

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Protesters demand: 'Free Cuban 5!
Extradite CIA-trained mass murderer!'

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 21

MAY 28, 2007

'Prosecute cops for May Day riot!' Demand many in Los Angeles



Firing rubber bullets and swinging clubs, dozens of Los Angeles police officers attacked a peaceful rally for legalization of immigrants held at MacArthur Park on May 1.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES, May 16—"I'm here so that my voice will be heard and this won't go unpunished," Josefina González told a public forum here organized by the Los Angeles City Council two days ago. González was one of many workers clubbed by cops at the May 1 rally

at MacArthur Park, where 5,000 people turned out to demand legalization of undocumented immigrants and an end to raids and deportations.

Support has been building for a May 17 demonstration here called by many of the groups that organized the May Day

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U.S. 'working poor' superexploited 'BusinessWeek' warns of impending disaster

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The cover story of the May 21 issue of *BusinessWeek* features "The poverty business: Inside U.S. companies' audacious drive to extract more profits from the nation's working poor."

The article details how a growing number of businesses have made hefty profits by offering high-interest credit to "the working poor," driving hundreds of thousands if not millions of low-paid workers into "a thicket of debt from which many never emerge."

It notes the concern of some in big-business circles that this expanding bubble of "subprime lending" will hasten a financial crisis for U.S. capitalism and heighten class tensions as workers' living standards are driven down even further.

The authors describe how companies, in their drive for the highest return, have found an easy source of "untapped profits" among the most exploited workers. "Once, major banks and companies avoided the poor side of town," they note. But now "a growing number of sizable corporations are realizing that viewed in the aggregate, the working poor are a choice target."

They lure working people, squeezed by low wages and rising medical costs, rent or mortgage payments, and previous debt, into getting fast cash in

exchange for high interest rates and fees.

The volume of such "alternative financial services" has risen to \$250 billion a year, with companies that offer auto financing, check cashing,

Continued on page 4

Restaurant workers in N.Y., New Jersey fight for pay, dignity

BY EDDIE BECK

WAYNE, New Jersey—Workers are picketing Majestic Buffet, a Chinese restaurant here, in a fight for better wages, improved conditions, and dignity on the job. Recent organizing efforts by delivery workers at several New York City Chinese restaurants have reinforced the Majestic workers' struggle, which began with a 2005 walkout.

Working 12-hour days and 6-day weeks, Majestic Buffet servers are not paid wages. They take home only what customers give them in tips, minus a \$15–\$20 daily fee they have to fork over to the boss. The owners also impose fines, such as \$10 for not setting a table or scrubbing

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Dallas suburb bans renting to undocumented

BY STEVE WARSHELL

HOUSTON, May 14—Voters in the Dallas suburb of Farmers Branch passed an ordinance two days ago that bans landlords from renting to most undocumented immigrants. The measure is the first of its kind in any U.S. city to be approved by referendum.

The ban passed by a vote of 68 percent to 32 percent, according to the Associated Press. It requires apartment managers in this city of 27,000 to verify that renters are U.S. citizens or legal residents before leasing to them.

Starting on May 22, landlords who break the rule could be punished by fines of up to \$500 per day.

The Farmer Branch City Council approved the ordinance in November. In January, the council revised the law to exempt minors, seniors, and families whose members are both documented and undocumented.

The city already faces four lawsuits from civil rights groups, residents, landlords, and businessmen, who argue that local authorities cannot make immigration policy and that the ban violates the Federal Housing Act. Attorneys of some landlords said they will seek a restraining order before it takes effect, the *Dallas Morning News* reported today.

At a May 12 victory party, some city

Continued on page 7

Democrats prepare new war funding bill Bush can sign

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, May 16—Democrats in Congress say they will deliver by the end of the month a new bill that U.S. president George Bush can sign to fund the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

On May 1, Bush vetoed a \$100 billion war package passed by the House of Representatives and Senate. Democrats painted that as antiwar because it included dates for redeploying U.S. troops from combat roles in Iraq.

Meanwhile, deployment of additional U.S. troops to Iraq continues unabated. The Pentagon has alerted 10 Army brigades they will likely be sent to Iraq in August. Washington is trying to stabilize the regime in Baghdad, which continues to fracture under the conflict between wealthy Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds seeking control of Iraq's oil resources.

The House approved a bill May 10 that would fund Washington's wars in installments—\$30 billion immediately, and another \$50 billion in mid-July after Bush delivers a progress report on the war in Iraq. The latter amount could come with restrictions, including a timetable for redeployment of U.S. troops.

Bush has threatened to veto the new

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Crisis deepens for Pakistani gov't as opposition calls mass strikes

BY RÓGER CALERO

May 15—A nationwide strike in Pakistan yesterday shut down the southern port city of Karachi and affected other parts of the country. Opposition parties called the strike to

protest violent attacks over the weekend by pro-government forces, during which at least 39 people were killed and more than 100 wounded.

The events deepened the political crisis gripping the regime of President Pervez Musharraf, one of Washington's allies in the region.

On Sunday, government-authorized thugs reportedly attacked people who have been conducting regular street protests over the March 9 dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry.

Musharraf suspended the head of the country's Supreme Court after

Continued on page 8

'Militant' supporters raise sub drive quotas

BY RÓGER CALERO

NEW YORK, May 15—With two more weeks to go in the *Militant's* spring subscription drive, supporters of the paper are gearing up to meet or surpass local quotas. Distributors in four cities—Birmingham, Alabama; Miami; San

Continued on page 4

\$33,000 to go on 'Militant' fund

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

NEW YORK, May 16—Get involved in the effort to raise \$100,000 for the *Militant* fund drive! Convince those you know who see the socialist newsweekly as essential to their political activity to contribute now! Another \$33,000 is

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Scottish National Party narrowly wins elections

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

EDINBURGH, Scotland, May 13—The Scottish National Party (SNP) won a razor-thin majority over the incumbent Labour Party in the May 3 elections for Scottish parliament. It was the first time ever the SNP won parliamentary elections here.

The SNP, which favors independence for Scotland, won 47 seats to Labour’s 46. The Liberal Democrats won 16, Conservatives 17, and Greens 2. Not since 1955 has Labour been beaten into second place in Scotland.

Ten days after the vote, the SNP has been unable to form a majority coalition and a minority government is likely. Liberal Democrats have refused to enter talks, citing SNP insistence on holding a referendum on Scottish independence.

Labour leaders campaigned hard on the threat to the unity of the United Kingdom an SNP victory could usher, but big business sees little danger in the result, as parties favoring the UK union still hold 60 percent of seats. The *Sunday Times* even backed the Scottish National Party, saying an SNP-led coalition would mean increased fiscal powers for the Scottish parliament and an incentive to cut funding for the public sector, which accounts for 25 percent of jobs, and boost business profits. The bourgeois-nationalist SNP campaigned for cutting corporate and other taxes.

Illusions among parties of the middle-class left that they could build on their electoral gains in 2003, when the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) won six seats and the Greens five, were

left in tatters. The SSP won no seats and the Greens two.

Labour lost across Britain. It no longer holds an absolute majority in the Welsh parliament, where Plaid Cymru, the Welsh bourgeois nationalist party, came second. In England 165 out of 312 local councils outside of London are now held by the Conservatives, which won 40 percent of the ballots cast to Labour’s 27 percent. Labour got most of its votes in working-class areas. The party retains the affiliation and financial backing of many trade unions.

