

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Independence from U.S. colonial rule
say Puerto Rican patriots at UN

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 24

JULY 3, 2006

Utah miners, supporters celebrate victory in settling lawsuit by bosses



Militant photos by Tamar Rosenfeld

Left: UMW Region 4 organizing director Bob Butero speaks at June 4 event at UMW District 22 hall in Price, Utah. Right: UMW retiree Bob Fivecoat and Annie Fivecoat (left) give former Co-Op miners Bill Estrada and Berthila León (right) press clippings and solidarity messages with union struggle. The Fivecoats helped organize fund-raising for miners' fight to win UMW representation. Translator Róger Calero is at center.

BY PAUL MAILHOT

PRICE, Utah—"In September 2003 the workers at Co-Op stood up to the mine owners and opened a fight for dignity, better working conditions, and safety," said Bill Estrada in welcoming some 100 people to a barbecue and pro-

gram here June 4. Among those attending were former Co-Op miners, their families, and supporters. "Today we celebrate the defeat of the retaliatory lawsuit the company filed against our union struggle, and we celebrate what the fight at Co-Op

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Bolivian gov't announces land reform

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Bolivian president Evo Morales announced in early June a sweeping agrarian reform plan, issuing titles for some 3 million hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres) of state land to landless peasants. The move comes in response to a rise in peasant occupations of unused farmlands. A month earlier

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San Diego march: 'No Nat'l Guard troops at border'

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

SAN YSIDRO, California, June 3—"Our main focus today is to oppose the militarization of the border. The decision to send 6,000 National Guard troops will only result in more deaths. That's why we are marching," said Chrissie Jogoleff, 20, a student at San Diego City College and leader of the Sí Se Puede Coalition. Jogoleff was an organizer of the protest at the U.S.-Mexico border here. *Sí se puede* means "Yes we can" in Spanish.

Two days earlier California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said he would send 1,000 National Guard troops to the border as part of "Operation Jump Start." That's the White House plan, backed by Congress, to deploy Guard troops to the border to make it easier for immigration cops to police the frontier with Mexico.

The 200-strong protest, called on

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Cops in Canada stage 'antiterror' raids, arrest 15

BY JOE YOUNG

TORONTO—Some 400 police officers carried out raids in the Toronto area June 2-3 arresting 15 people for an alleged terrorist plot. Two others already imprisoned were also charged in the case. The raids took place as part of a "sting" operation in which the police delivered three tons of ammonium nitrate to their targets. The suspects were later arrested for plotting "terrorist" actions with the materials, which can be used to make explosives. The Toronto *Globe and Mail* labeled them "suspected Islamic extremists."

The 17 people involved are charged

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2,850 new 'Militant' readers: Welcome!

Dear Reader,

Thank you for helping make the *Militant's* spring circulation campaign a success!

More than 2,800 people subscribed in two months, exceeding the initial goal of 2,000. Welcome! More than half of the new readers signed up the first three weeks of the subscription drive.

That period coincided with huge immigrant rights rallies. On April 9-10 and again on May Day some 2 million people took to the streets each time, many of them downing their tools, to demand immediate legalization of the undocumented. The size, geographic spread, and proletarian composition of these actions was unprecedented for the United

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Miners' families demand 'Justice!'

Hold picket lines in Harlan, Kentucky, to protest exclusion from probe of deadly blast



Militant/Eddie Beck

UMWA safety official Kenny Johnson (center) at MSHA office in Harlan, Kentucky, June 2, where relatives of miners killed in a May 20 explosion at Darby Mine No. 1 protested their exclusion from government investigation. At right is Teddy Stewart, brother-in-law of Roy Middleton, who was killed in the blast. Next to him is Nellie Middleton, Roy's mother.

BY SAM MANUEL

HARLAN, Kentucky, June 2—Family members of miners killed on the job here protested today the exclusion of their representatives from investigations by state and federal officials into the May 20 explosion at the Darby Mine No. 1 where five miners died.

Attorney Tony Oppgaard and United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) safety official Kenny Johnson, who represent the families, were excluded from the state investigations. They participated in the federal investigation, which was held separately, after several miners who had been called as witnesses designated them as their

representatives.

According to the county coroner, miners Amon Brock, 51, and Jimmy Lee, 33, were killed by the explosion. Roy Middleton, 35; George Petra, 49; and Paris Thomas Jr., 53, survived the blast but suffocated from carbon monoxide.

The June 2 picket was the second protest organized by the families. Two days earlier they protested the exclusion of Oppgaard and Johnson from investigations held by state mine safety and health officials. Two state troopers were stationed in the hallway apparently to prevent family members and

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Bush: Killing of al-Qaeda leader in Iraq part of 'long war' on 'terror'

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, described by U.S. president George Bush as the "operational commander of the terrorist movement in Iraq," was killed June 7 in a U.S. air strike in Baqubah, Iraq. Five others were also reportedly killed in the attack, including a child.

"Zarqawi is dead, but the difficult and necessary mission in Iraq continues," Bush said in a press conference the following morning. "We can expect the terrorists and insurgents to carry on without him."

In recent public appearances, administration officials have continued to press the theme that Washington is engaged in a "long war" that doesn't end with the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his address at the May 27 commencement ceremony at the U.S. military

academy at West Point, Bush defended the course his administration has led under the banner of fighting the so-called war on terror.

"The focus of much of your military

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Ottawa ties foreign policy closer to Washington’s

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO—In a May 4 speech, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper said reestablishing better trade relations with Washington and steps to strengthen Ottawa’s military mission alongside U.S. forces in Afghanistan are two of the most important achievements of his new Conservative government.

For the past three years, tensions between Ottawa and Washington have created a substantial problem for Canada’s billionaire ruling families. Trade disputes with the United States have cost Canadian companies billions in lost profits. Ottawa’s refusal to join the imperialist invasion of Iraq in 2003 heightened the tensions.

Growing unease with this among Canada’s rulers helped fuel a sharp factional struggle for leadership within the then-ruling Liberal Party and played a key role in its defeat.

The Conservative Party won a minority government, 124 seats out of 308 in Parliament, in the January 23 election after 13 years of Liberal party rule. Harper took office February 2.

On his first trip abroad, Harper went to Afghanistan March 12 to visit the 2,200 Canadian soldiers who are part of a NATO force there. In a quick vote in parliament May 17, the Conservatives won a motion to extend this Canadian mission to 2009.

The Conservative government is accelerating a transformation of its military, begun by the former Liberal government, into one that can be rapidly deployed using light-armored equipment for what they dub “peace-making” combat roles instead

of “peacekeeping” policing missions. Such missions, under the UN flag, were the hallmark of Canadian military interventions abroad for decades.

On April 27, a sharp trade dispute between Washington and Ottawa was settled, with Washington agreeing to remove the high tariffs it had placed on Canadian softwood lumber in 2002. As part of the accord, Washington will return \$4 billion of the \$5 billion in duties collected and Ottawa will restrict exports if lumber prices fall below a certain level.

Taking steps aimed at reversing support for sovereignty in Quebec, whose French-speaking majority is an oppressed nation in Canada, is also a goal of the new government.

On May 5, Harper announced

Chile: students strike to improve education



AFP/Getty Images/Claudio Pozo

Protesters in Santiago, Chile, confront police June 1. Cops used tear gas and water cannons and arrested more than 1,000 in an effort to put down student strikes. High school students across the country walked out of classes in May, and again in June, to demand free transit passes, free university entrance exams, and improved education in public schools. Organizers say more than 1 million students joined the latest strike.

—MICHAEL ITALIE

an accord between Ottawa and the Quebec provincial government that grants Quebec permanent represen-

tation in the Canadian delegation to UNESCO, the UN’s educational and cultural body.

Police in Canada stage ‘antiterror’ raids, arrest 15

Continued from front page under the Anti-Terrorism Act, which parliament passed in December 2001. Nine are also accused of “receiving training” to carry out a “terrorist” act and six with “intent to cause an explosion.” Media reports claim the 17 are linked to two individuals under arrest in Atlanta and to another arrested in London, England, who is alleged to have ties to al-Qaeda.

Fifteen of the accused appeared June 3 handcuffed and with manacles on their feet in a heavily guarded court here. They have been held in solitary confinement, not been allowed contact with their families, and may only talk to their lawyers through phones monitored by prison authorities. Attorney James Silver, who represents one of the defendants, said, “These [security measures] are unparal-

leled, as far as I’m aware, in the history of the Canadian court system.”

