25	12	48%	12	3	15	8
Detroit	40	17	43%	13	6	20	7
NY Garment Dist.	80	31	39%	40	13	50	6
Miami	30	11	37%	15	1	15	3
Western Colorado	18	5	28%	8		12	4
Twin Cities	50	13	26%	25	14	25	3
Newark	55	14	25%	25	8	35	10
Birmingham	20	5	25%	8	4	10	3
Cleveland	25	6	24%	5	1	20	6
Philadelphia	25	6	24%	10	3	15	1
Brooklyn	45	10	22%	35	8	35	8
Pittsburgh	45	10	22%	5		20	1
Des Moines	40	8	20%	25	14	21	6
Houston	30	6	20%	12	3	20	8
Tucson	5	1	20%	1			
Upper Manhattan	75	13	17%	50	11	40	8
Chicago	35	6	17%	20	4	25	7
Charlotte	18	3	17%	7	1	10	1
Boston	30	4	13%	15	4	20	4
San Francisco	30	4	13%	18	1	15	1
Atlanta	40	5	13%	15	3	30	3
Omaha	9	1	11%	15	4	10	1
U.S. total	893	262	29%	423	120	511	115
Australia	20	3	15%	4	2	12	2
Int'l totals	1065	322	31%	464	129	619	153
Goal/Should be	1050	315	30%	460	138	625	188

### IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
<b>Canada</b>							
UFCW	5	1	20%	1		4	1
UNITE	3		0%	2		3	
Total	8	1	13%	3	0	7	
<b>United States</b>							
UMWA	15	2	13%	2		10	
UNITE	50	4	8%	45	4	50	1
UFCW	50		0%	50		50	
Total	115	6	5%	97	4	110	1
<b>New Zealand</b>							
NDU	1		0%			1	1
MWU	2		0%				
Total	3		0%			1	1
<b>Australia</b>							
AMIEU	3		0%			3	
MUA	2		0%			3	
Total	5		0%			6	

AMIEU-Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; MUA-Maritime Union of Australia; MWU-Meat Workers Union; NDU-National Distribution Union; UFCW-United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA-United Mine Workers of America; UNITE-Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textiles Employees

## Colorado miners snap up the paper

BY JASON ALESSIO

GRAND JUNCTION, Colorado—*Militant* supporters here have found a good response to the paper in the coalfields of Colorado and Utah. A sales team that traveled to the coal mining town of Hayden, Colorado, sold nine copies of the paper in around two hours on May 5. A number of coal miners and their relatives gave a serious hearing to the team members, and expressed interest in the *Militant's* coverage of the resistance by Palestinians to the actions of the Israeli military.

"I always stop to talk to you guys when you are at the

## 'Militant' announces new web administrator

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The *Militant* received a generous response to our appeal for volunteers to help maintain our website, themilitant.com. We are pleased to announce that Guy Tremblay, a supporter of the paper who lives in Quebec City, Canada, is our new web administrator. Tremblay replaces Peter Link, who for eight years did the work of preparing and posting the week's articles for themilitant.com and its predecessor.

Tremblay began posting articles and photos to the website with the May 6 issue. He has training in the skills required and has been able to quickly assume responsibilities for maintaining and updating the site.

Readers are not only able to read current issues at themilitant.com, but can access and search issues going back more than six years. They can also send in letters and forum announcements, and find out where the nearest distributors are located.

The *Militant* thanks everyone who volunteered to be of assistance.



# Nebraska packers win union victory

Continued from front page

in which the union lost the vote 238-150. Defeated but not crushed, veterans of that organizing drive regrouped. They founded a new workers committee that confidently led workers throughout the hard-fought campaign. "This time around we weren't afraid," said Juan Valadez, a leader of the committee. "We've learned a lot through-out this fight."

"The workers at the front of this fight always knew we were capable of winning. I'm so happy that we won this victory, which at one time we had thought would be impossible," said Eleuterio Valadez, a 25-year veteran at the plant. He participated in a 1980 strike to win a union that ended in defeat.

One of the key organizing tools used by the workers committee throughout the drive was an in-plant fact sheet entitled *La Neta*—slang for "the truth." It has been embraced by workers at the plant as a newsletter that tells it like it is, responding to company attacks and updating workers on developments in their fight. Members and supporters of the workers committee have organized distribution of each issue of *La Neta* throughout the day, starting at 5:15 a.m. in the parking lot of the plant.

Published from its inception in Spanish and English, *La Neta* included a "union yes" message in Arabic in a recent issue. This was an important step, taken by the workers committee to draw co-workers who have immigrated from the Sudan into the struggle. One such worker helped with the translation.

As election day approached, the confidence of the workers grew. A *Si se puede!* hand signal spread throughout the plant, with workers holding up three fingers to each other signifying May 3. Boisterous hook and knife banging, and shouts of "*Si se puede!*" sporadically erupted as workers voiced their unity. One day a boss "came into our area, the tripe room," said one kill floor worker. "We all screamed '*Si se puede!*' and '*Fuera!*' (get out). He left in 10 seconds, red-faced."

*La Neta* encouraged co-workers to listen to *La Máquina Musical*, the only Spanish-language radio station in town, before and after work. Working together with a UFCW official, five leaders of the workers committee wrote and recorded messages for the program, encouraging their co-workers to vote "union yes" on May 3. The punchy messages,

accompanied by background mariachi music, were heard by Latino workers throughout Omaha. "Many co-workers heard the messages. It helped a lot," said Sandovar.

Father Damian Zuerlein, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, sent a mailing to parishioners and meat packers, inviting them to attend a solidarity Mass followed by a lunch. "Courageous and wise workers have decided to lead this effort. I applaud them and encourage you to join them in their efforts to build solidarity among the workers."

About 400 people packed the church, including nearly 100 meat packers from various plants. Organizing drive leaders Tiberio Chávez and Olga Espinoza addressed the gathering, updating supporters on their fight and urging continued solidarity.

The company campaigned throughout the drive to try to intimidate workers and undermine the union's growing support. In addition to a 30-cent pay raise, they put on a chicken dinner to "congratulate workers on tremendous production." One worker, seeing through the tactic, screamed "Chicken yes! Union yes!" *La Neta* helped to counter this company tactic.

A barrage of antiunion literature, full of lies and distortions, was posted regularly in locked glass display cases. "It had to be protected behind glass," said Lisa Rottach, a kill floor worker. "Things they posted in the open were quickly removed by workers." Copies of a newspaper article with an antiunion bias were also distributed by the company in the cafeteria the day before the election.

## Turning the tables on the company

The company also began to organize a series of captive-audience meetings of roughly 30 workers in early morning hours and after work. Many workers resented having to sit through the litany of misinformation, off production hours, and with no opportunity to speak. During the second round of meetings, workers organized to chant "*Si se puede!*" at the end of the meeting, shocking bosses with their shouts. Subsequent meetings fell flat, with most workers not attending.

In a last-ditch effort on May 1 to convince workers to "entrust their future to the company," the bosses stopped production for a half hour in both the fabrication and kill departments. At the end of their meeting, fabrication workers erupted into chants of "*Si se puede!*" and "Union!" On the kill floor, leaders of the committee got wind of the impending



Militant/David Rosenberg

Carpenters shared their float at Cinco de Mayo parade in South Omaha, Nebraska, with new members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271.

ing meeting and organized a response over lunch. When the chain stopped, workers were herded into the large kill room, with carcasses still hanging on the line. Two company officials appealed for calm to be able to begin the event, as the raucous and enthusiastic chanting was drowning them out.

The would-be antiunion meeting was rapidly transformed. The bosses replayed their same plea to trust the company, claiming that the union cannot improve working conditions and that there is no cap on union dues. When they asserted that workers already have a voice at ConAgra, one Black worker demanded to be given the microphone. At the end of the appeal, management thanked workers and told them it was time to go back to work.

Olga Espinoza raised her hand, and with other leaders of the workers committee, moved to the platform. When it became clear the bosses would not cede the floor, workers chanted in Spanish, "Let her speak." The company official reluctantly gave her the mike. Another leader shoehorned her way to the front to translate Espinoza's comments into English.

"My intention in going up there to speak was to show others that there's no reason to be afraid, that everyone needs to be fearless," said Espinoza. Before the assembled workers, she demanded to know why the company hasn't made any safety improvements to the dangerous area where a mechanic, Tiberio Chávez, had fallen. The company responded that her question could be answered in the office, then turned off the sound equipment and sent everyone back to work.

Workers, groups of union officials, and students from Creighton University, as well as members of Omaha Together One Community, turned out for a plant gate rally May

2, greeting workers with shouts of support as they exited the plant.

On election day some 50 supporters arrived at 4:30 a.m. for a rally at the plant gate. A couple of dozen workers distributed *La Neta* in the parking lot with the message, "Fabrication, Kill floor—united—will never be defeated. Vote yes!" As music played and maracas rattled, the crowd encouraged workers as they entered the plant.

A dozen or so workers stayed past quitting time to witness the count. As the "yes" votes began to pull ahead, the workers held back from a victory celebration until the government officials completed their official tally sheet.

"I thought I was going to faint from happiness," said Juan Valadez. "This fight has just begun," Olga Espinoza added. "We fought to win this victory, but now we must keep fighting to win a contract."

Workers have scheduled a meeting to "plan out the next steps for a good contract. We are the union," reported *La Neta*.

## 'I wish you success in your struggle'

In mid-April four meat packers at ConAgra Northern States Beef and two at Nebraska Beef in Omaha, Nebraska, sent a letter of solidarity to each of the Cuban revolutionaries framed up by Washington. The letter described the union struggle in Omaha and the upcoming May 3 vote at ConAgra and added, "We support you because you are fighting like us." All five Cubans responded in writing to the letters, offering support and thanking them for their solidarity. Gerardo Hernández's message arrived the day of the election. "We will be with you May 3! All of you *compañeros*, *si se puede!* Onward and good luck. I wish you much success." The *Militant* received a copy of the letter sent by Fernando González Llort to the meat packers. The letter was translated by the *Militant*.

April 23, 2002

Dear Friends

Many thanks for the letter that you sent and for your solidarity and support.

I know that there are many honest persons among the American people who understand our struggle and that of our people in spite of being in the middle of so much disinformation and misrepresentation. Toward such end, our case is kept behind a veil of silence out of fear that if those same people learn the truth they will say "Enough!" and put an end to the injustice against us and our country.

I wish you all the success that you deserve in your struggle for a union. On May 3 I will be present, I will think of you, and I will wish you the victory for which you have been working.

With your help and that of the North American people, some day also we will attain that victory. *¡Si se puede!* Yes we can!

My infinite thanks to all who signed the letter for your support and solidarity.

Ever onward to victory!  
Fernando González Llort  
F.C.I. Oxford,  
Wisconsin

## 'Keep building the future we dream of for the world'

Printed below is an excerpt from a letter to the *Militant* editor by René González, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and convicted last June in a U.S. federal court. They were convicted of a series of conspiracy charges, including conspiracy to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign power, to commit espionage, and, in one case, to commit murder. The other four prisoners are Fernando González Llort, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino Salazar, and Gerardo Hernández.

The five were given sentences by the federal judge ranging from 15 years in prison to a double life sentence. They explained, as has the Cuban government, that they were carrying out a revolutionary mission to defend their country by gathering information on the activities of counterrevolutionary groups that function on U.S. territory and

organize to carry out violent attacks on Cuba. These groups have a long record of such activity, perpetrated with the complete knowledge and complicity of the U.S. government.

The addresses for the five are listed below. The U.S. government refused to recognize the names of Fernando González Llort and Ramón Labañino, so correspondence to them should be sent under the names Rubén Campa and Luis Medina respectively.

April 30, 2002

Dear Grég McCartan,

Thank you for sending me the issues of the *Militant*. It's been a great source of encouragement to know that some Americans have been able to overcome so many years

## Write to the five Cuban revolutionaries

René González Schwerert, Reg. #58738-004, FCI McKean, P.O. Box 8000, Bradford, Pennsylvania 16701

Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Reg. #58741-004, USP Florence, P.O. Box 7500, Florence, Colorado 81226

Gerardo Hernández (Manuel Viramontes), Reg. #58739-004, USP Lompoc, 3901 Klein Blvd., Lompoc, California 93436

Fernando González Llort (Rubén Campa), Reg. #58733-004, FCI Oxford, P.O. Box 1000, Oxford, Wisconsin 53952-0505

Ramón Labañino Salazar (Luis Medina), Reg. #58734-004, USP Beaumont, P.O. Box 26035, Beaumont, Texas 77720-6035



# Maple Creek signs contract with miners

Continued from front page

while the mood was upbeat, there was also a feeling of disbelief among many in attendance over the company's move. A sizable layer of mostly seasoned miners are taking a wait-and-see attitude. But at the same time there was also a strong feeling of pride among miners over what they had accomplished. They knew they were on the right side and that it pays off to stick to your guns.

