

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Ouster of Boris Johnson reflects crisis of rulers in United Kingdom
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Join efforts to expand reach of 'Militant,' SWP campaign

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"I need this paper," school teacher Juawana Kinnard told Socialist Workers Party member Anthony Dutrow as they sat on her porch in Cincinnati and she signed up to renew her *Militant* subscription July 8.

"All the other news I see tells me that we are the ones responsible for the crisis we and our families face," she said, "and that all we can do about it is elect Democrats or Republicans who promise to solve everything for us. Well, we've done that for years and here we are!"

Dutrow said working people need to organize independently of the bosses' twin parties and build our own party, a labor party. Kinnard purchased three books to learn more about the SWP's program, including *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*. "I think we have to understand our history in order to be able to change our future," she said.

As part of taking the SWP's fighting program broadly among working

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Support Ukraine in fight against Moscow invasion!

Ukraine, Russian workers need to join against Putin's war!



Screen shot from video

Soldiers' wives in Buryatia, east Siberia, appeal for husbands to be sent home from Ukraine war. "May the death of every soldier in this unjust war be on your conscience," one told the gov't.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Determined to conquer Ukraine and crush its existence as an independent nation, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces to resume their offensive in the east July 16. This

cut short a 10-day-old pause aimed at replenishing their depleted and demoralized ranks following losses from defeats earlier in the conflict.

Putin aims to gain full control of

**Defend Ukraine independence!
End US sanctions on Russia!**

Ukraine's Donbas industrial heartland as unease about the war grows at home, but his forces continue to confront dogged Ukrainian resistance.

Ukrainian troops repelled Russian advances on Sloviansk, a key eastern stronghold in Donetsk, July 17. Behind

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White House bars national rail strike, imposes gov't board to dictate terms

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — On July 14 the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Division (SMART-TD) informed their members, the rail conductors and

AS I SEE IT

locomotive engineers who operate freight trains on the major railroads across the U.S., that they had voted by over 99% to authorize a strike July 18.

The U.S. freight railroads run on almost 140,000 miles of trackage, according to the Federal Railroad Administration.

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Workers need a program to fight high prices and unemployment

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Soaring inflation over the past year and a half is battering the lives of millions of working people worldwide. Combined with the impact of the capitalist crisis on jobs, price hikes are making it increasingly difficult for workers to keep things together and raise a family. Rising costs of energy, food, child care and health care, along with higher rents and mortgage payments, are just some of the many obstacles.

The U.S. consumer price index rose to 9.1% for the 12 months ending in June, the largest yearly increase in nearly 41 years. Gasoline prices shot up by nearly 60%.

Hardest hit is the working class. Those getting paid least spend a greater proportion of their income on the fastest-rising items such as food, gas and housing. And as most every worker knows from experience, the government's fig-

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Biden Mideast trip illustrates decline of US imperialism

BY TERRY EVANS

President Joseph Biden's July 13-16 trip to the Middle East revealed the weakened state of U.S. imperialism and the inability of the Biden administration to achieve gains for the U.S. capitalist rulers against their rivals. For decades the Iranian rulers have intervened in regional conflicts in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, extending their military and political clout and getting closer to acquiring nuclear weapons.

Though declining, Washington remains the preeminent imperialist power worldwide. The U.S. capitalist rulers deploy up to 60,000 troops in 21 countries in the region, from Egypt to Kazakhstan

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Independent truckers shut down Oakland port, longshore workers refuse to cross picket line



Militant/Eric Simpson

OAKLAND, Calif. — Some 400 truck drivers, mostly independent owner-operators, began a three-day strike July 18 at the Port of Oakland. They are protesting AB5, a law passed by the California legislature in 2019, that puts extra burdens on owner-operators who don't want to be employed by trucking companies. The U.S. Supreme Court June 28 declined to hear a challenge to AB5 by the California Trucking Association.

"It's going to put us out of business," Carlos Flores, an Oakland-based trucker for almost 20 years, told the Bay Area News Group. "We're fighting for the right to work." Truckers protested in the Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach last week. The strike was honored by dockworkers at the SSA terminal July 19. International Longshore and Warehouse Union business agent Melvin Mackay told dozens of longshore workers who had refused to cross the truckers' picket line, "All you guys can go home!"

"The ILWU will not cross a picket or protest," Mackay told the *Militant*. "I think it's repulsive that the truckers can't work independently."

Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of California, joined the truckers' picket lines in solidarity with their fight.

— ERIC SIMPSON

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Teamsters in Indiana strike at FireKing over health coverage

Strikers at Case fight for pay raise, 'rational schedule'

Boris Johnson ouster reflects political crisis of rulers in UK

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson resigned as Conservative Party leader July 7, forced out by mounting pressure from working people and former supporters, and a tsunami of ministerial resignations. Fifty members of Parliament quit the government in just 48 hours. The crisis reflects the rulers’ nervousness about how to deal with London’s place in the shifting world order and rising working-class anger toward assaults on living standards.