Stephen Harper, Canada’s prime minister and leader of the Conservative Party, hailed the arrests. “We are a target because of who we are and how we live, our society, our diversity and our values,” he said. Referring to the previous Liberal administration, Harper said that “governments on both sides of the House” have worked “to ensure that our police and security forces are working more co-operatively.”

New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton joined the chorus, stating he was “thankful that we have a security network with our police services that have been able to nip this thing in the bud.”

“Canadians have had a very great success in their anti-terrorism efforts,” said U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice. Others in the U.S. also hailed Ottawa’s raids as providing useful lessons for the U.S. rulers. An article in the June 11 *New York Times*, headlined “Lessons From Canada: Snooping Works,” said: “If radical Islamic terrorists emerge from within, border agents and port inspectors are unlikely to catch them. Better to use, some security experts say, a controversial tool in the war on terror: domestic intelligence and snooping.”

A massive media barrage is treating

the accused as if they were already guilty. The front-page headline of the June 7 *Globe and Mail*, for example, claimed those arrested were planning to “Storm Parliament Hill, Seize the politicians, Behead the Prime Minister.”

Prof. Jasmine Zine, a spokesperson for the newly formed Concerned Citizens Against a Rush to Judgment, criticized “the tremendous rush to attribute guilt without meaningful questioning of the security apparatus or being thoughtful in scrutinizing the evidence.”

On June 4, a mosque in Rexdale, a suburb of Toronto, was vandalized. Many windows of the building were broken.

The Communist League (CL) in Canada issued a statement June 9 calling for opposition to the “police raids, arrests, and other curbs on workers’ rights under the ‘antiterrorism’ banner.” It continued: “The rights of the accused must be defended—including presumption of innocence, private meetings with their lawyers, and complete access to all evidence against them.” The real target of these attacks on basic rights, it said, “is the fighting capacity of working people and our unions, not ‘terrorists.’”

The CL also called for immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan, where they are deployed as part of the U.S.-led “war on terror.”

THE MILITANT

‘I share its articles with co-workers’

“I subscribe to, read, and support the ‘Militant.’ Sharing articles from the ‘Militant’ with my co-workers encourages them to think of ways they can actively resist employer attacks.”

—Harold Ruggless
Des Moines, Iowa



Harold Ruggless is president of United Auto Workers Local 270.

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The Militant

VOL. 70/NO. 24

Closing news date: June 13, 2006

Editor and circulation director:

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Martin Koppel, Paul Pederson, and Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January and two weeks in June.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899; Fax (212) 244-4947.

E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first class (airmail), send \$80.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: Send \$65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: Send Canadian \$45 for one-year subscription to the Militant, 2238 Dundas St. West, Suite 201, Toronto, ON. Postal Code: M6R 3A9.

United Kingdom: £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.
Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

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Bush defends ‘long war’

Continued from front page
careers” Bush told the future U.S. Army officer corps, will be “the long war with Islamic radicalism.”

“The terrorist enemies we face today hide in caves and shadows—and emerge to attack free nations from within,” the president said. He reiterated that Washington “makes no distinction between the terrorists and the countries that harbor them.”

Bush once again reviewed historic changes his administration has overseen in Washington’s military strategy, global deployment, and order of battle. These include establishing new alliances that shift from task to task; transforming the military’s structure from the old large divisions to smaller and more agile combat teams that can move quickly to any theater of battle around the world, as well as elevating the role of Special Operations forces; and reorganizing the federal government, including its domestic police and military apparatus.

He pointed to the shift in relations with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan from governments that “once turned a blind eye to terror” to close U.S. military allies.

Bush also cited the establishment of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) involving some 70 states. Under this program, Washington and its allies assert the right to stop on the high seas and board any vessel suspected of carrying “weapons of mass destruction.”

A few days after Bush’s speech, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld toured Indonesia, Vietnam, and Singapore. His Indonesian counterpart agreed to discuss participation in the PSI “on an ad hoc basis.” Washington reestablished military ties six months ago with the government of Indonesia, the world’s most populous

country that’s largely Muslim. Rumsfeld announced that “Washington intended to give Jakarta sustained access to American training and equipment,” Reuters reported.

Likewise, Bush said, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the U.S.-led military alliance established during the Cold War, has been transformed from “a defensive alliance focused on protecting Europe from Soviet tank invasion into a dynamic alliance that is now operating across the world.” Bush pointed out that “for five decades, NATO forces never deployed outside of Europe.” Today they are operating in Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, and Afghanistan.

At a June 8 meeting of NATO’s North Atlantic Council, involving the defense ministers from 37 countries, NATO announced plans to increase its forces in Afghanistan from 9,000 to 16,000 by this summer, with an eye toward eventually taking command of the mission there. According to the *New York Times*, 6,000 of those troops—provided by the British, Canadian, Dutch, and Australian governments—will be stationed in southern Afghanistan, where they are expected to engage in combat.

“We created a new Northern Command responsible for homeland defense,” Bush said. This is the first time a military command under the direction of the commander in chief has been responsible for military operations inside U.S. borders since after the Civil War.

He also pointed to passage of the Patriot Act and moves to further centralize federal police powers by combining 22 separate agencies into the Department

UK: Protesters oppose ‘anti-terror’ measures



Militant/Paul Davies

LONDON—Hundreds demonstrated June 11 outside Scotland Yard police headquarters to oppose the June 2 police shooting and anti-terror raid of a home in Forest Gate, east London. In the assault, cops arrested Abul Koyair, 20, and his brother, Mohammed Abdul Kahar, 23, who was shot in the shoulder. Both were released a week later.

—PAUL DAVIES

of Homeland Security. Bush also warned that the governments of Syria and Iran could be the next targets for a U.S. attack.

The killing of Zarqawi “was a development in the war on Islamic extremist terrorism that not even some of the Bush administration’s toughest critics found fit to criticize,” the *New York Sun* said in a June 9 editorial.

The paper said that Leslie Cagan, a leader of the antiwar group United For Peace and Justice, “would not condemn the killing” of Zarqawi. “There seems to have been a body of evidence that this

man has been involved in terrorist activities,” she is quoted as saying to the *Sun*.

Cagan told the *Militant* that this quote is accurate, but a little oversimplified. “We don’t support acts of terrorism be they state terrorism from a government like the United States or committed by a militia,” Cagan said. “When people commit terrorist acts there should be some attempt to bring them to justice. Its better to do that through a criminal trial.”

Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth also told the *Sun* that Washington was “perfectly within its rights” to kill Zarqawi.

Miners’ families demand justice

Continued from front page

the media from going near the hearing room. They were removed the second day. State mining officials closed the hearing, saying they wanted to encourage witnesses to be forthcoming without

fear of intimidation.

Several family members pointed out that the mine boss and the company’s attorney were allowed to sit in on the entire investigation. “What kind of justice is that?” asked Teddy Stewart, brother-in-law of Roy Middleton.

“What do they have to hide?” asked Tilda Thomas, holding a sign that read, “Families Have Rights Too!” The widow of Paris Thomas Jr., she stood in the lobby of the Harlan Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) building with a dozen family members of other miners killed.

Thomas told the *Militant* her family has gotten no offer of assistance from the company and that with the exception of a call to express his condolences she has heard nothing from the mine’s co-owner, Ralph Napier. “We weren’t even told the hearings were taking place until we found out in the newspapers,” she added.

She received a letter stating that the family’s insurance is paid for six more months, she said. After that it will cost her \$207 a month to continue the coverage. “Where am I or any of these families going to get an extra \$207 a month?” she asked.

“Company reps in, Family reps out! Why?” read the sign held by Priscilla Petra. Her husband, George Petra, survived the explosion but was overcome by carbon monoxide gases.

“Who has more of a right to be in there than the families?” Paul Ledford told the *Militant*.

Ledford is the only survivor of those working in the mine during the May 20 explosion. Ledford said he thought his respirator stopped working after about 10 minutes. As he tried to get out of the mine he passed out twice. After regaining consciousness the second time he was able to signal rescuers using his helmet light. Ledford said investigators

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Bolivian government announces land reform

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the Bolivian government announced the state would take majority control of the country’s oil and natural gas industry.

