

## Utah miners build March 12 solidarity rally

BY PAT MILLER

PRICE, Utah—“This check is not very large, but maybe it will help. My dad was a strong union man and my husband worked in the mines. They both died of cancer,” wrote a contributor to the Co-Op Miners Fund from Madisonville, Kentucky.

Sent after seeing a feature article on the Co-Op mine struggle in the recently published January-February issue of the *United Mine Workers Journal*, this widow’s \$25 donation is one of many. In the first two days of mail at the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) district office here after the *Journal* article reached union members and their families, \$510 came in from eight contributors.

The miners at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, have been reaching out broadly for support from miners and other working people in the region in the lead-up to a March 12 rally at the UMWA

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## U.S.-led forces in Iraq stage offensive along the Euphrates

BY SAM MANUEL

In late February, the U.S. military opened a new offensive centered on the town of Ramadi and several other cities along the Euphrates River in the Anbar province, west of Baghdad. The same Marine division that led the assault on Fallujah three months ago is also heading this offensive, which includes a section of the Iraqi armed forces.

Dubbed “Operation River Blitz,” the Anbar offensive is a continuation of the second phase of the Iraq war that began with the November Fallujah assault. Its primary objective is to destroy the elite units of the Iraqi army from the deposed Baath Party regime of Saddam Hussein,

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## Clinics protest Kansas gov’t demand to open abortion records of 90 women

BY MARY MARTIN

DES MOINES, Iowa—In an attack on the right to privacy and abortion rights, Kansas attorney general Phillip Kline has demanded the medical files of some 90 women and minors who received abortions in Kansas, stating he needs the records to prosecute criminal cases involving rape and child sex abuse.

Lawyers for the two abortion clinics that are the subject of this probe have asked the state Supreme Court to throw out the subpoena, calling it a “fishing expedition” aimed at identifying names and intimate details of women’s lives in violation of their right to privacy.

At a news conference, Kline, a Republican party politician and ardent foe of abortion rights, explained that statutory rape, defined by Kansas law as sex with

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# Lebanese gov’t resigns amid sustained protests

## Under U.S. pressure, Syrian gov’t turns over Iraqi Baathists

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Lebanese prime minister Omar Karami resigned February 28 in face of broad mobilizations against the years-long intervention by the Syrian government in Lebanon. After hearing the news, thousands of people celebrated that night in the streets of the capital, Beirut.

For days, tens of thousands had demonstrated in Lebanese cities calling for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country and removal of the Syrian-backed government of Karami and President Emile Lahoud. Chanting “Syria out!” and “Lahoud, your turn is coming!” the protesters identified the Syrian and Lebanese governments as responsible for the assassination two weeks earlier of former prime minister Rafik Hariri, a prominent politician who had spoken in opposition to the Syrian government’s presence in Lebanon.

Some 14,000 Syrian troops are currently in Lebanon. For nearly three decades, the Syrian government has intervened in politics there, hoping to assure that Beirut will support the policies of the Syrian rulers and will act as a buffer for Damascus against the Israeli government.

Under the political pressure cooker created by the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, working people and others in Lebanon have stepped into the



AP/Nati Harnik

Some 25,000 protesters converge on Martyrs’ Square in Beirut, Lebanon, February 28 despite a government ban on demonstrations. The prime minister of Lebanon resigned that day.

political space opening as the Baath Party regime in Syria weakens. The open move last fall by the Syrian government to push through a change in Lebanon’s constitution to keep the Lahoud government in power, followed by the assassination February 14 of Hariri, detonated the long-simmering and widespread popular indignation against the meddling of

Damascus in the country’s affairs.

Washington and Paris have seized on the development to vie for greater influence in Lebanon and seek to further advance their competing interests in the region. Washington has continued to press Damascus to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and to turn over Iraqi Baathists and others who

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## Imprisoned for a year without a hearing, New Jersey unionist fights deportation

BY RÓGER CALERO

FREEHOLD, New Jersey—Moisés Mory, the president of Local 13742 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), has been in jail facing deportation since May 2004. He is fighting for his right to live and work in this country and is appealing for support to prevent the immigration police from deporting him to his native Peru.

The jailed trade unionist was arrested by *la migra* at his home in West New York, New Jersey, in May. He has been held since then without access to a hearing. He’s currently incarcerated at the Monmouth County jail in Freehold, New Jersey. Mory was denied a habeas corpus hearing to present a motion for his release, and now awaits

a decision by a federal judge on his case. “They are opposed to giving me a due process hearing,” Mory told the *Militant* in a February 19 interview. “They don’t want to grant me a hearing because they know I have enough arguments for my release, and to obtain a waiver in my case.”

The immigration police is seeking to deport Mory based on a 1986 misdemeanor conviction. In June of that year, Mory was charged with “possession” of a controlled substance. When he was arrested, Mory was riding with an old acquaintance who the police claim was carrying 3.5 grams of cocaine on him. Despite the acquaintance’s confession that the drugs belonged to him—and that Mory knew nothing about them—Mory was convicted and sentenced

to 364 days in jail. During the trial he was advised by his attorney to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge in order to avoid a lengthy and costly court process—even though Mory maintained he was innocent. Mory was also never informed by his lawyer or the judge that the charges could later have consequences with his immigration status.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Re-

sponsibility Act signed into law in 1996 by President William Clinton expanded the number of crimes for which a person can be deported or deemed “ineligible” for citizenship to include a range of misdemeanors, redefining them as “aggravated felonies.” This law made Mory’s nearly 20-year-old conviction a “deportable” offense.

Mory has lived in this country for more than two decades. He filed an application to become a permanent resident in 1984 when he and his wife, Ruth, applied for amnesty. While his wife became a permanent resident, Mory’s application remained pending due to the 1986 conviction. In 1999, when Ruth became a U.S. citizen, she filed a petition for a “status adjustment” for Moisés,

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Moisés Mory, president of Steelworkers Local 13742, with his wife Ruth before being jailed. She helps lead the defense effort.

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U.S. officials say are using Syria as a base to finance and organize the armed campaign against the U.S.-led occupation forces and others inside Iraq. After Hariri's assassination, Washington withdrew its ambassador from Damascus, Syria's capital. So far, the Syrian government has continued to accede to this pressure, most recently turning over 30 leading Iraqi Baathists to the Iraqi government and beginning to withdraw its troops in Lebanon to an area closer to the Syrian border.

Karami announced his decision to resign February 28 at a special session of parliament. This parliament's term of office expires at the end of May. Opposition political parties are demanding a "neutral" government to organize elections and investigate the assassination.

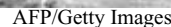
“Security forces set up roadblocks to limit the flow of young Lebanese streaming into Beirut,” the *Financial Times* reported, “but closer to the site of the protest sympathetic army officers allowed small crowds through.” Working people and others of various backgrounds have seized the greater political space opened up by the divisions among the Lebanese rulers to give voice to their rejection of the Lahoud government and its backers in Damascus.

In September 2004 Hariri played a role in the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which put the stamp of the “international community” behind the demand for withdrawal of Syrian forces. The following month he resigned his post in protest over the parliament’s approval of a

The breadth of the opposition has forced political groups that traditionally aligned themselves with Damascus to take a conciliatory position toward the opposition. Hezbollah, a Shiite Muslim militia that has been historically backed by Syria, has met with a top aide to Jumblatt and other opposition figures who have urged the powerful militia to back their cause. "Our only choice is dialogue if we care for Lebanon," Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was quoted as saying. "Hezbollah is a main partner in any future coalition and an essential component which enjoys authority and credibility," said Jumblatt.

The Syrian government ordered its troops into Lebanon in April 1976 in order to block a revolutionary upsurge among the Lebanese toilers from toppling the government that largely disenfranchised the Muslim

In testimony before Congress at the time, U.S. secretary of state James Baker said, "We are appreciative of the role that Syria is playing in support of the international coalition in the Gulf." When asked whether the administration had given a green light



to the Syrian intervention in Lebanon, he said, "Syria was there at the request of the legitimate government of Lebanon, a government that we recognize and a government that we support."

The government of Bashar Assad—who became president in 2000 after the death of his father—has taken a more openly conciliatory stance toward Washington in face of the escalating imperialist war drive in the Mideast. Since Washington launched its “war on terrorism” in 2001, Damascus has “provided important intelligence support to Washington in its fight against al Qaeda,” the *Wall Street Journal* noted at the time of the U.S. assault on Iraq.

Following Lebanese prime minister Karami's resignation, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and her French counterpart, Foreign Minister Michel Barnier, didn't ease their fire on Damascus. In a joint statement at a March 1 press conference in London they repeated their governments' "call for the full and immediate implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559. That means the full and immediate withdrawal of all Syrian military and intelligence forces from Lebanon." They also insisted that the

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# U.S. offensive in Iraq

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which maintained much of their weaponry and cohesion as they melted away in the face of the U.S.-led takeover of Baghdad in April 2003. These Baathist units have been the backbone of the withering campaign of bombings, ambushes, kidnappings, and assassinations directed at the U.S.-imposed interim government in Iraq and the occupation forces.

A measure of the increasing isolation of the Baathists was the response to a February 28 suicide car bombing in the Shiite town of Hillah, which killed 135 people and wounded 141. It was the deadliest single bomb attack of the war. The blast mainly killed young police and Iraqi national guard recruits waiting at a clinic for medical checkups. Shoppers in a nearby market, including women and children, also died. A statement on the Internet by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq took responsibility for the bombing. The statement was not immediately verified.

Associated Press reported that on March 1 more than 2,000 Iraqis held a spontaneous demonstration outside the clinic, chanting "No to terrorism!" "No to Baathism and Wahhabism!" Wahhabism is a form of Sunni Islam adhered to by Osama bin Laden. Some also condemned interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi or local officials for failing to prevent the attack.

A black banner hung outside the market offering condolences for "innocent martyrs of this rural southern town at the hands of the sinful traitorous terrorists during the cowardly attack," the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Meanwhile, several developments highlight further the instability of the newly elected Iraqi government and the political space that has opened for working people and oppressed groups since the collapse of Hussein's party police state. Leaders of the Kurdish slate that won the second largest number of votes in the January 30 elections have outlined their conditions for entering a bloc with Shiite-led parties to form a new government. They include strengthening the Kurd's autonomy in northeastern Iraq and Kurdish control of the province that contains the oil-rich city Kirkuk.

## 'Operation River Blitz'

U.S.-led forces began operations in late February in the towns of Ramadi, Hit, Baghdadi, Haqlaniyah, and Haditha—all in the Anbar province west of Baghdad. The Hussein regime had maintained a

strong base of support in the Sunni Arab population of the province, and since Hussein's fall, the Baathist-led insurgency has operated with relative freedom. Residents of Ramadi started to flee the city, many fearing a repeat of the U.S. assault on Fallujah last November, Reuters reported. A curfew is in effect from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Checkpoints have been set up throughout the city and at least 100 individuals have been detained, al-Jazeera TV reported.

"Unmanned drones, their engines buzzing like lawn mowers, regularly scan the city's warren of alleys," the *Christian Science Monitor* reported February 24 from the city of Hit. U.S. Marines have detained all former police officers there. Last October the police allowed armed insurgents to take over the police station without a fight, the *Monitor* reports. The U.S. military suspects the police of sympathizing with the Baathists.

In Haqlaniyah, U.S. warplanes reportedly dropped 500-pound bombs on targets, while an AC-130 gunship fired 40 mm rounds in support of U.S. troops.

At a February 22 Pentagon briefing in Washington, Gen. David Rodriguez said the operation is expected to be of a "significantly lesser degree" than what took place in Fallujah. In the current operation the Marines intend to "ride that fine line... where we don't spoil the goodwill that's here... while still having enough force so if the enemy decides to fight we can kill them," said Lt. Col. Steven Dinauer. To that end, said the *Monitor*, in addition to their regular complement of tanks, mortars, and grenades, the Marines have also brought along a lawyer, \$20,000 to pay for damages, and dozens of soccer balls.