Skyrocketing prices, worsening working conditions, grueling shift schedules, deteriorating health care and housing, and rising drug and gambling addiction mark a broad capitalist crisis here. To defend themselves and their families from its effects, hundreds of thousands of rail, postal, telecom and other workers have voted for strikes. Rail unions have set dates for nationwide stoppages in July and August.

The rulers face these challenges amid a worldwide economic slowdown, the post-Brexit failure to reverse the decline of the U.K.’s capitalist economy, and sharpening conflicts with rivals as a major land war in Europe unfolds in Ukraine. They also face a renewed crisis over British rule in Northern Ireland.

Johnson remains prime minister until Sept. 5 when the Conservative Party will have chosen his successor. A dozen party members of Parliament threw their hats in the ring to replace him.

Just 30 months ago the Conservatives won a landslide general election victory. Johnson won votes of millions

of workers with pledges to “level up” their conditions, reverse the deep-seated crisis and “get Brexit done.” He won out against the big-state vision and “political correctness” of the pro-European Union Labour Party, then led by Jeremy Corbyn. Labour’s vote held up among the middle class in big cities and university towns, but shattered among working people in the party’s former heartlands and in rural areas. Labour leaders then contemptuously condemned workers for having voted for Johnson.

The propertied rulers sided with the Conservatives despite opposition of many to Johnson’s drive to quit the EU. They saw a Johnson-led government as a way to end the political paralysis that dogged the government of former Prime Minister Theresa May, and to keep out Corbyn.

Coalition crashes on class realities

Johnson’s downfall lies in the ongoing crisis and coming apart of the electoral coalition he put together. When he was elected he said that many former Labour-voters “lent” him their vote and his government must act to honor their trust. But since then workers’ lives and livelihoods have been hammered.

Real wages have been cut. Half a million have left the workforce since the pandemic. Many of those working have temporary and agency jobs, with over a million hired on zero-hours contracts.

“Jobs are so precarious,” Dave Hut-ton told the *Militant*. The former care home worker lost his job five years ago.



Royal College of Nursing

Nurses march in London June 18 demanding government pay higher wages. Nervousness of U.K. rulers amid spreading shifts in capitalist “world order” and rising working-class anger over assaults on living standards led Conservative Party leaders to oust Boris Johnson.

“I started food deliveries. Some days you can earn 12 pounds (\$14) an hour, but then you remember the day before you only got 5 pounds an hour.”

The Johnson government’s pandemic policies led to the elderly and those in care homes being killed off in their thousands. Paltry provision of health care meant thousands more dying unnecessarily of cancer. Today, 6.6 million people, 10% of the U.K. population, are on hospital waiting lists. “While we’ve faced horrendous COVID conditions, the government lived differently,” retail worker Shamin Ahmed said. “This is not a government for working people.”

Nor did the government satisfy the rulers. British capitalism is mired in “stagflation.” Inflation stands at more than 11%, the highest in the imperialist world, while economic growth and productivity are the lowest. Johnson’s trumpeted spur to business investment has proved ineffective. His forecast of a free-trade deal with the United States is a distant dream.

The Conservative Party got hammered in two recent by-elections. Some Conservative members of Parliament turned on the government, accusing it of corruption and Johnson of lying. A pro-Brexit media commentator, Andrew Neil, complained that Johnson “acted as if the rules didn’t apply to him,” by breaching his own government’s lockdown rules.

Nigel Farage, former leader of the Brexit Party, criticized Johnson for getting elected as a conservative but governing as a liberal. Under Johnson the state has grown, taxation increased and policies have been adopted based on climate-change hysteria.

The Labour Party joined the anti-Johnson chorus, despite the party backing all the government’s major calls — endorsing its COVID and “green” policies and condemning workers taking strike action to defend themselves. As Moscow’s war has raged in Ukraine, Labour leader Keir Starmer has burnished Labour’s credentials as a party that can defend ruling-class interests amid rising worldwide conflicts. He pointed to Labour’s record as the governing party that helped lead the establishment of the imperialist NATO alliance in 1949, under Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin.

“There’s really no real difference between Labour and Conservatives,” Charni Wiggins, a software company worker, told the *Militant*.

Johnson’s replacement will do nothing to protect workers from the rulers’ drive to put the crisis of their system on our backs. Nor will it turn around the fortunes of British capitalism. Continued attacks on working-class living standards and political instability are guaranteed, posing the need for workers to organize independently of the bosses and build our own party.

THE MILITANT

Right to freedom of worship upheld by court ruling

Supreme Court rulings protecting the constitutional right to freedom of worship are good for working people. The ‘Militant’ explains the high stakes involved in defending our rights to put us in a better position to fight in the interests of workers and our families.

Thomas Nast/Harper's Weekly
1871 drawing depicts bishops attacking children, part of bigoted anti-Catholic crusade.

