

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 12 MARCH 27, 2006

Oppose employers' immigration 'reform'!

Unionize all workers, native- and foreign-born

Over 100,000 rally in Chicago against House immigration bill



Militant/Zena McFadden

Construction, hotel, restaurant, and other workers turned out for March 10 rally in Chicago to oppose the Sensenbrenner bill, passed by the House of Representatives, which makes it a felony to be in the U.S. without proper documents. The city's mayor, the Illinois governor, some employers, and many unions backed action. Organizers promoted an alternative bill introduced by senators John McCain and Edward Kennedy.

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD
AND ERNEST MAILHOT

CHICAGO—Whistles, cheers, and chants of “Sí se puede” (Yes we can) reverberated as tens of thousands marched

through downtown Chicago March 10 in a protest against proposed immigration legislation recently approved by the U.S. House of Representatives, known as the

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“A practical lesson for the working class on how to fight and win”

Our History Is Still Being Written

“Why is this book important outside Cuba, and in the U.S. above all? The simplest answer is the most accurate. Because it is needed by those on the front lines of the class struggle, wherever they may be.”

— Mary-Alice Waters,

editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*,
at February 2006 Havana International Book Fair

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Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party National Committee
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Saturday, April 1, 4 p.m. Los Angeles

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Saturday, April 8 St. Paul, MN

Details to be announced

Saturday, April 22 New York City

Details to be announced

Young Socialists meetings: March 26 Atlanta; April 2 L.A.; April 9 St. Paul; April 23 NYC

Sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists
for more information, contact listings on page 8

We call on working people to oppose all the “immigration reform” bills before the U.S. Congress—from the Sensenbrenner proposal recently approved by the House of Representatives to the McCain-Kennedy bill. All these measures are designed to meet the needs of the U.S. employers at the expense of the working class. Instead, labor should

EDITORIAL

campaign to organize all workers, U.S.- and foreign-born, into trade unions.

The various immigration proposals beef up the hated *migra* cops and “homeland security,” and some institute a “guest worker” program. Their purpose is to perpetuate divisions in

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UMWA pursues organizing effort at Peabody coal mines nationwide

BY DENNIS RICHTER

PRINCETON, Indiana—The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) is in the third month of a nationwide effort to organize the U.S. operations of Peabody Energy, the world's largest private sector coal company. Organizers are working out of an office here to assist miners in their efforts to bring in the union at the seven nonunion mines Peabody operates in Indiana and the three it owns in Southern Illinois.

The UMWA launched this campaign, called Justice at Peabody, at a December 9 rally in St. Louis. Organizers say that hundreds of nonunion miners at Peabody mines across the country have

requested assistance from the UMWA to form a union.

Peabody Energy reported 2005 sales
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U.S. gov't steps up pressure for sanctions on Iran

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The U.S. government and other members of the United Nations Security Council began discussions March 10 on ratcheting up pressure on Iran over its nuclear program. U.S. officials told the media they want the Security Council to declare a deadline for the Iranian government to suspend all uranium enrichment activity or face the threat of sanctions.

As Washington and London pressed for a more aggressive stance, Moscow
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1,500 new, repeat 'Militant' readers: Welcome!

Letter from the editor

Dear Reader,

Thank you for helping make the seven-week effort to increase the *Militant's* long-term readership a success.

Nearly 1,500 people subscribed during the campaign. Welcome! Almost 700 of them renewed or bought long-term subscriptions for the first time, with the rest getting introductory subs.

The effort got off the ground with the February 6 issue that featured the banner headline, “Unionize the mines! Build the UMWA! No miner has to die! Workers need a union to enforce safety.” We were responding to the bosses' brutal drive for profits that had already killed 16 coal miners and two other mine workers
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Kurds in Iraq make headway toward winning greater autonomy

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Tensions over oil exploration and development are ongoing between Baghdad and authorities in the Kurdish autonomous region of northern Iraq. Underneath them lies a widening divide between the region, known as Iraqi Kurdistan, and the rest of Iraq.

Kurdish officials in northern Iraq have been inviting oil companies to start exploration of untapped reserves in the region—a direct challenge to Baghdad, said the Associated Press February 3. The Kurdish regional government also began new oil drilling on three other sites, said the January 14 *Washington Times*.

Iraqi government officials are not happy. “Any contract for exploration or production of oil and gas without the consent of the federal ministry of oil is contractually void,” said Hussain al-Shahristani, deputy speaker of Iraq’s National Assembly, according to a Dow Jones news wire in December.

Adnan Mufti, speaker of the Kurdistan regional assembly, contends, however, that the country’s new constitution adopted last October allows Kurdish authorities to go ahead with production of their own oil. The Kurdish regional government estimates oil reserves in the region at 45 billion barrels.

Kurds in Iraq are an oppressed nationality. They also live in neighboring regions of Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Armenia. Kurds took advantage of the 1991 U.S.-led war on Iraq to establish autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan. Since the Baath Party regime of Saddam Hussein was overthrown with the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, Kurds have pressed to consolidate and expand their autonomy.

Most Kurdish teenagers in the region have never lived under the Arab-domi-

nated central government in Baghdad. And after 14 years of Kurdish education in the area, almost no Kurds under 30 speak Arabic, noted a feature article in the January issue of *National Geographic*. In one section of the region administered by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), one of the two main Kurdish parties, the magazine said its reporters saw no Iraqi flags or any other semblance of the central government’s authority.

In an informal poll in Kurdistan held during the January 2005 national elections, 98.7 percent of Kurds voted for full independence. Largely in response to that sentiment, the two main Kurdish parties—the KDP and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)—signed an accord to form a single administration in the region. Until then, the two ran separate sections of the territory.

A larger proportion of women have jobs in the Kurdish region compared to the rest of the country. Women appear to face fewer social restrictions in Kurdistan, and they are more integrated into the government and military, according to *National Geographic*.

The peshmerga is the Kurdish military, which was formed in the guerrilla war against the former Baathist regime. Today the group continues its autonomous existence, while its members also make up a disproportionate number of the Iraqi military and police in the region. The *National Geographic* reporter said he was greeted by the chief of police in oil-rich Kirkuk wearing the insignia of a peshmerga major on his uniform. Kurds were expelled from the city en masse under Hussein but are now returning and are trying to become once again the majority there. Halfway through the interview, be-

fore a delegation from Baghdad arrived, the police official replaced the peshmerga insignia with one for a captain in the Iraqi army. Most police under his command are peshmerga veterans and he refused an order from Baghdad to replace them with Arab policemen.

In Mosul, also in the north, two Iraqi battalions are now responsible for sections of the majority-Arab city that were formerly patrolled by U.S. troops. U.S. commanders are concerned with the overrepresentation of Kurds in those units, said the February 2 *Washington Post*. One unit on patrol with U.S. forces reportedly consisted entirely of Kurds who spoke no Arabic and many of whom had Kurdish flags sewn on their uniforms despite regulations prohibiting such insignia.



Construction patterns also reflect moves toward de facto independence. Much like Shiite-dominated southern Iraq, the Kurdish cities are a maze of cranes and half-finished apartment blocks, office buildings, and commercial centers. Hundreds of miles of roads are rapidly being built through the region’s mountains. The new roads link the Kurdish cities to each other and to the borders with Turkey, Iran, and Syria. The roads leading south, toward Baghdad, however, remain in a state of advanced disrepair, *National Geographic* reported.

Dubai company backs off port deal

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

A Democratic Party–led chauvinist campaign charging U.S. president George Bush with being weak on “homeland security” has forced the White House to find a face-saving way out of the dispute over “foreign management” of U.S. ports.

As opposition to Dubai Ports World’s (DP World) impending takeover of six U.S. port facilities grew among Republicans, as well as Democrats, the company on March 9 announced its decision to back out of the deal. DP World is owned by the government of the United Arab Emirates and operates ports in many countries.