“The fragmented result reflects a vacuum in ruling-class politics,” said Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Leith Walk ward in Edinburgh. “In face of the continued decline of British imperialism, no capitalist party—including the nationalists—has an alternative to chipping away at the social wage, intensifying the exploitation of workers, and pursuing imperialist wars abroad. But none of them are strong enough to tackle the working class head-on, which they will have to do to restore profit rates.”

Seattle event sends off group to Philippines conference

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

SEATTLE—Forty people attended an April 25 meeting here in solidarity with working people in the Philippines facing government repression. The event, held at the Seattle Labor Temple, sent off three local delegates to the 23rd International Solidarity Affair (ISA) in the Philippines.

The ISA is an annual event initiated

Electronics strikers in Scotland rally support



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

UDDINGSTON, Scotland, May 11—Seventy people, including dozens of strikers, gather outside the Sunvic Controls electronics plant here before marching to a rally addressed by national trade union leaders. The 42 striking workers, members of the Transport and General Workers’ Union and Amicus the Union, have been on the picket line for seven weeks. They are fighting Sunvic’s attempt to impose a 12-week layoff provision with only eight days pay. “We have been treated like dirt,” Margaret Murray, 54, who has worked at Sunvic for 38 years, told the *Militant*. “Before the strike we were escorted off the premises an hour before the end of our shift. But it’s made us stick together more.” Many strikers have worked at Sunvic for decades and recount with anger the bosses’ intimidation tactics, including installing cameras to film pickets and calling the police. The company is busing in scabs to maintain production. “We don’t know what’s going to happen,” said striker Helen Paterson, “but we’ll stick it out to the end.”

—CAROLINE BELLAMY

by the *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (May First Movement), a national labor federation in the Philippines.

The audience at the meeting here included many young Filipinos and other Asian and Pacific Islanders. Celso Tolman, a member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, chaired the event. He noted the long history of struggle by working people in the Philippines and by Filipino workers in the United States. In 1981, he said, two leaders of a cannery workers’ struggle against Alaskan contractors were assassinated outside their union offices in downtown Seattle.

The delegates, Rob McCauley, Gina Salao, and Chel Cendana, represent the U.S. Committee on Labor and Human Rights in the Philippines, Philippine U.S. Solidarity Organization, and BAYAN-USA Pacific Northwest Regional Council, respectively. They said that on their fact-finding tour they would attend a May Day labor rally in Manila and then visit

working-class communities and factories in different areas of the country.

The delegates reported that since 2001, 843 union leaders and others have been killed in the Philippines as part of government-backed political repression. Freedom Allah Siyam, a leader of BAYAN-USA, described Washington’s long history of imperialist plunder and its role in supporting repression in that country. He said the U.S. government has provided more than \$230 million to the Philippine military since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became president in 2001. In October, 5,000 U.S. troops took part in joint military exercises with Philippine troops.

Discussion at the meeting also took up the popular resistance that led to the end of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and forced the closing of U.S. military bases there in 1992.

The delegates said they will give a report on their trip on their return.

THE MILITANT

‘Read it to learn from workers’ fights’

“I read the ‘Militant’ to learn how to fight for my rights as a worker, and also to learn from other workers’ fights.”

—Juan Valdez
Omaha, Nebraska



Juan Valdez, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271, has been a meat packer for 32 years.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Two N.Y. transit workers killed on job in one week

BY DAN FEIN

NEW YORK—Two subway track workers were killed on the job here five days apart. Both were members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, which organizes public transportation workers on subways and buses run by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA).

Daniel Boggs, 41, was hit by a train April 24 in Manhattan. On April 29 Marvin Franklin, 55, was hit by a train in Brooklyn. Franklin had 22 years on the job.

Franklin was killed when a train scheduled to run on the local track was redirected to the express track, which his crew had been informed was closed. Franklin's supervisor instructed him and his partner Jeffrey Hill, 41, to retrieve a dolly on the other side of the active tracks. Hill was hospitalized for injuries. The New York *Daily News* reported that investigators believe Franklin did not hear the train approaching as he crossed the tracks because of the noise from a large generator powering construction lights nearby.

"We were doing exactly what we were ordered to do by our foreman," said Hill at Franklin's funeral, which was attended by hundreds of transit workers.

Boggs was part of a team setting up

lanterns to warn train operators that crews were on the tracks for scheduled switch and rail replacements.

After Boggs was hit by the train, his fellow crew members pulled the lever at an emergency alarm box that should have cut off power to the high-voltage third rail. The lever didn't work, nor did the other alarm box crew members tried to activate. Some 70 such controls are now being tagged as inoperable and are supposed to be repaired.

Union members were outraged that the safety equipment had not been maintained. "A working alarm box is a matter of life and death," said veteran track worker John Samuelson, according to the *Daily News*.

He said the number of workers whose duties include repairing emergency equipment has been reduced over the past five years. "It's another case of a smart, production-minded boss playing Russian roulette with our lives," Samuelson said.

Following Franklin's death, the MTA bosses suspended all but emergency track work for four days.

Several union members spoke about the lack of job safety at a TWU news conference April 30. Percival Thomas, 52, said, "We have an atmosphere down there where we are doing more



AP

New York City transit workers clean up as train arrives on nearby track, Dec. 23, 2005. A subway worker was killed April 29, after a foreman told him to cross an active track.

with less." He called the bosses' pressure to produce "tremendous," with fewer workers than three years ago.

In an effort to defend the transit bosses, MTA spokesperson Paul Fleuranges said, "In the last 5 years we have had only 6

right-of-way fatalities," referring to track work. Twenty-seven transit workers have been killed on the job since 1980. Between 2003 and 2006, there were 98 reported "near-misses" in subway tunnels and along elevated tracks.

Imprisoned in Texas, 200 workers denied transfer to Massachusetts

BY RÓGER CALERO

May 14—In a May 7 decision, a federal judge denied a request that more than 200 undocumented immigrants facing deportation be returned to Massachusetts. The workers were taken to jails in Texas after a March 6 immigration raid at the Michael Bianco Inc. leather plant in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Attorneys for the detained workers had filed a complaint March 8 arguing that their transfer to jails in remote areas of Texas denies them access to legal counsel and the opportunity to obtain conditional release on bond.

The more than 200 workers held in Texas were among 361 arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement

(ICE) agents at the New Bedford plant.

They were taken the day of the raid to Fort Devens, a former army base in Ayer, Massachusetts. Under pressure from relatives and others, some 60 workers were released for "humanitarian reasons" the next day. But the majority were quickly jailed in New England or flown to other states.

In the motion to dismiss the defendants' request to transfer the case under Massachusetts jurisdiction, Judge Richard Stearns described violations of their rights. These included denying them access to legal counsel, and transferring 116 detainees to a jail in El Paso, Texas, even after a request for a temporary restraining order had been filed seeking to halt any further moves.

The ICE also began deporting workers who would have been covered by such a restraining order, but who, under pressure, agreed to voluntary deportation by waiving their right to appeal.

"Assuming these allegations to be true," Stearns wrote, the workers rights were not violated because they have no constitutional right to counsel, release on bond, or that the proceedings be held in a specific venue. He went along with the government's argument that the detainees had been sent to Texas due to lack of prison space in Massachusetts.