In his Pentagon briefing General Rodriguez noted that attacks on U.S., Iraqi, and civilian targets have been "down a little bit since the election." He also said that although the attacks on Shiites during the Muslim Ashura holiday have been bloody they were a third less than in the previous year.

Rodriguez also said that "the noose is closing" around Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq. "Over the past several weeks there's been several capture-or-kill of several of the key people in his network." With backing and collaboration from the Baathist elements financing and leading the insurgency, this group has claimed responsibility for numerous beheadings, kidnappings, and assaults on Iraqi civilians.

The Iraqi government announced that a

said loud and clear that the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon.... The most effective way to achieve that goal is to have our partners Britain and France and Germany represent not only the EU, not only NATO, but the United States. And hopefully we'll be able to reach a diplomatic solution to this."

"We absolutely agree that Iran must say No to any kind of nuclear weapon. Full stop," declared German chancellor Gerhard Schröder after meeting with Bush February 23. "We are very much of the opinion that this is the target that needs to be achieved through a diplomatic negotiating path, if possible. But this means there needs to be movement on both sides."

The EU negotiators have been pressing Iran to make its suspension of uranium enrichment permanent. They have also urged the United States to drop its opposition to Iran joining the World Trade Organization.

While in Europe, Bush reiterated Washington's refusal to rule out a military assault on Iran. At a February 22 news conference at the European Union in Brussels, he said, "This notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous.... And having said that, all options are on the table."

The IAEA board of governors was scheduled to begin its quarterly meeting



Jaime Razuri/AFP/Getty Images

**U.S. Marines observe a mortar shell's impact February 23 during Operation River Blitz in Haqlaniyah in Anbar province, west of Baghdad.**

top leader of the group had been captured February 20. Talib Mikhliif Arsan Walman al-Dulaymi, also known as Abu Qutaybah, was captured that day. Al-Dulaymi was responsible for finding safe houses and transportation for members of the group, according to the Iraqi government announcement.

## Kurds press to strengthen autonomy

Nechirvan Barzani, prime minister of the Kurdish regional government, said the Kurdish leaders would only agree to a deal on the formation of a new national government if they are given control of disputed areas in the north of the country, including Kirkuk, a major oil center. Since 1991 the main Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have administered three northeastern provinces in Iraq as an autonomous region. The area is popularly known as Iraqi Kurdistan.

Kurds are taking advantage of the election results to press their demands for increased autonomy for the region. A unified slate led by the KDP and PUK is projected to win 75 seats in the 275-seat national assembly. The Kurds are in a strong position to negotiate with the Shiite-led slate, which won a slim majority, but far short of the two-thirds needed to form the government on its own.

In addition, the Kurds want to maintain a provision in the interim constitution, known as the Transitional Administrative Law, which allows a two-thirds majority in any three provinces to block the ratifica-

tion of a new constitution.

A February 17 report in the *Kurdistan Observer*, based on an interview with KDP leader Massoud Barzani, outlined the Kurdish demands:

- Ownership of any natural resources in the region including oilfields and the power to determine how the revenues are split with the central government.
- Control of the 100,000-member military force in the region, composed mostly of former guerillas of the Kurdish peshmerga militia. No other armed forces would be allowed to enter Kurdistan without official permission.
- The authority to appoint officials to work in and operate ministries in Kurdistan, including overseeing security and the economy.
- Authority over fiscal policy, including how much tax revenue goes to Baghdad. The central government would also not be able to raise tax revenue in Kurdistan without permission.

According to the London-based *Independent*, Kurds also want the right of return for Kurdish refugees. In the months leading up to the election thousands of Kurds returned to Kirkuk and many others throughout the northern regions registered to vote in town. Kurds want Kirkuk returned to Kurdish control in order to reverse the Arabization campaign carried out by the Hussein regime, which brutally removed thousands of Kurds from the region in the 1970s and 1980s. Kurdish lands and homes were given to Arabs, many of whom were also forcibly settled there in order to strengthen the regime's hold on the province.

Iraqi Kurds make up an oppressed nationality that together with another 20 million Kurds spans parts of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Armenia. The capitalist rulers in Baghdad, Ankara, Tehran, and Damascus fear that any move toward independence or even formal autonomy by Iraqi Kurds would inspire national struggles among their Kurdish populations.

## Allawi tries to hold post

Nearly a month after the election, negotiations to form a new government continue to drag out. Iyad Allawi, a wealthy Shiite and prime minister of the U.S.-backed interim government, has announced that he will attempt to hold onto his position in the new government even though the slate he headed came in a distant third in the voting, with just 40 of the 275 seats.

The United Iraqi Alliance, a Shiite-led coalition that won a slim majority of the votes, has nominated Ibrahim Jaafari for the post. Jaafari, a leader of the Da'wa party, served as president of the U.S.-appointed Governing Council under the occupation regime headed by U.S. overseer of Iraq Paul Bremer and as a deputy president in the U.S.-backed interim government.

At a news conference following his nomination, Jaafari said that defeating the insurgency would be the first priority of his administration, reported the *New York Times*. In previous statements, the *Times* said, Jaafari made it clear that an Iraqi government cannot accomplish that without the continued presence of U.S. troops.

# Bush uses Europe visit to press campaign against Iran's nuclear energy program

BY CINDY JAQUITH

U.S. president George Bush used his European visit in late February to press Washington's campaign to prevent the development of nuclear power in Iran.

Tehran states that it wants nuclear plants to meet the country's growing energy needs and develop industry and infrastructure. Washington charges this is a cover for a nuclear weapons program, and has been pressing the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to bring Iran before the Security Council for sanctions.

In late 2004, after talks with the European Union (EU) governments of Britain, France, and Germany, Tehran agreed to a temporary suspension of uranium enrichment, a step necessary to produce nuclear fuel, but one the U.S. government claims is proof of weapons production. Iranian officials have repeatedly stated that they will eventually resume enriching uranium.

"In order to run our nuclear reactors efficiently, the Islamic Republic of Iran needs to master that field," stated supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei February 23. "If the Westerners insist that no nation but themselves is entitled to master the nuclear sciences, that is an irrational and arrogant demand."

Bush reported that in his meetings with leaders in London, Paris, and Berlin, "all

# Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange sue U.S. chemical giants

BY CINDY JAQUITH

BROOKLYN—Chemical giants Dow and Monsanto argued in federal district court here February 28 for dismissal of a class-action lawsuit against them by some 100 Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange during the U.S. war against their country.

The suit charges that 30 companies that produced the herbicides used in the Vietnam War violated international law and committed war crimes. It seeks damages for injury to and wrongful death of Vietnamese as well as environmental compensation for Vietnam.

Washington sprayed millions of gallons of Agent Orange on Vietnam from 1962 to 1971, arguing it was to destroy vegetation that could feed or hide liberation fighters. The lawsuit charges up to 4 million Vietnamese suffered dioxin poisoning as a result. Dioxin can cause cancer,

deformities, mental retardation, and organ dysfunction.

Included in the Vietnamese delegation in the courtroom February 28 was plaintiff Dr. Phan Thi Phi Phi, who had four miscarriages within two years in the early 1970s. She had been working in an area heavily sprayed with Agent Orange.

“We did not know what happened to us, what was the cause of it, so we were very sad because we had so many miscarriages and we could not have children,” she told reporters.

Lawyers for Dow and Monsanto urged Judge Jack Weinstein to throw out the case because they said their clients were simply executing the orders of a U.S. president, John Kennedy. In 1961 Kennedy requested a scientific opinion from advisers on the dangers of Agent Orange and was told it was safe, they said. Speaking to ABC



U.S. planes spray chemical defoliants in south Vietnam in 1965. U.S. imperialist forces dumped millions of gallons of toxic compound Agent Orange during the war there.

news outside the courtroom, Monsanto representative Glyn Young claimed, “The overwhelming weight of all of the independent scientific evidence on Agent Orange

shows that there’s no connection between exposure and any serious human illness. Second, the use of Agent Orange was first authorized by President Kennedy, and he did it to save the lives of U.S. and allied servicemen.”

Monsanto was one of seven chemical companies that agreed in the 1980s to pay \$180 million in damages to U.S. GIs and their families for Agent Orange poisoning stemming from the war in Vietnam.

The U.S. government has also filed a brief demanding the case be dismissed. Ori Levin presented the government’s argument in court, protesting that it is “extraordinary” for “former enemy soldiers” and others to be able to sue U.S. corporations for what they did in the war. Moreover, he said, it is “inappropriate” for the courts to question a president’s wartime actions.

Levin stated that once a U.S. president makes a decision that may run counter to international law, that decision becomes domestic law and stands above international rulings.

“That goes pretty far toward saying the president isn’t bound by law during wartime,” Weinstein replied. “Is a direct violation of a major human right not subject to check by the courts? That’s outrageous!”

Weinstein will rule in several weeks on the dismissal motions.

## Plaintiffs’ stories told in legal briefs

**The following are excerpts from the Justiciability and Standing Brief in the lawsuit against U.S. chemical companies that manufactured Agent Orange. They describe the cases of a few of the Vietnamese plaintiffs demanding justice.**

The Plaintiffs in this action include several individuals residing in both the North and South of Vietnam who in one way or another have been harmed by their exposure to Agent Orange and other chemical weapons manufactured and sold by the defendants. An organization, the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin, is also a plaintiff in this case.

Plaintiff PHAN THI PHI PHI is a Vietnamese national originally from the City of Hue in the central part of Vietnam. Plaintiff Phi Phi is a medical doctor. From April 1966 through July 1971, Dr. Phi Phi served as Director of Hospital No. 1, a mobile hospital with different units which moved to various locations in Quang Nam province and Quang Ngai province in southern Vietnam. The hospital units were often located near the Ho Chi Minh trail and near various rivers and streams in the said provinces. The hospital staff, including Dr. Phi Phi, and the patients receiving treatment at the hospital, relied upon food they cultivated or found in the nearby valleys for daily sustenance.

Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces, especially near the Ho Chi Minh trail, were two of the areas heavily sprayed with chemical weapons manufactured by one, some or all of the defendants pursuant to operations Trail Dust and Ranch Hand both before and during the time of Dr. Phi Phi’s residence there.

Before the war and her exposure to the defendants’ chemical weapons, Dr. Phi Phi had given birth to a healthy daughter. During the war, Dr. Phi Phi became pregnant three times. Each of those three pregnancies ended with miscarriages in the first trimester of her pregnancy. In 1973, Dr. Phi Phi became pregnant again. Although the pregnancy proceeded normally through the first trimester, on or about July 1973, she again suffered a miscarriage which required hospitalization and termination of the pregnancy.

Plaintiff HO KAN HAI is a Vietnamese national and sues in this action along with her son, NGUYEN VAN HOANG. Since 1972, plaintiff Ho Kan Hai has been a farmer residing in Aluoi (formerly Ashau) Valley in southern Vietnam, living in close proximity to the former US military air base in A So. Ms. Hai and her family’s diet has consisted of local rice, vegetables, manioc, fish and poultry, among other foods. Ms. Hai has had four miscarriages during her time in A So, and two of her children have died young, one at the age of 16 days, one at the age of two years. She has also had surgery to remove ovarian tumors. One of her living children is plaintiff Nguyen Van Hoang. He was born on or about September 7, 1992.

Hoang was born with severe physical and mental developmental disabilities and currently lives with his mother.

Plaintiff DANG HONG NHUT is a Vietnamese national originally from Tien Giang, in southern Vietnam. Before the war with the U.S., she lived in Saigon. In 1959 Ms. Nhut was married, and in 1960, she gave birth to a healthy son. In 1965 Ms. Nhut traveled to Cu Chi to visit her husband, and spent approximately one month there. Cu Chi was an area heavily sprayed with chemical weapons, and Ms. Nhut often noticed a fog or mist and a strong odor in the air, and a white substance on plant leaves. Ms. Nhut returned to Saigon in 1965.

In 1966, Ms. Nhut was arrested by the RVN regime [the government of South Vietnam] and held in prison in Bien Hoa from 1966 through 1972. During her time in prison, she ate dried fish and other food she could not identify. After her release from prison, she lived in Tay Ninh, Binh Duong and Cu Chi. After the war, she found work

as a tailor at a small shop.