Addressing thousands of Indian peasants gathered June 3 to receive land titles in the eastern city of Santa Cruz, Morales said, “Getting back the land means we’re getting back all the natural resources, we’re nationalizing all the natural resources.” The Bolivian president also said that about 20 million hectares of public land—about twice the size of Portugal—would be distributed to landless peasants over the next five years. CNN reported that the government intends to confiscate “only land that was not being tilled, land that was obtained illegally, or land used for speculation.”

“The landowners, the foreign companies, the political parties that have dominated this country took our land from us and that’s why we live in misery,” said Wilson Chacaray, a Guarani Indian leader at the ceremony, according to the *Scotsman*.

Bolivia is one of the least developed countries in Latin America. The National Institute of Statistics reports that some 63 percent its 9.2 million inhabitants live below the government’s official poverty level. In rural areas the figure is closer to 80 percent.

According to a recent report by the Roman Catholic Church, almost 90 percent of Bolivia’s productive land is owned by 50,000 families, while millions of peasants have little or no access to land. A study by the United Nations Development Program said that in the agricultural lowlands encompassing the departments of Pando, Beni, Santa Cruz,

and Chuquisaca, 100 families own 25 million hectares, while 2 million families of small farmers together have access to just 5 million hectares.

In response to Morales’s announcement, the National Farming Confederation, representing some of the country’s largest landholders, announced they would form “self-defense” squads.

“The government is not stopping land occupations, and faced with this situation the agribusiness community has decided to take actions on our own,” José Cespedes, president of the Eastern Agricultural Chamber, told the media.

Meanwhile, the campaign to teach Bolivia’s workers and peasants to read and write is advancing. The program began in March with assistance from the Cuban government, which is providing volunteer trainers, reading materials, and 30,000 television sets.

A ceremony held in the city of Cochabamba June 6 celebrated the first 1,000 graduates from the *Yo sí puedo* (Yes, I can) literacy program. So far some 5,000 training centers have been set up nationwide. Bolivia’s education minister, Felix Patzi, said the goal is to teach some 1.2 million people over the age of 15 to read and write and to be able to declare the entire country free of illiteracy by the end of 2008.

“Already the program has successfully taught 100,000 Bolivians to read and write,” *Prensa Latina* reported May 31. “The second stage proposes to benefit another 200,000 citizens, while the third and fourth stages will have a bilingual character

and will be addressed to the indigenous communities.”

At the same time, more than 700 Cuban doctors are providing free medical care to Bolivians in 188 cities and towns throughout the country. Cuba’s ambassador to Bolivia, Rafael Dausa, told *Prensa Latina* that the Cuban medical brigade has already treated 570,000 patients and saved more than 1,000 lives in just three months.

Meanwhile, some 400 Bolivian doctors conducted a one-day strike June 1 to oppose the presence of Cuban doctors. “We think the health of the Bolivian people should be managed by Bolivians,” Fernando Arandia, president of the Bolivian Medical College, told Reuters.



Quake victims in Indonesia aided by 135 Cuban doctors

In another act of solidarity, the Cuban government has sent 135 doctors to Java, Indonesia, to provide medical assistance to the tens of thousands injured from the earthquake that struck that country May 27. Nearly 6,000 people have died and more than 600,000 have been left homeless. “In this terrible situation, the Indonesian people can count on the support of the Cuban government and the Cuban people,” stated Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque in a message to Indonesia’s president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

—B.W.

2,850 new ‘Militant’ readers: Welcome!

Continued from front page States, and that was reflected in *Militant* sales too. About 1,000 people subscribed at the immigrant rights rallies.

The final stretch of the campaign, which ended June 7, was second best. Nearly 500 people subscribed that week, a good number of them miners and their families throughout the U.S. coalfields. *Militant* readers took to heart the appeal from the paper to widely sell the issue featuring the front-page headline, “Unionize the mines! Build the UMWA! No miner has to die!”

Below are some of the reports readers sent in about these efforts, which show how more and more working people say they need the *Militant* to fight the bosses’ antilabor offensive and win.

BY JEANNE FITZMAURICE

HARLAN, Kentucky—“I’ve been looking for that paper,” said Tilda Thomas, whose husband, Paris Thomas, Jr., was killed along with four other miners at the Kentucky Darby Mine No. 1 near here after an explosion on May 20. She went on to explain that her brother-in-law had downloaded the *Militant* article, “Bosses’ profit greed kills six Kentucky miners,” from the Internet, telling her, “There *is* one paper holding the company responsible.”

Tilda Thomas met a team of *Militant* supporters June 2 outside the Harlan office of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). She was there with a dozen other family members of the miners who were killed underground to protest the exclusion of their representa-

tives from the agency’s initial investigation of the miners’ deaths (see front-page article).

Militant supporters on that team—Sam Manuel from Washington; Rachele Fruit and Wes Lewis from Atlanta; Eddie Beck from Newark, New Jersey; and myself from Birmingham, Alabama—sold eight subscriptions and 188 copies of the paper in Harlan County. We sold many of them in the parking lot of the Wal-Mart and a local grocery store in Harlan. Time after time those buying the paper would point to the photos of the five miners who were killed at the Darby mine, published on the front page of the last issue, saying they were friends or relatives of those miners.

“I’ll take a subscription,” said Carson Whitehead. He was among many miners who stopped and purchased the paper at a railroad crossing on Route 38, which is dotted with a cluster of mines, including Darby Mine No. 1.

“What’s in your paper this week?” asked another miner whose wife had picked up a copy the week before.

Over two weekends *Militant* supporters sold 15 subscriptions and 318 copies of the socialist newsweekly in Harlan County.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

PITTSBURGH—*Militant* supporters from here, as well as Washington, D.C., New York, and New Jersey, visited the northern Appalachia coalfields June 3–4. We sold 77 copies and five subscriptions to the paper. Sales included visits to Carmichaels, Pennsylvania; and Fairmont and Clarksburg, West Virginia.

The high point of our visit was the sale at Consol Energy’s non-union Bailey Mine in southwestern Pennsylvania, where we sold 17 papers. At one point, four cars coming out of the mine were lined up with drivers waving their dollar bills for the paper. One miner shouted: “We need the union!” Many of the very young miners stopped to talk to a Young Socialists member on the team.

Word spread inside the mine about the *Militant*’s headline that week: “Organize the mines!” This is a popular idea at Bailey, which employs many workers from mines that were previously organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). In the two days following the sale, supporters of the *Militant* who work at the mine sold four introductory subscriptions.

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

TWIN CITIES, Minnesota—*Militant* supporters here shot past our quota with a weekend of sales June 3–4 to meatpacking areas in Minnesota, a central Illinois coal team, and several sales in workers districts in and around the Twin Cities. Young Socialists in town for the socialist summer school joined these teams and helped make them a success.

Ashley Williams, a 16-year-old high school student, answered the door during a visit to Worthington, Minnesota. Kin to a packinghouse worker who was injured on the job, she identified with the need to unionize the mines and other workplaces to enforce safety. Williams decided to



Militant/Frank Forrestal
Militant supporter sells paper June 3 outside Freeman United Crown 3 coal mine in Illinois.

subscribe on the spot. Reading the *Militant*, she said, “is important for those in my community and my family. There is no need for people to get hurt at work.”

As supporters of the *Militant* were about to leave, Williams’s mother entered the apartment. After discussing the importance of having a working-class newspaper and how workers around the world have more in common with each other than the bosses, she thanked the team for coming. Twenty minutes later she took her car to look for the sales team and bought her own subscription.

At the same time, donations from many readers made it possible to exceed the *Militant*’s fund drive goal. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Argiris Malapanis, Editor

Spring ‘Militant’ Subscription Drive
April 8 – June 7, 2006
Final Chart

Country	Quota	Sold	%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	35	39	111%
Christchurch	20	22	110%
N.Z. Total	55	61	111%
CANADA	120	129	108%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London*	65	73	112%
Edinburgh	30	30	100%
UK Total	95	103	108%
UNITED STATES			
Detroit	5	6	120%
Tampa	15	17	113%
Albany, NY	15	16	107%
Des Moines	205	219	107%
Twin Cities	200	213	107%
Washington, DC	95	102	107%
Miami	160	170	106%
Boston	85	88	104%
Atlanta	90	93	103%
Chicago	100	103	103%
Newark	165	169	102%
Birmingham	105	106	101%
Houston	140	142	101%
Los Angeles	170	171	101%
New York*	340	343	101%
Seattle	145	146	101%
Amherst, MA	6	6	100%
Philadelphia	130	130	100%
Pittsburgh	60	60	100%
San Francisco	110	109	99%
Price	65	58	89%
U.S. Total	2406	2467	103%
AUSTRALIA	45	46	102%
ICELAND	17	17	100%
SWEDEN	35	35	100%
Int’l totals	2773	2858	95%
Goal/Should be	3000	3000	100%
*increased quota			

Families of Kentucky miners picket hearing

Continued from page 3 told him that his respirator worked and that he most likely overran the rate at which the device produces oxygen.