The judge claimed that any legal appeals they might decide to pursue could be equally done from Texas, even though the workers' legal help,

families, and social support network are in Massachusetts. He granted a 21-day stay of deportation in which the workers seeking to fight the order must prepare an appeal.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

The Fight Against Police Brutality from Los Angeles to Atlanta. Speaker: Bill Arth, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 26. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel.: (205) 780-0021.

FLORIDA

Miami

Extradite Luis Posada Carriles. Free the Cuban Five. The Cuban Revolution's 48-year Defense Against Imperialism. Speakers: Andrés Gómez, national coordinator, Antonio Maceo Brigade; Bernie Senter, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 25. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 8365 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 206. Tel.: (305) 756-4436.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Support the Strike Against Fox Valley Forge. Speakers: Ignacio Galindo, Valley Forge striker; Ernest Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 25. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. 3557 S. Archer Ave., Tel.: (773) 890-1190.

NEW YORK

New York

China and the World Today: A Working-Class Perspective. Speaker: Nancy Boyasko, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 25. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. 307 W. 36th St. 10th floor (use north elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Fight Against Police Brutality: Report from May 17 Los Angeles Protest Against Cop Riot. Speaker: John Naubert, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 25. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

Hundreds march in Enlgland to support Palestinian struggle



Militant/Alex Xezonakis

SHEFFIELD, England, May 12—"Free, free Palestine!" was a popular slogan here today at a march and rally of more than 300 people in support of the Palestinian national liberation struggle. The action was organized by branches of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign from cities across northern England, including Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Halifax, Nottingham, and Leeds. The event also featured a photographic exhibition, a Palestinian *dabke* dance group, and a lively samba band that led the march.

—ALEX XEZONAKIS

N.Y.: Hunter College students discuss defense of Cuban Five

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY EMILY PAUL

NEW YORK—Several students and others participated in a May 2 meeting at Hunter College here entitled “Who Are the Cuban Five? Why Should We Demand Their Freedom?” The Student Political Science Association and Hostos Puerto Rican Club sponsored the event.

Speaking on the panel was Francisco Guzmán, president of LUCHA, a Latino student organization at New York University, Maura DeLuca of the Young Socialists, and Camilo Matos of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party Youth. Freddie Montgomery of the

Student Political Science Association chaired the program.

The Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González—are revolutionaries who have been framed up by Washington and are serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons. The FBI arrested them in 1998. They were convicted in 2001 on charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage”; “conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent”; and, in the case of Hernández, “conspiracy to commit murder.”

The event at Hunter College was organized as part of a stepped-up international effort to win solidarity for the Cuban Five, initiated by the Union of Young Communists and other mass youth organizations in Cuba. The campaign began January 10 and culminated with an international conference held in Havana April 29–30 (see adjacent photo box).

The Young Socialists are taking advantage of the work they did this year to continue collaborating with others to build support for the fight to release the five Cuban patriots.

Pathfinder titles well received at meeting in solidarity with Cuban Five in Havana



Militant/Ben O'Shaughnessy

HAVANA—Young Socialists Alex Xezonakis from the United Kingdom (left) and Filip Tedelund from Sweden (right) show books on revolutionary working-class politics to fellow delegates at an international youth conference in solidarity with the Cuban Five held here April 29–30. The two were part of an international team of Young Socialists who participated in the gathering. In total, the team sold more than 40 books and pamphlets published and distributed by Pathfinder Press. About 400 youth attended the conference.

—BEN O'SHAUGHNESSY

Living standards of ‘working poor’ in U.S. driven down further

Continued from front page remittances, credit cards, rent-to-own sales, tax preparation services, home mortgages, and student loans. There has been a proliferation of “payday lenders” providing expensive cash advances due on the customer’s next payday.

Such usury involves major companies like Bank of America, HSBC Finance, and GMAC Financial Services (formerly owned by General Motors). Wells Fargo, for example, offers “emergency” payday loans at an annual

interest rate of 120 percent. J.D. Byrider Systems, which sells used cars through dealerships nationwide, has raked in fat profits from selling highly financed autos to low-paid workers—what its CEO calls the “huge

‘Militant’ subs

Continued from front page Francisco; and Twin Cities—increased their quotas last week.

To meet the international goal, 221 subscriptions per week are needed the remaining two weeks of the circulation campaign—about the same number that came in last week.

Many workers helping to get the *Militant* around on the job and elsewhere across the United States report that the paper’s coverage of the fight for legalization of undocumented immigrants is finding broad interest among working people of all nationalities.

“The chart on the May Day actions in last week’s issue was especially attractive on the job,” Dan Fein, a garment worker in the Bronx here, told the *Militant*. “Altogether last week, nine coworkers bought copies—some of them first-time readers—and another got an introductory subscription. Many had seen the coverage on Spanish TV of the attack by L.A. cops against the May Day march there, and wanted to read the *Militant*’s coverage.”

Last weekend 25 people bought copies of the paper and two subscribed at a literature table in Harlem, most of them African Americans. These workers were particularly interested in the paper’s coverage of the May Day actions and the police riot in Los Angeles, said Paul Pederson, a *Militant* supporter here.

Such experiences highlight the opportunities to expand the paper’s readership and surpass the international goal of the subscription drive by the May 27 deadline.

market of people with subprime and unconventional credit.”

BusinessWeek highlights the case of Roxanne Tsosie, a Navajo worker in Albuquerque, whose \$15,000-a-year job as a home health-care aide requires a car. At Byrider, she was persuaded to buy a 1999 Saturn subcompact for

\$7,922 entirely on credit—at 25 percent interest.

Only later did Tsosie discover in the fine print that she was required to make \$150 payments every two weeks rather than monthly. She was unable to keep up, and after she had shelled out \$900,

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Donate to the ‘Militant’ Fund today!

Continued from front page needed to meet the international goal by the May 27 deadline.

The eight-week campaign is now \$7,400 behind schedule. The *Militant* needs to receive \$20,000—roughly twice the amount we got last week—by next Wednesday, May 23, in order to get the campaign on target.

The fund picked up an additional \$1,500 in local pledges last week. But we are still \$1,385 short of the quotas adding up to the international goal. Supporters of the paper everywhere can step up collection and increase their quotas, especially where working people’s response to the paper during and coming out of the May Day actions has been the strongest.

The money is needed now to cover the paper’s operating expenses—printing, shipping, rent, and utilities—and to continue sending reporters around the world to respond to developments in the class struggle in a timely way. On May 27, as the fund drive ends, three *Militant* reporters will be heading to Cuba to cover the 10th Festival of Overseas Chinese, which will mark 160 years since the arrival of the first Chinese indentured laborers there.

John Naubert, the fund drive director in Seattle, wrote that a special *Militant* Labor Forum there to raise money for the fund featured a panel of speakers who helped build and organize May Day actions for legalization of immigrants in that city and in Yakima, Washington.

“Paul Reboca, who helped organize last year’s May Day demonstration in Yakima and participated in this year’s action in Seattle, relayed how he began to read about the nature of the capitalist system while he was in prison,” Norbert said. “He said that the *Militant* ‘has infor-

mation the regular papers don’t want you to know,’ and described how he shares it with his family.”

Similar outreach is needed and possible everywhere. Send your contribution to the *Militant*, earmarked “Fund Drive,” at 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018. And encourage your coworkers, neighbors, and friends to do the same!