The membership meetings were opened by UMWA Local 1248 president Frank Wydo. At both meetings Carlo Tarley, the secretary-treasurer of the UMWA International, and International union president Cecil Roberts also spoke. Many miners participated in the discussion. In a April 25 letter to Maple Creek miners, Roberts emphasized that "your steadfast commitment to the effort has been of paramount importance to this success."

Starting in 2003, the contract at Maple Creek will cover the terms and conditions of the national agreement. After living with a wage freeze since 1995, the company will increase wages for miners at Maple by \$3.15 an hour starting next year. For the first time in almost seven years, wages will be equivalent to all other miners covered by the NBCWA.

In countless communications to miners over the past few years Maple Creek owners have said they had drawn the line on paying wages earned by union members under the national agreement. Owner Robert Murray and his main spokesman at Maple Creek, D. Lynn Shanks, have claimed that Maple Creek miners have the lowest production rate of any longwall mine in the country and were therefore undeserving of union-scale wages.

In addition, the union contract at Maple Creek will have a common expiration date at the end of 2006 with the rest of the mines covered under the NBCWA pact. This will help strengthen the bargaining power of the national union.

The victory at Murray comes as several large coal operators have recently signed the 2002 NBCWA without modifications. These include RAG mines in Pennsylvania, and U.S. Steel Mining, Jim Walters, and Drummond, all of which have mines in Alabama. The only difference between the NBCWA agreement and the Maple Creek contract is the start date. The Maple Creek contract will take effect Jan. 1, 2003.

## Antiunion provisions dropped

Also important is the fact that workers at High Quality, where the company will soon begin coal production, will be covered by



Miners rallied in Powhatan Point, Ohio, last July to confront coal boss's union-busting moves. Victory won by miners at Maple Creek mine in Pennsylvania places the workers in a stronger position to defend their union and meet challenges ahead.

the same terms. Murray's plan from the beginning was to treat the new mine as separate and not part of Maple Creek. The fight was whether it would be a union mine. This is what he lost and is at the heart of what the miners won.

The numerous "Memorandum of Understandings," which significantly weakened the union and were part of the previous agreement, have been dropped.

Another important concession won by the miners has to do with forced overtime. Mandatory work on Sunday has been eliminated and every third week miners will only have to work five days. While this may not seem like much, miners have been working six-day weeks for years.

Many miners suspect that U.S. Steel, which buys a large percentage of its coal from Maple Creek, had a hand in Murray's change of course. Without the coal supplied from Maple Creek, U.S. Steel would be faced with a big gap in its supplies. The company had recently made it clear to Murray it would go elsewhere to get its coal.

To capture the scope of the victory for the UMWA, it is useful to step back and look at some of the key highlights of the battle over the last seven years.

After U.S. Steel Mining Co. closed the

mine in 1994, it was purchased by Robert Murray, who is today the largest independent coal operator. Murray won deep contractual concessions from the union and reopened the mine in 1995. From day one it was clear that Murray had every intention of weakening the union. Working conditions in the mine deteriorated rapidly. Grievances piled up, dozens of miners were disciplined, and suspensions multiplied. Many issues involving work rules and safety remained unresolved.

## Deterioration of safety

In 1996 a miner was killed in a haulage accident; the following year, a belt repairman was killed in a rib roll. In this period miners worked up to 60 plus hours a week. In the fall of 1999 there were two major rock falls along the main haulage track in the mine, temporarily shutting the mine down. It was a miracle that no one got hurt or killed.

In April of 1999, without any warning, Maple Creek owners ordered the miners out of the mine and told them to clear out their lockers. The union was not informed of the closure and no explanation was given to the miners, a clear violation of the state's Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification

law. The abrupt closing took place after inspectors with the U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) cited the company for serious safety violations. The workers—fuming at this point—were called back to work a few days after this incident.

The battle reached a head in September when miners walked off the job for two days. The strike was over whether the current national Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement or a separate "memorandum of understanding" is the standing contract. The company claimed that the job action violated a no-strike clause in that agreement, and the federal court agreed. Coming out of this conflict, the company filed a \$1.7 million lawsuit against the union. As part of the recent contract, the lawsuit has been dropped.

Tensions were ratcheted up again in December 2000 after Maple Creek miners rejected a proposed contract extension 335 to 10. Following the vote Murray sent a letter to all Maple Creek miners where he said that by rejecting the contract, miners had "made a terrible mistake" and "had no idea what [they] were really doing." His letter went on to say, "You turned down the only Agreement that Maple Creek can afford and that our lenders will allow. Because we suspect mischief in this vote, I am giving the hourly employees of Maple Creek" another chance to vote. The union rejected this undemocratic move. Later, Murray said there "are 500 people who will be in the unemployment line."

Referring to the union's voting down of the contract, the big-business coal publication *Coal Outlook* said "that rejection probably means union leadership this time isn't in the mood to talk about concessions." The same publication noted that "the Murray/UMWA relationship has also been strained lately over a fight about lack of union representation at a new Murray longwall mine in Ohio."

## Ohio operations

Murray operates two mines in southeastern Ohio. Powhatan No. 6, represented by UMWA Local 1810, is working under a concession contract. Nearby, Murray recently opened the Century mine as a non-union operation. Like the situation at Maple Creek, relations are tense, especially as Murray expands production at the Century mine.

There is talk among miners in Local 1248, including at the recent union meetings, of using the momentum from Maple Creek to give a helping hand to their fight and to aid the organizing efforts at the Century mine. The fight in Ohio will now take on more importance. In a recent UMWA press release, Roberts said, "While the UMWA is happy it was able to reach an agreement at Maple Creek, the union will continue working to resolve its current differences with Robert Murray at his Ohio Valley Coal Co. Powhatan No. 6 operation."

In the wake of the contract rejection in 2000, tensions reached new levels when the union used "memorial days"—where miners do not report to work—to put a spotlight on Murray's union-busting moves. After the successful memorial days, including a 400-strong rally in Powhatan, Ohio, supported by both the Maple Creek and Powhatan No. 6 locals last summer, Murray filed more lawsuits all of which have gone down to defeat.

Experienced miners take pride in telling new miners about the history of Local 1248 and how it fought for the strongest contract. Some of these miners will point to the role the local played in the Miners for Democracy movement in the early 1970s. They were a part of a powerful movement that fought for rank-and-file democracy against then UMWA president Tony Boyle. In 1972 Boyle and his corrupt, entrenched bureaucracy, were defeated by the Miners for Democracy slate, headed by Arnold Miller.

Maple Creek miners know that the road ahead will not be smooth. There is concern about the impact the phasing out of Maple Creek will have on jobs and seniority rights when the new portal at High Quality begins production. But miners are in a stronger position today to defend their union and are more confident to meet the inevitable challenges ahead.

Frank Forrestal and Tony Lane are underground miners and members of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248.

# California garment workers demand back pay

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

"We will continue to fight, and to do anything we can to get that money back," said Yan Fang Mei, a former worker at the Wins of California garment plant. More than 200 workers are fighting to get four months' back pay from the company, which closed last August. "We also want some justice," she added. "We want the owner to go to jail for stealing from the workers."

Mei was speaking as part of a panel on defending workers' rights on a May 3 San Francisco Militant Labor Forum celebrating May Day. Joining her on the panel were Emiliano Martínez, a Mexican worker who is part of the *Voluntarios de la Comunidad* (Volunteers of the Community), which has been organizing protests demanding drivers' licenses for all, and Deborah Liatos, a meat packer and member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Twenty-three people participated in the forum, which was publicized with flyers in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Two members of the Chinese Progressive Association translated the meeting for the three Wins Fashions Workers who attended. Spanish translation was provided for three workers who are active in the fight for the right to a driver's license.

Mei, who immigrated from China to the Bay Area in 1999, detailed the conditions faced by Wins workers. "Work was hard and wages didn't make ends meet," she said. "While the workday was scheduled to run from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., workers had to stay hours longer if they didn't meet their quota."

The factory owners had a history of pay-

ing workers late, Mei said. Then, in April of last year, "all the checks for 230 workers in the three factories bounced."

Although the owners have declared bankruptcy, they "recently opened a restaurant and have another factory in Oakland," she said.

The Labor Department has collected \$400,000 from the company, but it is not enough to cover back wages. Even though Wins workers demand that this money be used at least partially for payment of wages owing, the department refuses to do so.

One indication of the support that the Wins workers have won was the announcement that 30 garment workers at Ben Davis garment factory had signed a petition circulated on the job in support of the struggle.

In response to a question on whether Wins workers saw any potential in joining their fight with that of the garment workers at the Levi-Strauss plant, facing closure in June of this year, Leon Chow of the Chinese Progressive Association said that Levi-Strauss workers had approached them, "so hopefully in the next few weeks we'll have some joint actions."

## 'We fight for dignity'

"We are the ones who work in the fields, in construction, in the factories," said Emiliano Martínez. "We fight for dignity and to obtain a driver's license."

Martínez invited everybody to a May 7 demonstration at the state capitol in Sacramento where activists from throughout the state will be gathering to demand the state government sign a law that will give immigrants without documents the right to a li-

cense.

"This is hard work," he said of the campaign, "but I am not going to give up until we manage to get our licenses."

Deborah Liatos told the forum participants of a fight at Sara Lee/Galileo Foods where she works. The bosses began writing up workers in the packaging department for quality problems caused by the company's attempts to speed up the line, she said. When they suspended a co-worker, all the workers in the department organized themselves to oppose this assault, and forced the company to downgrade all the written warnings to verbal warnings. The suspension was dropped from the worker's record and she received back pay for the day she was suspended.

Like other fights by working people, Liatos said, the struggles described at the forum are winning support from other unionists and co-workers. "The U.S. government is at war against working people in this country, just as it is at war against the people of Afghanistan and the Palestinian people. It is again preparing a war against the people of Iraq. This is not in the interests of working people anywhere in the world," she said.

"As a socialist I believe that as long as the U.S. and other countries are run in the interests of the rich, workers' rights will always be under attack. Through our struggles we will need to fight to replace the capitalist government with one of workers and farmers," Liatos said.

Rollande Girard is a garment worker at Ben Davis in San Francisco.

# At line dividing Korea, history of anti-i

## Through five decades, working people resist Washington's military occ

BY JACK WILLEY

PANMUNJOM, north Korea—"I gained the unenviable distinction of being the first United States Army Commander in history to sign an armistice without a victory," wrote U.S. general Mark Clark in his autobiography.

Clark, commander of the U.S. forces at the conclusion of the 1950-53 Korean War, was referring to the July 1953 cease-fire agreement signed by U.S. officers and the government of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The agreement was signed here in Panmunjom, a village that straddles the Military Demarcation Line that today divides north and south Korea.

A Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists leadership delegation, in north Korea to solidarize with the Korean people in face of escalating U.S. government threats and to participate in two national celebrations, visited Panmunjom April 21. We were able to learn firsthand about Washington's forced partition of Korea and how the U.S. war to conquer the entire peninsula and turn back the socialist revolution in the north was defeated.

Farming cooperatives line the hilly road that leads from Pyongyang to Panmunjom, in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on the



In three years of relentless saturation bombings from 1950-53, use of napalm, and ground assaults, much of Korea, especially north of the 38th parallel, was left in rubble. Inset, Pyongyang before the Korean War. Above, Pyongyang three years later.

ants working the land here on a cooperative that butts right up on the border.

Watchtowers and cameras surround the two fortified military buildings that face each other at the border. Soldiers from the DPRK's Korean People's Army (KPA) stand guard on one side of that narrow concrete strip, just a few feet away from south Korean troops dressed in United Nations uniforms to disguise the more-than-half-century-long U.S. imperialist military occupation of the southern half of this country.

KPA officers told delegation members that since 1999 U.S. troops have no longer been deployed within eyeshot of the demarcation line. This is an attempt, they

said, to obscure the reality that the so-called UN force stationed in south Korea is not only commanded by U.S. officers but is made up almost entirely of U.S. troops. There are 37,000 U.S. soldiers stationed in south Korea today. Some 40 U.S. mili-

tary installations dot the southern half of the divided country, with a massive store of armaments including nuclear warheads and delivery systems.

### Revolutionary struggles in Korea

Fresh from its barbaric atomic incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its victory over Japan in World War II, U.S. imperialism in early September 1945 imposed the division of Korea at the 38th parallel with the agreement of the government of the Soviet Union, whose troops had moved into the northern part of Korea at the close of the war. For the previous 50 years Korea had been under the colonial boot of Japanese imperialism. The U.S. rulers hoped that Korea, along with China—the biggest "prize" that was supposed to fall into the imperialist victors' hands after World War II—would be theirs to oppress and exploit.