The U.S. Senate recently passed legislation requiring mine operators to provide miners with breathing devices that contain two hours of oxygen instead of the current one hour. The House approved a similar bill June 7, which, in addition to the two hours of air, also requires mine owners to provide communication and tracking devices to miners within three years.

Teddy Stewart said the legislation was too late. “They ought to have enough air for the miners to survive like they had in Canada,” said Stewart. He was referring to the successful rescue of 72 potash miners in Canada in January who survived for hours in safety rooms underground that were equipped with 36 hours of air, food, and water.

The Kentucky miners and their families won a small victory when Oppegard and Johnson announced that several miners who had been called as witnesses had designated them as their representatives. “We preferred to go in as representatives of the families,” Johnson said. “We are sure that the miners will want us to keep the families informed. That is what several have told us. They want to help the families.”

Investigators say the explosion was likely caused by a methane gas leak from a sealed-off section of the mine. According to the Associated Press, miner Tony Bledsoe said he told state investigators that he had been instructed to build the seals at the Darby Mine No. 1 without receiving any training.

Bledsoe said the blocks used to construct the seals were easily broken and that half of them cracked on the delivery truck. The driver of the truck declined to be interviewed upon leaving the federal investigation.

Until the 1990s, seals were constructed with concrete blocks. MSHA has recently allowed mine owners to use a foam-type material called an Omega Block, which is cheaper and can easily be lifted by one worker, requiring



Militant/Eddie Beck
Paul Ledford, the lone survivor of the Darby No. 1 mine explosion, outside the MSHA office in Harlan, Kentucky, June 2.

smaller crews. Rescuers at the Darby mine reported these blocks did not withstand the blast.

Eddie Beck from Newark, New Jersey, contributed to this article.

\$90,000 ‘Militant’ Fund Drive
April 15–June 7 ♦ Final Chart

Country	Quota	Paid	%
ICELAND	200	550	275%
FRANCE	250	325	130%
SWEDEN	640	820	128%
CANADA*	2,500	3,117	125%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	1,500	1,665	111%
Christchurch*	885	935	106%
N.Z. Total	2,385	2,600	109%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	600	656	109%
London	1,200	1,314	110%
UK	1,800	1,970	109%
UNITED STATES			
Tampa	300	425	142%
Houston*	3,500	4,100	117%
San Francisco	8,500	9,580	113%
Atlanta*	4,500	4,955	110%
Chicago	5,500	6,024	110%
Miami*	2,400	2,563	107%
Pittsburgh*	4,200	4,436	106%
Los Angeles	8,500	8,941	105%
Price	1,000	1,040	104%
New York	12,000	12,425	104%
Washington, DC	2,500	2,588	104%
Philadelphia	3,200	3,292	103%
Boston*	3,550	3,645	103%
Des Moines*	2,100	2,154	103%
Twin Cities	4,800	4,920	103%
Newark	3,500	3,510	100%
Birmingham*	2,400	2,401	100%
Albany	100	100	100%
Seattle	8,000	7,268	91%
Other		1,560	
U.S. Total	80,550	85,927	107%
AUSTRALIA*	1,200	1,247	104%
Int’l totals	89,525	96,556	107%
Goal/Should be	90,000	90,000	100%
*increased quota			

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Canada: Diamond workers strike in Northwest Territories

TORONTO—After voting by 71 percent to reject the company’s final offer in early April, nearly 400 workers are on strike for a first contract at BHP Billiton’s Ekati Diamond Mine in the Northwest Territories—190 miles south of the Arctic Circle. The strikers are members of Union of Northern Workers (UNW) Local X3050, which is affiliated to the Public Service Alliance of Canada union.

Wages are a major issue in the strike, with the union pointing to the \$7.5 billion in profits BHP Billiton made last year. The union rejected the company’s May 30 “last and final offer” at talks with the union on May 30, charging the bosses with refusing to compromise on the issues and retracting provisions it had agreed to earlier. More information on the Ekati strike can be found on the union’s websites www.unw.ca and

www.psacnorth.com.

—Beverly Bernardo

Coal miners in Australia fight for union contract

SINGLETON, Australia—Coal miners at Xstrata’s United Collieries in the Hunter Valley, 140 miles north of Sydney, walked out June 1 in a seven-day protest strike. The job action by some 100 miners, members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, is part of a fight to win a new union agreement. It followed a week of rolling stoppages involving 24-hour walkouts by different shifts and overtime bans.

Terry Fernie, the lodge secretary (union delegate), said that the company had stalled negotiations on the agreement until after the federal government’s new antiunion legislation came into effect at the end of March. These laws have made it much more difficult to take legal strike action. Fernie



Militant/Bob Aiken

Left, mine workers union lodge secretary Terry Fernie speaks with *Militant* reporter Linda Harris June 2 on the picket line at Xstrata’s United Collieries in Singleton, Australia.

explained that the union conducted the required secret ballot, with more than 90 percent voting in favor of taking action.

The mine lease has an expected life of only another six years. Pickets said they want to secure their entitlements—injury pay, severance pay, and long service leaves—because under the new

laws there would be no guarantee that the current agreement would continue.

The company has offered wage raises averaging 2 percent per year, less than the rate of inflation. “Last year the company made a \$112 million profit from this operation, but they still have nothing for the fellas,” said Fernie.

—Linda Harris

Steel boss sues ‘Workers World’ newspaper for ‘defamation’

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK—The Renco Group, a multibillion dollar holding company, filed a defamation lawsuit March 1 against the Workers World Party; WW Publishers, Inc., which publishes the *Workers World* newspaper; and Brenda Ryan, a *Workers World* reporter.

The suit, filed in New York State Supreme Court, alleges that the weekly newspaper defamed Renco in two articles published in February.

The first article was headlined “WCI Steel bankruptcy robs workers’ pensions.” Renco claims that a sentence in this article, which said, “After robbing the pension fund, Renco now claims it can cover the fund’s shortfall,” is “false and defamatory,” according to the suit the Renco Group filed.

Attorneys representing the company, from the legal firm Arnold & Porter LLP, had notified *Workers World* that Renco might take legal action if the paper did not withdraw the article from its website and apologize to the company. In response, *Workers World* ran a second article, headlined “Is Renco robbing steelworkers pensions?” It quoted Deirdre Griswold, the paper’s editor, saying, “The paper is standing by the article unconditionally and refuses to accept Arnold & Porter’s ultimatum. The article accurately described their client as robbing the pension funds.”

At the time Renco was engaged in an effort to shield itself in the bankruptcy court from its pension obligations to the workers at WCI Steel in Warren, Ohio. This would have left the pension fund—already underfunded to the tune of \$117 million—in the hands of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), a quasi-government agency that takes over a portion of pension plans left behind in bankruptcies. If Renco had succeeded, the PBGC said in February, “the pension plan would have been abandoned to a liquidating corporate shell with no assets.”

Griswold told the *Militant* that the aim of the suit is to intimidate those who speak out against corporations like Renco. “A lot of people are using this kind of language with respect to the things that are happening to their pensions—words like ‘theft,’ ‘robbed,’ ‘steal,’” Griswold said. “And they are

angry. This has affected workers in the airlines, steel, mining, and many other industries.”

When contacted, the Renco Group referred this reporter to attorney Peter Haveles of Arnold & Porter.

Haveles said the case had nothing to do with free speech. “Renco is not suing *Workers World* for its speech,” he said. “It is suing *Workers World* for its false statement.”

In their motion to dismiss the lawsuit filed May 25, attorneys at Davis Wright Tremaine, who represent *Workers World* and the other defendants, disagree. This is a “free-speech litigation,” they say. The right to express opinion and use “rhetorical hyperbole,” they argue, is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and similar provisions in the state constitution.

“*Workers World* was obviously using the word ‘robbing’ in a rhetorical fashion to express its opinion that WCI’s bankruptcy—which Renco initiated—led to the unfortunate situation

that workers’ pensions would suffer as a consequence,” the defendants’ attorneys argue. “No reasonable reader could construe the articles as suggesting that Renco literally purloined money from the workers’ pensions.”