Spring ‘Militant’ Subscription Drive March 31 – May 27 ♦ Week 6 of 8			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
ICELAND	12	12	100%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	75	65	87%
Edinburgh	30	26	87%
UK TOTAL	105	91	87%
NEW ZEALAND	60	48	80%
SWEDEN	35	28	80%
AUSTRALIA	45	36	80%
UNITED STATES			
San Diego, CA*	15	14	93%
Seattle*	110	97	88%
San Francisco*	125	105	84%
Newark*	130	109	84%
Boston	85	70	82%
Birmingham*	135	111	82%
Chicago*	100	82	82%
Miami*	180	145	81%
Twin Cities*	160	127	79%
Washington, DC	105	83	79%
New York	320	242	76%
Los Angeles	120	88	73%
Philadelphia	120	88	73%
Atlanta	115	84	73%
Albany, NY	10	7	70%
Des Moines	125	83	66%
Houston	100	66	66%
Pittsburgh	65	39	60%
Detroit	8	3	38%
U.S. Total	2,128	1643	77%
CANADA	130	98	75%
Int’l totals	2,515	1,956	82%
Goal/Should be	2,400	1,800	75%
* increased quota			

\$100,000 ‘Militant’ Fund Drive March 31–May 27 ♦ Week 6 of 8			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
AUSTRALIA	1,400	1,275	91%
FRANCE	300	260	87%
CANADA	3,500	2,662	76%
NEW ZEALAND	2,800	2,045	73%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	1,500	1,075	72%
Edinburgh	400	275	69%
UK total	1,900	1,350	71%
UNITED STATES			
Detroit	65	100	154%
Chicago*	5,700	4,880	86%
Twin Cities*	5,500	4,649	85%
Des Moines	2,000	1,666	83%
San Francisco*	11,000	8,534	78%
New York*	15,000	11,561	77%
Miami*	3,800	2,750	72%
Atlanta	6,000	4,320	72%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	2,074	69%
Pittsburgh	3,000	1,985	66%
Houston	3,000	1,930	64%
Newark, NJ*	3,850	2,390	62%
Philadelphia*	4,300	2,600	60%
Birmingham, AL	2,500	1,475	59%
Boston	3,800	2,230	59%
Seattle	7,000	3,526	50%
Albany, NY	50	20	40%
San Diego	500	150	30%
Los Angeles	8,000	2,355	29%
Other		300	
U.S. total	88,065	59,495	68%
ICELAND	450	290	64%
SWEDEN	500	220	44%
Int’l totals	98,615	67,597	68%
Goal/Should be	100,000	75,000	75%
* raised quota			

— PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD —

Below is an excerpt from a review of Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution (see ad, page 6). A condensed version of the review appeared in the winter 2007 edition of Rice Paper, a Pacific Asian arts and culture magazine published in Vancouver, Canada. Its author has written extensively on the history of Chinese immigration in Guyana in the 19th century. Please send items for this column to the Militant.

BY TREV SUE-A-QUAN

The contributions of the three authors in the military field are described in the book. At different times each one of them served in Angola where a contingent of determined Cuban volunteers fought against better-armed South African forces. The defeat of South African troops in Angola has been hailed as an important Cuban accomplishment, reflecting a triumph not only of the few over the many

but also of the socialist internationalist struggle over imperialism. Cuba's internationalist mission to Angola lasted between 1975–91 and it was a cause to which Cuba staked everything. This story is not well known outside Cuba.

The book recounts the achievements of the Cuban Revolution through the eyes of three Cubans who became generals and happen to be of Chinese descent. . . . Although the 19th century history surrounding the introduction of Chinese indentured laborers is described, it is a brief look rather than a detailed study; contemporary events are projected to be more relevant than those of the prerevolutionary past. . . .

The three Chinese generals contributed to Cuba's socialist progress in various capacities at home and abroad. Compared with the conditions that their early immigrant countrymen endured, Chinese Cubans have seen a rise in status parallel with the social transformations.

'Declarations of Havana' at Manhattan store



Militant/Mike Shur

NEW YORK—Librería Continental, a Spanish-language bookstore in the Washington Heights neighborhood here, displays in its storefront *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* published by Pathfinder Press, among other titles.

—GALE SHANGOLD

'Civil confinement' laws for sex offenders are reactionary

BY EVA BRAIMAN

NEW YORK—In its April 9 issue, the *Militant* ran an article on a law signed in March by New York governor Eliot Spitzer allowing the state to hold “sex offenders” indefinitely after they complete prison sentences. Among other things, the law establishes a new violation, the “sexually motivated felony,” applying to those who intended to commit a sex crime but didn't.

New York is the 20th state to pass

AS I SEE IT

“civil confinement” legislation. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld such laws, ruling that civil confinement is “treatment,” not punishment.

Working people should oppose this legislation and reject the hysteria whipped up by capitalist politicians, as well as cops and the media, against the menace of “sexual predators.” Such laws curb democratic rights and erode human solidarity. Their enforcement requires strengthening the state spying apparatus, including expanding the use of DNA banks, global positioning devices, and “criminal profilers.” The new laws also make cop and government frame-ups easier. Anything that strengthens the hand of capital against labor is a danger to working people—the vast majority.

An article in the March 4 *New York Times* described the so-called treatment centers for civil confinement. Most “look and feel like prisons, with clanking double doors, guard stations, fluorescent lighting, cinder block walls, overcrowded conditions and tall fences with razor wire,” it said. “Bedroom doors are often locked . . . and mail is searched by the staff for pornography or retail catalogs with pictures of women or children.”

Evaluations by “mental health experts” using demeaning and unscientific penile plethysmograph and polygraph tests are decisive for determining who is locked up in these centers after serving their sentence. In California, civilly confined men may opt for castration as “treatment.”

The ruling class is playing on the revulsion we all feel when a child is molested, or another sexually-based crime is committed, to go after hard-won rights working people need to defend themselves against antilabor attacks

by the bosses. These rights include the presumption of innocence, statutes of limitations, the right of appeal, the right to face your accuser, and protections against double jeopardy, entrapment, and cruel and unusual punishment. “Own your crime” therapy for sex offenders tramples the right to remain silent. And these laws undermine basic democratic concepts such as the right to privacy and freedom of movement. Such protections must apply to all or they ultimately apply to no one.

Provisions in these laws institutionalize job and housing discrimination. Many sex offenders released from prison can't get work or a place to live after serving their sentences. Some are forced to live in trailers just outside prison walls. Restrictions on where they can live and protests by neighbors often chase these individuals around the country.

Hysteria around sex offenders is also used to pit one section of the working class against another and promote vigilantism by cops and pro-cop outfits like the Guardian Angels.

Dozens of free private and government web sites provide maps of all the registered sex offenders. A click brings up the name, photograph, and address

of each such person in a given area, providing a hit list for those so inclined.

An article by anti-immigrant writer Andy Selepak posted on the website of Patrick Buchanan, an incipient fascist politician, is headlined, “Illegal Alien Sex Fiends.” Selepak claims “there are approximately 240,000 illegal immigrant sex offenders in the United States. . . . [I]f ever there was an argument for building a border fence, this is it.” A reader of the article posted comments in response claiming that kidnapping and rape are part of Mexican culture.

Another example of how the hysteria around sex offenders promotes vigilantism is the popular NBC television show “To Catch a Predator.” In it, agents posing as young girls chat on line with men and lure them to a house rigged with cameras and surrounded by cops. When the man arrives, NBC reporter Chris Hansen leaps out and confronts him with humiliating questions and he is thrown on the ground and arrested on national television. So much for due process.