In 1974, Ms. Nhut became pregnant again. She suffered a miscarriage two months into the pregnancy. In 1975, Ms. Nhut became pregnant a third time. Again, she suffered a miscarriage two months into the pregnancy. In 1977, Ms. Nhut became pregnant a fourth time. An ultrasound examination performed at Tu Du hospital in Saigon five months into the pregnancy determined that the fetus had spina bifida and other deformities. The pregnancy was terminated, and the fetus was removed and kept at the hospital.

In 1980, Ms. Nhut became pregnant a fifth time, and again suffered a miscarriage two months into the pregnancy. At that time, her doctor advised her not to become pregnant again, because of the health risk involved. In 2002, a tumor was discovered in Ms. Nhut’s intestine, and she had surgery at Nguyen Trai hospital to remove it. In May 2003, Ms. Nhut had her thyroid surgically removed because it was not functioning.

## Monopolies poisoned U.S., Vietnamese workers

**The following excerpts outline the history of the use of Agent Orange by the U.S. government in the Vietnam War, the role of the chemical companies that manufactured the herbicide, and the cover-up of its lethal effects by both. The excerpts are taken from the Justiciability and Standing Brief in the lawsuit against U.S. corporations that produced Agent Orange.**

### STATEMENT OF FACTS

#### A. Use of Chemical Weapons in Vietnam

In late 1961, President Kennedy approved a joint recommendation of the Departments of State and Defense to initiate, on a limited scale, a chemical warfare campaign in Vietnam involving the use of defoliants.

Operation Trail Dust, as the Air Force’s chemical warfare program was originally called, and which later became Operation Ranch Hand, began its spray missions in January 1962. The initial aerial spraying took place near Saigon. Its purpose, ostensibly, was to clear the thick jungle canopy from around roads, power lines and other lines of communications in order to lessen the potential for ambush.

At the start of the government’s chemical warfare campaign in Vietnam, the spraying of all targets required prior approval from the White House. In late 1962, authority for defoliation target selection in the chemical warfare program was delegated to the US ambassador to the Republic of South Vietnam (“RVN”). In late 1963 authority for crop target selection in the chemical warfare program was delegated by the Ambassador to the White House.

Although the stated purpose of Operation Ranch Hand was to defoliate forests and mangroves and to destroy crops depriving enemy combatants of food, this was still chemical warfare employed by the U.S. military, with the knowing participation of the defendants herein, to further the military and foreign policy objectives of the USG [U.S. government] in Vietnam.

From the beginning, the USG took steps to cover up its involvement in this chemical warfare program. U.S. government policy initially emphasized that the U.S. military was merely assisting the RVN government in the herbicide program. In fact, a 1962 pact assigned the ownership of the herbicides to the RVN government once they were delivered, and RVN soldiers handled the loading and transportation of the herbicides.

The United States Air Force (“USAF”) aircraft used to spray the herbicides were camouflaged and equipped with removable identification insignia. When performing crop destruction missions, the aircraft bore RVN insignia, the USAF flight crews wore civilian clothing and were accompanied by a RVN army crewmember, pursuant to a U.S. Department of Defense concept codenamed “Farmgate.”

The USG’s use of chemical weapons to advance its objectives during the Vietnam War escalated in late 1964 as the war escalated. Controls and limitation on spraying were gradually relaxed and the areas sprayed were expanded. A frequent target of the Ranch Hand operation was the complex of roads and footpaths in southern Vietnam used as a supply route by forces loyal to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (“DRVN”) and the National Liberation Front (“NLF”) personnel, commonly known as the “Ho

Chi Minh Trail.” Also heavily targeted by the herbicide campaign were the heavily wooded Demilitarized Zone, the Mekong Delta and U.S. military bases.

The use of chemical weapons for crop destruction also gradually expanded, and in 1965 alone, 45% of the total spraying was designed to destroy crops. The crop destruction included the spraying of fields suspected of being used by the NLF. However, fields used exclusively by civilians were also frequently sprayed. In 1967 alone at least 20 million liters were sprayed—85% for defoliation purposes and 15% for crop destruction.

#### B. The Chemical Weapons Used

Agent Orange was the most widely used chemical weapon, particularly after 1964. Agent Orange was a 50-50 mixture of the n-butyl esters of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T). The later component was found to contain the contaminant TCDD or 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (i.e., dioxin), which is regarded as one of the most toxic chemicals known to man.

Dioxin is a family of chemicals (75 in all) that does not occur naturally, nor is it intentionally manufactured by any industry. The most toxic dioxin is called 2,3,7,8 – TCDD. Dioxins are produced as byproducts of the manufacture of some herbicides.

#### C. The Extent of Their Use

During the course of Operation Trail Dust, Operation Ranch Hand and the final period of the war, large numbers of Vietnamese combatants and civilians were

**Continued on Page 5**



# Socialists hold regional conference in Tampa

## Participants map out plans for study, sales of ‘New International’ magazine

BY RACHELE FRUIT

TAMPA, Florida—Steve Clark, managing editor of *New International* and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, was the featured speaker at a public meeting February 26 to celebrate the publication of four new issues of the Marxist journal *New International*. The forum was part of a weekend southeastern socialist educational conference here.

The new issues are *New International* no. 12 in English and *Nueva Internacional* no. 6 in Spanish, featuring the articles “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” and “Their Transformation and Ours” by Jack Barnes, and *New International* no. 13 and *Nueva Internacional* no. 7, which include “Our Politics Start with the World,” also by Barnes. The latter two had a first printing.

“The initial printing of these books was sold out at the Havana Book Fair, but we will soon have all four back from the printers, and we invite everyone to come to the international meeting to launch the new publications in New York in April,” Clark said.

“This is an historic turning point for imperialism,” Clark added. “We will see economic devastation that none of us has seen before—conditions that much of the world has been living under for a long time. And we will have an opportunity to participate in big class battles for decades to come.”

“As Barnes explains in ‘Our Politics Start With the World,’ the activity of vanguard workers must be guided by a strategy to close the economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries and among classes within almost every country,” he said.

“We are part of an international class, the working class. The key to our transformation is the use, the strengthening, and the extension of union power,” Clark said.

The 58 participants in the program came from Houston; Atlanta; Birmingham, Alabama; and Daytona, Orlando, Gainesville, Tampa, and Miami, Florida. They were welcomed by Karl Butts on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party in Tampa. Sonja Swanson, a member of the Young Socialists in Miami, co-chaired the meeting. This public event was part of a two-day regional educational weekend sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. The educational conference, titled “Imperialism and the



Militant photos by Dave Wulp

**Participants in February 26 socialist southeast regional conference in Tampa, Florida, listen to Steve Clark (inset), managing editor of the journal of Marxist politics and theory *New International*.**

Fight for Socialism Today,” included three classes on *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* by V.I. Lenin.

### Build the world youth festival

It also provided an opportunity for activists to share experiences in building for the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students taking place in Caracas, Venezuela, in August. Swanson pointed to a display on the festival, described the upcoming activities of the newly organized festival organizing committee in Miami, and then introduced Ilona Gersh, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in Detroit.

Gersh asked all those in the audience who are building the festival in their cities to stand. She explained that the broadest possible festival would help defend both Venezuela and Cuba from U.S. imperialist aggression. She pointed to the importance of young people in Venezuela meeting others like themselves from around the world who are looking to fight imperialism, and the possibility of winning youth from the United States who go to the festival to the perspective of making a revolution in the United States itself.

She said that the workers and peasants of Venezuela have three times defeated attempts by the capitalist class, backed by

Washington, to overturn the elected president, Hugo Chávez. And she described the inspiring example of the tens of thousands of Cuban volunteer doctors and teachers in Venezuela today. “We have an opportunity to involve workers and farmers of all ages in helping to build the festival in each local area,” Gersh stated.

The public meeting provided an essential political framework to the two days of intensive study of *Imperialism*. The discussion addressed questions such as: why the free competition of the early years of capitalism inevitably led to monopolies; why the rise of monopolies leads to more violent competition and deeper economic crisis; how the capitalists of the different imperialist nations are forced—not as a matter of policy, but by the workings of their own system—to divide and redivide the world among themselves through military and economic means; the connection between the rise of imperialism and the rise of op-

portunism as a current within the workers movement; and why imperialism leads not only to increased national oppression, but also increased resistance among the toilers of the world.

“This is the first thing I have studied by Lenin,” said Milovan Tucakovic, 27, a middle school teacher from Miami. “For the first time, ‘imperialism’ is not just a word. I learned a lot about how they dominate the world.”

“Lenin wrote this pamphlet 90 years ago,” said Muhammed Kareem, a young worker from Atlanta. “He explained what the system is and what it would lead to, and that’s exactly what has happened, what’s going on right now. When I first started to read the *Militant*, it put all together what I was seeing in the world. It explains that the problems facing humanity are the result of the system of capitalism, not of individual leaders like George Bush. There’s no going around it. The system can’t be reformed.”

Conference participants purchased close to \$150 worth of books, pamphlets, and periodicals on revolutionary struggles, including eight copies of *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* by V. I. Lenin.

Rosa Huerta from Atlanta left the conference with *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* (We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions), by Thomas Sankara. “I think it’s true that capitalism doesn’t worry about the hunger of people in the world,” she said. “My experience is from Latin America. The imperialists take the maximum resources they can such as minerals and oil. When there is no more oil, it is not worth anything to them anymore.”

Nine hundred dollars was collected for the Militant Fighting Fund to help the paper defend itself in the libel lawsuit brought by the Kingston family, the owners of the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah. One reader of the *Militant* renewed her subscription as part of the international campaign to increase the number of long-term readers of the paper.

## Excerpt from Agent Orange suit

Continued from Page 4

directly exposed to herbicides by spraying. In addition to those who were sprayed directly with the herbicides, many more were exposed indirectly, by coming into contact with soil, plants, food and water that were contaminated. It has been estimated that up to 4 million Vietnamese were exposed to herbicides during the period 1961–1971 alone.

Dr. James R. Clary [U.S. scientist then employed at the Air Force Armament Development Laboratory, Elgin Air Force Base, Florida] explains how the USG and these defendants could manufacture and use such a toxic chemical, even though they were aware of the ill effects it would cause:

When we (military scientists) initiated the herbicide program in the 1960’s, we were aware of the potential for damage due to dioxin contamination in the herbicide. We were even aware that the ‘military’ formulation had a higher dioxin concentration than the ‘civilian’ version due to the lower cost and speed of manufacture. However, because the material was to be used on the ‘enemy’, none of us were overly concerned. We never considered a scenario in which our own personnel would become contaminated with the herbicide. And, if we had, we would have expected our own government to give assistance to veterans so contaminated.

### D(i) Defendants’ Knowledge of Dioxin and its Dangers

Defendants knew long before procurement and production that certain hazards could arise from dioxin contamination, including, *inter alia*, chloracne, a severe and systemic disease of the skin and liver damage; yellow atrophy of the liver; severe personality and psychological disorders; as well as, in certain instances, death.

For example, in 1949, an accidental spill occurred at defendant Monsanto’s chemical plant in Nitro, West Virginia, in

which a compound containing dioxin was dispersed throughout the building, exposing the defendant’s workers to the toxic substance. Many of the workers at the Nitro plant developed serious health problems and developed symptoms, in some cases severe and intractable, of chloracne and other conditions soon after the accident.

In 1954, an outbreak of serious and permanently disfiguring forms of chloracne, as well as diseases of the blood-forming elements of the body, including liver disease, occurred among workers at a Diamond Alkali plant, who were working with phenoxy herbicides, including 2,4,5-T. Beginning in 1960, a dermatologist named Jacob Bleiberg began making rounds in the chemical plant in Newark in order to see workers and treat their skin conditions.

In 1972, Dr. Bleiberg wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Times that was never published. It described some of his findings in the Diamond workers. He notes that “fifty percent of the men developed chloracne... two workers died of liver disease... one man died of liver cancer... almost all of the workers complained of severe fatigue... and 20% of our men had abnormal blood sugar tests indicating diabetes.” He did this investigation at the request of Diamond management, indicating that they were aware of all of his findings.