At the time, revolutionary struggles were breaking out across the Korean peninsula in the wake of the collapse of the country's colonial overlord in Tokyo. People's Committees sprang up throughout Korea to fight for national independence, land reform, labor rights, women's suffrage, and the nationalization of Japanese-owned industries.

A 1948 document of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency acknowledged the emergence of "a grassroots independence movement which found expression in the establishment of the People's Committees throughout Korea in August 1945."

On Sept. 6, 1945, people's committees from around the country met and formed the Korean People's Republic, with Seoul as its capital.

When U.S. forces occupied south Korea in mid-September, they joined local landlords and capitalists in harshly repressing the revolutionary movement there.

For the next two-and-a-half years the south was directly ruled by the U.S. military government headed by the American army brass. This occupation regime outlawed the people's committees, refused to recognize the Korean People's Republic, and launched a reign of terror, imprisoning or killing many thousands of Korean patriots.

"The country is literally in the grip of a police regime and a private terror," said the leader of a U.S. fact-finding team to south Korea covered by the *Militant* in 1947.

In an attempt to legitimize the division of the country, the U.S. government gained United Nations cover in 1948 to conduct rigged elections that established the Republic of Korea. The dictatorship headed by the U.S. puppet Syngman Rhee governed the south for the next dozen years until Rhee was driven from power by mass mobilizations of workers and students in 1960.

North of the 38th parallel a social revolution was unfolding. A sweeping land reform, nationalization of the mines and factories, and the adoption of laws to advance women's equality were implemented.

In 1947 the north Korean government

began sending tens of thousands of troops to China to fight in the revolutionary struggle unfolding there. The following year, in response to the imposition of the U.S. client regime of Syngman Rhee, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established. The president of the DPRK was Kim Il Sung, a leader of the anti-Japanese liberation movement since the early 1930s.

### Korean War

Throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950, south Korean forces carried out repeated military incursions into the DPRK, as Rhee collaborated with his U.S. backers to prepare a war to retake the entire country for capitalist rule. Washington also saw the reconquest of the north as a springboard to turn back the Chinese Revolution, which had triumphed in 1949, freeing a fifth of humanity from imperialist domination.

North Korea built up its army in response to the accelerating provocations by Rhee's regime and its U.S. sponsors. In June 1950 war erupted between the two sides. Washington responded by engineering a vote in the UN Security Council authorizing it to deploy U.S. armed forces and those from 15 U.S. allies under the cover of the UN flag to combat "North Korean aggression."

The KPA quickly liberated 90 percent of the peninsula in an effort to reunify the country. In September, however, tens of thousands more U.S. troops invaded near Seoul, and the KPA organized a retreat to the north. By the end of that month the U.S. and its allied troops had driven to the northern border with China along the Yalu River. U.S. commanders were openly talking about pushing beyond the Yalu in a drive to crush China's new revolutionary government.

In mid-October, however, the KPA forces were joined by hundreds of thousands of Chinese volunteer fighters who poured down from Manchuria and drove the imperialist forces back to the 38th parallel by the beginning of 1951.

The U.S. government continued the war for two-and-a-half more years, conducting a brutal bombing campaign that leveled nearly every building in the towns and cities of north Korea. The Democratic administration of Harry Truman also threatened the use of nuclear weapons against north Korea. But Washington was unsuccessful in its efforts to bring the DPRK and Korean people to their knees.

During our visit to the DMZ, the Korean Central News Agency interviewed Steve Clark, a member of the SWP and YS delegation. "The Korean people between 1950 and 1953 dealt the first military defeat to U.S. imperialism," Clark told the KCNA.

"This was not just a victory for the Ko-



Guide at the Fatherland Liberation War Museum in Pyongyang points to unexploded bomb shells dropped on the city and to photos depicting their destructive results during the Korean War.

border with south Korea. Panmunjom, a farming village, is itself a victim of the imposed division of the country. The demarcation line cuts right through the village and its farmland, separating dozens of families for nearly 50 years. We saw peas-

ants working the land here on a cooperative that butts right up on the border.

There are 37,000 U.S. soldiers stationed in south Korea today. Some 40 U.S. mili-

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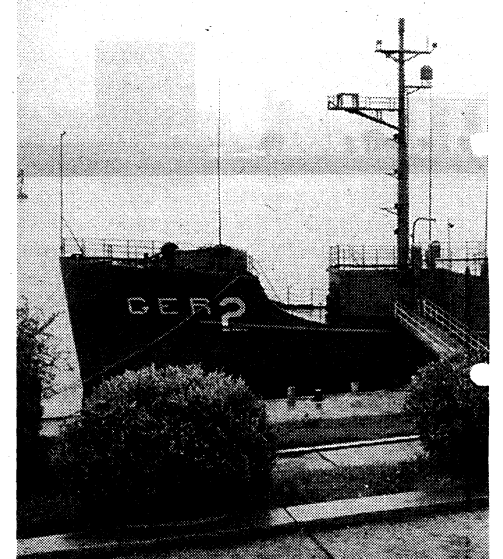
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Above and right: Militant/Olympia Newton. Above, U.S. spy ship *Pueblo* seized by north Korea in 1968. Right, the remains of U.S. spy ship shot down over north Korean airspace in 1968. In face of Washington's unrelenting military threats and attempts to starve north Korea submission, the people and government continue to defend their sovereignty and refuse to bow down to imperialist dictates.



# Imperialist struggle

## Reunification and division of Korea

orean people, but for workers and farmers in the United States and for toilers around the world," he said. Following the Korean War, Clark pointed out, the U.S. rulers were defeated by Cuban working people at the Bay of Pigs. They were defeated by the peasants and workers of Vietnam. And they failed in their effort to establish a U.S. protectorate in Iraq to serve as a base of U.S. imperialist operations throughout the Middle East.

Clark also explained that the Korean War was never popular among working people in the United States, and that many U.S. soldiers were repelled by the brutality of both the ground operations and bombing campaign carried out by their officers on orders from the U.S. government.

Opposition to the war grew as the Korean people and armed forces stood their ground. In mid-1953 the newly-elected Republican administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower agreed to sign an armistice with the DPRK.

Roughly 4 million people had been killed in the U.S.-organized war, including some 3 million Korean civilians; half a million north Korean soldiers; more than 100,000 combined south Korean and "United Nations" soldiers (including 54,000 from the United States); and tens of thousands of Chinese volunteers.

### DMZ: emblem of a divided nation

While agreeing to sign a cease-fire in 1953, however, Washington did not agree then or at any time after to withdraw U.S. forces from the peninsula and sign a peace treaty with the DRPK. To this day Korea remains the only country with which the United States is officially at war.

Korea also remains the only unresolved national division imposed by the victors coming out of World War II.

The 150-mile-long DMZ is itself an emblem of the partition of Korea as a whole. According to *Panmunjom*, a pamphlet on the history of DMZ, the dividing line cut through the middle of 122 villages in eight counties. Hundreds of villages had to be moved or simply disappeared, and 3 highways, 24 roads, and several railroad lines were severed. Some 1 million south Koreans have been separated from their immediate family members in the north as a result of the artificial division.

Between 1977 and 1979, south Korean authorities built a concrete wall across the entire peninsula, scarring the country from the Yellow Sea in the west to the Sea of Japan in the east. The wall was dug in as a bunker that can only be seen when viewed from the north, not the south.

### U.S. troops out of Korea!

In face of Washington's unrelenting mili-

tary threats and attempts to starve north Korea into submission, Clark told the KCNA, "the government and people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea refuse to bow down."

"Our party will continue to work with others to do all we can to get all U.S. troops off your soil and out of the seas surrounding Korea, and to demand the removal of all U.S. nuclear weapons and delivery systems as well," Clark said.

"We're confident that if the Korean people are left alone, free from imperialist intervention, you will reunify your forcibly divided country, and tear down the wall that separates north from south. Then people from across Korea and around the world will visit Panmunjom as a monument to your victorious struggle and sacrifice for reunification."



Above: Militant/Olympia Newton

Left, SWP and YS delegation of Olympia Newton, Steve Clark, and Jack Willey. Immediately behind them is the line dividing Korea, with south Korean troops standing guard on the other side of the border. Photo above shows farmland and housing for workers in an agricultural cooperative in Panmunjom that butts up against the dividing line. After Washington's defeat in the Korean War, U.S. imperialism imposed the partition of the country, enforced by tens of thousands of U.S. troops. The border cuts through Panmunjom, separating families and friends for some 50 years.



## Sinchon massacre by U.S. military exposed

BY JACK WILLEY

SINCHON COUNTY, north Korea—Over the past few years the Korean people have been able to expose the truth about a number of atrocities by Washington's military forces during the 1950-53 Korean War. Many others, however, remain covered up and receive virtually no mention outside the Korean peninsula. One such massacre took place in Sinchon, a city located in what is today north Korea.

During the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists leadership delegation's visit to the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), we toured the Sinchon Museum, which documents what north Koreans consider the worst atrocity to have taken place in the north during the war.

Along with revelations of other massacres by U.S. forces, the museum helps to highlight the fact that in their assault on Korea five decades ago the imperialists waged a total war on the population and infrastructure of the country.

In the aftermath of Tokyo's defeat in World War II, revolutionary upheaval spread throughout the Korean peninsula. Washington enforced the division of the country at the 38th parallel and sent in troops to crush uprisings in the south, establish a military regime, and prepare to launch a war to bring the rest of Korea back under imperialist domination.

In September 1950, four months after the outbreak of the Korean War, tens of thousands of U.S. troops poured into Korea and began a northward offensive. Sinchon County was occupied for 52 days in the closing months of that year. Dozens of photographs and artifacts documenting the roundups and executions of Korean patriots and indiscriminate killings of men, women, and children are on display at the museum.

One of the historical sites marks mass graves where the slaughtered were buried. According to Ri Song Jin, a witness to the massacre, imperialist forces tortured many Korean patriots in the basement of the Sinchon church at the beginning of the occupation, then buried the dead and near-dead bodies in a trench.

We also visited an area that was bombed and learned that as U.S. forces marched out of town they destroyed most of the homes, factories, farm implements, and arable land.

### More massacres exposed

The Sinchon massacre was one of many atrocities carried out by Washington and its subservient regime in south Korea in their systematic attempt to bring the Ko-



Militant/Jack Willey

Steve Clark and Olympia Newton (in center) tour museum in Sinchon, which commemorates massacre carried out by U.S. military forces in that city in the closing months of 1950. The Korean people in the north and south have exposed several atrocities committed by U.S. forces during the Korean War. Many others remain covered up by Washington and Seoul.

orean masses under the imperialist boot.

In face of revelations by U.S. soldiers, former president William Clinton was pressured to acknowledge for the first time in 2001 that Washington's troops shot down Koreans fleeing the war zone in the village of No Gun Ri, south Korea, one month into the Korean War.

After U.S. Army officers ordered villagers to walk on railroad tracks at No Gun Ri, warplanes hailed bombs and bullets on the area where peasants had been resting. Scores of people were killed, while others scrambled for cover under the nearby railroad bridge. For three nights and four days, July 26-29, U.S. troops poured bullets into the tunnel where the peasants, many of them women and children, were trying to hide. "People pulled dead bodies around them for protection," recalled survivor Chung Koo Ho.

The air assault killed 100 refugees, while soldiers killed another 300.

In the lead-up to the Korean War, as the revolution was deepening in the north, social unrest bubbled throughout the south. In an attempt to buffer the resistance, Washington urged its puppet regime in Seoul to hold an election in May 1948 to try to give a "democratic" face to the dictatorship.

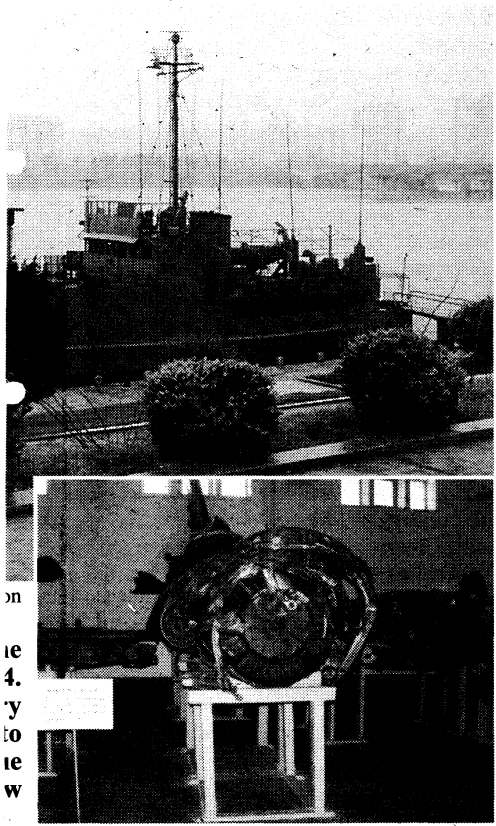
People in two districts of Jeju island boycotted the election, drawing outrage from U.S. military commanders. After a series

of incidents, the south Korean government launched a bloody assault on the island, burning villages and carrying out widespread executions and torture. By February 1949, more than 30,000 people had been killed, about one tenth of the island's population.