We must be alert to how the capitalist rulers use a group of people or type of crime that no one defends to undermine civil liberties and get the public to swal-

low measures they might otherwise oppose. Veterans of the civil rights movement know well how “sex crimes” were used to frame fighters for Black rights.

Alleged rape or abuse by child-care workers are cynically used to make working-class parents, especially women, feel guilty for going to work.

Violence against women and children are rooted in capitalist property relations and the family, where most fatal assaults against children actually occur. For more on this question, I recommend the books *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* by Frederick Engels and *Problems of Women's Liberation* by Evelyn Reed, both of which are available at www.pathfinderpress.com.

In a socialist society—one based on social solidarity and organized to meet human needs, not driven by the profits of a few with all the related cut-throat competition and alienation of capitalism—those who need medical help would be able get it free of stigma and children can be protected.

Let's not allow scapegoating by the capitalist class today undermine working-class unity and solidarity. Speak out against civil confinement laws!

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



May 28, 1982

At a well-attended news conference May 8, Miami-area organizations protested the Reagan administration's recently announced ban on travel to Cuba.

The sponsoring groups included the American Friends Service Committee, Antonio Maceo Brigade, Florida Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, Latin America and Caribbean Solidarity Association, National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, and the Socialist Workers Party.

John Ratliff, president of the Latin America and Caribbean Solidarity Association, explained: “This is an attempt by the administration here at home so they can be unrestricted in their war policy in the Caribbean. . . . The only possible explanation is that it is afraid for the American people to see Cuba first-hand.”



May 27, 1957

By special trains and buses, chartered planes, motorcades and every means of individual travel thousands of Negro freedom fighters from every corner of the country marched on Washington for the May 17 prayer pilgrimage. The great throng of some 27,000 gathered at noon before the Lincoln Memorial for three hours of prayer and protest against Jim Crow. The size of the meeting and the great distances traveled by the audience made it the most impressive demonstration for civil rights to date.

Integrated in the audience and in their mode of transportation were some two or three thousand white supporters of the fight against race discrimination. Many of these were from union delegations, anti-racist organizations and the various components of the socialist movement.



May 28, 1932

The spontaneous strike of the Colorado beet workers against a 40 per cent wage cut has grown to such proportions under the leadership of the T.U.U.L. that it is now one of the largest strikes of agricultural workers in the history of the American labor movement. It appears that more than 12,000 workers are out on strike. Their ranks have been swelled by the strike of the onion workers, who are also striking against a wage cut and in sympathy with their brothers in the beet fields.

The growers are replying to the strike with the usual repertoire of capitalist persecution. The merchants have refused credit to the strikers who, like the miners, buy on credit against their future pay. Workers are being picked up and held for deportation. Arrests of the leading militants are a daily occurrence.

Protesters: 'Free Cuban 5! Extradite Posada Carriles!'

Protests were held May 11 in several U.S. cities and in other countries to demand that CIA-trained murderer Luis Posada Carriles be extradited to Venezuela to be tried for his violent attacks against Cuba over nearly five decades. These include the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados that killed all 73 passengers, a deadly string of bombings of Havana hotels in 1997, and a foiled attempt to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro in Panama in 2000.

In March 2005 Posada, who two decades earlier had escaped from a Venezuelan prison while awaiting trial for the 1976 bombing, entered the United States. After his presence was exposed by the Cuban government, U.S. authorities arrested him on relatively minor charges of lying to U.S. immigration officials.

On May 8 U.S. immigration judge Kathleen Cardone dismissed those charges and let Luis Posada Carriles walk free.

Meetings and speakouts have been held throughout Cuba to protest Washington's refusal to extradite Posada or bring him to justice. On May 14–15, the Union of Young Communists initiated a public tribunal in Havana called "Youth accuse Luis Posada Carriles and the U.S. government." University of Havana law students presented evidence proving Posada's involvement in the 1976 bombing and other crimes, including his role in the 1970s as an official of the Venezuelan secret police, which tortured and killed revolutionaries in that country.

In addition to those reported below, dozens joined protests in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. In Canada, 40 gathered at an action in Toronto; and other actions took place in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Montreal.

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Several dozen people picketed in front of the offices of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement here May 11 to demand that Luis Posada Carriles be extradited to Venezuela or tried in U.S. courts for his murderous attacks on Cuba. A Cuban-born construction worker who took part in the protest said he was playing hockey in a tournament in Havana when the Cubana airliner was bombed in 1976. A friend of his was one of the dozens of young members of the

Cuban fencing team who were on the plane and were killed. "All our athletes went to the Plaza of the Revolution in Havana to demand justice. Now I am here to demand the same justice!" said the worker, who asked that his name not be published.

A 24-year-old student at the picket line said, "This is a clear exposition of the double standard that is being applied in the so-called war on terrorism."

"The campaign will continue here in Miami," said Andrés Gómez, director of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. That organization is a group of Cuban-Americans who support the Cuban Revolution. The protest was covered by three TV stations.

BY CECELIA MORIARITY

SEATTLE—A protest to demand the extradition of CIA-trained killer Luis Posada Carriles and the release of the Cuban Five took place here May 11. About 20 protesters handed out informational flyers on the Posada case in downtown Seattle during rush hour at Westlake Mall, a busy shopping and commercial area.

Demonstrators carried a large banner saying "Extradite Posada Carriles to Venezuela, End the U.S. War on Cuba." Another banner read "Victims of Posada's Terror," with photos of those killed in the 1976 bombing of the Cuban airliner. They attracted the attention of people getting off work or coming to the shopping center.

They also leafleted to publicize the Se-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Miami protest demands extradition of Luis Posada, part of May 11 national day of action.

attle premiere of *The Trial—The Untold Story of the Cuban Five*, a documentary produced by the Cuban film institute ICAIC. The June 13 event, to be held at the Northwest Film Forum in Seattle, will promote the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly imprisoned in the United States.

In 1998 the FBI arrested the Cuban Five—Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, René González, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino—on phony charges including "conspiracy to commit espionage." They were put in solitary confinement, convicted after a flagrantly unfair trial, and given long prison terms—three of them life sentences. Their "crime" was helping to defend Cuba's sovereignty by reporting on the activities of right-wing Cuban groups and individuals who have organized violent assaults on Cuba with the knowledge and

complicity of U.S. authorities.

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—Thirty people picketed the Federal Courthouse in El Paso, Texas, May 11 to condemn the U.S. government's failure to bring to justice Luis Posada Carriles, who was set free when a federal judge in that city dismissed immigration charges against him.

"He was held on minor immigration charges and even those were dropped. It's a complete maneuver by the U.S. government to free this man. The people of the world are outraged," Gloria LaRiva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, told the media.

After the picket line, protesters joined others for a showing of the Venezuelan documentary *Posada Carriles: Made in USA*.

Imperialist plunder of Latin America is theme of Havana conference to fight U.S. 'free trade' pacts

BY RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA—More than 700 people from 33 countries gathered here May 3–5 for the Sixth Hemispheric Meeting to Fight Against Free Trade Agreements and for the Integration of the Peoples. The majority of participants came from throughout the Americas.