While Democratic senators such as Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer from New York led the anti-Dubai campaign, threatening to introduce legislation to “ban companies owned by foreign governments from controlling operations at U.S. ports,” more and more Republicans joined in.

On March 8 the House Appropriations Committee voted 62–2 to reject any deal allowing DP World to take

over port operations in Baltimore; Miami; New Orleans; New York; Newark, New Jersey; and Philadelphia.

Bush threatened to veto legislation that would block the deal, but that didn’t have much of an effect. When his press secretary, Scott McClellan, refused to repeat the veto threat March 9, the *New York Times* said he “appeared to signal that the White House was backing away from its position.”

“In the case of the port deal, the political considerations are clearly paramount for Republicans,” said the *Times*, referring to the November congressional elections.

DP World had taken over a British-based company’s port operations, which included those in the U.S. cities. On March 9, the company’s top executive, Edward Bilkey, announced that the company would “transfer fully” the U.S. part of its acquisition to a still unnamed company based in the United States. “This should make the issue go away,” said Senate majority leader William Frist, with a sigh.

THE MILITANT

‘Tells you what’s going on in world’

*“I depend on the
‘Militant’ for news
I can’t get elsewhere.
It is very important
to know what’s going
on in the world.”*

—Said Yousuf
Vice President Division 8
UFCW Local 271
Norfolk, Nebraska



Said Yousuf, an officer of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271 in Norfolk, Nebraska, at his home. Tyson shut down plant organized by that local in February.

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

Protests in 30 U.S. cities oppose South Dakota ban on abortion

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Protests organized by Planned Parenthood and other supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion took place in more than 30 U.S. cities March 9 opposing the new South Dakota law banning abortions in that state. The state law, signed March 6 by Governor Michael Rounds, makes it a felony for doctors to perform abortions unless the woman's life is threatened. It is scheduled to take effect July 1.

Defenders of a woman's right to choose said they will challenge the legislation as an unconstitutional violation of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling, which decriminalized abortion. At the same time, the law has sparked debate among opponents of women's rights, including some who argue that a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade* now might backfire, given the widespread public support for a woman's right to choose abortion.

As part of the March 9 national "day of solidarity," 200 defenders of women's rights rallied at the federal courthouse in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, while 30 counterprotesters gathered across the street. Hundreds protested the law at the federal building in Rapid City, South Dakota. Smaller demonstrations took place in Bradenton, Florida; Trenton, New Jersey; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; and Washington, D.C.

Planned Parenthood, which operates the only abortion clinic in South Dakota, said it is preparing to challenge the state law. Kate Looby, director of

Planned Parenthood in South Dakota, said they were discussing whether to appeal through the courts or petition for a statewide referendum that could rescind the law in the November elections. "Either way, the law will not take effect," Sarah Stoesz of Planned Parenthood in Minnesota and the Dakotas told the press. "Our clinic will remain open for years to come."

The law has generated debate among opponents of women's rights on how to further their aim of re-criminalizing abortion. Several anti-abortion groups expressed tactical disagreements with pushing for an outright ban on abortion. Instead they argue that the steady chipping away at a woman's right to choose, which Democratic and Republican politicians have carried out over the past three decades, is more effective.

"Currently there are at least five votes, a majority, on the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold *Roe v. Wade*," Cristina Minniti, a spokesperson for the anti-choice National Right to Life Committee, told the *New York Times*.

A March 8 editorial in the conservative *National Review Online* said that laws like the South Dakota ban "set back the cause of overturning *Roe*." If the law did reach the Supreme Court, it said, the court "will surely strike the law down as a direct violation of *Roe v. Wade*" and "will elicit yet another re-affirmation of that decision."

Opponents of a woman's right to choose "have gained ground over the last decade and a half by pursuing a savvy increment strategy," the editorial said. "That strategy puts the end of *Roe* within sight. If *Roe* falls, pro-lifers should then try to persuade the public in each state to prohibit most abortions. After that, they should try to persuade them to prohibit abortion in the case of

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1 million march in France against antilabor law



Militant/Dimitris Faslalis

PARIS—Up to 1 million unionists and students marched in 160 cities across France March 7 to oppose a new antilabor law. The law gives bosses a two-year period to fire workers under the age of 26 at any time for any reason. It also lowers the minimum age for apprentice jobs from 16 to 14. Above, some of the 200,000 people who rallied in Paris that day. Students conducted strikes or blocked access to 40 of France's 82 universities. On March 11, riot police stormed the Sorbonne University to remove 300 students conducting a sit-in protesting the law.

—DIMITRIS FASFALIS

Black teenager killed at Florida boot camp

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY

MIAMI—Fourteen-year-old Martin Lee Anderson died January 6 following a beating by guards while imprisoned at a juvenile boot camp in Panama City, Florida. A 30-minute video shows the eighth grader surrounded by up to nine uniformed drill instructors, while five guards punched, kicked, and choked him. For more than 20 minutes a nurse stood by, hands on hips, observing the assault but doing nothing to stop it. Through it all Anderson is limp; his only movement is the writhing of his legs while cops are on top of him.

The beating took place shortly after Anderson was admitted to the camp. He collapsed after complaining of breathing trouble during the rigorous physical evaluation portion of the enrollment.

Guards then shoved capsules of ammonia up his nose. Anderson was arrested in June for taking his grandmother's car on a joy ride. He was sent to the boot camp for violating his probation by trespassing at a school. The boot camp is similar to military-style facilities for youth around the country. Six hundred boys between 14 and 18 are imprisoned in five camps in Florida.

Anderson's family pleaded for more than a month to have the video released to the public. A lawsuit by the *Miami Herald* and CNN forced its release. The autopsy by Bay County chief medical examiner Charles Siebert ruled that Anderson died of "natural causes." The Bay County sheriff announced February 21 that the boot camp will be closed in 90 days.

For further reading

Abortion Is a Woman's Right

by Pat Grogan

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. \$5



The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State

by Frederick Engels



How the emergence of class-divided society gave rise to repressive state bodies and family structures that protect the property of the ruling layers and enable them to pass along wealth and privilege. \$18

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U.S. gov't steps up pressure for sanctions against Iran

Continued from front page

backed off a proposal it had made to allow Iran to process small amounts of nuclear fuel.

"This is a test for the council," said Washington's UN ambassador, John Bolton. If Tehran does not comply with U.S. demands, he said, "we will have to make a decision of what the next step will be." He suggested that if the Security Council did not take aggressive enough action, U.S. officials might try to get its allies to impose sanctions.

The U.S. government has been waging its campaign against Iran on the claim that Tehran is developing nuclear weapons. Iranian officials insist that the country needs to develop nuclear technology to meet its growing energy needs, a position widely supported among Iranians.

At a March 9 Congressional hearing, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice said, "We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran, whose policies are directed at developing a Middle East that would be 180 degrees

different than the [one] we would like to see developed." Two days later U.S. president George Bush branded Iran a "grave national security concern."

Rice had announced in February that Washington is making \$75 million available for opposition groups in Iran. "A State Department official yesterday said that no recipients could be affiliated in any way with the regime or a group listed as a foreign terrorist organization," reported the March 8 *New York Sun*.

Earlier, Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), citing ongoing negotiations between representatives of the European Union (EU) and the Iranian government, said that Tehran had offered to suspend industrial-scale enrichment of uranium for two years, and that it might agree to a further extension if permitted to run a small-scale enrichment research program. The EU powers have demanded that Iran agree to a 10-year moratorium on all uranium enrichment.

Negotiations between Tehran and London, Paris, and Berlin—known as the EU 3—broke down at the end of 2005.

Last February the EU 3 and most other members of the IAEA board of governors, including China and Russia, approved a resolution to refer Iran's nuclear program to the Security Council but to delay any action for one month. Only Cuba, Syria, and Venezuela voted against.