In March, Renco agreed to a settlement in which it remained responsible for the pension fund. The fund, Renco states in its suit against *Workers World*, “is underfunded due to circumstances beyond the control of Renco,” such as “stock market performance earlier this decade” and “a change in formula for benefits.”

While the pension benefits remain intact for now, the fight by steelworkers against cutbacks at WCI Steel continues. Workers began informational picketing outside the plant May 25 to demand the company, which has emerged from bankruptcy under new ownership, take steps to ensure safety as it carries out a reorganization that includes speedup, said a Steelworkers union official.

“We’ve averaged one injury a day in

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 3, 1981

An estimated 10,000 unionists marched and rallied in Tucson, Arizona, on May 13, according to a story in *The Arizona Republic*.

They were protesting Tucson Electric Power Company’s awarding of a \$150 million contract for construction of a coal-fired power plant to a non-union firm.

At the rally—reportedly the largest ever in Tucson—iron workers, carpenters, electricians, and other unionists carried signs saying, “Keep America Union,” and denouncing Brown & Root, the scab contractor.

A significant number of the participants were Chicano workers.

John Fitzpatrick, president of the Retail Clerks Union, Local 727 in Tucson, was cheered when he told the crowd, “open shop means scab shop or anti-union shop.”

Arizona is a “right-to-work” state.



July 2, 1956

“I invite a debate with Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the American Communist Party,” declared Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, at a symposium in Brooklyn.

The symposium was on Working Class Policy in the 1956 Elections and was sponsored by the Brooklyn Compass Club. Four speakers participated: David Goldway, executive secretary of the Jefferson School; Clifford T. McAvoy, former candidate of the American Labor Party (New York section of the Progressive Party); Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, distinguished historian and educator; and Farrell Dobbs, SWP presidential candidate. Second speaker was Dr. DuBois. “Big Business will nominate the candidates. Forget the presidential election of 1956.”

Dobbs called for support of the SWP ticket as the only vehicle for carrying forward the fight for socialism on election day.



July 4, 1931

During the last two weeks the striking miners in Western Pennsylvania, Northern West Virginia, and the Eastern part of Ohio have gained thousands of new recruits. More mines were shut down, picketing activities and mass demonstrations increased.

Several miners have already been killed, fallen victims to this brutality many have been wounded and scores are held in the jails under almost prohibitive bail. Such is the heavy toll of this strike. Yet its powerful proportions testify eloquently not only to the terrible starvation conditions existing in these mine fields but also to what has become proverbial—the militancy of the miners.

It is worthy of note that it is particularly in this section of the bituminous coal fields that the mechanization of coal mining has reached its highest point. It naturally resulted in immensely increased speed-up and in the most heavy imaginable pressure of exploitation.

Utah miners celebrate

Continued from front page

means for the future. Our struggle was an example of what can be accomplished,” said Estrada, a former Co-Op miner and one of the leaders of the fight to win representation for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the mine owned by C.W. Mining. “It strengthened the fight of immigrant workers today for legalization and the ongoing struggles by miners for safety on the job and unionization to enforce safer conditions.”

The meeting was held at the UMWA District 22 union hall. Mike Dalpiaz, UMWA international vice president for the region, welcomed the participants. A Mexican meal cooked by miners and their families was prepared to thank all those who backed the miners in their fight for a union. Rosita Salazar, the wife of one of the former Co-Op miners, baked an enormous *tres leches* cake for the event with “Thank you for your support” scrolled on top.

A display of 50 photos depicting high-points of the struggle drew the interest of many. Miners who were directly involved in the Co-Op fight showed others the exhibit pointing to pictures that marked key moments of the organizing campaign.

Dalpiaz and Bob Butero, UMWA Region 4 director of organizing, described solidarity activities by many unions that helped sustain the struggle. “But the main people of this fight were the Co-Op miners themselves,” Butero said. “They are a brave group of people who deserve to be called true labor brothers and sisters.”

Butero said he had looked forward to swearing in the former Co-Op miners and welcoming them in a new UMWA local. But, he said, that victory was not

won at this time. “That is going to have to be an ongoing and continuing battle.”

After Butero’s presentation, UMWA retiree Nick Degiulio, who was in the audience, asked for the floor. Up at the podium he spoke about the type of labor action that was common when the workers picketed the Co-Op mine for months. “Jack Smith, a member of our local, drove by the picket line one day,” Degiulio recounted. “He said, ‘We have to organize some solidarity for these miners,’ and that’s how the first truckload of food got delivered.” A good number in the crowd were retired miners who helped the union struggle. They described similar proud moments to reporters and others present.

Those speaking as part of the program included Alyson Kennedy, who was one of three women miners working at Co-Op when the struggle began (see article below); George Neckel, director of Utah Jobs with Justice; Trevyan McCoy, who represented International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 from San Francisco, along with fellow ILWU member Ed Thomas who led the crowd in singing a union song; Samuel Johnson, president of UMWA Local 1332 on the Navajo Nation; and Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant* newspaper.

Johnson said the contract for his local at the McKinley mine near Window Rock, Arizona, expires in August.



June 4 meeting at UMWA District 22 union hall in Price, Utah, to celebrate Co-Op miners victory in defeating bosses’ counteroffensive. Left: Rosita Salazar (left), a supporter of union-organizing struggle, serves *tres leches* cake. Right: Translator Róger Calero and former Co-Op miner Alyson Kennedy (speaking).

Militant photos by Tamar Rosenfeld

There has been little progress in negotiations with the Pittsburg and Midway Coal Company, he said. “We’ve learned a lot from our solidarity efforts with the Co-Op miners,” added Johnson, pointing out that these lessons will be important for what he sees as their upcoming battle. Johnson invited participants to Local 1332’s annual picnic over the July 4 weekend in Window Rock, which he said is an important event to build solidarity with the Navajo miners.

Malapanis, who had recently returned from a reporting trip for the *Militant* to Harlan County, Kentucky, where five miners were recently killed (see front-page article), pointed to the interest among working people in Kentucky to learn about the Co-Op miners’ struggle in Utah and its accomplishments.

The celebration closed with former Co-Op miners Berthila Leon and Bill Estrada presenting photos of the miners’ march to the Co-Op mine in July 2004, after they had won reinstatement

following their 10-month strike. The framed pictures were given to those who led solidarity efforts for the union-organizing campaign.

Reporters from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Emery County Progress*, *Intermountain Catholic*, and the *Militant* covered the event.

Trade unions and other supporters of the Co-Op fight sent solidarity messages that were read at the meeting. One was signed by Russell Mayn, secretary-treasurer of the Maritime Union of New Zealand Local 13.

“The Maritime Union of New Zealand sends a message of congratulations in defending free speech and the rights of workers to organise and fight for fair and decent working conditions,” it said. “Like your union we find ourselves continually under attack from employers exploiting workers and using anti-union tactics to increase company profits.... [E]njoy the 4th. ‘Touch One Touch All.’”

How Co-Op miners stood up, defeated bosses retaliatory suit

BY NORTON SANDLER

PRICE, Utah—“The recent decision by federal judge Dee Benson in Salt Lake City shattered the retaliatory lawsuit C.W. Mining and its company union filed against the former Co-Op miners,” said Alyson Kennedy. She was speaking at a June 4 event here at the hall of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) District 22 to celebrate the settlement of the suit. Kennedy, a veteran underground coal miner, helped lead the two-and-a-half year-long union-organizing battle at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah. C.W. Mining owns the mine.

“The judge dismissed all the defamation charges the company had filed against 16 former Co-Op miners,” she said. “His ruling affirmed that workers have the right to express opinions about working conditions, including safety, and about our struggle to be represented by the union of our choice, without being sued by the bosses for it.”

Benson also threw out the company’s other charges alleging immigration fraud, unfair labor practices, violation of the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), and civil conspiracy, Kennedy noted. In the same ruling the judge dismissed the case against Utah’s two main dailies—the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News*. All that remained of the suit, originally filed in September 2004 against some 150 defendants, were “weak defamation allegations against the UMWA, Utah Jobs with Justice, and the

Militant newspaper,” she said.

The May 1 decision was damaging to the coal company, she added. Just a few weeks later C.W. Mining agreed to drop the lawsuit against the remaining defendants and reach a settlement with the UMWA and the fired Co-Op miners.