In February 1964, at Dow’s plant in Midland, Michigan, more than 40 workers developed chloracne, some quite severe, due to the presence of dioxin. At this time, Dow believed that extreme exposure to dioxin could result in “general organ toxicity,” as well as “psychopathological,” and “other systemic problems.” As a result of this experience with chloracne, Dow decided to explicitly inform the other defendants of its experiences and knowledge, going back to the 1940s. It organized a meeting in Midland, Michigan in March, 1965 which candidly shared all of this information with the defendants, including defendants Hooker, Hercules and Diamond Alkali. Though representatives from Monsanto were not present at this meeting, Dow shared the same information with them at the time.

## ‘Militant’ drive needs 175 renewals

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Renewal Campaign February 5 – March 6: Week Three						
Country	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold	
NEW ZEALAND						
Auckland	7	7	100%	0	0	0
Christchurch	3	1	33%	0	0	0
N.Z. total	10	8	80%	0	0	0
CANADA						
Montreal	6	5	83%	2	0	0
Toronto	10	5	50%	0	0	0
CANADA total	16	10	63%	2	0	0
AUSTRALIA	10	6	60%	2	1	
SWEDEN	4	2	50%	1	0	
UNITED STATES						
Los Angeles	20	18	90%	10	9	
Seattle	8	7	88%	3	1	
Price, UT	8	6	75%	6	2	
Washington	14	10	71%	3	1	
NE Pennsylvania	8	5	63%	5	3	
Houston	15	9	60%	3	1	
Newark	15	9	60%	2	2	
Boston	15	8	53%	5	1	
Detroit	8	4	50%	2	2	
Craig, CO	10	4	40%	2	0	
Des Moines	10	4	40%	5	3	
New York	30	12	40%	8	1	
Tampa	6	2	33%	3	1	
Philadelphia	10	3	30%	1	0	
Pittsburgh	10	3	30%	1	0	
Cleveland	8	2	25%	3	1	
Miami	12	3	25%	3	0	
Birmingham	10	2	20%	2	0	
Chicago	15	3	20%	5	0	
Omaha	5	1	20%	4	2	
Atlanta	15	2	13%	3	1	
San Francisco	18	2	11%	7	0	
Twin Cities	15	1	7%	6	0	
U.S. total	285	120	42%	92	31	
UNITED KINGDOM						
Edinburgh	3	1	33%	0	0	
London	10	3	30%	0	0	
UK total	13	4	31%	0	0	
ICELAND	2	0	0%	0	0	
Int'l totals	340	150	44%	97	32	
Goal/Should be	325	244	75%	80	60	

BY DOUG NELSON

Partisans of the socialist press have won 150 additional long-term readers since the four-week *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* subscription renewal campaign began February 5. However, the effort is still substantially behind schedule with 175 more *Militant* renewals to go in the final week to make the international goal of 325 on schedule.

On the top of the chart this week are supporters in Auckland, New Zealand, who have already collected their *Militant* goal of seven. They are poised to go over their goals as part of contributing to the international total.

Supporters of the two socialist publications in Los Angeles set the example this week, having collected nine *Militant* and three *Perspectiva Mundial* renewals, putting them at the top of the U.S. chart with 18 *Militant* and nine *Perspectiva Mundial* renewals in hand—90 percent of their goal.

In Los Angeles five renewals, (3 *Militant* and 2 *Perspectiva Mundial*) were picked up last Friday, two from co-workers at a meatpacking plant, and three at a Militant Labor Forum on Malcolm X that 25 people attended. In addition to the subscription renewals, several books of Malcolm X’s speeches, and eight other books and pamphlets were sold at the forum.

“We have worked the list pretty good. As always, it has been useful to talk to our subscribers—from the recent past, and those further back,” said Frank Forrestal, who is involved in the campaign there.



# March 12 miners rally

Continued from front page  
hall in Price.

Under the headline “Co-Op Miners Stand Strong: Company intimidation, illegal firings fail to stop representation election,” the *Journal* highlights the union’s support for the battle being waged by the miners for better wages, safety, dignity, and UMWA representation.

“After more than a year of fighting for their jobs and their families, miners at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah, were finally given the chance to make their voices heard in an NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] election at the mine on Dec. 17, 2004. But they had to overcome one last twist of the company’s anti-union knife to do so,” opens the *Journal* article.

“A week before the election, management of the C.W. Mining Co., Co-Op’s owner, called nearly 30 of the largely Latino workers into the company’s offices and fired them when they wouldn’t show additional proof of their eligibility to work in the United States.”

The article features an appeal to all members of the union to support the Co-Op miners in their struggle for genuine union representation. “The Co-Op miners’ determination to stand up and stick together in the face of the company’s outrageous intimidation tactics is a testament to their courage and their desire to have the UMWA’s voice on their side,” Secretary-Treasurer Dan Kane is quoted as saying. “I salute them, and I encourage every UMWA member to support them.”

The article also features an explanation of the latest NLRB ruling denying the votes of 108 Kingston family members who attempted to vote in the union representation election. The NLRB upheld an earlier ruling to not count those votes because of the interconnections of Kingston family members with the mine bosses. The votes of 27 miners fired by the company before the union elections, workers who were strong backers of the UMWA, were challenged by the company and are being held until the NLRB decides on the company’s challenge.

“Thanks to the support we’ve received, we’ve been able to hang tough,” Juan Salazar, a fired miner and leader of the Co-Op struggle, is quoted by the *Journal* as saying. “Without that support, I don’t know if we would have been able to do it. That support still continues. We have faith that we’ll be able to win this fight and improve our conditions, because it’s not just for us—it’s for all the other non-union miners around here, too. When they see we can do this, they’ll say, ‘we can too.’”

## Solidarity from Sunnyside workers

An example of this support was the warm reception from workers in Sunnyside, Utah, to a Co-Op miners support table in front of Miner’s Trading Post, the

local grocery store in this small coal mining town February 26.

Bob Fivecoat, a member of UMWA Local 9958 in Sunnyside and East Carbon, was joined in staffing the table by two Co-Op miners and a miner from a nonunion mine in the area.

Over the course of the day, more than \$400 was raised in raffle sales and contributions. One woman remarked, “I’m a coal miner’s daughter. I’ll buy one of those tickets.” One man asked, “What are you selling?” Fivecoat answered, “Dignity!”

A young miner went back into the store to get cash after hearing that the raffle was to benefit the miners fighting for safety and a union.

Another young man, who has no union experience yet, said, “I want to help them. I’m a miner too.” He works for a contractor and has labored at several of the mines in the area.

Joy Huitt stopped by and bought several tickets. Huitt started working in the mines in 1978 and eight years later became the first woman to hold a district union position in the UMWA.

A retired miner returned to the table several times, each time going home and digging up more photos to show around illustrating mining in the area 70 years ago. Another retired miner spent the day tending his ranch and came to talk every break he got. He cooked a hamburger lunch from his Black Angus herd for the volunteers staffing the table.

During a midday lull in traffic, Fivecoat recounted to the Co-Op miners stories of the past battles that took place in the hills surrounding them, culminating in the victory of the UMWA. Then he said, “My father was a union miner. He said, ‘Son, I’m giving you the union. Leave it better than you find it.’ In helping the Co-Op miners, I’m fulfilling that promise.”

## Winning support in Colorado

As part of their efforts to reach out for solidarity, three Co-Op miners, José Contreras, Domingo Olivas, and Bill Estrada, traveled to Craig, Colorado, February 26-27 to reknit ties with supporters of the miners’ fight there.

Co-Op miners have been invited to speak at the March 6 monthly member-



Militant/Teri Moss

**UMWA retiree Bob Fivecoat and Co-Op miner Ana-Maria Sanchez staff table at Miners’ Market in Sunnyside, Utah, February 26, to publicize March 12 solidarity event, and raise funds to support fired miners and their families.**

ship meeting of UMWA Local 1385, which represents workers at the Seneca mine outside Craig.

Local 1385 was one of three UMWA locals that took part in a highly successful solidarity rally and dinner for the Co-Op miners in Craig in January 2004. One hundred seventy-five people, including many miners, attended the event. The workers came from UMWA locals 1385, 1984, and 1799, as well as Local 9 of the Brotherhood of Operating Engineers at the Trapper mine, and workers from Twentymile mine, which is nonunion.

The delegation of Co-Op miners visiting Craig this year especially urged the unionists and other workers they met to join them for the March 12 fund-raising benefit and rally in Price, Utah.

On February 26, the Co-Op miners were guests at a mass conducted in Spanish at St. Michael’s Catholic Church in Craig. They were given the floor to speak.

Miners say especially important now is to show support financially while they fight the company firings and press the NLRB to rule on the legitimacy of the votes of

pro-UMWA miners. The big majority of the nearly 30 miners fired has been unable to get any job so far.

“We urge all people to write letters to the NLRB to count our 27 votes,” said José Contreras, one of the miners fired. “People can tell the labor board not to prolong this anymore. The company has violated the law by firing us for union activity and we want our jobs back.”

Letters protesting the firing of UMWA supporters at the Co-Op mine and urging the labor board to count the votes of the pro-UMWA miners should be addressed to: B. Allan Benson, NLRB Region 27 Director, 600 17th St. 7th Floor—North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433. Tel: (303) 844-3551; Fax: (303) 844-6249.

Contributions, messages of support, and copies of letters to the NLRB should be sent to “Co-Op Miners Fund” c/o UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501.

*Danielle London from Craig, Colorado, and Teri Moss from Price, Utah, contributed to this article.*

# Kansas officials demand abortion clinic’s files

## Continued from front page

minors under 16 years of age, was the main criminal activity he would investigate with the medical files of abortion patients. But he also suggested he would use the files to pursue criminal investigations of doctors who allegedly provide illegal late term abortions and health professionals for allegedly failing to report child sex abuse.

Kansas is one of 31 states that have

passed laws to ban or restrict late term abortions after 22 weeks, although Kansas law allows such abortions if a woman’s health is endangered.

Kline maintains that women are having late term abortions whose health, in his opinion, is not in danger and who therefore are in violation of Kansas law. He told the Topeka *Capital-Journal* in an earlier interview, “The law does not allow a mental

health exception for third trimester abortions, but it’s been interpreted wrongly to include that.”

Hundreds of women who have no access to abortion services in their home states travel to Wichita, Kansas, to obtain abortions, including late term abortions. Many are performed at Wichita’s Women’s Health Care Services Clinic by Dr. George Tiller.

This clinic is one of two whose records are being subpoenaed. Tiller himself was subpoenaed by Texas authorities last week as part of an investigation concerning the death of a woman who had died sometime after having an

abortion at the Wichita clinic. Anti-abortion activists routinely picket the clinic and follow clinic workers home and around town, according to press reports.

The National Organization for Women issued a statement by its president Kim Gandy condemning the probe. “This is outrageous harassment of women and their doctors for base political motives,” Gandy said.

According to the *Wichita Eagle*, 14 representatives in the Kansas legislature have called on Kline to abandon efforts to obtain the abortion medical records. The legislators, who are all women, called Kline’s subpoenas of the clinic records “an invasion of privacy.”

The medical privacy issue has gained national attention in this country in recent years.

In 2002, police in Storm Lake, Iowa, demanded patient’s medical files from area abortion providers as part of a criminal investigation concerning the discovery of infant human remains in a recycling center. When the local Planned Parenthood clinic refused to turn over its records, a district court ordered the clinic to release its records or have the clinic’s director face contempt of court charges and possible jail time. Following protest letters to the Buena Vista County attorney general’s office and calls and letters of support to Planned Parenthood, the Iowa Supreme Court stayed the order to turn over files and prosecutors withdrew the investigation.

In 2004 the Justice Department sought unsuccessfully to subpoena the medical files of women who had abortions at hospitals operated by universities in Philadelphia, New York, and Michigan. In 2003 Kline’s office tried to force medical providers to report any information they had about girls younger than 16 engaging in sexual activity, but a U.S. district judge issued a temporary restraining order. The case remains unresolved.