Delegates attended from a range of social protest groups, as well as some peasant, trade union, and student organizations. Talks and panels focused on current trade agreement negotiations between Washington and governments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"Like a malignant virus the FTAA [Free Trade Agreement of the Americas] has mutated and maintained its essence as a project of plunder and domination," said Osvaldo Martínez, president of the Economic Affairs Commission of Cuba's National Assembly, at the conference opening. "Now it shows its face with bilateral free trade agreements and siren songs of trade liberalization."

In previous years, similar gatherings focused on opposing the FTAA, a pact Washington sought to establish throughout Latin America to eliminate protective trade and investment policies of weaker capitalist states on the continent and open them to even greater exploitation by U.S. imperialism.

Unable to win full backing for the FTAA—both from sections of the U.S. ruling class and from governments of semicolonial countries—Washington has pursued regional and bilateral trade accords. Martínez noted that the governments of Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua have already signed such trade pacts. Those of Colombia and Peru are waiting approval from U.S. Congress for similar agreements. Negotiations are also underway with Panama.

Washington's plans to impose the FTAA have also run into opposition from workers and peasants fighting for greater control of their country's pat-

rimony, for access to land, and against other forms of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation.

On behalf of the conference organizing committee, Martínez urged participants to organize "actions to get closer to a world without the FTAA, without free trade agreements, without environmental destruction, without imperialism, and without discrimination on the basis of race or sex, and with social justice, respect for the environment, and full human dignity."

Martínez also reported some accomplishments of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and other initiatives to expand Latin American cooperation based on solidarity, not profit. ALBA is a trade pact signed by the governments of Cuba and Venezuela in 2005, which Bolivia and Nicaragua have now joined. ALBA includes programs to combat illiteracy, expand access to health care, and develop energy and infrastructure.

In a little more than two years of ALBA, Martínez said, 30,000 Cuban volunteer doctors have provided services to people who did not have access to medical coverage in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua; 70,000 youth are studying on scholarships to become doctors; and 2 million Latin Americans have learned to read and write. Martínez also noted that in the last three years more than 600,000 people have received eye operations, allowing them to see.

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All 18 books are available from distributors listed on page 8, or at...

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Restaurant workers

Continued from front page
a plate to the boss's satisfaction.

Tony Tsai, a former Majestic Buffet worker, said he and another worker, Kenny Chen, were seen as “troublemakers” by the owners. On a busy night in December 2005, a boss threatened to fine all nine waiters \$30 each because a shrimp was stuck to a plate Chen had put in the dishwasher. Instead of paying the fine, the workers walked out, Tsai said.

The workers have been picketing Majestic Buffet every Thursday at noon for the last several months. At the May 3 picket line, 12 people held signs outside the restaurant's entrance saying, “Pay workers now!” and “Stop the retaliation!” Four workers from Saigon Grill in New York City and a garment worker from Newark, New Jersey, joined the picket. Many drivers honked and waved in solidarity as they passed by. One young person hung out the passenger-side window with his fist in the air and screamed, “Boycott Majestic!”

Meanwhile, delivery workers in Manhattan, almost all immigrants from China, have been fighting for better wages and conditions at several restaurants, including Saigon Grill, Ollie's, and Our Place. Their struggle is backed by a coalition of groups, including the Chinese Staff and Workers' Association, in a campaign called Justice Will Be Served!

Delivery workers at the two Saigon Grill restaurants in Manhattan were locked out March 2 after refusing to sign a contract stipulating they were paid adequately and would not sue the boss. The workers started picketing March 7, demanding their jobs back with overtime and back pay.

The conditions at Saigon Grill are similar to those at Majestic. Wages are \$1.60 an hour with no breaks, overtime pay, or health benefits, workers said. Aside from the purchase and maintenance of bikes, delivery workers face risk of injury on the job. But if they take time off to see a doctor, or for any other reason, they have to pay a \$15 fine for each day they miss.

About 130 college students and workers from other restaurants joined a May 4 picket line outside the restaurant chain's Greenwich Village location.

“We're helping out here,” said Jerry Weng, who works at Ollie's, another Chinese restaurant where a similar fight is going on. “A lot of Ollie's workers have come out to support this fight.”

“We're in the middle of finals, but I came because I think that this fight gives me a chance to help people who really need it,” Paul Lee, a senior at New York University, told the *Militant*.

Many immigrant workers from China are exploited by employment agencies in addition to restaurant bosses, said Tsai.

Such agencies often charge workers 15 percent of their first month's wages for referring them to prospective employers all over the country. During a May 3 visit to Ming Du Employment Agency in New York's Chinatown, jobs were posted not only for New York, but also for southwest Georgia, northeast Pennsylvania, and western Kentucky.

“We kept working under these unfair conditions, because it's like this everywhere, though Saigon Grill is particularly bad,” Yu Guan Ke, a Saigon Grill worker, said at a March 9 picket line outside the chain's Upper West Side location. “But then we heard about other workers who fought for better conditions.”

“These fights have always taken place,” Peter Kwong, a professor of Asian American Studies and Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter College in Manhattan, told the *Militant*. “Wherever workers face this type of exploitation, there is a fightback. But they rarely get coverage in the mainstream media or support from the labor movement.” Kwong is also the author of several books on Chinese immigrant workers in the United States, including *Chinese America: The Untold Story of America's Oldest New Community*.

Many immigrant workers from China have been impacted by the movement demanding legalization of the 12 million undocumented immigrants in



Militant/Eddie Beck

About 130 people rallied May 4 in front of the Greenwich Village Saigon Grill in Manhattan, New York, in solidarity with locked-out workers fighting for better pay and working conditions.

the United States, Kwong said.

At the May Day march in New York, a spirited contingent of about 200 organized by the Chinese Staff and Workers' Association came from Chinatown and joined some 10,000

protesters, mostly workers from Latin America, demanding legalization and an end to raids and deportations.

Olga Rodríguez and Paul Pederson contributed to this article.

‘Prosecute L.A. police for May Day riot!’

Continued from front page
rally to demand prosecution of the cops who brutalized dozens and to demand legalization of the undocumented.

After congregating at the Immanuel Presbyterian Church, protesters will march to MacArthur Park. This will be the first street protest since May Day.

The March 25 Coalition, the umbrella group that sponsored the May 1 march of 30,000, which preceded the MacArthur Park rally that day, held a press conference today where it announced it has endorsed the May 17 protest.

The police fired 240 rubber bullets and beat people with batons to force everyone out of the park, hours before the May Day rally permit expired. Among those injured were a number of reporters, one of whom has sued the city and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

The police riot against a peaceful rally, composed mostly of workers and their children, has become a major issue in city politics. City Council members are planning four other public forums, with the next set for May 30. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announced he will speak at the May 17 rally.

Other groups are planning a June 24 demonstration in Hollywood here to press for legalization.

At the City Council forum, Police Chief William Bratton pointed to three investigations of the May 1 events and said the officers in charge that day have been replaced in their duties. He insisted the cops did not intend to harm the immigrant rights movement.

Many people who spoke at the forum said the actions the LAPD has taken so far in response to demands for justice are not enough and Bratton should resign. “Simply changing posts doesn't change anything, because they're still giving them [the cops] the same salaries,” Pedro Reyes, who was also hit by the cops on May Day, told the press. “This isn't punishment. It's not justice.”

Word is getting out about the May 17 protest. The action has been reported in the Spanish-language dailies *Hoy* and *La Opinión*, and on the popular morning radio show of Piolín.