Miners fight abusive conditions

Kennedy went to work at the mine in the spring of 2003. At that time, she said, workers were increasingly standing up to what they considered abusive working conditions there.

“When I was hired at Co-Op I was assigned to operate a battery ram car, a big piece of equipment like a dump truck that the operator drives to where the coal is being mined—the face. Coal is loaded into the ram car by a continuous mining machine and then driven to the belt that carries it out of the mine. The conditions on the section were bad. The bottom was shale and there was a lot of water on the ground. The shale would turn into sticky deep mud so the ram cars were constantly getting stuck,” she said.

“The miners on my crew helped me a lot, even though they all spoke Spanish and I couldn’t understand most of what they were saying. We did communicate on important things,” said Kennedy.

“They would ask me how much I was being paid. I said \$7.50 an hour. Most on the crew were being paid less and they had been on the job much longer than me. My co-workers asked me how much I had been paid at other mines. I said \$18 to \$20 an hour, because there was a

sindicato (union) at those mines.”

A couple of months after she started Kennedy said she was told to report to the shift foreman who informed her that her job was in jeopardy because the company had bad evaluations of her performance. “I protested but they sent me home anyway,” she said. “The boss said to call the next day and they would let me know if they still had a job for me.”

The bosses’ action provoked discussion among the miners who refused to back up the company’s allegations. “This had an impact,” Kennedy said. “It reinforced my refusal to accept the company’s claim that I couldn’t do the job. When I showed up for work the next day, the boss said that the company had another position for me on an underground crew.”

‘We stood up, gained confidence’

Miners gained confidence “every time we stood up to the bosses,” she continued. “We began talking about how to change these conditions in the spring and summer of 2003. We decided to meet and discuss how to do it. The bosses got wind of it. They would corner miners underground and question us about why we wanted the UMWA to represent us.”

“They began suspending miners,” she said. “I’ll never forget one incident. The crew I was on was waiting in the lamp room to go to work. We noticed that a miner was standing by himself. We asked him what was up because

we knew he was supposed to be underground. He told us the shift foreman had taken him out of the mine and the bosses were going to suspend him. Two crews immediately refused to go underground until the company backed down and agreed to put this miner back to work.

“A few days later, on Sept. 22, 2003, the bosses tried this again with another miner, Bill Estrada,” she said. “When Bill got to work a boss told him to sign a piece of paper agreeing he would be fired the next time he didn’t perform proper safety checks on equipment. Bill told them he wouldn’t sign. They then suspended him for three days with intent to discharge and told him to go home. Bill was able to describe to his crew what happened before he left.

“When word of the suspension spread, we decided to leave work, go to the mine office, and let the bosses know we would not return until Bill was back. Miners coming in for the afternoon shift joined us. Over 50 miners were at the office for hours,” she said.

“The company then called the county sheriff. Two sheriff’s cars showed up and the bosses asked the police officers to get workers off of their property,” said Kennedy. “One of the sheriff’s deputies looked at the two police cars, and then at the miners, and said, ‘Where am I’m going to put all of them?’ The boss responded, ‘They are all fired, get them off of the property now.’”

Workers then decided to leave. They

Continued on page 8

End U.S. colonial rule, say Puerto Rican patriots at the UN

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

UNITED NATIONS—"I have come to demand justice and to denounce the cowardly assassination of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos," Edgardo Ojeda told the UN Special Committee on Decolonization here June 12. The son of the Puerto Rico independence fighter gunned down by FBI agents last year, Ojeda explained that of all the evidence of his country's continued colonial subjugation, "one of the most barbarous was the premeditated murder of this tireless fighter."

On Sept. 23, 2005, FBI cops raided the home of Ojeda Ríos, a leader of *Los Macheteros*, in Hormigueros, Puerto Rico. They cordoned off the area, removed neighbors from their homes, and cut electricity to the community. Edgardo Ojeda pointed out that the autopsy showed the independence leader could have survived the shot that struck him. By blocking any medical assistance until the next day, the FBI agents left him to bleed to death.

Some 40 speakers addressed the decolonization committee, which adopted a resolution sponsored by the Cuban and Venezuelan governments in support of self-determination and independence for Puerto Rico. The number of speakers and those who observed the hearing was twice that of previous years, reflecting the deepening political and economic crisis on the island. There was a much greater turnout among both those in favor of independence and supporters of the two colonial parties in Puerto Rico, the ruling Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP). There was a sharper debate on how to resolve Puerto Rico's colonial status.

The economic crisis facing working people came to a head this spring when tens of thousands of workers marched against the May 1 "layoff" of 95,000 public workers. The two-week government lockout and service shutdowns forced through Puerto Rico's first sales tax. The capitalists are on an offensive in the name of dismantling an "oversized welfare state" to cut social programs such as food stamps and housing subsidies that large numbers of Puerto Ricans depend on. Already half the population lives below the federally defined poverty line.

Speaker after speaker described the widespread outrage and protests on the island at the FBI killing of Ojeda Ríos and the escalating attacks by the U.S. political police.

"The FBI has started harassing independence supporters in their homes and workplaces," Miguel Sánchez, a leader of the Hostos National Independence Movement and a shoemaker from Mayagüez, told the UN committee. He was representing a new group called Breaking the Cordon, which is campaigning to expose the truth about those responsible for the execution of Ojeda Ríos. He said the cops conduct interrogations of the neighbors and co-workers of those battling Puerto Rico's colonial subjugation.

On February 10 the FBI raided six homes and offices across the island. The U.S. political police seized docu-

ments, files, and computers to counter a "domestic terrorist attack" that they said was being planned by independence fighters.

Ben Ramos of ProLibertad Freedom Campaign was one of many speakers who made the case for freedom for the remaining five Puerto Rican political prisoners held by Washington—Oscar López, Carlos Alberto Torres, Haydee Beltrán, José Pérez González, and Antonio Camacho. The FBI re-arrested Camacho—who had already served out a 15-year sentence—on March 28 in the middle of the First Congress for the Decolonization of Puerto Rico held in San Juan.

In spite of the May 1, 2003, decision by Washington—in face of sustained mass protests—to end the decades-long use of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for target practice, the U.S. Navy continues its destructive practices there. Ismael Guadalupe, a central leader of the protests against the Navy's actions, told the UN committee that in the last 10 months U.S. forces, in the name of "cleaning up" the island, have carried out 66 detonations, setting off 20 tons of explosives. Noting that 50 percent of the territory of Vieques

Puerto Rico's independence in interest of toilers in U.S. Socialist Workers Party leader testifies at UN commission hearings

Below are excerpts of the statement to the United Nations Decolonization Committee that William Estrada presented June 12 on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party.

BY WILLIAM ESTRADA

I join with my brothers and sisters here in calling on the U.S. government to immediately release all Puerto Rican independence fighters locked up in U.S. prisons. They are some of the longest-held political prisoners in the world....

I also join with others in protesting the cold-blooded killing of independence leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos by FBI cops on September 23. All those responsible for this murder, from the triggermen to those who gave the order, should be prosecuted and jailed.

Others here have offered a wealth of facts demonstrating that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony.... They have used these facts to explain why independence from Washington's rule is a necessity for the people of Puerto Rico, if they are to freely determine their destiny.

I would like to add that a successful fight for the independence of Puerto Rico is also in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the U.S. Workers and farmers in this country have nothing to gain from Washington's colonial rule over Puerto Rico.

Having been involved with fellow coal miners in a three-year-long battle with coal bosses in Utah, I can say that working people in the United States have no common interests with the owners of Peabody Coal, General Motors, and Exxon, nor with the twin parties that serve the bosses' interests—the Democrats and Republicans.



Militant photos by Michael Italie

Speakers at June 12 meeting at New York's Hunter College following UN hearing. Inset: Edgardo Ojeda, son of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, killed by FBI cops last year. Above, from left: Frank Velgara of ProLibertad; Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the struggle to oust U.S. Navy from Vieques; Betty Brassell of United for Vieques; Manuel Rodríguez of Socialist Front of Puerto Rico; and Bill Estrada of the Socialist Workers Party.

remains in the hands of the federal authorities, he described how real estate and other foreign capitalist interests are taking over land and driving out many working people. "We demand a complete withdrawal by the Navy from Vieques," said Guadalupe.