## Two New Issues

### New International no. 12

#### CAPITALISM’S LONG HOT WINTER HAS BEGUN

by Jack Barnes

“One of capitalism’s infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism’s accelerating drive toward war, it’s going to be a long, hot winter.”—Jack Barnes  
Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, this cataclysmic crisis for “the West” and for “Christendom.” And draw satisfaction and enjoyment from being “in their face” as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

### Also in NI no. 12 Their “Transformation” and Ours

Socialist Workers Party National Committee Statement

**Crisis, Boom, and Revolution** 1921 Reports by V.I. Lenin & Leon Trotsky

### New International no. 13

#### OUR POLITICS START WITH THE WORLD

by Jack Barnes

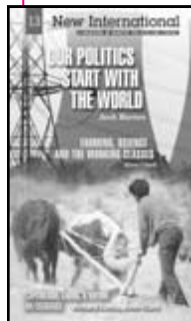
The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced, reproduced, and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, says Barnes, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap. \$14

### Also in NI no. 13

**Farming, Science, and the Working Classes** by Steve Clark

**Capitalism, Labor, and Nature: An Exchange**

Richard Levins, Steve Clark



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# ‘Vera Drake’ shows why right to abortion is powerful social gain

BY JOYCE FAIRCHILD

LONDON—*Vera Drake*, a film directed by Mike Leigh, is about a working-class woman who carries out abortions in post-World War II London, when doing so was a crime punishable by stiff prison terms. The year is 1950.

The film is a testament to the central place of the right to choose abortion in the fight for women’s emancipation. *Vera Drake* opens a window on the conditions women faced in the United Kingdom and elsewhere before the decriminalization of abortion. It highlights how the right to choose is a class question. In the absence of legal and accessible abortion, working-class women who seek to terminate a pregnancy face dangerous, often life-threatening choices.

In the film, middle-aged Vera works cleaning the houses of rich families. She is married to Stan, a motor mechanic who works in a small car repair shop with his brother.

Vera performs abortions for women who are mostly from the working class and denied access to safe treatment by medical professionals because the procedure is illegal and prohibitively expensive. Vera’s method is to inject the uterus with soapy water, explaining to her patient that a miscarriage will occur within a couple of days. The film contrasts this with the experience of the daughter of a rich family Vera cleans for, who is able to get a safe abortion at a private clinic.

Vera’s patients are referred to her by her longtime friend Lily, who also deals in postwar black-market goods. Lily is secretly exacting payment from the women for every abortion Vera performs, without ever telling Vera, who views her own actions as “helping women” and takes no money.

Following one of the abortions Vera performs, the young woman becomes seriously ill, is hospitalized, and the police are informed. Vera is arrested and tried under the Offences Against The Person Act of 1861. This law made it illegal to use drugs or instruments to cause an abortion in oneself or another woman. Found guilty, Vera is sentenced to two and a half years in prison.

## Abortion decriminalized in UK

Prior to 1967, abortions in the United Kingdom were a crime, punishable by up to life imprisonment for the doctor and the woman. Contraception was inadequate and unavailable for many women. Denied legal access to abortion, women were forced to turn to the backstreets. Thousands of women tried desperate measures to end their pregnancies. Purgatives such as a pint of Epsom salts; gin and ginger; turpentine; raw spirit; aloes; or sloes were used. Other treatments contained poisons like mercury.

“The horrors of backstreet abortions are beyond imagining and defy description,” noted a review of the film in the *Guardian*. “They were done without anesthetic, with obsolete or inadequate surgical instruments, with no sterilization, often with very poor light, on kitchen tables, by medically untrained people with no real knowledge of anatomy.”

In 1965, hospital records indicate 3,050 women were treated for post-abortion poisoning. Some 160 women were recorded as dying as a result of botched abortions between 1961 and 1963.

Following the legalization of abortion with the 1967 Abortion Act, the number of deaths as a result of abortions fell to four in the years 1985 to 1987.

The 1967 law was a historic breakthrough, making safe and legal abortion widely available under the National Health Service. It legalizes abortions if pregnancy poses a risk to a woman’s life or in cases of fetal abnormality, or a woman’s physical

or mental health, or that of her children, is put at greater risk by continuing the pregnancy. In practice, most women who request an abortion within the prescribed number of weeks of pregnancy may obtain one legally.

Changes to the 1967 Abortion Act were introduced in Parliament in 1990. Time limits were lowered from 28 weeks of pregnancy to 24 for most cases. In 1993, 89 percent of abortions in England and Wales were performed at 13 weeks or less. An estimated one in three women in the United Kingdom has an abortion in her lifetime.

In Ireland abortion remains a criminal offense. As a result, thousands of Irish women from the north and south travel to Britain each year for privately performed abortions, often late into the pregnancy.

Since 1967, members of Parliament have introduced bills numerous times attempting to restrict access to abortion. Each has been met by street protests and failed. The biggest demonstration, in October 1979, was supported by the Trades Union Congress and drew 80,000 people.

At the Bafta British film awards, Imelda Staunton, who plays Vera, won the prize for best actress, and Mike Leigh received the award for best director. Staunton also won the award for best actress at the Venice Film Festival, where *Vera Drake* was awarded best film honors. The film was nominated for an Oscar in the categories Actress in a Leading Role,



Above, Richard Shaw/Sun Advocate  
Vera Drake, left, the main character in Mike Leigh’s film of the same name, is led by a British police officer to prison after she was arrested for performing abortions illegally in Britain in 1950. Inset, march of 1,000 women’s rights supporters from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square in London in 1971. Their petition to British prime minister Edward Heath demanded free contraception and abortion on demand, 24-hour child-care centers, and equal education and job opportunities for women.

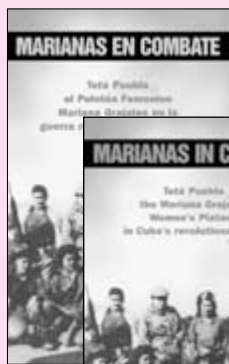


Directing, and Original Screenplay.

The fact that this film not only can be made today but can also win wide acclaim shows the profound change in social attitudes about women since the 1950s. It is

a tribute to the Veras of past decades who stood their ground in defense of a woman’s right to choose abortion as an elementary precondition for ending the second-class status that women face in class society.

## WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH FROM PATHFINDER

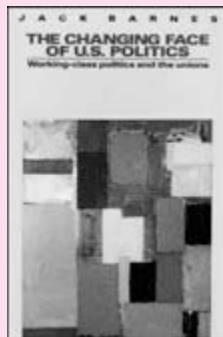


### Marianas in Combat

Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956–58

by Teté Puebla

Brigadier General Teté Puebla, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, joined the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1956, when she was fifteen years old. This is her story, from clandestine action in the cities to serving as an officer in the Rebel Army’s first all-women’s platoon. *In English and Spanish. \$14*

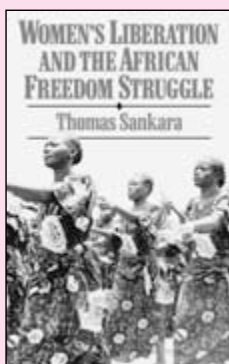


### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

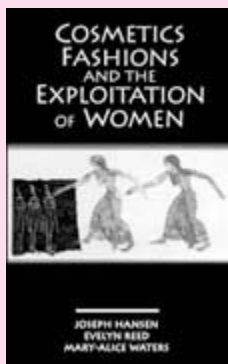
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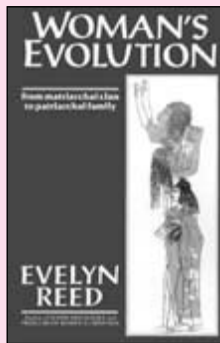
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# FBI assault on socialists, unions in World War II

Below is an excerpt from the article “Washington’s 50-year domestic contra operation” by Larry Seigle. The Spanish-language translation of it appears in a pamphlet titled *50 años de guerra encubierta; El FBI contra los derechos democráticos*. It is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for March. It addresses a vital question to the interests of workers and farmers throughout the world—the fight against attacks on democratic rights and political freedoms by the FBI, CIA, and other government agencies. The article is available in English in volume six of the Marxist magazine *New International*. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LARRY SEIGLE

In 1941 the Roosevelt administration, working in concert with the top International officials of the Teamsters, moved against the class-struggle leadership of the Minneapolis Teamsters. This leadership had refused to retreat from its position that labor must organize itself and set its priorities independent of the needs and prerogatives of the capitalist government and political parties. It continued to argue for the formation of a labor party based on the unions. It defended the colonial freedom struggle and championed the fight for the rights of oppressed nationalities in the United States. And it fought every move to sap the power of the labor movement by bringing unions under the control of government agencies....

In June 1941, FBI agents and U.S. marshals raided the branch offices of the Socialist Workers Party in St. Paul and



December 1943: Farrell Dobbs (center, left) and other leaders of Teamsters Local 544 and Socialist Workers Party convicted of “sedition,” on way to federal prison.

Minneapolis. They hauled away cartons of communist literature from the bookstores and libraries on the premises.

In Washington, D.C., Attorney General Biddle himself announced the plans for prosecution. “The principal Socialist Workers Party leaders against whom prosecution is being brought are also leaders of Local 544-CIO in Minneapolis,” he told the press. “The prosecution is brought under the criminal code of the United States against persons who have been engaged in criminal seditious activities, and who are leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and have gained control of a legitimate labor union to use it for illegitimate purposes.” Biddle’s harangues against editors of Black papers provide a pretty good idea of the broad scope the attorney general gave to the term “seditious activities.” From the standpoint of the government, any union activity dissenting from the drive toward entry into the war was illegitimate.

The government had three objectives in the crackdown on the Teamster local and the SWP.

First, it aimed to purge the labor movement of those who would not go along with imperialist war goals and militarization of the country and to intimidate into silence others, inside and outside the unions.

Second, the government wanted to erase the stronghold of union power and democracy represented by the Minneapolis Teamsters. The leadership of that union was

inspiring emulation of class-struggle methods throughout the Midwest and educating workers in the need for socially conscious labor action and political independence from the capitalist parties. Although these leaders represented a minority point of view in the labor movement, that could change. The fight they were waging could become a rallying point to draw together significant forces in the unions, among the unemployed and unorganized, among Blacks, and among working farmers.

Third, the government sought to push the SWP in the direction of going underground. It wanted to force the party to give up some of its public activities and to concede that it must function at least in part illegally. The rulers’ goal was to restrict the space for working-class politics.

The relationship of class forces imposed by the labor movement’s retreat allowed the capitalist government a good measure of success in its first and second objectives. But it totally failed in driving the SWP underground. One of the party’s first responses to the indictments was to nominate James P. Cannon, its national secretary and one of those facing trial, for mayor of New York City. The SWP launched a vigorous petition campaign to win Cannon a spot on the ballot. The party also initiated a nationwide defense effort that continued until the last of the defendants was released from prison. Throughout this fight, the SWP forcefully asserted its constitutional right to carry out

political activity. It published and distributed Marxist literature. It participated in and helped to advance the activities of the unions, the NAACP, and other organizations. SWP members explained communist ideas to fellow GIs, fought together with them against race discrimination in the armed forces and other abuses of citizen-soldiers, and took advantage of every opportunity to present the views of the party.

A central issue in the Minneapolis trial was the SWP’s opposition to any policy of subordinating the interests of unionists, Blacks, GIs, farmers, or other working people to the profits and power of the exploiters, who called for “national unity” in wartime to silence opposition to their policies. In time of war, the SWP explained, the struggle for the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state and the fight for trade union democracy become even more critical.

SWP leaders turned the courtroom into a platform from which to explain the party’s views on the war. They explained that the Second World War was really three wars in one.

First, it was a war to defend the Soviet Union, the first—and at that time the only—workers’ state, against imperialist efforts spearheaded by Germany’s rulers to overturn it and restore capitalist rule. In this conflict the workers’ movement throughout the world stood with the Soviet workers’ state.