Australia: union defends young worker beaten by boss

BY JOANNE KUNIAISKY AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) is campaigning to win compensation for a young man from the Cook Islands and to expose the brutal conditions he was subjected to by a building contractor here.

Two years ago, five Cook Island youths, all between ages 16 and 18, were brought to Australia on nonunion individual contracts to work for Manuel Puruto of Freliesma Guttering. Puruto promised them a better life, but instead worked the youths 12 hours a day, six days a week for \$50 a month, the union reported in a factsheet it is distributing. The teenagers lived at Puruto's house as

virtual slave labor.

Sam Kautai, who was 17 when he arrived, worked for Puruto for 18 months and was allegedly beaten regularly, including with a hammer. He was left blind in one eye, partially deaf, and with a broken nose, jaw, and teeth.

"I had a good opportunity to come to Australia because I heard it was good money," Kautai said, "The guy I was working for didn't treat me well. He gave me a lot of damage on my body."

The CFMEU is demanding A\$90,000 (US\$66,420) in back pay for Sam Kautai. CFMEU New South Wales Secretary Andrew Ferguson, quoted in the union factsheet, said, "Young workers and those who are vulnerable are being forced to sign individual Aus-

tralian Workplace Agreements, leaving them open to abuse and exploitation." He condemned the government for not investigating the brutalization of the five youths or the wages they are owed.

Sam's mother, Atirua Kautai, has come to Australia with her husband to be with her son. She spoke at a March 2 union-organized protest against the government's antiunion laws. The contractor "deserves to be put in prison," she said in an interview. "There was no protection for my son or the other boys. We owe the union a big thanks."

Manuel Puruto has now been charged by the Green Valley police with two counts of maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm.

‘In Cuba we have won equal pay for equal work’

Federation of Cuban Women leaders speak in N.Y.

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ AND OLYMPIA NEWTON

NEW YORK—“In Cuba, since the early years of the revolution, we have won equal pay for equal work,” said Dora Carcaño, regional coordinator for the Americas of the Women’s Democratic International Federation. She was speaking to an audience of 110 at a public meeting here March 11.

Carcaño, who is also a member of the national leadership of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), was on a panel with three other FMC leaders: Maritzel González, Tamara Columbié, and Ana Milagros Martínez. The four were in New York as part of the Cuban delegation to the annual session of the United

Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The public meeting, sponsored by a number of local organizations, took place at the Martin Luther King Auditorium of the health-care workers union, Service Employees International Union Local 1199. It was chaired by Frank Velgara and Arrin Hawkins, members of the coalition that organized the event.

Following introductory remarks by Carcaño and Columbié about the work of the FMC, there was a lively exchange of questions and answers. Responding to a question about the FMC’s participation in what is known in Cuba as the Battle of Ideas, González gave an example of their efforts. “We are working with young people who for one or another reason have



Militant/Willie Cotton

Federation of Cuban Women leaders at New York event. From left: Maritzel González, Ana Milagros Martínez, translator Luis Madrid, Tamara Columbié, and Dora Carcaño.

dropped out of school and are not working. FMC members go to neighborhoods and meet one-on-one with these young people. We want to give them an opportunity to continue their studies.”

The Battle of Ideas is a political offensive by the Cuban leadership aimed

at deepening the involvement of working people and youth in the revolution, central to which is broadening the educational and cultural opportunities available to the Cuban people today.

The speakers also addressed questions about Cuba’s record of internationalist solidarity. “In Angola, Cubans offered our military cooperation and shed our blood,” said Columbié, who herself was one of the 300,000 Cuban volunteers who went to Angola to help defeat the U.S.-backed invasions of that country by South African troops of the apartheid regime between 1975 and 1991. “The FMC had the privilege of working with Angolan women, and we did so until the moment came when they told us, ‘Thank you, we can take it from here on our own.’”

González said that while the U.S. government rejected Cuba’s offer to send some 1,600 doctors to the U.S. Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, many of these volunteers have since lent their services in other countries, including Pakistan in wake of the deadly October 2005 earthquake. “They’re working under very harsh conditions, visiting people’s homes in remote areas that sometimes take hours to get to. They always act in a respectful manner toward the culture and traditions of the people. Cuban women doctors are there too, and we are proud of their work.”

1,500 new, repeat ‘Militant’ subscribers: Welcome!

Continued from front page at stone and gravel operations in January—a toll that rose in February to 24 in the United States and shot up with the deaths of 65 coal miners in Mexico before the end of the month.

Beginning the last week of January, thousands of working people showed their appreciation to the *Militant* for its tell-it-like-it-is reporting of their struggles and other questions of world politics. And for its editorial support to organizing and other labor battles. Nearly 20,000 copies of the February 6 special issue were distributed over the next six weeks among miners, garment and textile workers, meat packers, poultry workers, hotel cleaners, auto workers, and others.

More and more workers insisted the *Militant* voice their concerns and publicize the facts of their efforts to resist the onslaught of the bosses’ profit greed. We were honored to do that.

Some asked for help in extending solidarity—like the messages Phil Pol-

som, an officer of the union organizing potash miners in Canada, sent to miners in Mexico through the *Militant*.

Many workers, like the Rockspring miners in West Virginia, explained they needed the *Militant* available outside portals or other worksites because selling it as widely as possible would help their struggles for unionization.

A woman who bought the *Militant* and donated \$3 to help its distribution told Tom Leonard in a working-class neighborhood of Houston, “It’s important to get the *Militant* around. Thousands of us think like what’s in that paper.” Hundreds of people—from dairy farmers to retired seamen and truck drivers—reacted the same way, not only renewing their subs but sending public endorsements to the paper to urge others to do the same.

New readers joined the effort, ordering bundles for the first time and taking quotas. This was especially true of the Young Socialists in Albany, New York; Detroit; and Tampa, Florida; all of whom made or surpassed their quotas.

A gain of the circulation effort, many distributors said, was acquiring the habit of meeting in person *Militant* subscribers, getting to know them, talking with them about politics, exchanging experiences, and convincing them to renew their subs in the process. While the final result of 692 renewals and long-term subs fell short of the initial projection of 1,000, the lessons learned about the method used have long-lasting value.

The cumulative fruits of this kind of outreach was captured in a note Linda Joyce from Charleston, West Virginia, sent March 13, the day the campaign ended. “On March 11, Tom Nichols and I attended the world premiere of the movie ‘Black Diamonds: Mountaintop Removal and the Fight for Coalfield Justice’ in South Charleston,” she wrote. “There were about 100 people there. The person who introduced the movie talked about the *Militant* in his welcoming remarks. He said the *Militant* had sent a reporter all the way from New York to West Virginia to cover the showing of the documentary on the 1972

Buffalo Creek disaster, and he held up the issue with the article in it. He told everyone they could subscribe later, pointing to Tom and I, and saying we would be in the lobby. After the movie, seven people subscribed and we sold all the single copies we brought. Several thanked us for being here and also endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund.”

Joyce was referring to the fund-raising effort and public defense campaign of the *Militant* against a harassment lawsuit by Utah mine bosses (see article below). *Militant* supporters integrated into the circulation work winning support for this campaign.

Over the next two weeks, and before the next sub drive starts, we urge you to help win another 200 endorsers to the Militant Fighting Fund to reach 500 new signers by March 31, the goal organizers of the defense effort have set.

Sincerely, Argiris Malapanis, Editor

Students back labor defense case

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—“We fully support the efforts of the *Militant*,” says a message from Campus Action, a State University of New York at Albany student group, one of many who endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund last week.

Workday Minnesota, an online labor publication in St. Paul, Minnesota, is helping to publicize a March 25 meeting at the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 union hall featuring Bill Estrada, one of the leaders of the Co-Op miners’ struggle in Utah to win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Other speakers include *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis and Bernie Hesse, head of organizing for UFCW Local 789 (see ad below). The meeting will “discuss a landmark lawsuit that threatens workers’ rights to free speech” says *Workday Minnesota*, referring to the legal action by the owners of the Co-Op mine against the UMWA, 16 Co-Op miners who were involved in the union-organizing fight, and the *Militant*.

