

Warrior Met forces 1,100 Mine Workers in Alabama into long strike



By Mark Gruenberg

Some 1,100 Mine Workers and their allies are standing strong against corporate refusal to make them whole as the strike the Warrior Met coal mining firm in Alabama forced them to call passed the 10-week mark in mid-June.

“We’ll be here one day longer than y’all can stand!” the union tweeted on June 15, accompanying a video from the hashtags #wariormetcoalaintgotnosoul and #UnitedWeStand.

But the workers took their fight beyond the mine itself. On June 22, led by union President Cecil Roberts, they descended on the Manhattan offices of the hedge funds who finance and back Warrior Met—and who reap the profits.

The miners, labor, and community supporters will leaflet in front of Manhattan office buildings that house BlackRock Fund Advisors, Inc., State Street Global Advisors, and Renaissance Technologies. Stuart Applebaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Workers Union and Sara Nelson, Association of Flight Attendants president, are scheduled to picket, too, UMWA Legislative Director Phil Smith reported.

“These hedge funds are among several entities that invested in Warrior Met five years ago when the company emerged from bankruptcy,” Roberts said. “But they insisted on dramatic sacrifices from the workers to the tune of \$1.1 billion. The company has

enjoyed revenues amounting to another \$3.4 billion since then, much of which flowed into these funds’ accounts. It’s time to share that wealth with the people who created it – the workers.”

Warrior Met, which emerged from the ruins of bankrupt Jim Walter Energy several years ago, is now profitable but forced the workers at its mines to walk. A lot of its profits came from the first, post-bankruptcy, contract it forced on workers, which included \$6-per-hour pay cuts, to \$22, among other

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givebacks.

At the time, company bosses promised the workers would be made whole once Warrior Met made money. Now it’s making money, and bosses don’t want to make the workers whole. That’s forced the UMWA members into the union’s first strike in

Workers travel to New York and descend on the offices of hedge funds that finance their bosses.

Alabama in 40 years, after the old contract expired on April 1.

Company refusal to keep its word is important for workers anywhere, but especially in northern Alabama, which had a prior history of union solidarity and strength, an exception in the otherwise union-hating South.

While talks are ongoing, they're not getting very far, so UMWA has reached out for both community support and labor solidarity.

Several unions, notably the United Food and Commercial Workers, sent checks to the strike fund run by the four UMWA locals which represent workers at Warrior Met's two mines, its central shop, and its processing plant.

The fund is not only paying miners forced to strike but bought health care coverage for them, too—an important point for coal miners exposed to the dangers of black lung disease.

And union leaders, including AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler and AFA-CWA President

Sara Nelson—the two women widely assumed to be leading contenders to succeed Richard Trumka atop the labor federation when he steps down—have traveled to Brookwood, Ala., the firm's center, to stand in solidarity, encourage the miners and march on picket lines.

“Instead of rewarding the sacrifices and work of the miners, Warrior Met is seeking even further sacrifices from them, while demonstrating perhaps some of the worst labor-management relations we've seen in this industry since the days of the company town and company store,” Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts said when the forced strike began.

“We have always been ready to reach a fair agreement that recognizes the sacrifices our members and their families made to keep this company alive. At this point, Warrior Met is not.... Despite Warrior Met's apparent appetite for this conflict, we will prevail.”

Communists call for united struggle after executioner E. Raisi takes presidency

By Morning Star

Iranian Communists called for a united struggle of all progressive forces after the Friday election of the “bloodstained” candidate Ebrahim Raisi as the country's next president in a widely boycotted poll.

The Tudeh Party of Iran (TPI) said in a statement that the turnout in the election, the lowest in the history of the Islamic Republic, was a damning indictment that called into question the legitimacy of the theocratic regime. It said that the low levels of participation were a vindication of its calls for a boycott.

TPI said that the “scandalous show of the election,” in which hundreds of candidates were barred from standing, “marks a decisive turning point and an end once and for all to the theory that the Islamic regime in Iran can be reformed.

Raisi was elected with 62% of the vote in an election that critics insisted was rigged to ensure his victory. The official turnout was 48%, though some observers have put the real figure as low as 30%, with information difficult to verify.

As head of the Iranian judiciary, Raisi has a bloodstained history, having been a member of the so-called “death committee” that oversaw the

1988 mass execution of political prisoners following a fatwa by the founder of the republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Among these were tens of thousands of Tudeh Party members, who were jailed, tortured, and executed when the theocratic regime turned on its former supporters after having eliminated most of the Iranian left.

TPI International Secretary Navid Shomali said that the real barometer of opinion when analyzing the elections was participation among the Iranian working class.

“The factory workers, the oil workers, metalworkers, teachers, nurses, women, and youth, resolutely declined to attend the polling stations and stayed away.

“Communists, the progressive left, progressive nationalists, and eminent writers and poets, all boycotted the election,” he said.

About 4.5 million people obliged to vote because of their employment spoiled their ballot papers, according to the official statistics, he said. The TPI called on all progressive forces to unite against the Iranian Islamist regime.

The Tudeh Party of Iran said election turnout was the lowest in the Islamic Republic's history, a damning indictment of the theocratic regime.

Unique Ecuadorian frog discovered, named after Led Zeppelin



By Olivia Rosane

A new species of frog has been described by scientists for the first time, and it's a real rockstar.

The new frog, introduced to the world in the journal *Neotropical Biodiversity*, hails from the Ecuadorian Andes and bears the name *Pristimantis ledzeppelin*, or Led Zeppelin's Rain Frog.

"The name honors Led Zeppelin and their extraordinary music," the frog's discoverers David Brito-Zapata and Carolina Reyes-Puig wrote in the paper announcing their find. "Led Zeppelin was a British rock band formed in London in 1968, one of the most influential bands throughout the 1970s, and progenitors of both hard rock and heavy metal."