Others who spoke in favor of independence for Puerto Rico included representatives of the Puerto Rican Independence Party; Socialist Front; National Council for the Decolonization of Puerto Rico; Vieques Support Campaign; Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico; Juan Mari Brás of Common Cause for Independence; and Raúl Alfonsín, former president of Argentina. Bill Estrada of the Socialist Workers Party spoke in solidarity with the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and explained why this fight is in the in-

terests of working people in the United States (see excerpts below).

Carlos Dalmau of the PPD acknowledged that being a "commonwealth" has not resolved the problem of Puerto Rico's status. He complained of the U.S. government's lack of cooperation and its "imperialist attitude."

Advocates of Washington annexing Puerto Rico as the 51st state also mobilized for the hearing. Miriam Rodríguez of the PNP decried the island's colonial status, making it possible for giant pharmaceutical companies and others to operate tax-free. "No one on the island accepts the current 'territorial' status," she said.

The UN committee adopted the resolution for the seventh consecutive year.

Rather, we have everything in common with working people around the world. We have a common oppressor and common enemy: the handful of ruling U.S. billionaire families and their government.

As long as Puerto Rico is under Washington's colonial domination, the fighting capacity and solidarity of the working-class movement in the U.S. will be weakened. And it will put U.S. imperialism in a stronger position to carry out its escalating assaults around the world.

The U.S. government has used Puerto Rico as a launching pad for attacks on countries around the world... Right now, U.S. military forces are conducting large-scale military maneuvers in the Caribbean—a threat aimed against Cuba and Venezuela....

This imperialist offensive abroad—their "long war," as they call it—is an extension of the U.S. employers' war against working people at home....

Among the casualties in this war are the 33 U.S. coal miners who have been killed so far this year—including the five workers killed last month after a mine explosion in Kentucky. They were killed by the coal companies' greed for profits.

But these conditions are generating resistance, and in many cases workers have been fighting to organize unions or to use their unions to defend themselves.

Over the past three years, dozens of coal miners, including myself, have been involved in a fight to organize the United Mine Workers of America at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, because of the unsafe work conditions and low pay—which started at \$5.50 an hour.

We and our supporters were recently able to defeat a harassment lawsuit by the coal bosses, a defense campaign that

many leaders of the Puerto Rican independence struggle supported, and I thank them for their solidarity.

I have also had the opportunity to be part of the recent mass protests by immigrant workers that have taken place around the United States, including 2 million on May 1, to demand "Legalization now!" These are some of the largest working-class mobilizations in decades.

Puerto Rican workers have also been part of these struggles, another expression of how the interests of working people in this country are intertwined with the anticolonial struggle in Puerto Rico.

Colonial domination reinforces the systematic discrimination and racist prejudice faced by 2.7 million Puerto Ricans in this country, along with Blacks, Chicanos, and other oppressed nationalities. As long as Puerto Rico remains a colony, Puerto Ricans in the United States will be subjected to second-class status....

The U.S. rulers, who live off the labor and resources of millions around the world, have the arrogance to tell the Puerto Rican people they have no choice but to depend on Washington, that independence would only bring them ruin.

But the living example by the workers and farmers of Cuba and their revolutionary leadership exposes this lie. Cuba shows that by taking political power, by making a socialist revolution, it is possible to win genuine independence from U.S. imperialism. Cuba points the way forward for working people everywhere—including the United States....

‘No Nat’l Guard at border’

Continued from front page

short notice, began with a rally at Larson Park. About 20 Minutemen, an anti-immigrant group that patrols the border to stop working people from crossing into the United States, organized a counter-demonstration.

“These folks called the Minutemen have a historical origin. They are the Ku Klux Klan,” said Nativo López, a leader of the Los Angeles-based March 25 Coalition. López is also the national director of Hermandad Mexicana and president of the Mexican American Political Association. These groups have been among the main forces that organized huge marches for immigrant rights in Los Angeles earlier this year. The March 25 Coalition sent a couple of carloads of people to participate in the June 3 action.

Chanting, “Yes to workers, no to the border,” and “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us,” the marchers were greeted with smiles and winks from workers entering the United States.

Angeles Del Desierto, a group of volunteers that rescues immigrants in the desert and mountainous region of the border, set up a booth at the rally site. Rafael Hernández, the organization’s director, participated along with his family and brought along the group’s bright red paramedic truck. “I started about eight years ago because I saw an urgent need,” he said. “This work is very dangerous, but there are about 40 members of the group. We provide food, water, clothing, and emergency aid to people found in extreme conditions.”

Laura Larraenza, another member of the group, said there has been a dramatic increase in the number of deportations recently. “From Las Vegas, Sacramento, Fresno, and here in San Diego almost 2,000 people have been deported,” she said. “These include families, a little girl being deported with her mom, handcuffed together. They also include legal residents who were forced by *la migrá* to sign papers for their deportation.”

The Si Se Puede Coalition is now plan-



Militant/Sylvia Hansen

Hundreds march June 3 in San Diego for legalization of undocumented immigrants and to oppose the deployment of U.S. troops to patrol the U.S.-Mexico border.

ning educational forums. “The first one is in Chula Vista, but we will be doing them throughout the city on a regular basis to empower people to understand the upcoming legislation for what it is—an attempt to maintain a source of cheap labor,” said Elva Salinas, a San Diego City College professor and member of the group.

Salinas was referring to the recent

immigration bill passed by the U.S. Senate. The measure would tighten border security, provide for a “guest worker” program, allow many of the 12 million undocumented in the United States to apply for residency after working for six years as temporaries and meeting a host of other strict conditions, and orders some 2 million immigrant workers deported.

Utah miners stood up, defeated bosses retaliatory suit

Continued from page 6

turned the lockout into a strike that lasted nearly 10 months, during which they won widespread labor solidarity. “We ended up winning our jobs back, including Bill’s,” Kennedy said. “This accomplishment was the result of the strength of the fight by the miners and the UMWA.”

The bosses filed their lawsuit soon after that in the fall of 2004, she stated. “They amended it later, and then fired nearly 30 miners on the eve of the union representation election. They claimed that the miners, most of whom had been working at Co-Op for years, didn’t have proper immigration documents.” The bosses amended the suit in July 2005, refiling it for a third time and putting greater emphasis on the alleged slanders by the miners.

conditions. Some of them would come to our picket line and say they need to fight for a union where they work. They said they made more money than us, but their working conditions were like those we faced at Co-Op.”

The coal from Carbon and Emery county mines is transported by truck to load outs where it is put on to trains. A truck driver contacted the UMWA and said he had drivers he worked with lined up to sign union cards, Kennedy said. This driver was fired a week later and the organizing did not go beyond this effort. But it showed the potential for unionizing the coal haulers, she said.

“We found out that the coal trucks from Co-Op were taking coal to a

power plant in nearby Helper, Utah,” Kennedy continued. “We contacted the union there and said we need help getting the power plant to stop using struck coal. These trade unionists began discussing how to help us.

“Rail workers who saw Co-Op miners picketing told us they thought their union should help the strike.”

What was developing then was real. “But the striking miners and the labor movement weren’t able to take advantage of that momentum. Broader labor action in the region was necessary to expand the unionization drive in the West and win a UMWA local at Co-Op,” she said.

In face of this situation the bosses

pushed their lawsuit to divert the struggle into the courts, she added. “But the miners, the UMWA, and the broader support we got, especially from working people in Carbon and Emery counties, stayed strong and we stood the company off again,” said Kennedy. “Now, the lawsuit has been defeated.”

The miners who went through this battle are changed people, said Kennedy. “What was accomplished is an example for workers everywhere that will help the struggles of today—like the fight for safety in the mines, and the struggle by UMWA miners at the McKinley mine in New Mexico to win a new contract when the current one there expires in August.”

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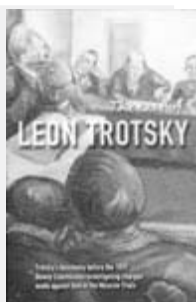
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Oppose U.S.-led ‘war on terror’

Working people have no interest in supporting the killing in Iraq of al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, any more than backing the killings of civilians by U.S. Marines at Haditha last year or the earlier torture of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. guards at Abu Ghraib.

The raid by the U.S. Air Force that successfully targeted Zarqawi is part of the “war on terrorism” led by Washington and its imperialist allies. The fact that the target had much blood on his hands, including that of civilians his group often claimed responsibility for kidnapping and beheading, does not make the attack less reprehensible.