Workday Minnesota further explains the March 25 meeting will help raise funds for the Militant Fighting Fund, “which has been established to win support for the *Militant* newspaper’s freedom of press rights and publicize the fight of all of the defendants to defeat

the harassment lawsuit.”

Militant Fighting Fund organizers have set a goal of winning 500 new endorsers by April 1. So far, 305 union locals and prominent individuals have signed on since this effort began February 1.

Five new endorsers came in from New Zealand last week, most of them members of the Meat Workers Union.

James Bates, president of United Steelworkers Local 2122 at the U.S. Steel plant in Birmingham, Alabama, signed on too.

Endorsements and contributions can be sent to the Militant Fighting Fund at P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, Utah 84152; Fax: (801) 924-5910; E-mail: MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com

‘Militant’ Subscription Renewal Campaign January 21–March 13, 2006 Final chart				
Country/City	Quota	Sold	%	Renewals
NEW ZEALAND				
Auckland	30	37	123%	20
Christchurch	16	18	113%	6
N.Z. Total	46	55	120%	26
AUSTRALIA	30	35	117%	26
U.S.				
Chicago	40	62	155%	22
Detroit	4	6	150%	3
Philadelphia	60	78	130%	25
Washington, DC	35	45	129%	20
Pittsburgh	40	48	120%	22
Miami	70	83	119%	35
Seattle	35	41	117%	21
Twin Cities	70	82	117%	36
Des Moines	85	97	114%	36
Albany, NY	16	18	113%	6
New York	135	147	109%	72
San Francisco	60	63	105%	30
Boston	40	41	103%	16
Price	70	72	103%	41
Houston	65	66	102%	23
Los Angeles	75	75	100%	40
Tampa	4	4	100%	2
Atlanta	60	53	88%	20
Birmingham	40	34	85%	8
Salt Lake City	30	25	83%	8
Newark	65	51	78%	28
New Orleans		4		4
U.S. Total	1099	1195	109%	518
SWEDEN	36	37	103%	19
UK				
Edinburgh	22	25	114%	15
London	50	49	98%	34
UK Total	72	74	103%	49
ICELAND	12	12	100%	5
CANADA	75	73	97%	24
Int’l totals	1370	1481	110%	692
Should be	1350	1350	100%	

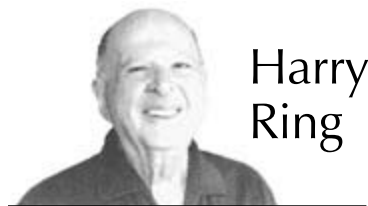
Defend Labor Rights!

Saturday, March 25, 7:00 p.m.
UFCW Local 789 union hall, St. Paul, MN
Speakers: Bill Estrada, coal miner in Utah & defendant in C.W. Mining harassment suit; **Bernie Hesse**, UFCW Local 789 head of organizing; **Randy Jasper**, activist in Family Farm Defenders & dairy farmer in Muscoda, Wisconsin; **Argiris Malapanis**, ‘Militant’ editor

Venue: UFCW Local 789, 266 Hardman Ave., St. Paul
Tel: (612) 802-8982 **Auspices:** Militant Fighting Fund;
Endorsed by: St. Paul Speakers Club; Bernie Hesse, UFCW Local 789; David Riehle, chairman UTU Local 650.

— GREAT SOCIETY —

A call for solidarity—In Chittagong, Bangladesh, 54 textile workers died in a factory blaze. They faced the le-



Harry Ring

thal choice of escaping through a single main exit or jumping

from a window.

Who does capitalism serve?—It was a terse item, two thumbs long and inconspicuously tucked in a small In Brief column in the *Los Angeles Times*. A small headline said: “Mexico: 65 Trapped, Miners Are Dead, Company Says.”

Bus company has to live—Unknown numbers of residents

of New Orleans were stranded when Katrina hit. But, for sure, the Landstar bus company made a bundle. For evacuating passengers, Washington’s transportation agency overpaid the bus company. The total paid to the company was a tad under \$60 million. But according to the company’s records, the bill should have come to \$27 million. A Landstar official responded: “The government still owes us about \$200 mil-

lion.” Who knows, maybe they’ll get it.

‘Fuel poverty’—“The average cost of home energy bills is set to rise to about \$1,000 a year, plunging hundreds of thousands more households into “fuel poverty.”—*The Times*, London.

‘Intelligent design?’—“Because of several helicopter and jet crashes in recent months,

the Navy said it would ground all of its aircraft for half a day for a safety review. The stand-down will affect thousands of navigation personnel and 3,800 aircraft, including aircraft on 12 carriers around the world.”—News item.

How generous—“Low-income workers finally feel at home—Thousands are waiting for the homes.”—News headline.

— ON THE PICKET LINE —

Canada taxi strike ends with union victory

TORONTO, Ontario—Taxi drivers ended their seven-week strike against Veteran Cab in Windsor, Ontario, March 4, voting by 89 percent to accept a new contract. The 350 workers are members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 195. “In my opinion this is a victory,” Local 195 taxi unit chairperson Haidar Aouli told the *Militant*. “Because of the unity of our members and the solidarity we got from other unions we came out stronger. We won respect and more income.”

The drivers carried out a hard-fought battle against increases in leasing rates demanded by the company, and a grueling seven-day, 12-hour workweek. Drivers are charged about Can\$412 a week for their leases, in addition to gas expenses. They don’t begin to earn anything for themselves before taking in Can\$600 a week (Can\$1 = US 87 cents). Aouli said there will be no increases in lease rates over the three-year agreement, and drivers for the first year will keep all meter rate increases.

—John Steele

Finland: Transport workers strike four days for contract

Some 11,000 bus drivers and garbage collectors in Finland went on strike March 5–8 over poor working conditions, long hours, and the use of part-time drivers. Some workers must be on the job 13–14 hours with long waiting time between routes. The Transport Workers’ Union has been without a contract since November.

The new settlement approved by the union leadership to end the strike provides a 6 percent pay raise over two years. It also states, “Part time employment can only be used when no other possibilities exist to get the work done.”

—Dag Tirsén

School workers in Scotland strike for equal and back pay

ABERDEEN, Scotland—“What do we want? Back pay!” chanted more than 100 angry women strikers outside a March 10 meeting here between city council officials and school authorities. Some 600 school catering workers and cleaners, members of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, began a strike the day before. “We want equal pay,” explained Marlene McAlhatton, a cleaner at Torry Academy. Many of the women earn about £5.50 an hour (£1=US\$1.72) and work part time. They are demanding back pay and bonuses for some five years. Citing the 1975 Equal Pay Act, they say their pay needs to be comparable to other council jobs. “Pickets were out at over 30 schools from early morning,”



Militant/Natalie Doucet

Taxi drivers in Windsor, Ontario, picket Veteran Cab office in February during strike.

said strike spokesperson and catering worker Sally Campbell. She explained they would strike two days every week for their demands. For most this was their first strike.

—Peter Clifford

Building maintenance workers in N.Y. march for better pact

NEW YORK—In preparation for a possible strike when our contract expires in April, thousands of members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ marched on 34th Street in the garment district of Midtown Manhattan here February 28. The workers who maintain and clean buildings showed the bosses they are determined to fight for a decent contract with better wages and benefits. The large demonstration ended with a rally in front of the Empire State Building, which is famous as the city’s tallest structure. Maintenance and security workers at

this building are not unionized and get paid miserable wages. Building maintenance workers are bracing for a tough battle, but many Local 32BJ members at the march said they are ready to resist the bosses’ attacks.