The demonstration was announced at the Saturday morning meeting on May 12 of day laborers at the Hollywood

Community Jobs Center. Workers there said many of them were at MacArthur Park May 1 and were planning to return on May 17. “I think everyone should bring a camera or video camera,” said Marcos Rodríguez, a day laborer. “I want the police to know we're going to be there with a sign in one hand and a camera in the other, in case something happens. It's time to put an end to Latinophobia and pass a just legalization now.”

“I'm ready for May 17,” said Héctor Gómez, another worker. “I'm ready for a march, a strike, whatever.” He was clubbed in the ankle by a cop on May Day, he said, and still has not seen a doctor. “I waited for hours at the hospital, and finally left. Then I went to a clinic, but they wanted \$30 and I only had \$20, so I never saw the doctor. Now it's been 12 days and I'm still in pain.”

“I've been talking about this action at American Apparel, the garment plant where I work,” said Chris Remple, who just launched his campaign as the Socialist Workers Party candidate in a special election for U.S. Congress, District 37. “Many coworkers already knew about it. One initially dismissed it saying it would just be used to clean up the image of the police. He said the May

Dallas suburb won't rent to undocumented

Continued from front page
officials made it clear they plan to get tougher on immigrants. But they said they will wait until the ordinance comes up for review in six months before they push for further restrictions, such as penalizing businesses who employ undocumented workers.

Authorities in more than 90 cities or towns have proposed, passed, or rejected laws banning landlords from renting to undocumented immigrants, penalizing businesses that employ them, or deputizing local cops as *la migra*.

The chauvinist campaign for the Farmers Branch ban has created an atmosphere of tension and intimidation in the area. The home of Mayor Robert Phelps was vandalized shortly after he publicly opposed the measure. The vote was monitored by U.S. Justice Department officials. At one local apartment complex a manager told the *Morning*

News that occupancy is already down 7 percent.

Apartment complexes in neighboring towns, however, are already trying to attract Farmers Branch residents who may have to move. “Stress-free living,” advertises a flier for the Clipper Pointe Apartments in Addison, Texas, some eight miles northeast. “If you are a Farmers Branch resident, we have the perfect special just for you,” it reads. “*Se habla español*. [We speak Spanish.]”

Addison mayor Joe Chow, originally from Taiwan, said the Farmers Branch ban “divides the community.”

In Farmers Branch, a 20-year-old undocumented construction worker named José spoke out against the ordinance to the *Morning News*. “There are so many Mexicans here now,” he said. The paper reported that, like many other workers in the area, he explained, “We just come here to work.”

Anti-Semitism rooted in capitalist crises, disorder

Below is an excerpt from *How Can the Jews Survive?* A socialist answer to Zionism, one of Pathfinder's books of the month for May. "The salvation of the Jewish people," says author George Novack, "cannot come from reliance upon Zionist chauvinism, American imperialism, or Stalinist bureaucratism. Every expedient short of the struggle for socialism will end in calamity for the Jews." Novack, the son of immigrant Jews from Eastern Europe, joined the communist movement in the United States in 1933. He was a member and leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1992. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The coming of capitalism eliminated the necessity and changed the possibilities and prospects for perpetuating Jewry as a people apart, since its special function became the general condition of the social economy. During the 19th century both liberals and Marxists held the view that the Jews would shed their distinctive traits and separate identity through gradual absorption into an enlightened bourgeois or a future socialist society.



Nazi troops round up Jews during the destruction of Warsaw in 1943

Progressive capitalism did institute a certain degree of assimilation in Western Europe and North America, although it failed to complete it there. The process of social and cultural homogenization was barely begun in Eastern Europe because of its backwardness.

The development of world capitalism in this century upset this perspective. Imperialistic, crisis-torn capitalism swung over to an exacerbated nationalism of its own. One of its most malignant manifestations was the resort to anti-Semitism, a ready-made means for diverting the wrath of despairing and deluded people away from the real authors of their misery by making the Jews a scapegoat for the crimes of a decaying capitalism. This relapse into barbarism was consummated in Germany, the most highly developed capitalist country of Europe, through the frenzied chauvinism of the Nazis capped by Hitler's extermination of six million Jews.

The degeneration of capitalism coupled with the failure of the socialist movement to replace it in time gave the Jewish question an acuteness and urgency unanticipated by the first generations of Marxists. Hitlerism served to spur and fortify the feelings of national solidarity among the Jews which, for different reasons, had been fading in both East and West Europe. The harried Jews had to defend and define themselves anew

in reaction to the menace to their very physical existence.

For the sake of self-preservation and national perpetuation, the survivors of East European Jewry who, especially among the workers, had been widely won over to the Marxist ideals of socialism, turned toward Zionism as the last hope of salvation. The project of seeking and

Pakistani gov't faces political crisis

Continued from front page

charging him with "abuse of power." Chaudhry had begun investigating cases of "forced disappearances" of hundreds of people in Pakistan held by government agents. He had also questioned the legality of Musharraf's pursuit of another presidential term while he remains army chief.

Gun battles broke out as Chaudhry arrived in Karachi to participate in what opposition parties hoped would be the largest of a series of demonstrations to protest his suspension. Thugs of the pro-government Mutahida Qami Movement attacked Chaudhry's supporters with batons and gunfire as they attempted to greet the judge at the airport, reported London's *Observer*.

Prior to the Karachi rally, government agents arrested hundreds of opposition activists and deployed more than 15,000 security person-

nel. Authorities banned gatherings of more than five people in Karachi, and gave the paramilitary border police, the Pakistan Rangers, a shoot-at-sight order.

Chaudhry's defiance of the president has found a hearing among middle-class layers discontented with the government. At the same time, the government has come under increasing pressure by Washington to crack down on al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other Islamist forces. The crisis coincides with the run-up to a presidential election set for this fall, and an anticipated attempt by Musharraf to secure another term. The general took power in 1999 through a military coup.

"The government is losing control over Pakistan, which is so obvious, and it is very dangerous," Talat Masood, a retired general, told London's *Financial Times*.

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"The government is losing control over Pakistan, which is so obvious, and it is very dangerous," Talat Masood, a retired general, told London's *Financial Times*.

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Capitalism's winter has begun

A recent cover story in *BusinessWeek* highlighted the surge of companies offering high-interest credit to some of the lowest-paid workers, driving them deeper into debt. These capitalists are raking in huge profits by pushing millions of the most exploited to the wall.

This is part of a broader picture in which real wages for working people in the United States have declined over the past three decades, while their indebtedness has risen. This is the result of the employers' drive—under the whip of ruthless competition among themselves—to increase profits by pushing down wages, slashing medical and pension coverage, and making us work faster, longer hours, and more unsafely.

The *BusinessWeek* article cited defenders of what the magazine called “U.S. companies’ audacious drive to extract more profits from the nation’s working poor.” Voices in big-business circles, however, have expressed concern that the rapid growth of “subprime lending”—also a factor in the rise in home loan defaults—will hasten a financial crisis for U.S. capitalism. Some also warn that it will increase class tensions and eventually risk social explosions as workers’ living standards are pushed down.

San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank president Janet Yellen said in a speech last November, in language rare for a bank official, that “rising [income] inequality is intensifying resistance to globalization, impairing social cohesion, and could, ultimately, undermine American democracy.”

For more than a quarter century, U.S. capitalists’ profit rates have stagnated. To reverse this trend they have been squeezing more labor out of working people, while increasingly flexing their military might abroad to control markets and territory. At the same time they have expanded speculative investments in search of higher returns. The resulting massive debt bubble is a growing threat to the entire U.S. capitalist financial system.