Statements by liberals or middle-class radicals in the U.S., like Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch or Leslie Cagan of United for Peace and Justice, saying that Washington was “perfectly within its rights” to kill Zarqawi, or that they “would not condemn” the killing because the target was “a terrorist,” are a capitulation to U.S. imperialism and its allies.

It’s not an accident that the conservative *New York Sun* ran an editorial, headlined “A Win in the War,” quoting Cagan and Roth to back up its assertion that even some of “the Bush administration’s toughest critics” did not find “fit to criticize” the June 7 air raid in Baqubah.

Al-Qaeda and its leaders have used thoroughly anti-working-class methods and pursued a reactionary course similar to that of the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein that has nothing to do with the interests of working people in Iraq or the broader Middle East. But only the Iraqi people themselves—free from the boot of occupation—can mete out justice against such people, not the imperialist occupiers.

As U.S. president George Bush put it, the killing of Zarqawi is part of Washington’s “long war.” The ultimate targets of that “war on terrorism,” however, are working people and their allies—from Iraq to North America. The same capitalist ruling class waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan—to deal blows to its capitalist competitors, change the relationship of forces in the region in favor of imperialism, and gain firmer control of resources such as oil for U.S. finance capital—is attacking the wages, working and living conditions, and rights of workers and farmers at home.

The U.S. rulers and their profit system are humanity’s number one enemy. We should oppose their “war on terror” and all its manifestations, uncompromisingly! And we should demand: U.S. and all “coalition” troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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CORRECTION

The article “We won battle at Co-Op mine due to strength of our fight and solidarity” in the June 5 *Militant* incorrectly listed the date of the union election at that mine as Dec. 16, 2004. The correct date is Dec. 17, 2004. Also, in the same article, the correct spelling of the company involved in a contract fight on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico and Arizona is Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Company.

Brookside Mine in Harlan County, Kentucky. Fri., June 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: 515-255-1707.

NEW JERSEY

**Newark
Defend Immigrant Rights! Legalization and Amnesty for All Undocumented Workers!** Speaker: Nancy Rosenstock, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 23. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd floor. Tel.: 973-481-0077.

TEXAS

**Houston
Land, Labor, and Immigration in America: The Struggles of Working People in Texas and Louisiana after the Civil War.** Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 4200 W. 34 St. Suite C-51A. Tel.: 713-69-6550.

LETTERS

‘Israel Lobby’

Your efforts to portray the entire middle-class Left as “anti-Semitic” (or worse) are unpersuasive. The author of the articles discussing the now-famous “Israel Lobby” article should have availed himself of a wider selection of literature from the liberal/radical Left.

James Petras has been regarded by many on the Left as a crank for many years, so his musings on this topic are not representative of a broader trend. Noam Chomsky criticized “The Israel Lobby” harshly, as have other respected Left intellectuals and political figures.

It is also worth noting that Mearsheimer and Walt, who wrote “The Israel Lobby,” are very far from the Left themselves. Yet your commentaries create the impression that their article was greeted with universal acclaim among U.S. radicals.

The Mearsheimer/Walt article relates to many interesting issues, such as the fevered reaction of super-Zionists like Alan Dershowitz. The supposed willingness of the Left to peddle anti-Jewish canards, though, is not among these intriguing issues.

Anna Fierling
Washington, D.C.

Use of ‘anti-Semitism’

I thought your article in the May 15 issue about the academic discussion on a theory of Jewish influence over U.S. foreign policy and the myth of the Jewish lobby very important in explaining the dangers of conspiracy theory. But I was surprised that the writer prefers the term “Jew-hatred” to “anti-Semitism” because “to say anti-Semitism would be putting it mildly.”

This suggests that anti-Semitism is a mild form of Jew-hatred. The term is more explicit than anti-Semitism but surely doesn’t describe the quality, amount, or effect of action against Jews more or less mildly. I can think of many things Sam Manuel might have wanted to say. Could you please clarify?

Debbie Delange
Manchester, England

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.

On ‘Israel lobby,’ Jew-hatred

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—In a letter published in the column below, reader Anna Fierling takes exception to the article “More middle-class radicals promote Jew-hatred” (May 15 *Militant*). “Your efforts to portray the entire middle-class Left as ‘anti-Semitic’ (or worse) are unpersuasive,” she says. The author of the article “should have availed himself of a wider selection of literature from the liberal/radical Left.”

The article in the May 15 issue showed that the paper by Harvard academic dean Stephen Walt and University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer, entitled “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,” promotes “the false and reactionary theory that U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is manipulated by a Jewish lobby with support from a network of ‘neoconservative gentiles.’” It also noted that others, like the editors of the *London Review of Books*, a biweekly oriented to the bourgeois left; Perry Anderson, editor of

REPLY TO A READER

the *New Left Review*; and left-wing academic James Petras, who is widely published here and in Latin America, have endorsed this view.

What Walt and Mearsheimer presented is little more than repackaging, with some academic gloss, of the longtime “amen corner” analysis of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan. During the U.S. military buildup for the 1991 Gulf War, Buchanan said on the McLaughlin Group TV news program that “there are only two groups that are beating the drums for war in the Middle East—the Israeli defense ministry and its ‘amen corner’ in the United States.”

Petras outlined a similar view, only more starkly, earlier this year in an article headlined “The Tyranny of Israel over America,” written for PalestineChronicle.com and reprinted in the Spanish-language daily *Granma* in Havana. “The onset and immediate aftermath of the Iraqi war and the subsequent occupation was the highpoint of Israeli tyranny over Washington,” he said. In the May 15 article we pointed out that Petras expressed views bordering on Jew-hatred.

A wider selection of views in middle-class left

Now let’s do what Fierling suggests, take a look at a wider selection of views on the matter among the middle-class left.

The Communist Party USA tries to have it both ways with regard to the Walt/Mearsheimer paper. An article by Susan Webb in the May 25 issue of the *People’s Weekly World*, which reflects the views of the CPUSA, praises the paper for helping to “open up mainstream discussion” on the Bush administration’s policies in the Middle East (meaning discussion to help elect a Democratic majority in this year’s U.S. congressional elections and a Democratic White House in 2008). Referring to “well-financed right-wing Jewish groups,” Webb says, “The power these groups exercise in U.S. political life, including in electing or defeating candidates, has been written about and documented in progressive publications.” At the same time, Webb adds that “loose characterizations” of these organizations by Walt and Mearsheimer “have an unpleasant ring for many Jewish readers.”

An article in the May 19 issue of the *Socialist Worker*, which reflects the views of the International Socialist Organization, talks about “defending Mearsheimer and Walt’s description of the Israel lobby from Israel boosters,” while offering a friendly critique on a number of points.

An article in the April 8 issue of *In These Times* by Salim Muwakkil, a senior editor of the social-democratic publication, says the “furious response from critics” of the Walt/Mearsheimer article is “an eerie confirmation of the paper’s point” on the domination of U.S. foreign policy by the “Israel Lobby.”

And the June 9 issue of *CounterPunch*, self-described as “America’s Best Political Newsletter” and edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St.Clair, says the following in advertising an article on the subject: “Read how U.S. presidents from Wilson, through FDR to Truman were manipulated by the Zionist lobby; how Israel bent LBJ, Reagan and Clinton to its purpose; how Bush’s White House has been the West Wing of the Israeli government; how Washington’s revolving doors send full-time Israeli lobbyists from think-tanks to the National Security Council and the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans.”

Even Noam Chomsky who criticizes Walt and Mearsheimer in his article “The Israel Lobby?” tips his hat to his academic colleagues for taking a “courageous” though not a very convincing stand.

Space is the only limitation in citing more such quotations. The main thing these individuals and groups do is not promoting anti-Semitism, which many do, even if willy-nilly. They all try to slide around the reality that the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie is advancing *its own* interests in the Middle East, *regardless* of Tel Aviv’s interests. They try to skirt the fact that working people have to overthrow the rule of this capitalist class and replace it with a government of workers and farmers in order to end war and national oppression of Palestinians or any other peoples.

Anti-Semitism and Jew-hatred

One final point. Reader Debbie Delange asks for clarification on the use of “anti-Semitism” versus “Jew-hatred.” Anti-Semitism is a milder and more ambiguous term. Original usage of the term “Semites” encompassed a wider range of people beyond Jews, including Arabs and Assyrians whose languages have roots in a common Semitic tongue. Jew-hatred is unambiguous. It more clearly illustrates the danger for working people of views promoted by “socialists” like Petras who dovetail the views of incipient fascist politicians such as Buchanan.