—Manuel Sánchez

New Jersey chemical workers rally against lock out

FIELDSBORO, New Jersey—Members of United Electrical (UE) Local 155 picketed and rallied outside the gate of the Stepan chemical company here March 4. Workers have been walking the picket line since the company locked them out after a 24-hour work stoppage on January 23. Workers voted in the UE in January 2005 and immediately began contract negotiations. The unionists are demanding an end to a four-year wage freeze and health benefit cuts. They report they have experienced forced overtime, speedup, and job combinations during the past year. Local 155 members have traveled to other Stepan plants seeking solidarity and getting out the facts about their fight.

—Martin Santiago and Osborne Hart

New York: sneaker store workers win union contract

After a year-long fight, some 95 workers employed by the Footco sneaker chain at 10 stores in New York City won a union contract in January

that raises wages, and for the first time provides paid vacations and health insurance. The workers, most of whom are immigrants, are now represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, a division of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Before the pact some workers were paid just \$4.75 an hour with no overtime pay. The federal minimum wage has been \$5.15 for nearly a decade. The three-year accord sets wages at \$7.25 an hour, rising to \$7.50 in July. “Now I will make the same money working 45 hours a week that I used to make working 55, 60 hours,” Jose Enriques, a five-year Footco employee, told the *New York Times*.

—Brian Williams

Unionists authorize strike if Delphi voids labor contracts

Unionists at the Delphi auto parts plant near Dayton, Ohio, voted the first week of March to authorize a strike if the bankrupt company goes through with voiding labor contracts covering 34,000 workers. The International Union of Electronic Workers–Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 755 represents 1,000 workers at the Ohio factory. Delphi, the largest U.S. auto parts supplier, said it will ask a judge at the end of March to throw out these contracts if the CWA, the United Auto Workers, and other unions don’t agree to deep concessions.

—Brian Williams

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



March 27, 1981

ATLANTA—A victory for the besieged Black community in its fight to halt racist child murders was won here March 15. In a “Moratorium on Murder—Save the Youth” demonstration, more than 1,500 people marched from the State Capitol to the Morehouse College campus, protesting the killings and the failure to capture those responsible.

Announced just two weeks earlier by the Association of Christian Student Leaders and Coretta Scott King, the march and rally attracted contingents from Boston, New Orleans, Richmond, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and Bloomington, Indiana.

Despite a local and national media blackout, delays in granting the permit, and a concerted campaign by city, state, and federal authorities to thwart any public protest, the marchers made their message clear: The slayings are racist and we won’t stop demonstrating until they are solved.



March 26, 1956

DETROIT, March 16—Mrs. Rosa Parks, the 43-year-old seamstress from Montgomery, Ala. whose arrest for refusing to relinquish her seat on a bus there precipitated the Montgomery protest movement, spoke at the Ford Local 600 United Auto Workers hall today.

“Our fight is not just for Montgomery Negroes to get a seat on the bus,” she told about 300 members and guests of the Frame and Cold Header Unit of the giant Ford Rouge local. “As long as we just took segregation,” she said, “the Southern white man had the excuse that the Negroes were satisfied, but we are staying off the buses to show the whole world that we aren’t satisfied.”

Six hundred dollars, collected from the unit’s Negro and white workers in the shop during the week, was presented to Mrs. Parks for the Montgomery protesters.



April 1, 1931

Authoritative reports from Prinkipo confirm in all their essentials the dispatches of recent date in the capitalist press concerning the fire which destroyed the home of comrade Trotsky in his island exile. By rare good fortune, the manuscript of the history of the Russian revolution which he is completing, an invaluable file of correspondence with Lenin, and a number of other documents were rescued from the flames.

The exact cause of the conflagration has not yet been established. Whether it was accidental or due to the dastardly efforts of a Stalinist hireling—and the whole past of Stalin’s persecution of the Opposition in general and Trotsky in particular makes the latter alternative not at all inconceivable—is not yet known.

Send all the books you can by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky written in Russian, German, French or English, or books on subjects related to their work (History, economics, sociology, etc.).

McCain-Kennedy bill

Continued from front page

cacy groups have focused these public actions on opposing the so-called Sensenbrenner bill, which the House of Representatives passed on Dec. 16, 2005, and on supporting an alternative measure introduced in the Senate by Republican John McCain and Democrat Edward Kennedy.

The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437), introduced by Republican congressman James Sensenbrenner, would make it an aggravated felony—a criminal, not just civil, offense—to live in the United States without proper documents or to commit even minor violations of immigration regulations. It would make millions permanently ineligible for adjusting their immigration status.

According to a March report by the Pew Hispanic Center, nearly 12 million undocumented workers—about 5 percent of the workforce—live in the United States, 4.4 million of whom arrived since 2000.

The House bill would also make “aiding” or “counseling” an undocumented immigrant a felony.

Building on the Clinton administration’s 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, the bill would expand the federal government’s powers of mandatory detention and expedited deportation of undocumented immigrants, and further limit their right to appeal. It also calls for building a fence along the U.S.-Mexican border and for reinforcement of border policing, including the use of the U.S. military in surveillance activity.

Legislation similar to the Sensenbrenner bill was introduced in the Senate February 23 by Republican Arlen Specter. That bill also provides for a “guest worker” program.

The actions protesting the Sensenbrenner bill have promoted the McCain-Kennedy bill, touting it as an “avenue to legal status” for millions of foreign-born workers.

The McCain-Kennedy bill, or Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act, introduced in both the Sen-

ate and House with bipartisan support, would beef up the immigration cops and further centralize the border operations of federal, state, and local police agencies.

The most publicized provision of that bill is the “temporary worker” program, which embodies elements of a “guest worker” plan proposed by President George Bush. It would allow undocumented workers who can prove they have worked in the United States since May 12, 2005, to apply for a temporary visa, valid for six years. Workers outside the United States could apply for a three-year temporary visa, renewable for another three years, if they showed evidence of a job offer through a federal registry and no “U.S. worker” took that job.

The worker would have to clear security and criminal checks, and pay a \$1,000 “fine”—for having been “illegal”—plus application and other fees.

McCain-Kennedy would establish a huge federal database, the Employment Eligibility Confirmation System, allowing bosses to electronically verify a worker’s identity and job eligibility. Workers hired through this registry would be able to change jobs, but would remain dependent on their boss to keep their legal status. Those workers hired from outside the United States would be subject to deportation if they were unemployed for 45 days.

As a result, despite “protections” stated in the law, these workers would face bosses’ permanent threat of firing and deportation, making them a ready-made pool of superexploited labor. Workers in this program would be able to apply for permanent residence status (green card) only at the end of their six-year temporary visa, after paying another \$1,000 “fine” and added fees.

One feature underplayed by liberal supporters of the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act is the Employment Eligibility Confirmation

Chicago: over 100,000 protest House immigration bill

Continued from front page

Sensenbrenner bill. The demonstration, which featured the governor of Illinois and mayor of Chicago, was also organized in support of an immigration bill introduced by senators John McCain and Edward Kennedy. Rallies with the same theme were held in Washington and Philadelphia that week.

Many demonstrators carried signs that read, “We are not criminals.” Some added, “We are your workforce.” The bill approved by the House in December would make it a felony for immigrants to live in the United States without proper documents and for anyone “aiding, abetting, counseling” an undocumented immigrant.

The two-and-a-half-mile march, estimated at 100,000 by most major local media, jammed downtown streets for hours. CBS TV said up to 300,000 people took part. The crowd was swelled by workers who took the day off. At some small companies, bosses encouraged their mostly immigrant employees to attend the action.

At the Stampede Meat plant, workers reported that when they noticed that many co-workers hadn’t come in

D.C. protesters: ‘Immigrants are not criminals’



Militant/David Salner

WASHINGTON—On March 7 about 20,000 people rallied at the Capitol here to oppose House of Representatives bill 4437, which brands undocumented immigrants as “criminals.” Five buses of poultry workers, construction workers, and others came from Georgetown, Delaware. There were not enough buses there for everyone who showed up.