Second, it was a war for national liberation, especially in Asia. The Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, and other colonial peoples were waging massive struggles against imperialist occupation and domination, taking advantage of the conflict between the world imperialist powers to push for their own freedom. In this war all of progressive humanity stood with the colonial peoples against their imperialist overlords.

Third, it was a war among imperialist rivals for domination of the world. In this conflict, the capitalist rulers of the United States and those of its allies sought to enlist the political support of working people by presenting their goals as the defeat of fascism and defense of democracy. But, as SWP leader James P. Cannon explained from the witness stand, U.S. working people could combat fascism only by strengthening their own organizations not by subordinating their struggle to support for the imperialist government, in wartime or not.

March

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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**Mr. Big Mouth**—Republican senator John McCain met with Hamid Karzai, president of Af-



**Harry Ring**

ghanistan, and afterward declared that the U.S. needs a permanent military base there to protect its “vital national interests.” Karzai ducked the issue and a Pentagon spokesperson tagged McCain’s statement as “premature to even consider something like that.”

**A piece of ‘owner society’**—“The number of employed workers 75 and over grew from 669,000 in 1994 to just under 1 million last year, according to Labor Dept. statistics. Those numbers will increase as the large baby boom generation ages.”—*Los Angeles Times*.

**The sock-it-to-‘em society**—About half of U.S. bankruptcies are by individuals and families afflicted by illness and clobbered by medical bills. According to a Harvard study, three-quarters of those who went belly-up had health insurance—at least at the start.

**How civilized can they get?**—The Pentagon said it has issued a rule barring the use of military

dogs in “abusing” prisoners. The asserted no-no on the use of dogs stemmed from trying to cope with bitter charges by more than 300 Iraqi and Afghan prisoners.

**Them GIs, always griping**—“The Army said it has identified 129 wounded soldiers who mistakenly received bills for expenses upon returning home from combat.” An army spokesman said “the problems were discovered by an audit team after several [several?] complaints. One involved a soldier from New York who lost an arm in Iraq and was told he owed \$1,800. He had expected a check for \$4,500.”—*USA Today*.

**Color-blind**—“London—In

1972 the Institute of Race Relations asked the MoD [Ministry of Defence] how many coloured servicemen there were. The Navy and the RAF [Royal Air Force] said they took no notice of colour. The Army said that it had no statistics, but an internal memo showed that doctors used facial features to dub recruits North European, Mediterranean, Asiatic, African or Negroid, or Other.”—*The Times*, London.

**Social security**—The House of Commons of the UK parliament wants to know why the Prince of Wales is exempt from business taxes. Like his 140,000-acre Duchy of Cornwall. The take is about \$20 million a year. Which

clarifies a snap we heard on TV. Asked if she would like to be known as the Princess of Wales, his bride-to-be said no, she would prefer to be known as the Duchess of Cornwall.

**Sort of a mix-up?**—Quietly unannounced, General Motors has sliced prices on SUVs and other models. Price cuts range up to \$2,000. “This is part of an effort to remain competitive,” a GM spokeswoman said.

**Meanwhile**—Toyota announced plans to build two new assembly plants in North America over the next five years. The Japanese cars and trucks have broken sales records nine years in a row.

## France: Workers protest gov’t move to lengthen workweek

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

The French lower house of parliament voted February 9 to strike another blow at the 35-hour workweek, which had been won through massive union protests in the late 1990s. The measure will be voted on in the upper house in early March.

French prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin campaigned for the measure under the slogan “earn more by working more.”

“In allowing citizens to determine their working time, we are giving those people an extra freedom,” said Herve Noveilli, a member of parliament from the governing Union for a Popular Movement party, and co-author of the law. Union leaders say the reform would in fact force workers to work more hours while cutting their benefits. Over the last year bosses in France as well as Germany have used the threat of layoffs to convince workers to accept contracts with longer workweeks without a raise in pay.

The revisions to the 35-hour law would free up private companies to arrange their own overtime deals with workers, up to the 48-hour workweek limit set by the European Union. Employees would also be “encouraged” to trade in to the company the holiday time earned for working extra hours in exchange for cash payments, job training, or early retirement. The standard workweek would remain at 35 hours for public sector workers.

“This will mean the end of the shortened working time. It means management will decide the working time, not the employees,” Dominique Barbet, chief economist at the BNP Paribas bank, told the BBC.

The vote in the lower house of parliament was followed by a series of marches and rallies February 5 organized by four of France’s main trade union federations. Between 300,000 and 500,000 people participated in these demonstrations in several cities across the country, Bloomberg News reported.

The 35-hour workweek was won in 1998 as a concession from the Socialist Party government of Lionel Jospin after mobilizations of tens of thousands of working people demanding government relief and jobs. The unemployment rate at the time had hit a record high of 12.4 percent. Several weeks of protests occurred throughout France, and workers occupied state unem-

ployment offices, schools, and financial institutions. Large demonstrations were organized by the major unions and in early December of that year a weeklong strike by maritime workers at the Société de Navigation Corse-Méditerranée in Marseille shut down the state-owned passenger and freight services.

The central demands of the demonstrators were a raise in employment benefits and the minimum wage, an immediate cash payment to ease the conditions of the unemployed, and a shortened workweek to increase jobs. Jospin sent riot cops to eject workers from the government buildings they were occupying. In the end, the Jospin government agreed to raise unemployment benefits by 10 percent and enact a 35-hour work week.

The shortened workweek was not implemented until two years later, and then watered down soon afterward. In 2003, the maximum number of overtime hours employees could work per year was raised from 130 to 180. In December of last year, Raffarin raised the limit again to 220 hours per worker per year.

France has the third-largest economy in Europe, and second largest in the euro zone countries. It currently has an unemployment rate of 9.9 percent, according to Bloomberg. Prime Minister Raffarin and other representatives of the French capitalist class have blamed the 35-hour week for France’s increasing unemployment and a lack of “work ethic.”

Facing increased inter-imperialist competition for markets and resources, the French rulers are demanding employees work longer hours and are imposing speed-up on the job. Emphasizing an nationalist economic framework, Raffarin said the 35-hour week was why “French” jobs and industries had relocated overseas. France’s finance minister said the shortened workweek cost “the country” 10 billion euros.

The bosses’ proposed solution to their economic crisis includes tax breaks to the wealthy to “create jobs.” According to a February 18 Associated Press dispatch, French labor minister Jean-Louis Borloo “unveiled a plan to create up to 500,000 new jobs in the service sector with tax breaks designed to encourage households to employ care workers and domestic staff.”



AFP/Boris Horvat

**Workers march in Marseille, France, February 5 to protest government plans to lengthen the workweek. Similar marches took place in more than 100 cities.**

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



**March 14, 1980**

Seven months after the Andrew Young affair, the Carter administration is once again embroiled in an embarrassing flap over its Mideast policy.

On March 1, U.N. Ambassador Donald McHenry voted with all the other United Nations Security Council members for a resolution that “strongly deplores” Israel’s settlement policy in the occupied West Bank—Arab territories captured by the Zionists in the 1967 war.

Three days later, the White House said the vote had been an error, the result of a “failure in communications” between Washington and McHenry’s office in New York. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance is now taking the blame. But almost no one believes the White House account.

What is the underlying cause of this gaffe?

To portray it as personal bumbling or indecisiveness on Carter’s part misses the point. Underlying the administration’s floundering Mideast policy is the overall weakening of U.S. imperialism in the region since the Iranian revolution....

Washington must...try to defuse the explosive potential of the Arab revolution. The imperialists hope to convince the Palestinian and Arab masses that gains can be made in alliance with Washington.

Hence the need for Washington to take some distance from the most extreme policies of the Begin government of Israel.

But whenever the issue is pressed, Washington will side with its basic ally, Israel.



**March 14, 1955**

CHICAGO—The branch of the Socialist Workers Party here wired Illinois Governor Stratton on Feb. 28 to take a strong stand to prevent the passage of the police state legislation known as the Broyles Bills.

The Broyles Bills do three things: (1) Declares “subversive” acts unlawful. (2) Declares membership in “subversive” organizations unlawful. (3) Permits the discharge of state and local employees who are “subversive persons.”

Previous attempts by Senator Broyles to pass such legislation were met with defeat due primarily to organized protest by labor unions, campus organizations, civic and fraternal groups. The present bills show every indication of being approved by the state legislature and by Governor Stratton.

Heralded as “watered down” versions, close examination of the bills reveals that they are more dangerous than ever before.

For example, any violation of Section 2 of S.B. No. 59 is liable to penalties up to \$20,000, and any violator of Section 3 of the bill is liable to imprisonment for five years. These sections make it unlawful to knowingly be a member of a “subversive organization or a foreign subversive organization.”

Section 6 forbids public employees from being members of “any subversive organization or foreign subversive organization included in the following lists of organizations which are designated by the Attorney General of the United States as subversive organizations.”

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# Using political space opening in Mideast

The mass street protests in Lebanon that turned out of office an unpopular government; the rising confidence among the Kurds in northern Iraq in their capacity to win independence; the weakening of the stranglehold of the Mubarak regime in Egypt over working people there—these are some of the unintended consequences of the U.S.-led imperialist offensive in the region.

In Lebanon workers and farmers have never forgotten the blows dealt to their struggles by the treacherous regime in Damascus. They see an opportunity in the weakening of the Syrian regime to get the boot of the Syrian rulers off their necks—and they are seizing it.

In northern Iraq the Kurds are taking the opening provided by the downfall of the murderous Hussein government to press for greater autonomy. This is sending shudders through the capitalist regimes in neighboring Syria, Turkey, and Iran who see the Kurdish flag flying for the first time at outposts across the border from their own oppressed Kurdish populations.

The Egyptian regime is feeling the consequences too. Washington's close ally Hosni Mubarak has ruled with an iron fist since the assassination of his predecessor Anwar Sadat in 1981. But this too is beginning to crack under the weight of imperialism's drive in the region carried out under the banner of "liberty and democracy."

While the war and aggressive course of world imperialism has resulted in immediate gains for Washington, its actions have also opened space in Iraq and throughout the region for the working class and peasants to organize and fight to advance their interests. And where this political space is opening working people are stepping in and beginning to look for ways to use it.

From the space to advance the freedom struggles of oppressed nationalities, to openings to advance the struggle for women's emancipation, to greater possibilities to push forward the fight for the separation of religious institutions from politics and the state—throughout the Middle East, South Asia, North Africa, and beyond—the uncontrollable social repercussions of imperialism's aggression will continue to unfold. That is the future the imperialists can do nothing to avoid.

There are surely countless more manifestations of this

today, but these three examples serve well to point out the responsibility revolutionary-minded workers, farmers, and youth have today to use the political space wherever it has opened—and regardless of how it has been opened—to circulate propaganda that popularizes and explains proletarian politics, and shows the working-class line of march toward power.

In spite of the deep hatred among workers and farmers in Iraq for the imperialist occupiers, there is no organization today leading a revolutionary national liberation struggle in Iraq. The hated Baathist forces that are at the head of the armed campaign in Iraq are incapable of doing this. The bombings directed at the majority Shiite population during the Ashura religious holiday and the massive blast February 28 in Baghdad that left 135 Iraqis dead highlight the fact that the interests of these groups are antithetical to those of the majority in Iraq.

Washington is using the brittle anti-working class character of governments like the Baath Party regime of Bashar Assad in Syria to continue to make advances along its course in the Middle East. The imperialist squeeze on Damascus is having a visible effect. Washington is getting results when it puts the screws on the Syrian government to cooperate in cracking down on Iraqi Baathist forces. The de-facto acceptance by the Assad regime of U.S. military operations inside Syrian territory along the Iraqi border is one more example of this.

Whatever the progress Washington and its imperialist rivals make against these regimes, however, nothing instigated in the citadels of finance capital can prepare the imperialists for the moment when the unintended consequences of their offensive shifts the relationship of forces to the favor of the oppressed and exploited. Imperialism cannot forestall indefinitely the momentous class battles that the decaying world system of capitalism will produce. For the new generations of workers and farmers coming into a world of growing capitalist disorder, the space is expanding to advance the fight to build an instrument capable of ending this brutal system once and for all—a revolutionary party of workers and farmers. This is the task facing those who are seeking to get both imperialism and the brutal bourgeois governments that serve it off the backs of humanity.