The south Korean government, which remains a semicolony of the United States, only investigated the massacre two years ago. "Until a decade ago," reported Howard French in the *New York Times*, "the Jeju massacres were ascribed both officially and in textbooks to North Korean infiltrators."

In the course of the Korean War, the U.S. rulers also conducted saturation bombing, especially of the northern cities, factories, and mines. They dropped more than 428,000 bombs on Pyongyang, a city whose prewar population was only 400,000, and used 717 million pounds of napalm on the country's people.

In spite of attempts by Washington and Seoul to cover up the atrocities, many Koreans who survived from both sides of the border have refused to stay quiet. In north Korea, the Sinchon Museum stands as a symbol of what imperialism has to offer humanity. Schools from across the country take students to the museum on field trips to learn more about the Korean War and the odds the Korean people fought against to defeat U.S. imperialism.



# Workers discuss outcome of French elections

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—Shop and factory floor debates are continuing among workers throughout France as the newly appointed government prepares new attacks against workers, immigrants, and youth.

In the second round of French presidential elections, incumbent Jacques Chirac received 82 percent of the vote, defeating the ultrarightist candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen. Chirac, a conservative Gaullist, was supported by the leaders of the Socialist and

French Communist parties, along with various "left of the left groups," who organized a "vote Chirac to stop fascism" movement that has, at least temporarily, succeeded in derailing the protests by workers and young people against government policies.

The first round vote for both wings of traditional French electoral politics, which have cooperated for five years in what is known as a "cohabitation" government, collapsed as a result of continued government attacks on retirement, medical care, educa-

tion and employment. For years the Plural Left government has tried to force through massive budget cuts in education, medical care, and retirement only to be met by determined worker resistance. In January 2001, a government "reform" of the retirement system was withdrawn after 300,000 workers took to the streets.

With the resignation of Socialist Party prime minister Lionel Jospin, Chirac named a new prime minister who has formed a government pledged to "reestablish law and order and the authority of the republic" and to "reform"—that is, to slash—the retirement system.

"In the long term," says Moïses Martinez, "the vote for Chirac will turn against workers." Martinez, who immigrated to France from his native Spain, has worked for 34 years at the French auto manufacturer Renault. He thought that "the demonstrations against Le Pen were great," while at the same time insisting that "Chirac is just no good. Some workers have been discouraged. They just do not fully see the consequences of their vote."

Without any clear leadership from a proletarian party, workers have had to debate out the question amongst themselves, as is the case among workers in the naval repair yards of the SNCM on the docks in Marseille, the area of France with the strongest support for Le Pen.

## Range of views

Gerard Arcangoli, a 36-year-old locksmith, wouldn't say for whom he had voted but he echoed many of Le Pen's campaign arguments saying that "we need to start putting French people first and clean up this country. There's too much crime, too much disorder.... The power sharing between the left and right wasn't a good thing. I want the right to have all the power and see if they can't get things done."

Arcangoli's co-worker Bernard Leonardi, a 45-year-old welder, member of the CGT union and of the Socialist Party, explained his pro-Chirac vote: "I voted to save democracy, not for Chirac." Lumping together those who voted for Le Pen with those who voted for several centrist groups that call themselves Trotskyist, he added "if all those idiots hadn't voted for extremist parties all this would never have happened."

Patrick Grenier, a 42-year-old electrician, is also a member of the CGT. "Of course I'm against Le Pen, but I cast a blank ballot. There's no way anyone can convince me to turn my back on all I've ever fought for, all I've ever believed in, and vote for Chirac."

At the other end of France, workers at the Peugeot auto assembly plant at Poissy outside of Paris were having similar discussions. Ayhan Isikyildiz, a 30-year-old worker of Turkish origin active in the CGT, has worked at Peugeot for 10 years. He said it is "good to demonstrate but we shouldn't demonstrate only against Le Pen but also question Chirac. We also have problems. Look what they did with the law for the 35-

hour workweek, and all the temporary workers. I would have preferred that everyone demonstrate against the bosses because that's what Chirac represents. We have to convince the high school students who demonstrated against Le Pen."

B. Dabo, who comes from Mali, is a temporary worker at the same auto plant. He organized a group of 30 immigrant workers from Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania to form an animated contingent in the May Day demonstration. While most contingents in the demonstration concentrated on calling for a vote for Chirac to stop Le Pen, Dabo's contingent called for an end to racial discrimination in travel and in sports. He criticized those who "voted for Chirac, not because of his program but to block Le Pen. Chirac will now adopt some of the ideas advanced by Le Pen."

Thierry Broutin, an auto worker at the Citroën assembly plant in Aulnay, called up one *Militant* correspondent and asked to be interviewed. "They stole our May Day," he said, referring to the organizers of the French nationalist actions. "I knew it when I saw all those French flags. Before we had flags from workers of all countries but rarely any sign of French nationalism."

## New government moves

Chirac has wasted no time in putting his newly acquired authority into action. He has named Jean-Pierre Raffarin as prime minister. Raffarin says that the massive vote for Chirac gives his government the legitimacy to "restore the authority of the republic."

The new government has adopted as its first priority to set up a Ministry of the Interior, Internal Security and Local Freedoms, described as a super "law and order" ministry. The new ministry will be headed up by Nicolas Sarkozy, making him the number two man in the new government. Sarkozy was previously associated with the government of Alain Juppé.

In 1995, the Juppé government had provoked massive strikes led by railroad workers when it tried to freeze the wages of public employees, raise the retirement age, gut the public medical care system, and privatize the railroads. The attacks on workers' rights were, for the most part, defeated. The press has called the newly formed government "Juppé's revenge."

The conservative daily, *Le Figaro*, says that Juppé is the "phantom vice president" claiming that, although he is not a member of the government, he is really the one pulling the strings.

## 'Law and order' campaign

Sarkozy's new ministry is to centralize the relations between the national police and the gendarmerie—a militarized police under the control of the army. The ministry is to centralize the intelligence-gathering networks of the two services in a "war against terrorism and the mafia" and a crackdown on "petty crime" which, in the framework of the recent elections, means second-generation immigrant youth in the suburban working-class housing projects.

A large part of the "law and order" drive is directed at young people and is aimed at driving a wedge between unemployed second-generation immigrant youth and industrial workers with regular contract jobs who are facing layoffs and cutbacks. The new government hopes to alter the 1945 statute on juvenile delinquency by lowering the penal age from 13 to 10 years of age. Prison centers for young people will be set up. For the first time, preventive detention of minors over 16 will be allowed.

The new government says that after "law and order," its second priority will be the "reform" of the retirement system. Neither workers nor the bosses have forgotten the last time they crossed swords over this issue. The determined 1995 strike wave led by the railroad workers accompanied by massive demonstrations of millions throughout the country still sends shudders of fear up the backbone of the French boss class.

Meanwhile, the Socialist and Communist Parties are gearing up for the legislative elections to be held in June. They hope to win a majority, forcing the formation of yet another period of "cohabitation."

Marc Kinzel, who works at SNCM shipyards in Marseille, and Derek Jeffers, who works at the Peugeot plant in Poissy, contributed to this article. Both are members of the CGT.

## Mass protest in Uruguay condemns government austerity moves



Thousands of workers marched in Montevideo, Uruguay, in April to protest austerity measures and economic conditions imposed by the government.

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Uruguay's economy has been hammered by Argentina's economic free fall and the collapse of its banking system. The bulk of its exports have gone to Argentina and Brazil, its biggest trading partners. Uruguay is now in the third year of recession after following those two countries into an economic tailspin several years ago.

Moody's Investors Service lowered Uruguay's investment rating to junk status May 3 saying the country was "increasingly vulnerable to macroeconomic shocks emanating from Argentina." Recently when the Argentine government severely restricted bank withdrawals, many took money from their Uruguayan accounts instead, draining hundreds of

millions of dollars out of the country. The Uruguayan central bank had to intervene because of a run on deposits.

While the Uruguayan government has depreciated its currency to increase the competitiveness of the country's exports, the regime and its capitalist rulers hold mostly dollar-denominated debts that add up to more than 60 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Seeking to force Uruguayan working people to bear the brunt of the economic crisis, the government in Montevideo has implemented cuts in social spending while increasing taxes, following IMF dictates. Thousands of workers marched in the capital in April to protest these austerity measures and the economic conditions.

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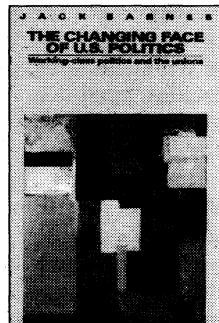
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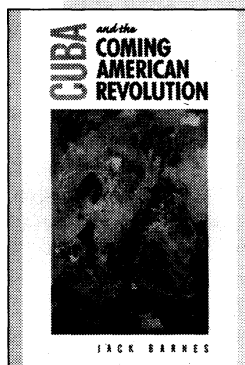
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by Jack Barnes

There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba

—Fidel Castro, March 1961

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made.

Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. In English, Spanish, and French. \$13.00



# Bipartisan framework of bourgeois politics moves to the right

The following excerpts from *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, by Jack Barnes address some of the main trends in politics that are reflected in the recent events in France. The talk was given to a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 New Year's weekend. It is published under the title, "So Far from God, So Close to Orange County," referring to the financial meltdown in Mexico at the time and the declaration of bankruptcy by Orange County. Barnes is the Socialist Workers Party national secretary. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

How is the pattern of world politics we have been discussing reflected concretely in the class struggle in the United States today? What do workers and youth in this country confront, and what can we do about it?

Right after the 1992 presidential elections, a public meeting was organized in New York City in conjunction with a conference of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee and communist leaders from several other countries. At that public meeting, we said that what was most important about the bourgeoisie's election campaign was the fact that it was not going to end with the counting of the ballots. "America First," the "culture war," building a wall along the border with Mexico—the themes of the ultrarightist Republican primary candidate Patrick Buchanan—continued to resound. The campaign of Ross Perot—who ended up getting 19 percent of the popular vote—and his demagogic appeal to an insecure middle class was not a fleeting phenomenon in bourgeois politics, irrespective of Perot himself. In the course of the 1992 campaign, Clinton had already begun speaking Perot's language, probing measures to erode the social wage won through the labor struggles of the 1930s and civil rights battles of the 1950s and 1960s. The Democratic nominee campaigned on the pledge to "end welfare as we know it."

Across the bourgeois political spectrum, this coarsening rhetoric—aimed at heightening resentment in the middle classes and undercutting social solidarity among working people—continued after the election, as we said it would. Two years into the Clinton presidency and two months after the election of a Republican majority in the U.S. Congress, an ideological battle still rages within the bourgeoisie, packaged in demagoguery directed to the broader population.

How should the capitalists operate politically in this new period of economic crisis and growing instability? Why are the employers still so far from accomplishing what they need to do, even after more than a decade of assaults on real wages, employment levels, job conditions, and working hours? How can they break through obstacles to take qualitatively more? How can the bourgeoisie start marshaling arguments that will enable them—even if ever so cautiously at first—to chip away more significantly at the assumptions underlying Social Security itself? These are among the questions at the center of bourgeois politics in the United States today.

## Rightward shift in bourgeois politics

The bipartisan framework of bourgeois politics continues to move to the right. What is the net result, for example, of a Democratic president coming into office and pledging to do something about national health care? Two years later, working people are further away from the socialization of medical coverage than before—*further away*. That is the reality. But the same direction is true across the board. There is a bipartisan movement to the right—and in some important respects a convergence—in the economic and social legislative agendas of both bourgeois parties.

Advancing along this trajectory inevitably breeds rightist demagoguery, because the

efforts by the Democratic and Republican politicians to rationalize their policies end up feeding reactionary biases, fears, and resentments. No matter how particular politicians try to package their anti-working-class moves, it is rightist views that are given the biggest impulse by the fact of these moves itself.