Unionists from the United Food and Commercial Workers, Service Employees International Union, and others carried banners and signs at the rally, like one above, which says in Spanish: “We are workers, not criminals.”

Danny Cardona, a day laborer from Freehold, New Jersey, told the *Militant*, “I’m here in the U.S. because I need to work. I came today because I don’t want to be called a criminal, and to protest any fence between Mexico and the U.S.” The bill calls for funding a 700-mile fence between the two countries.

—JANICE LYNN

System. While initially used only for temporary workers, who would be issued a “tamper-proof” card, the goal is to eventually expand the use of this system to check on all workers.

The central database will compile information about workers’ country of origin, legal status, occupation, city of employment, annual wages paid, dates when a worker begins and ends a job, and “biometric” data such as fingerprints and iris scans.

“The information will be warehoused in a massive database that establishes the framework for a national ID system, raising grave civil liberties and civil rights concerns,” says the National Immigration Law Center in a generally

favorable analysis of the bill.

The officials of several unions support the McCain-Kennedy bill, including the Service Employees International Union, UNITE HERE, and United Food and Commercial Workers. The Laborers union and AFL-CIO oppose the guest worker plan, saying it puts downward pressure on wages. At a February 28 news conference in San Diego, AFL-CIO officials said they favored laws tying the number of green cards “to the demands of the labor market, with more green cards issued when there is a demand for more foreign labor,” the San Diego *Union-Tribune* reported.

S. Dakota ban

Continued from page 3
rape and incest.”

In a March 7 news briefing, White House press secretary Scott McClellan said that the South Dakota law “is a state matter.” He also indicated that the law is at variance with the position of President George Bush of allowing abortion in case of rape and incest as well as when a woman’s life is endangered.

Women’s access to abortion has been steadily eroded since women won the decriminalization of this medical procedure. Some 87 percent of all counties in the United States have no health facilities or doctors that provide abortions. Nearly a quarter of all women who obtain an abortion must travel more than 50 miles to reach the nearest provider. Other obstacles include parental consent laws, mandatory waiting times, and required “counseling.”

Maura DeLuca from Pittsburgh and Sara Lobman from Newark, New Jersey, contributed to this article.

and saw others leaving early, about half of the first shift decided to go to the march. The company had to shut several cutting and packing lines.

A few small union contingents took part in the march, including from UNITE HERE and the Service Employees International Union.

Numerous students walked out of high schools to join the march. At Faragut Career Academy in the suburb of Lawndale, half of the 2,500 students walked out, the *Chicago Tribune* reported.

The crowd was made up overwhelmingly of immigrants and children of immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Polish, Chinese, Irish, African, and other workers were also present.

One of the marchers, David Martínez, told the press he was demonstrating because “I want to live here with my family.” Truck driver Pedro Hernández said, “It’s about human beings and basic rights.”

Many in the crowd carried signs against the Sensenbrenner bill, whose title is The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigra-

tion Control Act. Besides criminal sanctions against undocumented immigrants and those who aid them, the measure calls for reinforcing the Border Patrol and extending the building of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. Others carried signs supporting the McCain-Kennedy bill, which is backed by many Democratic and some Republican politicians. (See article above.)

Speakers at the rally included Mayor Richard Daley, Governor Rod Blagojevich, U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez, Sen. Richard Durbin, and other Democratic politicians who promoted the McCain-Kennedy bill.

Organizers of the march handed out thousands of American flags to demonstrators. Many in the crowd, however, brought flags of Mexico and other countries. The organizers also held a moment of silence at the beginning of the march for U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq.

Ernest Mailhot is a meat packer. Rolande Girard is a sewing machine operator and member of UNITE HERE.

UMWA organizing in Peabody mines

Continued from front page

of 240 million tons and \$4.6 billion in revenues. The company operates 28 coal mines in the United States, nine of which are currently unionized. Some 36 percent of the company's U.S. workforce is unionized, a percentage Peabody has pledged to lower.

"We have, over the last 15 years, moved the vast majority of our production and developed our operations to where we have reduced the intensity of our unionization," boasted Peabody president Gregory Boyce last October. He pledged to "continue on that path."

In an article in the January-February issue of the *United Mine Workers Journal*, John Cox described the conditions in the nonunion Peabody mine in Indiana where he works. "It's a whole different world," said Cox. "We don't have job security at all. They can come out and say, 'Boys, tomorrow you're going to work a 12-hour shift, and there is nothing you can do about it. You don't have any rights.

Shut up and do your job or go home.'"

"The safety issue is one difference between nonunion and union mines," UMWA communications director Phil Smith told the *Militant* in a March 14 phone interview. "When you have a local union safety committee, workers can go to them to get unsafe situations corrected, or, if need be, to shut down an unsafe operation. In a nonunion mine you can go report the problem to your foreman, but if he tells you to go back to work you've got two choices: continue working unsafe or lose your job."

Smith said that interest in the union has increased in the aftermath of the string of mine accidents this year that have cost the lives of 21 coal miners. "We've gotten a lot of calls from miners, both in Peabody mines and in other mines, who want to discuss the difference between working union and nonunion," Smith said. "A lot of these miners have worked in union mines but now find themselves in non-union operations, and they can see the

difference a union makes. At the same time, the coal bosses really haven't changed in the last 100 years. Their main goal is to produce at the lowest possible cost. And they put a lot of pressure on their workforce to achieve that goal."

In addition to its 10 non-union mines in Indiana and Illinois, Peabody operates four nonunion mines in Kentucky, and one in West Virginia. In the West, the company's nonunion operations include three large surface operations in Wyoming, an underground mine in Colorado, and a large surface mine in New Mexico. All of Peabody's overseas operations, which include four mines in Australia and one in Venezuela, are unionized.

"Right now the campaign has begun with a focus on Peabody's mines in West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois," Smith said. "But we've made contacts at



AP/James A. Finley

March organized by UMWA in St. Louis, December 9 to launch drive to unionize Peabody Energy coal mines.

the mines out West and are looking to expand our effort there as well."

In this campaign, the UMWA has deployed dozens of organizers and field staff throughout the coalfields. They have used flyers and a special website (www.justiceatpeabody.org) to build support for the effort.

UMWA organizers are getting miners to sign a petition supporting the union. This will be used to press for card-check neutrality on the part of the coal company. This means the company agrees to abide by the decision of a majority of miners to sign up for the union rather than having an election supervised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

"The NLRB is packed with corporate types and people who aren't favorable to workers organizing," Smith said. "With the company appeals and objections you're often talking five, six, even 10 years down the road before the process is complete. By that time, often people have been fired or reassigned and the company has been allowed time to wage a campaign of fear and intimidation among the workers."

Paul Pederson contributed to this article.

N.Y. top court: undocumented get back pay for job injury

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

NEW YORK—The Court of Appeals, New York State's highest court, ruled February 21 that undocumented workers are entitled to back pay and compensation for future lost wages due to debilitating injuries on the job, as are U.S. citizens or immigrants with work permits. It was the first such ruling by any U.S. court.

Two cases before the high court prompted the decision.

In one of them, Gorgonio Balbuena, a construction worker originally from Mexico, suffered multiple skull fractures in April 2000 when he fell off a ramp at a construction site in Manhattan while pushing a wheelbarrow. Balbuena presented evidence that he can no longer work due to his injuries. He filed a personal injury lawsuit against the owners of the property, who then sued his employer, Taman Management Corp.

Similarly, Stanislaw Majlinger, a construction worker from Poland, was injured in January 2001 when the scaffold he was working on some 15 feet above ground collapsed. He also sued his employer for compensation and lost wages.

The New York court heard both cases together. The Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the workers in both cases, stating that New York State labor law "applies to all workers in qualifying

employment situations—regardless of immigration status."