The new frog was described thanks to the research efforts of the San Francisco de Quito University and Ecuador's National Institute of Biodiversity (INABIO), the latter announced. The males of the species measure about 23.9–24.6 millimeters from snout to vent, the study authors wrote, while the one female identified measured 36.1 millimeters. It has coppery red eyes and skin that is a mix of yellow, brown, black, and orange, according to *The Guardian*.

It is also an example of the unique amphibian biodiversity of the Ecuadorian Andes. The new frog belongs to a genus of land-based frogs known as *Pristimantis*, the study authors explained. This genus currently contains 569 species, and scientists are learning more about its proliferation in Ecuador.

In the past two years, 28 new species of this genus

have been described in the country, 14 of them in the southern slopes of the Andes mountains.

"This region has proven to be one of the most diverse in small vertebrates," the study authors wrote.

Zeppelin's Rain Frog was identified in a region known as the Cordillera del Cóndor, a mountain chain between southeast Ecuador and northern Peru that is east of the main eastern Andes chain.

Scientists still don't know very much about the biodiversity of this region, but they are learning that it is home to many unique plants and animals only found amidst its cloud forests. Among them are at least five species of the *Pristimantis* genus, in addition to the new find.

However, much of the region's unexamined biodiversity is already under threat from human activities, INABIO explained. The top dangers facing the region are:

1. The expansion of farming and ranching.
2. Logging.
3. Large and small-scale mining.
4. The introduction of new diseases.
5. The climate crisis.

Therefore, the newly discovered species may already be in need of help.

"Due to the high endemism of the Cordillera del Cóndor, the new species here described is likely to be found only in this restricted area, therefore it is important to consider new long-term initiatives for small vertebrate conservation actions," Brito-Zapata and Reyes-Puig wrote.

It is an example of the unique amphibian biodiversity of the Ecuadorian Andes.

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Bangladesh: Communists refuse to participate in by-elections tainted by a history of fraud

By Emile Schepers

The Communist Party of Bangladesh has decided to refuse to participate in four parliamentary by-elections (elections taking place outside the regularly scheduled national elections), which are scheduled to take place in July. The reason for the refusal is the history of blatant election rigging by the ruling Awami League, starting in the general elections of December 2016. Since then, only the Awami League and its allies have been given a fair chance to run candidates in elections.

“The schedule for the by-elections for 4 parliamentary seats has been announced. We think that the people will not have the opportunity to exercise their voting right in this by-election under the present government and the present Election Commission.”

Oakland evitaría la falta de vivienda y crearía buenos empleos

BY Marilyn Bechtel

A medida que se acerca la fecha límite del 30 de junio para que el Concejo Municipal adopte un plan de gastos equilibrado de dos años a raíz de la pandemia, la presidenta del Concejo, Nikki Fortunato Bas, y tres colegas del Concejo están pidiendo un presupuesto que construya una caja fuerte y una comunidad saludable mediante la prevención y superación de la falta de vivienda, la prevención de la violencia, la creación de buenos empleos y una economía vibrante, y la restauración de parques, centros recreativos e instituciones culturales.

La discusión giró en torno a cuestiones presupuestarias, con dos coaliciones amplias, ReFund Oakland y Defund Police Coalition, que instan a una reorientación significativa de los fondos de la policía a las necesidades de la comunidad, y un Grupo de Trabajo de Reimaginación de la Seguridad Pública que presentó casi 90 recomendaciones al Concejo Municipal anteriormente esta primavera.

En una conferencia de prensa el 14 de junio cerca del Ayuntamiento en el centro de Oakland, Bas, que representa al Distrito 2, y su Equipo de Presupuesto del Concejo —los miembros Carroll Fife (Distrito 3), Noel Gallo (Distrito 5) y Dan Kalb (Distrito 1) — elaboraron en las enmiendas que proponen al proyecto de presupuesto que la alcaldesa Libby Schaaf presentó a principios del mes pasado.

Su objetivo, como se expresa en el Memorando de Presupuesto Bas publicado el mismo día, es cambiar el presupuesto de dos años de casi \$ 4 mil millones de la ciudad, en el futuro, “hacia la equidad al abordar la desinversión sistémica en las comuni-

dades marginadas”.

Con el presupuesto del alcalde asignando el 45% del Fondo de Propósito General de la ciudad al Departamento de Policía, pero solo el 2% a parques, bibliotecas y otros servicios clave que promueven la prevención de la violencia, Bas dijo: “Necesitamos cambiar esa asignación y usar más esos dólares policiales efectivamente.”

Las enmiendas del equipo transferirían \$ 18 millones de la patrulla de oficiales de policía a la prevención de la violencia, al concentrar la actividad policial en detener y resolver delitos graves. Al mismo tiempo, se instituirían respuestas alternativas no policiales a las llamadas de servicio no delictivas y no violentas a través del sistema de respuesta alternativa MACRO (Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland).

Gallo dijo que al crecer en East Oakland, hizo su tarea porque la biblioteca estaba abierta los domingos. “Y quiero asegurarme de que mis parques y centros de recreación estén abiertos no solo de lunes a viernes, sino también por la noche, los sábados y domingos”, dijo Gallo, “porque fue entonces cuando liberé mi energía. Quiero asegurarme de que nuestros servicios recreativos estén ahí”.

Kalb dijo que si bien la ciudad ha realizado algunas inversiones, nunca ha sido suficiente. “Entonces, ya sea en capacitación laboral, prevención de la violencia, campamentos para personas sin hogar, viviendas asequibles y algo más, aumentaremos esas inversiones durante los próximos dos años y estableceremos un patrón para hacer aún más”.

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