

jected at 2,120.3 million metric tons, which is 17.7 mmt more than the projected production this year, according to the February estimates by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. “World reserves are heading to yet another decline from their already low levels,” stated the FAO. “World cereal stocks by the close of the [crop] seasons ending in 2008 are expected to fall to just 405 mmt, down 22 mmt, or 5%, from their already reduced level at the start of the [crop] season and the smallest since 1982.”

All grains are in short supply. In the United States, wheat stocks are at their lowest level since 1948, in absolute tonnage. Among other reasons, this reflects the diversion of wheat acreage into producing corn for the biofuels craze. Sig-

nificant amounts of arable land are being removed from food crop use in grainbelts around the world. In China and India, huge amounts of agricultural land have been taken away for creating special export promotion zones and residential needs of the *nouveaux riches*. In China, almost 7 million hectares of arable land has been “lost” to the new scourge of the globalization-led economy.

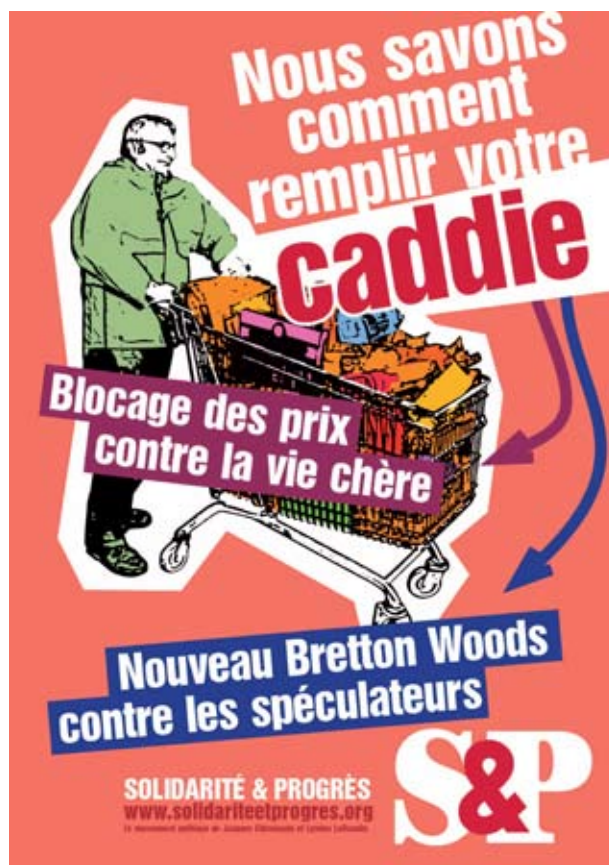
Therefore, capping all these trends, is the “Gorey” catastrophe of the biofuels mania that is increasingly diverting grains and oil crops away from the food chain. At present rates, in 2008, 95 mmt of corn will be consumed for ethanol, which is 12% of the expected total world corn harvest, according to the FAO. On top of that, 10 million tons of wheat

## Uproar in France over Food Price Inflation

The French party associated with the LaRouche movement, Solidarité et Progrès, is fielding four candidates in the March 9 municipal and district elections, using the poster (shown here) with the slogan “We know how to fill your shopping cart.” It also calls for a New Bretton Woods global financial system, against the speculators. The widespread concern in France over soaring food prices was illustrated by a cartoon in the daily *Le Monde*, showing President Nicolas Sarkozy shocked at the high price of the euro, while a little mouse who represents the “normal citizen” pushes an empty shopping cart.

Just as the election campaign got started, the French consumers’ union magazine, *60 Millions de Consommateurs*, published a survey of food price hikes in France between November 2007 and January 2008. Over that two-month period alone, prices for dairy products increased 5-48%, pasta 31-45%, and ham 10-44%.

The huge increase of the cost of living is the main reason that Sarkozy’s party, the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), is expected to suffer a huge defeat in the local elections. While Sarkozy was elected by a solid majority of some 54% just nine months ago, his support has been in a free fall, and is now 36%, having lost 9 points in the past month. While the press has focussed much attention on his love affair and new wife, Carla Bruni—which indeed has turned away many of the older people who had been his main base of support—the middle class and the lower 80% in general are furious. He had campaigned on the slogan, “I will be the President who will restore buying power to the population.” It is in those areas where he had raised expect-



tations the most and gotten voting results of over 60%, that the reactions against him are now the most intense.

Solidarité et Progrès is running candidates in four districts for the post of general counselor, the person responsible for running the departments. The party has a potential for rapid growth in this time of crisis, as shown by an electoral meeting for candidate Christophe Paquien on Feb. 26 in a district of Lyon; 45 people attended. Solidarité et Progrès national leader Jacques Cheminade was also there, to show his support.—Christine Bierre