A lower court had ruled that Balbuena was entitled to future lost wages resulting from his injury, but that he "should be compensated with what he could have earned in his native Mexico," said the February 22 *New York Sun*. The Court of Appeals later ruled that Balbuena was entitled to "lost American wages." Lawyers representing Taman Management argued unsuccessfully that Balbuena should not receive future lost wages because he was working "illegally" in the United States.

"New York's booming construction industry has given rise to an explosion of unsafe, even deadly, job sites," said an editorial in the March 11 *Daily News*. "From 2001 to 2005, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration recorded 68 'catastrophic' construction accidents in the city, 'catastrophic' meaning a worker died or at least three were seriously hurt.

"Mining OSHA data, the New York State Trial Lawyers Association found that such catastrophes happen predominantly on smaller jobs, many of them nonunion, rather than on major skyscraper projects," the *News* said. "In 2002, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says, contractors with fewer than 20 workers employed 38% of laborers but accounted for 56% of deaths.... Deaths like these keep happening

because there's virtually no enforcement of building rules and no penalty for violating them. In the metropolitan area, OSHA averaged 2.3 job site visits a day in 2004; many contractors haven't been inspected in a decade."

In 2004, 27 construction workers died on job sites in New York City, an increase of 29 percent over the previous year. The jump was largely because of falls and other "accidents" on construction sites. The latest casualty was Tony Duncan, a 47-year-old building worker killed March 7 when a foundation wall he was working on at a Brooklyn site collapsed.

New Zealand: coal miner killed on job

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

GREYMOUTH, New Zealand—Two miners were blasting coal underground at the Black Reef Mine here, on the West Coast of New Zealand, when the explosion unleashed a flood of water from an old mine. Miner Robert McGowan, 39, was killed. His co-worker, Gary Haddow, 51, survived by clinging to a roof peg in the mine.

In response, Andrew Little, national secretary of the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union (EPMU), which represents coal miners, told New Zealand Television that the death highlights the need to return to the practice

of government-appointed inspectors checking the safety of each mining shift. The practice was dropped about 15 years ago. Little said inspectors make sure all safety precautions are taken before miners start their shift.

One year ago the government leased the Black Reef Mine to a private company. Three people work the mine each shift. The *Greymouth Evening Star* reported that it is standard practice to test the area ahead by "forward drilling," which should have revealed the presence of a body of water. According to the *Evening Star*, McGowan's death was the sixth mining fatality on the job in the country's West Coast since 1991.

The mine is adjacent to Solid Energy's Spring Creek mine, which employs 130 workers and aims to extract 800,000 metric tons of coal a year.

"The biggest concern I have is companies and managers only have to refer to the Draft Code of Practices, which is a weak and watered down document, and the Mine Regulations Act," Harold Gibbens, union site delegate at the Spring Creek Mine, told the *Militant*, referring to mine safety throughout New Zealand. "We are finding more and more companies and managers are writing their own policies to suit their own individual plans. We need to get back to our Check Inspectors. We need an independent union member in this role."

Two-tiers become one in contracts, with lower wages for all

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The two-tier labor contracts employers in the United States have been imposing on workers for two decades have produced just a single lower-tier wage for most workers as those with the most seniority have either retired or quit. In effect, bosses in major manufacturing industries have succeeded in significantly reducing wage rates in their drive to boost profits.

A case in point is Caterpillar, which produces earthmoving and other heavy equipment. The company in 1998 signed a six-year agreement that allowed it to maintain 15 percent of its workforce as "supplemental employees,"

starting at 30 percent lower pay and no benefits. The contract approved last year set a 42 percent lower wage rate for new hires and shifted 20 percent of health-care costs onto these workers. Under the lower-tier setup, newly hired workers earn no more than \$12.50 an hour, compared to \$23 an hour made by high seniority machinists.

"Already, 50 percent of the upper-tier workers who were around in 2004 have left, through retirement and attrition," noted a February 26 *New York Times* article, titled "Rewriting the Social Contract: Two Tiers, Slipping Into One."

The article added, "Having essentially won against the U.A.W. [United

Auto Workers], Caterpillar's managers are trying to persuade hourly workers to think of the current contract as having only one tier, the lower one, while those in the upper tier should be thought of as older workers whose wages were 'grandfathered' until they depart."

In its drive to weaken the UAW, Caterpillar in the 1990s built 20 smaller, more specialized factories in the South with lower wage rates. Currently only half of Caterpillar's 22,000 hourly workers in the United States belong to the UAW, 6,000 less than in the early 1990s. Meanwhile, Caterpillar reported revenues of \$36.3 billion last year, up 20 percent from 2004.

Sankara: 'Freedom can be won only through struggle'

Below is an excerpt from a speech by Thomas Sankara given to the UN General Assembly on Oct. 4, 1984. The full text can be found in We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions, the French-language edition of which is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. Sankara was the leader of the Aug. 4, 1983, popular uprising in Upper Volta, a former French colony in West Africa. The country's name was changed to Burkina Faso. It initiated one of the deepest revolutions in Africa's history—carrying out an ambitious land reform, fighting corruption,

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

launching a program of reforestation to stop the advance of the desert and counter famine, and giving priority to education, health care, and women's emancipation. On Oct. 15, 1987, Sankara was assassinated during a military coup that destroyed the revolutionary government. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY THOMAS SANKARA

A few simple facts serve to describe the former Upper Volta: A country with seven million inhabitants, more than six million of whom are peasants; an infant mortality rate estimated at 180 per 1,000 and an illiteracy rate of up to 98 percent, if we define as literate someone who can read, write, and speak a language; an average life expect-



Ernest Harsch

Peasants rally October 1987 in Pibaoré, Burkina Faso. Banner reads: "Farmers of Burkina Faso: hoes yesterday, hoes today, machinery tomorrow."

tancy of only forty years; one doctor for 50,000 inhabitants; a school-attendance rate of only 16 percent; and, finally, a Gross Domestic Product of 53,356 CFA francs per capita, or barely over \$100. The diagnosis before us was somber. The cause of the illness was political. The cure could only be political.

Of course, we encourage aid that helps us to overcome the need for aid. But in general, the policy of foreign aid and assistance produced nothing but disorganization and continued enslavement. It robbed us of our sense of responsibility for our own economic, political, and cultural territory.

We chose to risk new paths to achieve greater happiness. We chose to apply new techniques and to look for forms of organization better suited to our civilization. We abruptly and definitively rejected all forms of foreign diktats, thus creating the conditions for a dignity worthy of our ambitions. To reject

mere survival and ease the pressures; to liberate the countryside from feudal paralysis or regression; to democratize our society and open our minds to a universe of collective responsibility in order to dare to invent the future. To shatter the administrative apparatus, then rebuild it with a new kind of state employee; to fuse our army with the people through productive labor and with the reminder that without patriotic political education, a military man is nothing but a criminal in power—this is our political program....

We swear—we state categorically—that henceforth nothing in Burkina Faso will ever again be undertaken without the participation of Burkinabè. Henceforth, we will conceive and decide on everything. This is a precondition. There will be no further assaults on our sense of decency and dignity.

Fortified by this conviction, we would like our words to embrace all

those who are in pain and all those whose dignity is being trampled on by a handful of men or by a system intent on crushing them.

To all those listening to me, allow me to say that I speak not only in the name of my beloved Burkina Faso, but also in the name of all those who are suffering in any corner of the world. I speak in the name of the millions who live in ghettos because they have black skin or because they come from different cultures, and whose status is barely better than that of an animal. I suffer in the name of the Indians who have been massacred, crushed, humiliated, and confined for centuries on reservations to the point where they can claim no rights and their culture cannot enrich itself through being joined together happily with other cultures, including the culture of the invader. I speak out in the name of those thrown out of work by a system that is structurally unjust and periodically in crisis, whose only view of life is a reflection of that of the affluent.