Capitalism over the past couple of decades has at least doubled the official jobless rate that is considered "natural" in the United States, Europe, and most other imperialist countries. The numbers of workers no longer even counted as part of the labor force still continues to grow. At the same time, the capitalists have reduced unemployment benefits, held down the minimum wage, diminished the buying power of take-home pay, denied government funding for child care, and allowed welfare benefits to fall further and further behind price increases. Working people are being driven out of affordable housing, and medical and retirement benefits are being cut.

This is what capitalism is imposing on growing numbers in the working class today. And then politicians from both parties start branding those forced to live under these conditions as outlaws. They start talking about putting the children of the "underclass" into orphanages. They start denying workers unemployment benefits or welfare unless we accept jobs at a minimum or subminimum wage. They draw immigrants across the border to exploit cheap labor and then begin organizing to deny them schooling, medical care, and social benefits.

In a long-term deflationary period such



Democratic president William Clinton in 1993. Barnes explains that "there is a bipartisan movement to the right—and in some important respects a convergence—in the economic and social legislative agendas of both bourgeois parties. Advancing along this trajectory inevitably breeds rightist demagoguery."

as we are living through today, the bourgeoisie does not even have to do anything for most of these conditions to worsen. It is not primarily a matter of government policies. Under such depression-marked circumstances, all the propertied families and their politicians have to do is let capitalism operate. As it does so, both economic and social conditions, and the relationship of class forces, shift against the workers and their allies....

During the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign, the bourgeoisie's two-party setup already began to show its tendency to disintegrate around the edges under the pressures we have been describing. And this process will continue. The first manifestations will not necessarily be recognizably fascist. Perot, for instance, is a Bonapartist demagogue who presses a generally right-wing political agenda, but his movement does not have the incipient fascist thrust of what Buchanan is trying to put together....

This is how political radicalization begins, as evidence of political weakness and moral bankruptcy mount in capitalist politics. And we should remember that forces coming from different directions in bourgeois politics can and do converge around radical



Militant/Nat London

Workers in France demonstrate Jan. 25, 2001, to defend right to retire at 60—part of resistance there to employers' antilabor moves. The capitalists try to put off major class confrontations, says Barnes, "because they are far from confident they can win."

demagoguery of this kind. Buchanan and Perot, for example, converge with those such as the so-called consumer advocate Ralph Nader and *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn to rail against the North American Free Trade Agreement—all of them speaking more or less openly in "America First" terms, while shedding crocodile tears over the conditions of Mexican workers and farmers.

## Workers resist capitalism's horrors

The working class in the United States, as throughout the world, will resist the horrors the declining capitalist system has in store for the vast majority who must labor for a living, produce all social wealth, and create the basis for the advance of culture. The fights we see and take part in today—from the strike against Caterpillar by members of the United Auto Workers, to strikes and massive street mobilizations by workers and youth in France this year against the government's antilabor moves, to responses to attacks on women's rights and racist assaults, to the protests sure to come in Mexico against Zedillo's plan to "rescue" the peso at working people's expense—waves of resistance like these will at some point cross a threshold in one or more countries and pass over into a period of more sustained class battles.

As those struggles break out and develop—and we have no way of foreseeing the place or the timing—communist workers are not only going to be part of them from day one. They, as well as their party and their newspaper, are also going to be already known by many fellow fighters from having gone through earlier struggles together.

Unlike in the 1930s—during the last major capitalist crisis and rise of working-class battles and revolutionary opportunities in many countries—this time around it is not foreordained that the big majority of working-class fighters and youth attracted to revolutionary political conclusions will end up being misled into believing—and acting on the belief—that to be a communist is to be a Stalinist. That false consciousness, which facilitated either corrupting or demoralizing millions of revolutionists, became weaker in the second half of the 1950s following Moscow's revelations of some of Stalin's crimes. It was further weakened in the wake of rebellions by workers and youth in Eastern Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. The Cuban revolution and its internationalist course dealt Stalinism even bigger blows. But the barrier nonetheless remained largely intact.

Today this poisonous confusion of a counterfeit of communism for the real thing can begin to be remedied. In the heat of coming class battles, the door will be open as it has not been since the early days of the Bolshevik-led Russian revolution to win the most revolutionary-oriented and self-sacrificing workers and youth to communism. They can be won to the scientific conclusion that the working class must get rid of a social system that relies on the monopoly of productive property by a tiny minority of ruling families who grow wealthy off the fruits of what the toiling majority produce with our labor. Revolutionists can and will be won to the only accurate conclusion from the experience of our class in this century—that unless we build proletarian parties and a communist world movement capable of

leading workers and farmers to make a socialist revolution, capitalism will repeat its descent toward fascism and world war, and under even more horrible conditions than before....

## Nightmare of the capitalist class

The important thing is that without taking on the working class and our organizations in gigantic battles that we will have the opportunity to win, the exploiters cannot use their enormous military might to unleash a third imperialist world slaughter. Don't fall for the rulers' bluff. Long before such a war becomes possible, the capitalists must cow the workers and defeat us in struggle. They will ultimately finance and support growing rightist and fascist movements, because the capitalists cannot defeat the working class using "normal" methods. There will be massive street battles between fascist legions and the forces mobilized by the class-struggle-minded labor movement.

That is the nightmare for the world's capitalist classes and their temporary political spokespersons—the Clintons, the Gingriches, the Majors, the Blairs, the Zedillos. In their big majority, they do not want to confront those class battles, because they are far from confident they can win. They try to put off the confrontations and finesse them. They buy off this or that middle-class layer in order to weaken our class organizations and try to con us into accepting more and more sacrifices for the good of the "nation."

But a point is always reached where working people can be conned no longer and struggles begin to mount. And with revolutionary leadership, forged and tested in coming struggles, the international working class has the numbers, the social power, the culture, the values, and the program to defeat the reactionary forces loosed by finance capital. We can organize victorious revolutions and open the construction of socialism on a world scale.

That is what we are preparing for. That is what is so important about political weapons such as the new issue of *New Internationalist* [no. 10] that we are celebrating here. That is why it is so important to get this magazine—along with the *Militant*, the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*, and our entire arsenal of revolutionary books and pamphlets published and distributed by Pathfinder—into the hands of workers and young people who are fighters and aspire to be revolutionists.

In November and December 1995, millions of workers and youth in France conducted another round of strikes and mobilizations against Paris's austerity moves. The mass protests, backed by all three major union federations, succeeded in slowing down aspects of the government's assault on jobs and retirement benefits of rail workers and other public employees. In the spring 1997 parliamentary elections, the Socialist and Communist parties won a majority and formed a new government, registering the rejection by workers and substantial layers of the middle class of the austerity course being pressed by the previous regime amid jobless levels exceeding 12 percent.

On May Day 1996 hundreds of thousands of unionists and other workers demonstrated in Mexico City against the austerity pact imposed by the Zedillo regime and agreed to by the progovernment officialdom of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM). The CTM officials had called off all May Day activities and told workers to stay out of the streets.

# Sharon readies new attacks on Palestinians

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon cut short his White House meeting with U.S. president George Bush May 7 and flew back to Israel to begin preparations for a new round of assaults on the Palestinian people. Upon landing at the Ben Gurion Airport he convened an emergency cabinet meeting to authorize new military actions against the Palestinians.

As Sharon and Bush began their meeting, a bombing attack killed 15 Israelis at a gambling resort in the coastal town of Rishon Letzion, about 15 miles south of Tel Aviv.

Shortly before his departure from Washington, Sharon alluded to the reactionary offensive he was about to unleash. "The battle continues and will continue until all those who believe that they can make gains through the use of terrorism will cease to exist—cease to exist," he emphasized.

Bush had invited Sharon to the United States in order to discuss his administration's plans to hold a conference on the Mideast this summer with the aim of attempting to impose a "solution" upon the Palestinian people that would block their fight for self-determination and their right to return to their land. Washington continues to differ with Tel Aviv on how to handle the Palestinians' continued resistance. Bush, for example, has publicly called for "provid[ing] a framework for growth of a potential Palestinian state."

In addition, the U.S. rulers have held extensive conversations and sought assistance from Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia on the situation, with a view to keeping the

pressure on Arafat.

The U.S. rulers also brought pressure to bear on the Israeli government to release Arafat from confinement in his Ramallah compound, which Tel Aviv had surrounded with troops and armor. As part of the deal the Bush administration and British authorities agreed to provide jailers for several Palestinian prisoners transferred to a prison in Jericho. Bush also announced that he is once again sending George Tenet, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, to the Middle East to help put back together a Palestinian police force.

Washington hopes to use both the carrot and the stick with the Palestinian leadership. Speaking on the "Fox News Sunday" program May 5, White House national security adviser Condoleezza Rice attacked the Palestinian Authority for failing to rein in the Palestinians' resistance. "The Palestinian leadership that is there now, the Authority, is not the kind of leadership that can lead to the kind of Palestinian state that we need," she stated. "It has got to reform." She insisted that Washington's approach of getting heads of capitalist regimes in the area, such as Egypt and Jordan, to keep the pressure on Arafat to crack down on Palestinian fighters, was having an affect.

Three days earlier the Senate and House of Representatives expressed their bipartisan support for Israel's recent military assault in the West Bank. The Senate passed such a resolution by 94 to 2, while the House vote was 352 to 21.

Sharon brought his own set of demands to Washington, focusing on how the U.S.

and Israeli rulers should go about "restructuring" the Palestinian Authority. He accused the Saudi Arabian regime of supporting "terrorist operations" and made clear to Bush that his plans for "peace" include neither negotiations with Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat nor an agreement to dismantle any Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Rather, reported an article in the May 4 *Washington Post*, Sharon favors "an elaborate system of fences, trenches, tunnel, settlements, and army camps to create 'buffer zones' around Palestinian areas."

Although the Israeli government withdrew its forces from a number of Palestinian cities occupied last month, it has kept tanks and troops stationed throughout the West Bank, and has imposed blockades around many towns. While the Israeli military is conducting incursions into cities, killing, injuring, and detaining local residents, it is also meeting continued resistance by Palestinian fighters.

About 50 Israeli tanks moved into the center of Nablus before dawn on May 3, firing shells at a building, which an armored bulldozer then demolished. In the ensuing fight two Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed and two other Israeli soldiers were wounded. Israeli forces succeeded in whisking off the streets and into detention at least four Palestinians. The day before, Israeli forces raided the West Bank cities of Tulkarm and Hebron, arresting several Palestinian men.

On a roadside near Jenin, Israeli troops opened fire and killed a Palestinian woman and two children passing by the area May 5, saying at first that a bomb exploded close to where an Israeli tank was stationed. In this instance the Israeli army had to admit that the three individuals they had just killed had absolutely nothing to do with the incident and that the "explosion" was the noise of a tank tread coming loose.

These military assaults are continuing on a daily basis with incidents like these taking place in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On May 6 Israeli troops shot dead four Palestinians in Gaza in two separate incidents. One involved an exchange of fire in which the fighters responded with grenades, injuring two of the Israeli soldiers.

A planned UN fact-finding mission into the Israeli army's assault on the Jenin refugee camp was halted before it began after

Tel Aviv expressed its opposition and Washington backed the Israeli rulers' stance.

Opposition to the Israeli army's role as a repressive military force is reflected in the fact that 1,000 Israeli reservists have signed declarations that they will not serve in the Occupied Territories. Twenty-one of these individuals are serving time in military prisons.

## Growing economic crisis within Israel

A May 3 *Wall Street Journal* article titled "Conflict Grinds on Israeli Economy" pointed to the deepening economic crisis facing workers and farmers inside Israel itself. "For the first time," the article stated, "the conflict has been accompanied by a deep recession. Hotel vacancy rates hover around 90 percent. Restaurants...aren't doing much better. Unemployment has soared past 10 percent, leaving a record number of Israelis out of work.... And the outlook is growing worse by the day."

The Sharon administration has responded with a proposed "emergency economic package" that would raise already-high taxes and cut working people's social benefits. In response to these cuts and a plan to freeze the minimum wage, the chairman of the Histadrut labor federation is threatening to call for a general strike in the next two weeks.

Farmers are facing skyrocketing prices for water and gasoline. They were also forced by the Israeli government to fire the Palestinian laborers who had worked for them. One farmer, Yitzak Avraham, told the *Journal* that the government instructed him to hire Israeli citizens or contract workers who are scheduled to be brought in the country soon from Thailand. "I can't make money anymore," said the 47-year-old farmer, as he surveyed the field of rotting tomatoes and cucumbers he was unable to harvest. "Life has become very difficult."

Economic conditions are even worse for Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Officials from some relief agencies estimate that 50 percent of Palestinians there now live below the poverty line and that up to 60 percent are unemployed.