## Lebanese government resigns amid protests

Continued from Page 2

vote for a new parliament in the spring include "an international observer presence prior to and during the elections."

Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, a close ally of Washington, has also felt the pressure to fall in line with the U.S. rulers' aggressive drive in the region, which is carried out in the name of bringing "liberty and democracy" to the Middle East. On February 26 Mubarak asked the Egyptian parliament to change the constitution to allow some space for contending candidates in presidential elections. He has ruled under a state of emergency since his predecessor, Anwar Sadat, was killed in 1981.

### Retreat by Damascus

The Syrian government turned over to Baghdad 30 officials of the Iraqi Baathist party February 27, including Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Sabawi Ibrahim Hassan, Iraqi officials reported.

Hassan had directed the political spy apparatus under the Hussein regime. Since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq two years ago, he had reportedly been involved in organizing and funding the Baathist-based forces that have carried out bombings and other attacks on civilians and U.S. and Iraqi forces. Operating out of the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, Hassan

and the other 29 were arrested in Hasakah, 30 miles from the Iraqi border, according to the Associated Press.

In an attempt to undercut demands for full withdrawal of its forces, Damascus announced February 24 a "redeployment" of its soldiers in Lebanon to the Bekaa Valley along Lebanon's eastern border with Syria. "The important withdrawals that have been carried out so far and will be carried out later will be done in agreement with Lebanon against the backdrop of the Taif Agreement and the mechanisms it entails," said Syrian deputy foreign minister Waleed Al-Mualem, according to Islam Online.

The 1989 Taif Agreement between the Lebanese and Syrian governments called for the movement of Syrian troops back to the border of the two countries, followed by discussions on the duration of the presence of Syrian forces. They are currently centered in the mountains above Beirut, along the eastern border of Lebanon, and around the northern town of Tripoli.

The White House responded to the Syrian government's announcement of troop redeployments by repeating its demand for immediate withdrawal. "Our view on redeployment is that [UN] Resolution 1559 calls in clear and unequivocal terms for all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon," said State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher at a February 25 press briefing. "That needs to happen immediately, and we're looking for action, not just statements."

## Tel Aviv presses plan for Gaza withdrawal

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a 17-5 vote on February 20, the Israeli cabinet approved Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to begin withdrawing about 8,200 settlers and thousands of Israeli soldiers from the Gaza Strip.

The first stage of this evacuation from the 21 settlements there has been set for July 20. The plan also calls for withdrawing some 500 settlers and soldiers from four small settlements in the northernmost areas of the West Bank.

The cabinet decision came a week after the Israeli Knesset, or parliament, approved the withdrawal proposal. The law calls for the evacuation process, which is planned to occur in four stages, to be completed by the end of the year. However, "before each stage begins, the cabinet must decide whether to approve it, based on existing circumstances," the *Washington Post* reported.

This pullout is "a very, very difficult move," commented Sharon, "but it is vital for the future of the State of Israel."

The move by Tel Aviv is aimed at securing the long-term viability of the Israeli state and strengthening its grip over the largest settlements on the West Bank.

In another vote, the Israeli cabinet approved by a 20-to-1 margin a decision to modify the route of the wall being constructed through the West Bank. The original route of this 400-mile, steel-and-concrete barrier, one-third of which has already been constructed, would have annexed to Israel one-sixth of the West Bank. The revised route, according to

Israeli officials, reduces this to 7 percent of West Bank land annexed by Israel.

However, this land includes most of the 230,000 settlers currently residing in the West Bank, where 2.2 million Palestinians reside. The largest settlement, Maleh Adumim, just east of Jerusalem, and a massive group of settlements south of Jerusalem called Gush Etzion would be on the Israeli side.

The wall will also firm up Israeli control over the areas inhabited by more than 200,000 Israelis who live in east Jerusalem, which Tel Aviv annexed after the 1967 war. Last year the Israeli government invoked the Absentee Property Law to claim thousands of acres of land in Jerusalem whose owners are now prevented from farming by the construction of the "security fence."

In mid-February, Israel's parliament also approved a \$1 billion financial package to compensate settlers being evacuated from Gaza. Some, depending on the size of the land they've been occupying and the length of their stay in the settlements, will be given hundreds of thousands of dollars to move.

"Why should these people be paid to leave when they have come to land that does not belong to them, occupied land?" commented Nasser Abu Diak to a *New York Times* reporter. "They are considered as refugees while the original refugees are forgotten." Diak is a 37-year-old Palestinian maintenance worker whose family was forced to flee their home in Jaffa in 1948.

## Venezuela gov't expropriates half of British firm's cattle ranch



Hundreds of peasants are occupying part of "El Charcote" ranch in their fight for land.

BY SAM MANUEL

Landless peasants in Venezuela won a big victory when the government announced it will expropriate about half the land on a cattle farm owned by a large British company. The decision follows a government inspection of the El Charcote farm to decide whether any of the land had been obtained illegally, what sections were idle, and how much should be turned over to landless peasants who have occupied part of the farmlands for four years, cultivating vegetables and other crops.

The government will expropriate nearly 2,000 acres, said Alexis Ortiz, an official in the central state of Cojedes where the farm is located. According to the February 24 *Business Week*, Ortiz said the government's inspection showed that 12,350 acres of the farm's land had been claimed illegally, and actually belongs to the state. Ortiz explained the expropriated land would be given to poor farmers.

Ortiz also said that the owners of the farm would be charged for having used state lands and that the amount could be deducted from the compensation the government would normally pay for expropriated land. (No details were given regarding the remaining 10,000 acres found to be illegally obtained or idle.)

The El Charcote farm is run by Agroflora, a subsidiary of the Vestey Group, owned by British food tycoon Sam Vestey. It normally produces 3.3 million tons of beef annually but now produces about a third of that. Agroflora operates 13 farms in Venezuela, and Vestey also owns farms in Argentina and Brazil, and an export shipping line. Vestey's wealth is estimated at \$1.4 billion.

On January 8 some 200 Venezuelan troops and police accompanied government inspectors onto the farm to conduct a survey. When landless peasants began to occupy the farm four years ago, El Charcote's managers responded by hiring thugs to shoot and kill several peasants. About 80 peasants have been killed by ranch owners throughout Venezuela in the last six years, according to the *New York Times*.

Peasants at El Charcote responded to the rancher's effort to drive them off the land by organizing a protest that took over the offices of the National Land Institute (INTi). Following a meeting by a delegation of the peasants with Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez they have been allowed to remain on the land. Some of the peasants are plowing fields with tractors bought with government credit.

"I will not abandon this land," said Félix Rodríguez, 41, as other peasants nodded in agreement during an interview with the *Times*. Peasant José Pimentel called the British company "invaders," adding, "They are on land that is not theirs."

According to INTi about 115,000 landless peasant families obtained titles to more than 9 million acres of land between the enactment of land reform legislation in the fall of 2001 and the end of 2004. On January 10 the Venezuelan government announced a special decree aimed at accelerating land distribution. More than 10,000 peasants went to Caracas, the country's capital, to hear the announcement by Chávez, according to the BBC.

In February the Venezuelan government said it had identified more than 500 idle farms and is reviewing the status of another 40,000.

A 1998 census found that 60 percent of Venezuelan farmland was owned by less than 1 percent of the population. It also said 90 percent of farmland given to landless peasants under a 1960 agrarian reform had since been returned to large landowners.



# Deportation fight

Continued from front page

and instead of resolving his situation, the immigration cops used the new legislation to begin deportation proceedings against him.

Mory has been battling the immigration cops for many years. This is the second time the immigration service has tried to deport him. In 1999, after spending a year in jail, he beat back the immigration cops’ first attempt when an immigration judge dropped the deportation proceedings.

“They came to my house looking for my husband, asking me where he works saying they were looking for him to return some papers he had lost,” Ruth told the *West New York Reporter*. Moisés was arrested on the spot after she told them where he worked. “They lied to me and they arrested him,” she said.

The government did not let up in their effort to throw him out of the country. In December of 2003 the government appealed the judge’s decision to drop the proceedings, and, without Mory even being informed by his attorney, a judge issued an order for him to leave the country within 90 days, or file another appeal. But he was never told that this proceeding took place, he said.

### Co-workers respond to appeal

Mory’s co-workers and others who defend his right to live and work in this country have sent letters to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

In one such letter, officers of Local

13742, and 99 of his co-workers at Foamex International Inc. who signed the letter, refuted the government’s charge that Mory is “inadmissible” to the United States because he is not of “good moral character.” Mory worked for 10 years as a machine operator at the factory, which produces polyurethane foam.

“We the undersigned appeal for the release of our current president, Mr. Moises Mory,” read the letter. “We have only known him as a fine worker respected in the company and a friend to all who needed his help. As a former shop steward he spoke up for his fellow working man when he felt a wrong was committed. This respect enabled him to win the presidency [of the USWA local] by a landslide.... Thank you for giving us the opportunity to show our concern for our fellow member, and hope this process will have a favorable outcome and allow us the return of our co-worker and president, so he may resume his role on our behalf.”

Mory has continued fighting alongside others in the prison for better conditions and for their right to due process.

Many of the inmates, like himself, are being held without bail or a hearing even after providing ample proof that they do not represent a flight risk. Provisions of the 1996 immigration law allow the federal government to imprison immigrant workers with past convictions even for minor offenses indefinitely without bail while the government seeks to deport them. Under pressure of indefinite imprisonment many of them agree to sign an agreement for “voluntary departure” to their country of origin.

“Immigration does this to break us psychologically and emotionally,” Mory said.

He shares a cell with 30 other inmates who come from all over the world, he said. They remain locked-up 24 hours a day with the exception of a few times a week when they are allowed out in the yard. There is only one shower, and the unsanitary conditions inside the cell has cause skin rashes and other problems. “It took four months for them to give me a cream to fight an infection,” he said. He said that every time they go see the doctor or get medicines, the prison authorities subtract money from the inmate’s personal account.

Mory told the *Militant* how the inmates organize to assist each other in preparing forms and writing letters appealing for support for their cases. In most cases, their main demand is their right to a fair hearing where they can present their case.

## ‘La migra’ steps up arrests and deportations



### BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A record number 157,281 undocumented workers were deported from the United States in fiscal year 2004, which ended September 30, according to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a division of the Department of Homeland Security.

According to government figures, ICE removed 82,802 individuals it calls “criminal aliens,” who have some sort of criminal conviction on their record while in the United States, an increase of 6.6 percent over fiscal year 2003. Deportations of other workers rose by more than 10 percent, to 74,479.

About 3 million young U.S. citizens have at least one parent in the United States without proper immigration documents, reports a February 17 *New York Times* article titled “Caught between Parents and the Law.” The stepped up deportation sweeps result in many of these children either being forced to leave the country, or stay behind without one of their parents.

The number of programs under which immigration cops now operate have expanded over the past couple of years. A National Fugitive Operations

Program (NFOP), also known as the Absconder Initiative, was launched in February 2002 under ICE’s Office of Detention and Removal.

NFOP takes aim at a list of nearly 400,000 individuals for whom unenforced deportation and removal orders have been issued. In most cases those being targeted are not even aware that such orders have been issued, according to the immigrant rights group Families for Freedom. Once detained they can be deported immediately without a hearing before an immigration judge. Currently NFOP operates 18 teams nationwide, with plans to expand to 30 teams.

ICE spokesman Manny Van Pelt in an interview with the *Times* described how these immigration cops conduct operations. “When agents plan a raid on the last known address,” the *Times* article states, “efficiency dictates that they come prepared to apprehend others with outstanding deportation orders who live nearby.” At their disposal is information from eight databases encompassing about 26 billion electronic records from a support center in Williston, Vermont.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**Defend the Cuban Five against Washington’s Frame-up!** Video showing of “Mission against Terror,” a documentary on the Cuban Five. Speaker: Seth Dellinger. Sat., March 12, 7:30 p.m. 4229 S. Central Ave. 323-233-9372.