To accomplish their profit goals, the U.S. rulers must take much more aggressive steps and deal severe blows to workers and farmers. The biggest obstacle to their objectives today is the resistance by working people, including vanguard actions by foreign-born workers such as the recent May Day demonstrations. These actions are a significant factor in U.S. politics even while the trade unions continue to decline and many labor struggles continue to end in standoffs with the bosses, or even in setbacks.

The May 1 mobilization of 400,000 workers in the streets of U.S. cities and towns nationwide to demand legal status for all undocumented immigrants showed the increased confidence of a substantial layer of workers. Follow-up actions, like the May 17 march in Los Angeles to protest the May Day cop riot there, show that May 1 actions were not a fluke. These mobilizations set an example for other working people of how to fight and reach out for solidarity.

Democrats converge with Bush on war funding

Continued from front page

House bill but indicated he would be open to setting “benchmarks” for the Iraqi government to make progress in stabilizing the country.

Keeping up the Democrats’ “antiwar” posture, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Senator Russell Feingold of Wisconsin are sponsoring an amendment to cut off war funding by March 31, 2008. Another amendment by Senate Armed Services chairman Carl Levin, also cosponsored by Reid, would begin troop redeployment by October 1 with completion by the end of next March. It would also allow Bush to waive the dates under certain conditions. Neither amendment is expected to pass. Reid said these proposals would allow for a “debate” on troop redeployment without tying up money for the war.

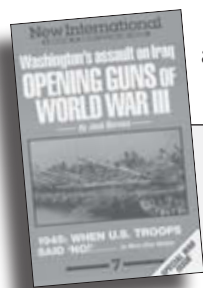
Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman announced May 8 that about 35,000 ad-

ditional soldiers are being readied for deployment to Iraq. On January 10 Bush announced the dispatch of 25,000 more troops to the country, increasing the U.S. occupation force to 160,000 troops as part of a military offensive called the “surge.” The latest deployments would maintain that larger occupation force through the summer, Whitman said.

Thousands of Iraqis have died in the last few months under the U.S.-led occupation and the tit-for-tat sectarian killings carried out by militias linked to Shiite and Sunni capitalists. The Iraqi government said 1,506 civilians were killed in April—down from 1,861 in March and 1,645 in February.

On May 8 Iraq’s vice president Tariq al-Hashimi threatened a walkout by Sunni members of the cabinet and parliament unless the Iraqi constitution is amended to prevent dividing the country into Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish regions. Hashimi leads the Iraqi Islamic Party, which is prominent among Sunnis.

The country’s largest oil fields are in the predominantly Shiite south and the Kurdish-run autonomous province in the north. Washington has pressed the Iraqi government, with no success so far, to pass an oil revenue sharing law to obtain cooperation from wealthy Sunnis.



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Opening Guns of WWII
By Jack Barnes \$14

LETTERS

Yahweh Ben Yahweh

A friend e-mailed me a copy of the *New York Times* obituary for Yahweh Ben Yahweh, a right-wing thug who preyed upon Dade County’s Black community, especially in the North Miami and Opa-Locka area where I lived when he was active here. The *Times* suggests that Yahweh was a Black liberation activist, instead of a rip-off artist and an ally of slumlords, the police, and the capitalist class. His group supplied the ruling class with extralegal thug violence against poor African Americans whom Yahweh blamed for their own oppression.

Yahweh was a former NFL safety with the then St. Louis Cardinals and Oakland Raiders who attempted to become a minor capitalist before he hatched the Yahweh racket. The conviction that sent him to jail came after the gang of bourgeois

politicians Yahweh was hooked up with got pushed aside by another gang of bourgeois politicians. None of the crimes he and his organization regularly committed against Black workers were ever prosecuted

His movement never took part in any of the struggles of African Americans in Miami Dade County, even though there was always some naive person involved who thought we should reach out to the Yahwehs.

Tony Thomas
Miami, Florida

Union fighter James White

James White, 73, a longtime union fighter, died May 4 in Natchez, Mississippi. He was one of the rank-and-file leaders of the 1998–2001 strike by United Steelworkers Local 303L at the Titan Tire plant in that small city. *Militant* supporters from

many areas got to know him while visiting the picket line during that hard-fought strike.

During the walkout, James became a partisan of the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party election campaigns. He was an elector in Mississippi for the SWP candidates in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, and was always happy to meet with petitioners and eager to help out.

Susan LaMont
Birmingham, Alabama

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.

‘Working poor’

Continued from page 4

the company repossessed the car in order to resell it. “Nearly half of Byrider sales in Albuquerque do not result in a final payoff and many vehicles are repossessed,” the article notes.

Another example cited is Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, Inc. Its founder told the *BusinessWeek* reporters that as his company grew in the 1980s, “we focused on the low-hanging fruit, the less-affluent people who wanted their money quick.” The company charges impoverished workers steep fees for tax preparation and “Money Now” cash advances on tax credits.

Lakissisha Thomas, a store clerk in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, was anxious to receive her \$4,351 Earned-Income Tax Credit and “took out a refund-anticipation loan from Jackson Hewitt. She used the money to pay overdue rent and utility bills,” the article reported. After paying a 10.4 percent fee of \$453, she found out she could have received the refund through various free services.

SLM Corp. offers high-interest student loans. Molley Cosgrove of Portland, Oregon, took such a loan from “Sallie Mae,” as the company is known, in order to enroll in a culinary institute to become a chef. Three years later she is saddled with a \$43,000 debt, most of it accruing interest at 18.5 percent. Now, unable to get a job as a chef for more than \$8.50 an hour, she is faced with impossible payments of \$553 a month.

A host of other companies aggressively promote “pre-approved credit cards” to low-paid workers, who soon find themselves trapped by high interest rates—28 percent is typical—and payments eating up more than half their paychecks.

Widening gap in wages, debt

The *BusinessWeek* article describes how debt is becoming disproportionately more expensive for lower-income workers. In 1989, households earning \$30,000 or less a year paid 16.8 percent more in interest rates for auto loans than what was paid by households earning more than \$90,000. By 2004 the gap had soared to 56.1 percent. With mortgage loans, this gap has jumped from 6.4 percent to 25.5 percent.

“The only feasible way to run a capitalist society is to allow companies to maximize their profits,” economist Tyler Cowen told *BusinessWeek* in defense of this unabashed gouging of the most exploited. “That will sometimes include allowing them to sell things to people that will sometimes make them worse off.”

The magazine added, “Others worry, however, that the widening income gap between the wealthy and the less fortunate is being exacerbated by the spread of high-interest, high-fee financing.”

It noted, “Wages for the working poor have been stagnant for three decades. Meanwhile, their spending has consistently and significantly exceeded their income since the mid-1980s. They are making up the difference by borrowing more.”

Real wages (that is, adjusted for inflation), medical and pension coverage, and other components of workers’ basic living standards have declined, often sharply, for the majority of working people in the United States. Average real weekly earnings of employed workers have dropped from about \$325 in 1972 to \$275 in 2003.

At the same time, the debt burden has become more crushing. Household debt grew from about 60 percent of disposable income in 1980 to more than 110 percent in 2003, according to U.S. government statistics. Household payments on mortgage and consumer debts rose from about 10 percent to 13 percent of disposable income during this period.

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes
in *New Internationalist* no. 12

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