The total economic dependence of the West Bank and Gaza Strip upon Israel is reflected in the fact that 90 percent of Palestinians exports go to Israel, while only 10 percent of Israeli exports go to the occupied territories.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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**In Defense of Bilingual Education: No to the Unz Ballot Initiative.** Fri., May 17, 7:00 p.m. 12 Bennington St., 2nd fl., East Boston. Tel: (617) 569-9169.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**Stop Police Brutality! Jail the Guilty Cops!** Speakers: Juanita Young, whose son, Malcolm Ferguson, was shot and killed by New York cops in 2000; Maurice Williams, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Newark. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

### NEW YORK

#### Brooklyn

**Roots of the Crisis in the Catholic Church.** Speaker: Angel Lariscy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m.  
**Workers in New York Respond to First Steps toward Massive Cuts.** Speaker: Salm Kolis, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Both events at 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5 program, \$6 dinner. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

#### Garment District

**Vote in France Deepens Crisis of Bourgeois Parties.** Speaker: Bill Schmidt, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue, 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

#### Upper Manhattan

**Vote in France Deepens Crisis of Bourgeois Parties.** Speaker: Craig Honts, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**The Fight for Equal Rights for Immigrants.** Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. 5237 N. 5th Street. Donation: \$5 each for forum and dinner. Tel: (215) 342-7020.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**The Role of Youth in Cuba Today.** Speaker: Romina Green, Young Socialists, recently participated in events in Cuba commemorating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Union of Young Communists. Sun., May 12, 2:00 p.m. Pre-forum luncheon at 1:00 p.m. 3437 14th St., NW. Tel: (202) 387-1590.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**The Crisis in Australian Health Care.** Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League, member, Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union. Sun., May 19, 4:00 p.m. 1st floor, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: \$4.

Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

### CANADA

#### Vancouver

**The Fight for a Democratic, Secular Palestine.** Fri., May 17, 7:30 p.m. 2645 East Hastings, 2nd Floor. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Christchurch

**Elections in France: No Support to Chirac, Le Pen.** Fri., May 17, 7:00 p.m. 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

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**How it's managed**—"American seniors rack up debts like never before—Medical expenses often feed the cycle"—Headline, *USA Today*, April 25.



Harry Ring

**Warms your heart**—"A bright spot in health insurance—

WellPoint reports a 46 percent rise in profit. Managed-care firms post gains on rising premiums"—Headline, *Los Angeles Times*, April 25.

**May his tongue shrivel**—"Last year, fresh coffee was dropped from the menu at the Klamath County jail. This year, condiments like salt, pepper, mustard, and mayonnaise are being eliminated. Sheriff Tim Evinger considers seasonings a luxury."—News item.

**Must be plenty overtime**—One of our favorite big-business media verbs is "earns." Like, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that at the city

Dept. of Water & Power, general manager David Wiggs "earns" an annual salary of \$284,000, plus a \$3,500 monthly housing allowance.

**Like we were saying**—"Online brokerage firm E-Trade Group paid Chief Executive Christos Cotsakos \$77 million last year—more than quadruple what any other Wall Street CEO earned."—News item.

**House of cards**—"Legions of less affluent consumers are falling behind on credit card bills, pushing late payments to the highest level in nearly five years....Higher late fees and penalty interest rates

are compounding the problem. Many card issuers have raised the late fee to \$35."—News item.

**Here's a surprise**—"A new study finds people of color in U.S. cities often pay higher fees to refinance their homes than whites."—News item.

**What 'idle rich'?**—Elizabeth Johnson, heiress to the Johnson & Johnson Band-Aid empire, has been unable to sell off her 20,000 square foot penthouse space on the 50th and 51st floors of Manhattan's Trump Towers (she lives on the 48th). So she cut it up into four

"apartments." The top-of-the-market, a 6.5 bathroom suite is priced at \$21.5 million. The cheapest, which also has 6.5 bathrooms, is yours for \$7.7 million.

**P.S.**—If Trump Towers sounds cramped, consider the idea of a castle. A good number are available these days, many of them vacant for some time.

Obviously, they're not in mint condition. But they're as cheap as they are spacious. (In Poland, as low as \$80,000.) But, one European Castle broker advises: "It's not unusual to have 50 bedrooms and one bath—and no roof."

## Workers, youth back socialist ballot drive in Houston

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign of Anthony Dutrow for U.S. Congress here are planning to go way over the top in their drive to collect signatures to put the meat packer on the ballot.

With nine days to go in the petitioning effort, socialist workers and young socialists were just a few dozen signatures short of their original goal.

The bedrock of the campaign has been a consistent petitioning in the working-class districts of Houston. Hundreds of people have signed up at shopping centers on North Shepherd Drive, not far from the Pathfinder bookstore. One worker from Mexico who met campaign supporters came by the Pathfinder bookstore and bought several books and a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*.

More than 200 signatures were obtained from students at the University of Houston on Friday April 26. Many signed owing to their disgust with both the Democratic and Republican parties, while others expressed interest in one or another points of the campaign platform. An Asian-American student who initially decided not to sign the petition took a campaign flyer to read. When she saw the petitioners back on campus she enthusiastically signed and urged several of her friends to do the same.

"Look," she told two friends who were passing by, "Do you see what they say about Afghanistan and the treatment of the prisoners in Guantánamo! You should really sign this! I am glad to see others who think this way."

A number of students noted that tuition and fees are again increasing at the university. "Students here can barely finish

school," a young person told one of the socialists. "It takes on the average seven years for students here to complete a Bachelor's program because so many have to work and study at the same time." Another student added, "All this extra money will now go to build a research center for petrochemical studies—more free work for oil corporations."

Dutrow and other socialist workers joined an April 19 demonstration of more than 200 supporters of the Palestinian struggle. Most of the crowd were Palestinian youth now living in Houston and they welcomed Dutrow to the action.

Dozens signed the petitions and several people filled out subscription cards for the *Militant* and asked that supporters call them later in the week to arrange more discussions and finalize the sale.

As this kind of response from workers and young people in Houston has sped up the pace of the drive, campaign supporters have decided to increase the number of signatures that they will turn over to local election officials.

"Because of the undemocratic nature of Texas ballot laws," Dutrow explained to supporters, "we have decided to set a new goal of 1,800 to put the campaign in the strongest position possible to fight for our rightful spot on the ballot." The original goal set by petitioners was



Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress Anthony Dutrow, right, joins April 19 demonstration in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people. The campaign has been well received among working people and students as supporters collect signatures to place Dutrow on the ballot.

1,500 signatures.

"While the law states that only 500 signatures are required," he continued, "election officials are able to exclude signatures for many reasons, including place of residence and lack of registration. While some-

one may have been born and raised in the district, they may still not have the right to vote in elections or sign petitions due to a felony conviction. There are tens of thousands of men and women in the Houston area who face these restrictions."

## 'Wall St. Journal' describes stakes in strike at Hershey

BY GREG McCARTAN

A feature article in the *Wall Street Journal* May 1—International Workers Day—shed further light on the stakes in the strike at Hershey Foods Corp.'s two plants in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Some 2,700 members of Chocolate Workers Local 464 walked out April 26, rejecting the company's demands that they sharply increase co-payments on their health-care plan.

The strike "has turned into an unusually personal attack against Hershey's first outsider CEO," the *Journal* wrote. Richard Lenny was previously a top boss at Kraft Foods, owned by the Philip Morris company. *Forbes* magazine reports that Philip Morris ranked fourth in total profits of any U.S. firm in 2001, raking in \$8.5 billion.

Some of Philip Morris's huge profits are credited to Lenny's antiworker cost-cutting drive. Since leaving Kraft Foods he has cut 800 jobs at Hershey's, winning praise from Wall Street for bringing "world-class discipline to the business."

"Until Mr. Lenny came along in March 2001," the *Journal* wrote, "Hershey employees didn't worry much about business acro-

nyms like ZOG, shorthand for 'zero overhead growth' and a buzzword associated with Mr. Lenny on Wall Street. Now, his zeal for cost-cutting has become the subtext of the dispute."

David Nelson, from Credit Suisse First Boston, told the *Journal* that Lenny's attacks are "a big departure for Hershey and a positive one."

Nelson's remark highlights the different class views of the conflict. On April 23 union members voted by a 7-to-1 margin to reject the company's concession demands, indicating they don't think Lenny's antiunion drive is such a step in the right direction. The workers pointed out that any increase in health-care payments will simply wipe out meager wage increases offered by the company.

Hershey's showed its contempt for the workers when on May 1 it called back 129 union members who had been on lay off before the strike, demanding they cross the picket line or face losing unemployment benefits. All refused to cross.

Union members have put up a giant inflatable rat in front of the plant and christened it "Lenny." Signs on the picket line read: "Stop the greed, share the wealth," and "The sweetest place on earth went sour."

Hershey's profits have climbed 10 percent over the last year to \$87 million. Workers on the picket line told *Militant* reporters they simply won't accept the company's attacks at a time when Hershey's is pocketing tens of millions each year. It's no wonder the chocolate workers walked out of the plants. Only the nuts are left inside.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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**THE MILITANT**  
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEETLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 20, 1977

SEATTLE—More than 500 women gathered at the University of Washington campus in Seattle April 30—May 1 for the Northwest Women's Action Conference.

"One gets the impression that things are not so rosy in the fight for women's rights," said Rita Shaw in her remarks opening the conference. Shaw is a member of Seattle-King County NOW and a founding member of the Washington ERA Coalition.

Shaw outlined the attacks women are facing: the widening gap in pay between men and women, cutbacks in affirmative action and child care, restrictions on the right to choose abortion, and the right-wing opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.

"We must deal realistically with the fact that our gains are being eroded," Shaw continued. "And even though the battles seem insurmountable, we must acknowledge that any whittling away of the rights of any woman is a loss for all women."

One proposal supported by the conference calls for a demonstration and rally on August 26—women's equality day—in downtown Seattle. It also urges similar actions in other cities in Washington and Oregon.

There was considerable debate over this resolution, especially around what the central demands of the actions would be.

The conference decided to focus the protest's demands around the ERA, abortion rights, no forced sterilization, and child care.

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

May 19, 1952

The new Smith "union seizure" bill now before Congress would make it possible for the government to break a strike, smash the union that called it, and then force the union to pay for this "government service."

The bill opens a new stage in government anti-labor legislation. Previous laws mask their strike-breaking intentions under the "cloak" of settlement clauses. They pretend to provide machinery for the settlement of capital-labor disputes.

This is true even of the Taft-Hartley "slave-labor" law, which provides for a government board that is supposed to try to bring about an agreement. This new bill, on the contrary, specifically forbids the government from making any recommendation towards a settlement, and specially provides powers for strikebreaking, and for that alone.

Further, the bill would make it unlawful to either strike or encourage a strike while the plants were in the government's hands, or to contribute funds for the strike or for strike benefits, or to give "direction or guidance" to such a strike.

The new Smith bill reveals the close connection between the witch hunt hysteria and the anti-labor drive. It uses the same patriotic cover used for the witch hunt against "communists." The words "national emergency" and "national defense" are repeatedly inserted in the bill.

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# Lessons of elections in France

Continued from front page

parties go hand-in-hand with these deepening assaults and make them appear less and less distinguishable from each other.

The abject capitulation of the "left of the left" in rallying to the French flag and joining the panicked cry of "Vote Chirac!" to "save France" is a fitting culmination of a decades-long course of rejecting any pretense at integrating themselves into the working class and its day-to-day struggles and battles. Their stand is another step in their evolution toward functioning in practice as a left wing of the social democracy.

## Dangers of French nationalism

On May Day, under the guise of fighting a rising "fascist threat," the union officialdom and SP leadership, backed by the Communist Party and other workers parties, organized French nationalist actions across the country to mobilize a vote for an enemy of all working people, President Jacques Chirac of the Gaullist party.

The nationalist depths of the workers parties' treachery in joining themselves to the anti-Le Pen get-out-the-vote machine can be seen in one fact: the role of the French imperialist state was never mentioned in the so-called battle to defeat fascism.

Turning their backs on working people from the South Pacific to Africa to Afghanistan, these parties and union leaderships urged working people to vote for a capitalist party that is directly responsible for the French government's foreign policy and military affairs. France is among the most heavily armed imperialist powers and maintains an arsenal of nuclear weapons—the *force de frappe* so treasured by its billionaire rulers. Paris has troops deployed in Yugoslavia and a number of countries in Africa, and plays an active part in the imperialist occupation forces in Afghanistan. Are working people in these countries suffering under the boot of ultrarightist Le Pen? Or is it French imperialism, organized by the SP and Chirac's rightist party, which is their direct oppressor today?