## COLORADO

### Craig

**Assault on Civil Liberties: The Cases of Lynne Stewart and Ward Churchill** Speaker: representative of Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 11, 7:30 p.m. 11 West Victory Way, Suite 205, 970-824-6380.

## NEW JERSEY

### Newark

**The Fight for Women’s Rights Today** Fri., March 11, 8 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd. fl. (973) 481-0077

## NEW YORK

### Manhattan

**Protest the conviction of Lynne Stewart** Speaker: Lynne Stewart, attorney convicted on “terrorism” charges. Fri., March 11, 8:00 p.m. Dinner at 7:00. Donation: \$5 dinner; \$5 forum. 307 W. 36th St., 10th fl., north elevators, (212) 629-6649.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Pittsburgh

**The Bush Cross-Country Campaign for Social Security “Reform” and the Bipartisan Assault on Workers’ Social Wage** Speaker: Tony Lane, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248. Fri., March 11, 7:30 p.m. 5907 Penn Ave., Room 225, 412-365-1090.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**Emancipation, Not Biology, is Women’s Destiny: Behind the Latest Claims that the Female Brain Is Inferior** Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party, Fri., March 11, 7:30 p.m., Donation: \$5 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A, (713) 869-6550

## Moisés Mory writes from the Monmouth County Jail in New Jersey

**The following are excerpts from two letters from Moisés Mory, who is imprisoned in Freehold, New Jersey, and is fighting government efforts to deport him (see article on front page). They were sent to distributors of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in New Jersey.**

Thanks very much for sending me *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant*. As always they’re very interesting and precise in their reporting. Here I loan them to my compañeros so they can read and illustrate them. The majority agree with all the articles, but as always there are some “Bushites.” There are two of these among the 66 of us in this dormitory, so there are always polemics going on about Latin American and world politics, and there never fails to be an argument about the “Cuban revolutionary system” and the “Bolivarian system of Chavez.” Also on the conflict in Iraq. I’ll tell you that in this Freehold jail, on my radio I’m able to get Cuban stations such as Radio Rebelde, Radio Progreso, Radio Reloj, which I get beginning at 10:00 p.m. and lasting until 5:00 a.m. These stations are on AM frequencies—Radio Rebelde on 600, Radio Progreso on 750, and Radio Reloj on 800. Here we teach each other, making a long antenna or cable, with an iman (magnet) at the end, and putting it out the window made of metal. And we’re able to get these stations. If you want, try to see if you can get them in Newark.

I hope the miners in Utah have consolidated their new union, with the elec-

tion of their leadership, and that support continues coming for the freedom for the five Cuban revolutionaries.

Dec. 17, 2004

My health is almost OK, since they’re now giving me the medicines I need, and they’ve returned the money they had been subtracting for seeing the doctor and giving me the medicines. The pressure we brought to bear was so great, threatening them with lawsuits, that it had an effect, and they’ve returned everyone’s money except for one person, who already sent them another complaint. We’ll have to wait until next Thursday to see our balances and whether they’ve returned the money. If not, we’ll have to tell them again that we’re going to file complaints.

I hope your New Years went well. It always makes me recall the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. There are 9 Cubans with me here, and we’re always talking politics. I’m always helping them write letters, and anything else within my capabilities. I’m resending you the earlier letter; I don’t know why they returned it. There are also Haitian comrades with me, who were very interested in the article by Eric Simpson, and they made a few copies of it, because they need support in their fight for political asylum. The Utah miners struggle has been tremendous; finally they have a union to fight for them. Also the gigantic help by all the comrades to support the *Militant’s* struggle to confront the Kingstons. The call for financial support surpassed what was hoped for, and much

more is needed.

I’d like you to do me a big favor. If possible, could you send me a copy of *Granma* from Cuba, or the international edition, where it talks of the 46th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. I know that you and the comrades can get it into my hands, and I have many comrades here that would be happy to see it. Thanks in advance for the effort in keeping us informed about our socialist reality.

Jan. 8, 2005

## Donate to the Prisoners Fund

**The ‘Militant’ receives many requests from readers behind bars. The Prisoners Fund makes it possible to send them subscriptions at a reduced rate. A prisoner can buy a six-month subscription for \$6 and a one-year subscription for \$12.**

**The Spanish-language monthly magazine ‘Perspectiva Mundial’ offers prisoners a six-month subscription for \$3 and a one-year subscription for \$6.**

**To help cover the cost of these special offers, please send a check or money order, earmarked “Prisoners Fund,” to the Militant, 306 W. 37 St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.**



# Australia gov't to send more troops to Iraq

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Prime Minister John Howard announced February 22 that an additional 450 troops will be sent to Iraq, more than doubling the number of Australian ground forces there.

This is the first expansion of imperialist troops in Iraq since the January 30 elections. Howard said that Iraq was at a “tilting point following its landmark elections” and the Australian troops were “needed to help rebuild the country.”

The new force will be sent to al-Muthanna in the south of Iraq, where a contingent of noncombat troops from Japan is working on engineering projects. The Australian troops will replace the Dutch force, which is being withdrawn in March, that is currently providing security for the Japanese engineers. The U.S. and British military have been pressing the Australian government for some time to lift its troop commitments in Iraq. In the week prior to the decision to send troops, Howard received requests from both Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi and British prime minister Anthony Blair.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted Howard as saying that he feared that the Japanese troops would leave Iraq if Australians were not sent to protect them, causing the international coalition to crumble.

Howard described Japan's continued presence in Iraq as vital. “Working alongside and in partnership with a close regional ally and partner such as Japan is very important from Australia's point of view,” he said.

Japan has some 850 military engi-



Marwan Naamani/AFP/Getty Images

**Australian and U.S. troops search Iraqis in Baghdad January 19 after a car bomb exploded near the Australian embassy. On February 22 the Australian government announced it was sending an additional 450 soldiers for the occupation of Iraq.**

neers in al-Muthanna. This deployment is another step by Tokyo in extending the use of its military around the world, with the encouragement of Washington and Canberra.

The day after Howard's announcement *The Australian* editorialized, “We will be encouraging Japan's new assertiveness in foreign and security policy.” A *Herald*

columnist said that Howard's decision showed “Australian support for Japan putting ‘boots on the ground’ around the world.”

The *Herald* reported that a spokesperson for Koizumi had described the troop commitment as further evidence of the “friendly relationship” between the two countries. Talks between the Japanese and

Australian governments open this month on a free trade agreement.

A 10-member army reconnaissance team will leave Darwin for Iraq within 10 days to prepare for Australia's new deployment of troops. The new force, the majority of which will be sent in 10 weeks time, will also be involved in further training of Iraqi security forces.

Forty light armored vehicles, known as ASLAVs, will be sent to Iraq in support of the new task force, which will be deployed initially for a year. The *Herald* reported that defense analysts were concerned that the military will be hard pressed to complete the refit of its fleet of light armored vehicles for Iraq in time.

“Our army largely lacks the equipment types, numbers and logistic capacity to sustain such a commitment in medium to high intensity warfare,” Neil James, executive director of the Australia Defence Association in Canberra commented on February 23 in an article in *The Australian*. “These deficiencies reinforce the urgency of the current initiative to modernise and harden the army after decades of comparative neglect.”

These comments reflect the need of the imperialist rulers of Australia to rapidly transform their armed forces in preparation for the sort of wars they are fighting and know they need to fight under the banner of “antiterrorism.”

Currently there are about 900 Australian army, navy, and air force personnel in and around Iraq, but only about 160 combat troops on the ground. Howard said that the increased commitment will mean additional annual spending of between A\$250 million and \$300 (A\$1 = US\$0.78) million from the budget. He has not ruled out sending further troops.

In the run-up to the Australian federal elections last year Howard promised not to substantially increase troop numbers in Iraq. In an interview with ABC radio February 22 Howard admitted that the government had changed its position. “But in the end,” he said, “I've got to take decisions that I believe are right in the interests of this country and broader Western interests in the Middle East.”

## Colorado Wal-Mart workers lose union vote

BY DANIELLE LONDON

CRAIG, Colorado—Workers at a Wal-Mart Tire and Lube Express in Loveland, Colorado, voted against union representation in a February 25 election.

In November, 9 of the 17 workers in the store's tire department signed cards calling for an election in which they could vote for representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). Since then two workers in the department left to attend college and a third was fired, Joshua Noble, one of the tire department workers who led the union-organizing effort, told the *Denver Post*. He said as many as six new workers were brought in after being screened by the company to ensure they were opposed to the union. The vote for union representation lost by a vote of 17-1.

UFCW representative Dave Minshall told the Reuters news agency that the union would file several charges with the National Labor Relations Board. Labor board officials had overseen the balloting. Minshall said Wal-Mart interfered with the voting, barred the union from sending its own representative to observe the vote, and added employees to the bargaining unit to dilute the strength of union supporters.

Noble, 21, told the *Post* he and a few other workers who favor unionization had been making calls to undecided workers leading up to the vote. “In other departments, there are a few workers that are behind us, but there are a lot of workers who tell us that we're troublemakers,” he said. Noble contacted the UFCW, he said, because he believes Wal-Mart should improve wages and benefits and give workers more adequate breaks.

Two days before the vote, the union held a rally in support of the organizing effort in front of the Loveland Wal-Mart that reportedly drew close to 200 people. Wal-Mart is the largest private sector employer in the world, with 1.4 million workers. The UFCW has been trying to organize workers at the retailer for more than a decade.

Wal-Mart has blocked unionizing efforts through firings of union supporters

and threats to take away benefits if workers did join a union. A vote for union representation on February 11 lost by a vote of 17-0 at Wal-Mart's Tire and Lube Express in New Castle, Pennsylvania. The bosses recently announced they would shut down a store in Jonquiere, Quebec, where work-

ers had voted to join the UFCW. In 2000, after meat cutters at a Wal-Mart store in Jacksonville, Texas, won UFCW representation, the company retaliated by eliminating their job category companywide and switching to selling only pre-packaged meat in its stores.

## New Jersey utility workers reject company offer

BY SARA LOBMAN

MORRISTOWN, New Jersey—Striking workers at Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L), New Jersey's second-largest utility company, overwhelmingly rejected a company contract offer on February 26. The 1,300 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) have been on strike since December 7. Only 26 workers have crossed the picket line. The union negotiating committee had recommended the offer be rejected.

“The company's proposal is worse than their original offer before the strike,” said Angel Perez, a collector who has worked for JCP&L for 12 years. Perez was one of nine workers on the picket line here in Morristown the day after the vote. The 3 percent pay raise they offered for each of the next three years does not even offset the steep increases in what workers will have to pay for medical under the proposed pact, he said.

Jeff Ecklof, vice president of IBEW Local 1298, one of the five locals on strike, said that the company is trying to gut work rules that require crews of two or three workers on certain dangerous jobs. Workers refer to the proposed, weaker rules as “widow-makers,” he said.

Workers also object to company demands that workers be “on call” outside of their regular work hours. Workers would not get paid for this time unless they were called in, but would be subject to disciplinary action if they were unreachable or unavailable. The company had already tried to impose this system in the months leading up to the strike. According to



Militant/Sara Lobman

**Strikers picket February 27 at Jersey Central Power & Light in Morristown, New Jersey. The 1,300 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers walked out six weeks earlier, and overwhelmingly rejected a company offer February 26.**

workers on the Morristown picket line, some 200 workers were suspended for “failure to cooperate.”

“The real problem is they don't have enough workers,” Perez said. Ecklof added, “Ten years ago we had 3,000 workers, now we're down to 1,300.”

John Jones, a service worker with 26 years at the company, pointed to a row of

shiny-clean service trucks in the company parking lot. “They were so sure we'd approve their offer, they got the trucks all ready for work on Monday,” he said.

“The biggest mistake this company made was letting us go out on strike,” he added. “Now we all know each other and we'll stand together even better when we do go back in.”