I speak on behalf of women the world over, who suffer at the hands of a male-imposed system. We welcome suggestions from anywhere in the world on how to achieve the full development of Burkinabè women. In exchange, we can offer to share with all other countries the positive experience we have had with women who now participate at every level of the state apparatus and in all aspects of Burkina's social life. Women in struggle proclaim in unison with us that the slave who does not organize his own rebellion deserves no pity for his lot. He alone is responsible for his misfortune if he harbors illusions in the dubious assurance of a master's promise of freedom. Freedom can be won only through struggle and we call on all our sisters of all races to rise to the assault and fight to conquer their rights.

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No to bosses’ immigration ‘reform’

Continued from front page

the working class, maintaining a more vulnerable section of the workforce to assure bosses a pool of superexploited labor, and to fatten their profits.

Many workers are justifiably outraged at the Sensenbrenner bill—the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act. If adopted, it would criminalize millions by making it a felony to be in the United States without proper documents in perfect order. It would make it a crime for anyone—teachers, hospital staff, friends—to “aid” undocumented immigrants in any way.

Officials of a number of unions and immigrant rights groups are backing the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act as a “realistic” alternative. But the McCain-Kennedy bill, as it is called, is an anti-working-class piece of legislation as much as the Sensenbrenner proposal and its variant introduced in the Senate by Arlen Specter. It is crafted to serve the profit needs of the employers. “Secure America” means strengthening the immigration police and arresting more workers at the border. “Orderly immigration” means regularizing the status of a layer of foreign-born workers to guarantee bosses a stable reservoir of laborers with fewer protections who can be exploited more than others. “Guest workers” would be dependent on their bosses for their legal status, and the government would have a ready-made list of immigrants who can be tracked and deported when their visas expire.

The McCain-Kennedy bill—together with laws requiring driver’s licenses to include Social Security numbers—helps lay the groundwork for a national identity card. It would set up a massive central database compiling information about workers’ legal status, country of origin, occupation, city of employment, wages paid, current dates of employment, fingerprints, and other personal identification. This ID system would eventually be extended to all U.S. residents, giving cop agencies and employers another tool to victimize working-class militants.

The goal of these bills is not to expel all those without

papers or to slow down immigration. Not only is that impossible—the number of undocumented has reached nearly 12 million, 5 percent of the U.S. workforce—but the bosses need immigrant labor. This is partly how finance capital in the United States has maintained an edge over its competitors in other countries.

According to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center, undocumented immigrants are 24 percent of all workers employed in farming, 17 percent in cleaning, 14 percent in construction, and 12 percent in food preparation. At a time when this mass inflow of workers born abroad has created a burgeoning underground economy, the U.S. rulers seek to regularize the status of some in order to tighten their control over them.

The working class is becoming more internationalized, as immigrant workers become more integrated into U.S. society. These changes help break down national divisions, provincialism, and racist and other prejudices—among native-born and immigrant alike—that bosses use as a weapon against working people. Immigrant workers are not helpless victims but potential fighters; they strengthen the working class.

Uncompromising opposition to all variants of the bosses’ “immigration reform” is in the interests of workers and exploited farmers across the United States and beyond. For the same reason, working people should campaign to repeal all federal and state laws mandating Social Security checks by the employers and to defeat any attempts at imposing a national ID card.

Above all, the labor movement needs to *organize all workers into trade unions and mobilize union power* as the only effective way to confront employer and government attacks not only on foreign-born workers but on the wages, job conditions, and dignity of all working people. The organizing struggles under way among coal miners, hotel employees, meat packers, and construction workers, many of whom are immigrants, show the potential for leading such a fight.

USA Patriot Act renewed by big bipartisan majority

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

On March 9, U.S. president George Bush signed legislation renewing 16 provisions of the USA Patriot Act that had been set to expire the next day. The previous week both Houses of Congress had passed the bill with strong bipartisan support—89 to 10 in the Senate and 280 to 138 in the House of Representatives.

At the same time the administration has won the support of leading Democrats to give legislative sanction for the first time to domestic spying without a court warrant. Democrats have been using recent revelations that the White House has authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to carry out such spying operations as a propaganda point in the factional infighting between the two major big-business parties.

The original Patriot Act was enacted shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, as one of Washington’s first actions in its “war on terrorism,” which included the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. The 1,016-clause law gave new powers to the FBI and other police agencies to conduct spying and disruption operations against individuals and organizations, carry out arbitrary searches and seizures in private homes and businesses, and jail immigrants without charges virtually indefinitely.

The Patriot Act is built on three 1996 laws that were at the heart of Clinton administration attacks on workers’ rights and political freedoms—the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, and the Economic Espionage Act.

Recent Congressional debate focused on two of the 16 provisions up for review. Democrats and Republicans agreed to make the other 14 permanent, while extending the “library provision” and “national security letters” for four more years.

The Patriot Act gives a government agency power to issue a “super-subpoena”—a national security letter—that forbids recipients from consulting a lawyer without police approval or even acknowledging that they have received the subpoena. The only change in the final version approved March 9 was to permit consultation with a lawyer without prior okay from the cops.

The library provision gives the government authority to obtain secret court orders to search private records from businesses, medical offices, libraries, and others as part of an “authorized” investigation. Those who receive these subpoenas must remain silent about the fact the search is going on. This “gag order” may now be challenged in court by the institution that receives the subpoena. The ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Jane Harman of California, praised the extension of the library provision because “only libraries that also function as Internet service providers are now covered.”

Republican legislators are making headway with a bill that would allow wiretapping without a warrant for up to 45 days if “there is probable cause to believe that one party to the communication is a member, affiliate, or working in support of a terrorist group or organization,” and one of the people involved is outside the United States.

In a show of bipartisan support for such a measure, senators from both parties agreed to the formation of a seven-member Senate Intelligence subcommittee. Democratic senator John Rockefeller from West Virginia called the new body, for which he is vice chair, “a step in the right direction.” Composed of four Republicans and three Democrats, the subcommittee would be charged with “oversight” of the NSA’s domestic surveillance program. According to rules for the new body proposed by the White House, the seven senators would be barred from revealing what they learned to the other members of the full Intelligence Committee—let alone the rest of Congress or the public.

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LETTERS

Cartoon dispute clarified

Thanks for the excellent coverage of the Danish cartoons controversy. Last week’s Reply to the Reader along with the reprint of Trotsky’s statement in preparation to appear before the Dies Committee really helped clarify the complex and (apparently) contradictory ways in which the ruling classes have exploited this issue.

Helen Colley

Manchester, England

More on cartoon controversy

While I agree that the Danish cartoons are offensive to Muslims, calls for censorship from any quarter should be opposed. I had a personal experience with censorship right here in the U.S. while in prison.

The prison administration and guards believe it is their right to control what inmates read. They sometimes have a list of banned publications, but most often a guard can

arbitrarily confiscate whatever they choose. The way it usually works is that an article by Dr. King or Nelson Mandela is censored or stolen from an inmate while vile racist tracts seem to be in wide circulation.

I agree with your response to another reader that restrictions on free speech always end up being used against working people and oppressed nationalities. I think the way to fight hate speech is with more speech. A case in point is the recent antiracist mobilizations against the Ku Klux Kowards in Baltimore.

R.B.

Baltimore, Maryland

Miners killed in Colombia

On March 8 a student was killed by the cops during a protest at the National University here in Bogotá. Since then, the students have been organizing protests, several major streets have been closed, and

classes cancelled.

Thank you so much for the reporting on the Sago Mine disaster and the miners in Mexico, which has been excellent.

There was an explosion in a coal mine near Bogotá in February, and four miners were killed. According to the newspapers, the explosion happened because of gases that had built up while the mine was closed during the holidays. The mine owners, of course, did not take the proper safety measures and the miners paid with their lives.

Nicole Sarmiento

Bogotá, Colombia

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.