Workers will pay a price for the impact of the French nationalist mobilizations. The protests reinforced the ability of the rulers to present their trade policies, austerity measures, "security" crackdowns, and wars abroad under the guise of what is good for "we French." They bolster the rulers' ideological offensive aimed at keeping workers and farmers from thinking that the only "we" is the exploited and oppressed around the world, and the only "they" is the capitalist rulers and their well-paid bosses and agents.

It is useful to remember the logical outcome of lesser-evil bourgeois politics. It was seen in 1932 when, under cover of the need to stop the fascist threat in Germany, the Social Democratic Party urged working people to cast their ballots for President Paul von Hindenburg, a conservative militarist. Following his electoral victory, Hindenburg handed power to Adolf Hitler.

## Roots of the crisis

The roots of the crisis facing the capitalist and social democratic parties lie in the inability of the superwealthy ruling class in France to break the resistance of workers to the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis. This includes worsening conditions on the job, anti-immigrant assaults, persistently high unemployment, attempts to erode retirement benefits, and austerity measures aimed at education and health care.

As in other imperialist countries, the main parties have moved consistently to the right over the last two decades as they act on behalf of the capitalist class. They try to sow divisions in the working class; whittle away at the social wage and workers' rights; and impose "law and order" by putting more cops on the streets and more working people in prison. Their only course has been—and will continue to be—to somehow, some way, press forward this assault—and face humiliation at the polls down the road.

The capitalist and social democratic parties, along with their centrist hangers-on, have done everything possible since the second-place finish of ultra-rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen to blur the fact that the main themes of Le Pen's National Front during the campaign—crime, the European Union, and immigration—have been the touchstones of bourgeois politics for some time in France. His campaign to halt immigration into France for many years, for example, is a policy adopted by the U.S. ruling class between World War I and World War II. He makes a distinction between "illegal" immigrants and those who have become citizens of France, saying the former should be rounded up and deported.

Le Pen, like other ultrarightists who function in bourgeois politics in the United States and elsewhere, simply advances his reactionary proposals by addressing these questions forthrightly, minus the sugarcoating applied by other capitalist politicians.

To better position themselves to compete with U.S. imperialism, the French rulers carry out their assault on workers and farmers under the banner of the need for a strong European Union and common currency. Budget

cutbacks and other assaults on working people have been justified on the grounds that they are dictated by a nameless, faceless "supra-national" bureaucracy that oversees the drive toward European unity. Workers have been told that the increasing use of temporary jobs by the bosses, deterioration of working conditions, and plant shutdowns are necessary evils in building a common market and remaining "competitive" in the capitalist world market.

As the European Union expands east, moreover, the weight of Germany grows, and the anti-Euro banner of the radical right in France and some smaller countries of western Europe gains support. And the world recession weighs in differential ways on various countries and different layers of workers and farmers in Europe.

The anti-Americanism of the leaders of the Socialist and Gaullist parties has been cast in the framework of supporting a common currency in order to create a trade bloc able to stand up to U.S. imperialism, and to attempt to widen trade with the East European workers states.

While joining the jingoistic anti-American chorus, Le Pen focused his fire on Brussels, the seat of the European Union. He pounded away at the main parties, presenting his demand to withdraw from the monetary union as the only road to save "French jobs" and sovereignty.

## Evolution of the National Front

The election results also spell a crisis for the National Front, an ultrarightist bourgeois party. For a number of years Le Pen has moved away from the more openly fascist elements in his party, a process that led to a split by those who opposed his moves to become more "respectable" in bourgeois politics.

Fascist-minded leaders like Le Pen in France and Patrick Buchanan in the United States see that the only way the capitalist rulers will ultimately be able to crush the working-class resistance is through violent combat. Their perspective of organizing a cadre in the streets that can take on and defeat the working class runs up against the fact that it is still historically too early to actually construct and sustain such a movement. These forces can either remain isolated ideological groups, or make their way into bourgeois electoral politics, the other main arena in which they can gain a hearing.

Buchanan's high point came in the 1996 primary elections in New Hampshire, when his victory shocked the Republican establishment. But temporary electoral successes like this don't lead anywhere for fascist forces today because they cannot yet construct an ultrarightist street movement. Their electoral results may take "respectable" bourgeois layers by surprise, but in the longer run the fact that they cannot be sustained results in disappointment to an ultrarightist cadre.

The vote in France will be Le Pen's high point, even as the ideological, "anticrime," and nationalist anti-immigrant measures that are the touchstones of bourgeois politics today will continue to generate ultrarightist currents in every imperialist country.

## Constructing proletarian parties

The working class in France has time and again proven its capacity to fight and mobilize against the assaults by the rulers. Across Europe similar battles against the anti-labor drive of the employers and their governments continue to break out. A day after the second round of voting in France, tens of thousands of workers in Germany kicked off rolling strikes to demand a decent wage increase from major employers in auto, steel, and other major industries. In Italy, one-day strikes have put the Berlusconi government on notice not to press ahead with a new round of attacks on the social wage in that country.

Working people involved in these battles vote many different ways in bourgeois elections when there is no clear working-class alternative being put forward. It is the fact that workers are on the picket line or in the streets defending their class interests that is important, not how they may cast their ballot.

Working people and revolutionary-minded youth have a wealth of material in English, French, and Spanish to draw on and use as part of these battles. This includes *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *New International no. 7*, and the *Changing Face of U.S. Politics* (see advertisement on page 10). These titles draw on decades of lessons of working-class struggle to explain the roots of the capitalist crisis and the rightward shift in the major bourgeois parties, and to point to the possibility and necessity of working people building proletarian parties capable of leading tens of millions in the fight to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class and replace its rule with a government of workers and farmers.

Faced with the effects of the capitalist crisis, more workers, farmers, and youth people are open to considering a revolutionary alternative as they continue their day-to-day struggles. Small proletarian parties, rooted within this resistance and operating within the plants, mines, and mills can effectively reach out and gain a hearing with each successive wave of upsurge and crisis.

# Washington targets Cuba

Continued from front page

as during a visit to Iran that the two countries could "bring America to its knees."

Even the *New York Times* found the claims hard to swallow and noted that "Cuba, in fact, is one of the few developing nations to play a significant role in drug and biotechnology activities." The paper said Cuba has made "new vaccines for its comprehensive immunization program, which is widely admired by scientists and physicians."

Washington, in fact, maintains the largest store of biological and chemical weapons of any country in the world, and unlike the Cuban government, has used them in its imperialist assaults against the peoples of Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba. The U.S. Army stores chemical weapons at eight locations in the United States and the Johnson Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. Munitions include M55 rockets, mines, bombs, and one ton containers of agents.

In 1998 the Clinton administration used similar claims against the government of the Sudan when it launched air strikes against the capital of that country. The government of the Sudan insisted the factory that was bombed produced medical drugs and had nothing to do with chemical weapons.

Since workers and peasants in Cuba toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959 and opened up the first socialist revolution in the Americas, Washington has sought to isolate and overturn the conquests working people have achieved on the island. U.S. president John Kennedy decreed a blockade against Cuba in February of 1962, one year after the failed invasion of 1,500 mercenaries armed, trained, and backed by Washington. These actions were part of what has become a more than 40-year war against the Cuban Revolution that has continued through Bolton's Heritage Foundation speech.

# May Day actions

Continued from Page 2

gans demanding that the government end its assault on social security. Many tens of thousands of working people—union and nonunion—have taken to the streets in the past year in defense of social security and living pensions.

In Reykjavik, Iceland, more than 10,000 people participated in a May Day march, according to *Morgunbladid*, the main daily paper there. Organized by the Delegate Council of the trade unions in Reykjavik, the demonstration was joined by numerous Palestinians and youth who carried Palestinian banners and signs demanding that Israel stop the killings and withdraw their army from the occupied territories.

The Federation of Apprentices also joined the action with their demands for student housing and a better wage for trainees. Two apprentice students, marching alongside a couple of Young Socialists, explained that they were from another part of the country and had to come here to finish their apprenticeship. But the school had no housing. For more than a decade the Federation of Apprentices had a housing project for the students, which is about to fall apart because it is too big an economic burden. This, they said, is one of many examples of discrimination facing young people who live outside of Reykjavik.

Natasha Terlexis in Athens, Greece; Nan Bailey in Los Angeles; Atli Freyr Fridbjörsson and Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdottir in Reykjavik, Iceland; and Brian Williams in New York contributed to this article.

For further reading

## The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II.

\$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12 and at [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com).



# Deep historical roots of civil war in United States

Printed below are excerpts from *America's Revolutionary Heritage*, by George Novack. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. The items quoted appear in the chapter titled "The Civil War—its place in history," written by Novack in 1961. Copyright © 1971 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The Civil War had deep historical roots. It was the inevitable product of two inter-

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

lacing processes. One was the degeneration of the First American Revolution, which unfolded by slow stages until it culminated in open counterrevolution. The other was the rise of capitalist industrialism with its contradictory effects upon American social development. The interaction of these two fundamental factors, the first rooted in national soil and the second stemming from world conditions, constituted the principal driving force in American history between the close of the first revolutionary struggle and the outbreak of the second.

It is impossible to understand the necessity for a Second American Revolution without grasping the dynamics of these two interpenetrating processes out of which it emerged. The First American Revolution took place in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The second unfolded in the middle of the nineteenth century. Separated by an interval of almost seventy-five years, these two revolutions are customarily regarded as totally different and completely disconnected events. This view is superficial and false. In reality the First American Revolution and the Civil War form two parts of an indivisible whole. They comprised distinct yet interlinked stages in the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the United States.

The bourgeois-national revolutionary movement in North America had five main tasks to fulfill. These were: (1) to free the American people from foreign domination; (2) to consolidate the separate colonies or states into one nation; (3) to set up a democratic republic; (4) to place state power in the hands of the bourgeoisie; and (5) most important of all, to rid American society of its precapitalist encumbrances (Indian tribalism, feudalism, slavery) in order to permit the full and free expansion of capitalist forces of production and exchange. These five tasks were all bound together, the solution of one preparing the conditions for the solution of the rest.

The First Revolution solved the first three of these tasks. The Patriots' struggles liber-

ated thirteen colonies from British rule; the ensuing class contention for power (1783-1788) led to the creation of a federal union; the new nation set up a democratic republic. It went quite otherwise with the last two. Although the Revolution cleansed the colonies of much feudal rubbish and cleared the ground for the swift growth of American capitalism and American nationhood, it failed to place the scepter firmly in the hands of the big bourgeoisie or to effect a thoroughgoing reorganization of American society on a bourgeois basis.

These deficiencies of the first bourgeois revolution were not immediately evident and took time to manifest themselves in full force. At first the Revolution seemed entirely successful and its outcome satisfactory to the northern capitalists. They had attained the paramount position in the new republic, which they governed together with the southern planters with whom they had waged the war, written the Constitution, and formed the Union.

But the merchants, financiers, and manufacturers proved incapable of maintaining their hegemony. After a brief though important period in supreme authority during Washington and Adams's administrations, their direct political representatives were compelled to turn over national leadership to the plantation aristocracy. The bourgeois conquest of political power had turned out to be premature. This was confirmed when the mercantile capitalists subsequently failed to recover the supremacy they relin-

quished in 1800 to the slavocracy and had to rest content with second rank....

### International context of Civil War

For almost twenty-five years [from 1847 to 1871] the entire Western world was a fiery furnace of war and revolution. These were the most turbulent years humanity had experienced since the Napoleonic Wars or was to know until the First World War. Within this furnace were forged not only the imperialist powers of modern Europe, which were to rule the earth until 1914, but the nation destined to outstrip them as the mightiest of world powers: the capitalist United States of North America.

The Second American Revolution must be viewed within this world-historical setting. Our Civil War was neither an isolated nor a purely national phenomenon. It was one of the most important links in the chain of conflicts that issued directly out of the world economic crisis of 1857 and constituted the great bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement of the mid-nineteenth century....

American democracy was defended and extended by the coalition of class forces that fought and won the Civil War. But at its best this democracy has remained restricted. At no time since have the masses of American people exercised decisive control over the national government. Whether Republicans or Democrats held the White House and Congress, the plutocrats have ruled the country and determined its major policies in war or peace.

## LETTERS

### Workers compensation

I am a union carpenter in eastern Kentucky and have been fighting the workers compensation system for three years. I believe that the system is corrupt, I believe they have no morals, this includes some of the attorneys.

Judges take the word of doctors that they know are used over and over again to lie. The big companies pay a lot of money to see that injured workers do not receive a dime. The doctors for the injured worker are totally ignored. Elected officials do not care either, or else they would not let this system cheat the workers the way they do. Workers

compensation is supposed to mean workers get compensated when they are injured on the job.

The way the system is now the workers do not have a chance. It needs to change. Everybody needs to get together and say, "enough is enough." This includes our union leaders. If we raise enough hell something will happen.

John See  
Louisa, Kentucky

### Support for Widows' Walk

The recently concluded Widows' Walk for black lung benefits made a big impact

among the workers at Flushing Shirt in Jefferson, Pennsylvania. Some of them had fathers who died from black lung, and a few have fathers who are still living with it. Many of them have had relatives in the coal mines.

Several co-workers took leaflets publicizing a meeting for Linda Chapman and Phyllis Tipton that the United Mine Workers hosted in Uniontown. One posted the flier all over nearby Carmichaels. Another took a leaflet to a Shop-n-Save near his home and posted it there. Yet another co-worker took a leaflet home for her husband to take into the Emerald mine where he works.

A woman who runs an automatic machine across the aisle from me took a leaflet and told me her father had died of black lung and her mother "had to fight" to get benefits. Another told me that her father had died from black lung when she was four and that her mother had never received benefits. One co-worker said her father had worked in the mines for 47 years and had his benefits denied after receiving them for three years. He won them back after a seven-year fight, but died shortly after. His widow never received benefits.

After the Uniontown meeting 53 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 622 at the plant signed a message of solidarity to the marchers. It said we supported their march, thought they had done a great job in bringing attention to this issue, congratulated them on making it to the end, and explained that many in our plant had family members with black lung.

Chris Remple  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### Thrilled with 'Militant'

First of all I would like to say that I am thrilled to read your paper. When my friends and I were rallying in Washington, D.C., April 20 we picked up a copy of the paper and were amazed later on what was said. Most of the papers you will read in your life are very one-sided. I was thrilled to see that this was not. It laid out the facts about what the Muslim people really think and believe.

I would just like to say to all the journalists: great work, and stay open minded. You will win many people over that way with your tactic.

Abrar Founas  
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

### Capitalism, workers' rights

I am a member of a social action group called the Idaho progressive student alliance. I have been very happy with the strides we have made in creating consumer awareness about issues pertaining to capitalism

and its inherent flaws. I personally have a deep-seated hatred for violators of human/workers rights and feel something must be done. Until recently I felt that Democrats were better than Republicans and that I would vote for them if need be. But now, two prominent members of Idaho's Democratic Party have come out with campaign promises stating that they can and will bring in big businesses.

This is not what the people of the world need. Capitalism has never solved a single problem related to workers' rights! The unions have made great progress, but the concept of unions is in direct opposition to the concept of capitalism. If we can help each other please let me know.

Jamie Bailey  
Pocatello, Idaho

### Online

Congratulations on the excellent work done by both *Militant* staff and also by the volunteers who put it online.

Sedi Minachi  
by e-mail

### Anti-Le Pen protests

In your May 13 lead article, you seemed to imply that the rallies across France to protest the National Front did not merit the support of communists. If this is not your position, I urge you to clarify it. If it is, it seems to me to be a serious ultraleft error.

I agree strongly with the *Militant's* stand against a vote for Chirac in the May 5 runoff. Working people cannot rely on Chirac or anyone else to hold back the advance of fascism—they must do it themselves. However, this does not mean that because the leadership organizing the antifascist mobilizations calls for supporting Chirac, that communists should not take part in them. Instead, communists should be actively encouraging the formation of a broad antifascist front, as they should seek to keep the struggle rooted in the streets and not in the polling booths.

It seems that the correct policy would be to encourage and take part in such struggles, while seizing the opportunity to educate workers and their allies about the dangers of relying on a vote for Chirac or any other policy that compromises the independence of the working class.

Loren Meyer  
Missoula, Montana

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

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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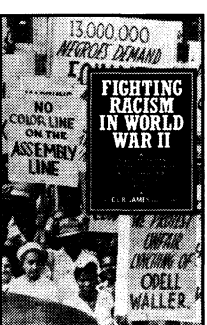
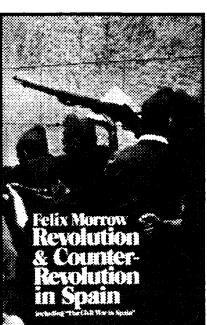
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## Strikers in Germany demand wage hike

BY RÓGER CALERO

Members of IG Metall, Germany's largest union with 2.7 million members, began a series of one-day strikes May 6 to press their demand for a 4 percent wage increase. Workers in metals-related industries are fighting to reverse years of pay settlements that have barely kept pace with inflation, part of the "restraint" urged on them by the union tops.

Close to 50,000 auto workers in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg walked out in the country's first industry-wide strike in seven years, threatening to spread the actions across the country if an agreement is not reached.

Union members stayed off the job at 20 companies in the city of Stuttgart, a union stronghold and a major auto industrial center. The action halted production at plants belonging to the luxury car makers Porsche, Audi, and the Mercedes-Benz unit of the DaimlerChrysler Corporation.

Speaking to 400 strikers at a rally outside Porsche's plant, IG Metall union president Klaus Zwickel received loud cheers when he said the actions will continue "until we get an acceptable result, acceptable to those who voted to strike."

Warning strikes in the lead-up to the May 6 walkout involved tens of thousands of workers, as the employers stuck to their offer of a 3.3 percent wage increase. The union began with a demand of a 6.5 percent pay hike, but reduced this to 4 percent in negotiations.

Union officials told the press that workers in the industry should not receive less than the 3.6 percent wage settlement awarded in recent chemical industry nego-

tiations. Martin Kannegiesser, head of the employers' federation Gesamtmetall, said the 3.3 increase represented a "threshold of pain for our companies."

### Employers' stance

The big-business press has closely followed the conflict, since issues of the competitiveness and profitability of major industries in Germany are involved.

"Zwickel won't get a new offer from us," said Ottmar Zwiebelhofer, the bosses' chief negotiator, referring to the IG Metall president.

"It's ridiculous to talk about a 6.5 percent increase at a time like this," said Ulrich Ruetz, a chief executive at an engine parts maker outside of Stuttgart, referring to the economic slowdown in the country. "We can shift our work to our plants in Hungary, Ireland, or even south Korea," he said, in a clear threat to the workforce. "We cannot do it in short term, but we can do it."

The *International Herald Tribune* explained that the European Central Bank (ECB) "has served notice that it is carefully watching the union. Because the union's contract covers 3.6 million workers—well above the union's official membership—it is bound to feed wage inflation across a broad swath of the economy." Wage inflation is the capitalist daily's term for higher wages won by workers.

"Economists and business executives worry that a generous wage settlement for the metalworkers will lead to higher wages for the huge public employees' union, construction workers and banking workers," wrote the *New York Times* May 7.

The BBC reported that "pay deals in the



Striking workers at the DaimlerChrysler factory in Sindelfingen, Germany. Members of the IG Metall union stayed off the job at 20 companies to demand a wage increase.

metals industry have a wider importance, as they tend to set the tone for settlements in other industries."

"A growing number of executives now say that Germany's whole wage structure is too rigid," the *Times* said, pointing to the fact that almost all manufacturing involving metal, from carmakers to machine-tool companies and electronic manufactures, is covered by the single agreement. The pact includes companies employing anywhere from a few hundred to tens of thousands of workers.

The big-business press has noted that the conflict registers a departure from the understanding that has existed between the em-

ployers and the trade union officialdom of avoiding confrontations whenever possible. This arrangement has been put under greater pressure as the German bosses seek to undermine wages and working conditions by shifting production out of the country, and by increasingly refusing to be part of industry-wide union contracts.

"The battle lines have become considerably harder this time around," said Heinz Junker, chief executive of Mahle, a large maker of pistons and other engine parts.

In search of lower labor costs the Mahle company has shifted the bulk of its manufacturing elsewhere. While keeping its labor force in Germany at 10,000, it now employs 19,000 workers in other countries where it can pay lower wages.

As the economic crisis has deepened and competition has sharpened, around half of all companies in eastern Germany have abandoned industry-wide collective bargaining agreements. In the two years that followed IG Metall's last settlement in 1995, when it won a 4 percent pay increase after the workers went out on strike, the companies bound by the contract cut 200,000 jobs.

### Huge profits

Union officials have pointed to the huge profits made by the auto companies despite Germany's economic downturn. Speaking at the rally on May 6, Uwe Huck, the head of the workers council at the Porsche's plant, said that with a 13 percent profit margin the company can't say that there is no money.

Although the big auto companies are currently profitable, auto parts makers and smaller manufacturers say they are not doing so well.

"The car companies are pushing the employers' association to accept an agreement," one executive at a parts company told the *Times*. "But they won't let us pass on any of those increased costs to them," he said, noting that the big auto makers have already imposed lower prices on the parts manufacturers.

The *International Herald Tribune* wrote that "Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who has intervened repeatedly in an effort to forestall the strike, could see his reelection results dimmed in September if the economy weakens further and unemployment remains high, pollsters say. The union has thrust him into an almost unwinnable situation. Schroeder, a center-left Social Democrat whose reelection campaign in September relies on unions for support, can neither afford to alienate the labor movement nor to preside over a double-dip recession."

The German Employers Federation has encouraged its members to hold wage increases to 1.8 percent this year, claiming that anything higher will derail the economy. The *Tribune* concluded that the union needs to reconsider its "ideological adherence to wage equality in the country with the highest wage rates in Europe.... And this is the biggest problem for Schroeder, the German economy and the ECB."

## Tire workers in Sweden protest layoffs

BY DANIEL AHL

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Filling five buses, 200 tire workers and their supporters traveled to Stockholm April 26 to protest the layoff of 744 workers from the Continental tire plant in Gislaved. The rally, organized by the Industrial Union, took place behind the Royal Castle and in front of Parliament. Workers demanded of the Minister of Industry Björn Rosengren that the government pass laws to make it harder to fire and lay off workers in Sweden.

At the rally workers blew whistles and wore white T-shirts and caps saying, "Gislaved." Some wore blue caps with the letters "D.A.," which is short for the Industrial Union paper, *Dagens Arbete*. One banner demanded, "Work for Gislaved," and a placard demanded, "Stop closing down our industry—Change the law!" The rally opened with a solemn "funeral ceremony" where workers, dressed in black, carried tires painted as funeral flowers and a "family gravestone" with the names of plants closed down by Continental throughout Europe: Dublin, Newbridge, Herstal, Traiskirchen, and Gislaved.

"We brought that idea with us from Hanover," said Sem-Ove Lundberg, referring to a rally in March when 100 Continental tire workers joined fellow unionists from the company plant in Traiskirchen, Austria, to protest layoffs at the Continental headquarters in Hanover, Germany.

Pakfetrat Khosro, 47, a worker with 13 years in the plant, told the *Militant* that he had been to the Hanover rally. "It was good, and so is this one," he said with a smile. "I have been making 550 tires for them every day, but soon that will be over. I will have to find work in another factory."

A band at the rally performed a song directed at Continental. An article in the main liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter* the day after the rally stated dryly that "the peaceful Swedish workers have learned how to make a show of their protest from their colleagues down in Europe."

Industrial Union local president Kaarle Heino addressed the rally. He pointed out



Some 200 tire workers and their supporters demonstrated April 26 in front of the Swedish parliament in Stockholm against layoffs and to demand jobs.

that the 774 workers forced onto the unemployment lines in a small industrial town like Gislaved would be the equivalent of 70,000 jobs in Stockholm. "It's far too easy to lay off employees in Sweden compared to other European Union countries," Heino said.

As part of the rally a union delegation delivered a resolution from the union local at the plant demanding "energetic and powerful initiatives from the state to create new work opportunities and education for Gislaved." According to *Dagens Arbete*, Rosengren said that the rules concerning layoffs "will be looked into."

Under the administration of Prime Minister Göran Persson's Social Democratic Party, Stockholm has taken the lead among its imperialist rivals in Western Europe in its drive to slash the social wage. As Persson himself put it in a speech in Stockholm on May Day, "We have broken mass unemployment, but now the main task will be to create a program against sick leaves and early retirement." So far, the government has not lifted a finger to provide new jobs or eco-

nomical compensation to working people affected by the shutdown of plants around the country.

Continental's announcement that it is halting production in Gislaved came last December. It is one in a series of layoffs in old industrial towns throughout the country. This includes the Ericsson plant in Kumla, the Avesta Polaroid steel mill in Degerfors, and the Scania assembly line in Katrineholm.

Eduardo Andrés Björnerström, a worker with 12 years in the tire plant, came to the rally with his wife Mailinn, who works as a nurse. Both are originally from Chile. "Many of us who are here today are not very used to protesting, but you have to do it," he said. On July 5, Continental will shut down its tire production in Gislaved. Workers invited supporters of the *Militant* to participate in an upcoming rally taking place in that town.

Daniel Ahl is a member of the Industrial Union in Stockholm, Sweden.