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Expand reach of the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

people, party members are involved in a five-week international effort to win 300 of those who subscribed to the *Militant* this spring to becoming long-term readers of the paper. The June 25-Aug. 2 drive includes selling 300 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionary fighters to subscribers.

Big strides have also been taken in efforts by party members and supporters to win ballot status for Chris Hoeppe, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Pennsylvania’s 3rd District, as party members discuss the roots of the crisis working people face and what we can do to end it. Campaigners had gathered 2,107 signatures by July 20, more than twice the number required. In addition, 51 *Militant* subscriptions have been sold, and 40 books. They plan to get a couple hundred more signatures and then turn them in with a press conference in Harrisburg, the state capital, next week.

“As a Black man, I can’t help but see white racism as the problem every place I turn, from jobs to housing,” Theodore Ramsen told Hoeppe at a farmers market in West Philadelphia July 16. “Is there systematic racism in the U.S.?”

“Yes, there is,” Hoeppe replied. “But capitalism is the system. Capitalism can’t exist without pitting us workers against each other. The source isn’t white people.

“The only way to eliminate racism, like the oppression of women and imperialist wars, is for working people in all our colors, religions and nationalities to take power out of the hands of the capitalists and reorganize society on the basis of solidarity. This is what the SWP is aiming to do,” he said.

Sedia Ali, whose family is from Afghanistan, joined the conversation. “Things are worse there since the U.S. went in,” she said, referring to the bombardment, invasion and 20-year U.S. occupation of the country.

“I can’t think of anything more valuable than having this discussion about the source of our problems,”

Ramsen added.

Both signed the SWP petition and got *Militant* subscriptions. Ali also bought *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* and *Black Music, White Business* by Frank Kofsky, a book about the exploitation of and racist contempt for African American jazz musicians.

SWP statement discussed

Rachele Fruit, the party’s candidate for governor of Florida, and campaign supporter Kay O’Neill discussed the SWP statement, “Defend the working class, our families, women’s rights,” with participants at a Ft. Lauderdale demonstration against the U.S. Supreme Court’s overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. The July 13 action was sponsored by Women’s March and Planned Parenthood. Issued by Alyson Kennedy, the party’s candidate for Texas governor, the statement explains why the only way to fight for women’s rights, including legal and safe abortion, is as part of a broader working-class perspective to win jobs, health care, child care, family planning and the other things workers need.

“I love the flyer,” Christine Rotondo told Fruit after reading the party statement. Rotondo was attending the demonstration with her daughter, Grace. “We’re huge supporters of this issue even though my husband doesn’t agree.”

“This is a working-class issue,” Fruit said. “If you need to have an abortion because you can’t afford to raise another child, that’s not a choice. Workers on strike today are using their unions to demand better living and working conditions. This is key to advancing the fight for women’s emancipation.”

O’Neill discussed the importance of fighting for affordable child care with Stephanie Ordonez, a Cuban American and new mother.

“I used to work at the University of Miami Veterinarian Division,” Ordonez said. “They only had two weeks paid maternity leave. Then you have to pay for short-term disability, but you can only get six weeks. Child care is hard to find. Women want to work. I’m proud to be working. And it’s really important for single dads too.”

Gabrielle Prosser, SWP candidate for Minnesota governor, joined a protest of 5,000 in Saint Paul demanding



Militant/Kay O’Neill

Rachele Fruit, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Florida governor, introduced *Militant* to Christine Rotondo and Grace, her daughter, at Ft. Lauderdale women’s rights action July 13.

access to abortion July 17.

“It’s becoming harder financially to support a family,” Prosser told participants Paige Hawkins and Serina Pikop. “We need to build a society in which women who want to raise children can do so. We should reclaim the slogan ‘pro-life,’ from opponents of women’s rights.” Four *Militant* subscriptions and nine books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries were sold at the action.

Discussions with rail workers

At Atlanta’s Norfolk Southern Inman rail yard July 15, Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, and SWP member Janice Lynn discussed working conditions with workers there and introduced the *Militant*. The paper reports on actions by rail workers to defend themselves from employer assaults on wages, conditions and safety.

“Management cuts corners and gets lax with the rules when in a rush. It’s not safe,” engineer Kareem Chivers, 47, with 18 years experience on the railroad, told the SWP campaigners. A member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, he added that the bosses push to run trains with just one engineer was another safety issue. “You need a conductor to check what is happening at the back of the train,” he said.

These conditions are a result of “employers looking to increase their profits,” Potash said. “It’s important to extend solidarity wherever workers are stand-

ing up and fighting.” She pointed to the fight of rail workers in the U.K. and coal miners at Warrior Met in Alabama.

“The companies are cutting back to save on costs, all in the name of greed, when actually they’re understaffed, cutting into safety,” Kyle Holiday, a member of both the Transportation Communications Union and SMART-TD unions, told Potash. “They really need to hire.”

Of the half-dozen rail workers who stopped their cars to talk, five bought copies of the *Militant*.

SWP candidates are receiving press coverage. The July 15 *Spokesman-Review* ran an article about candidates running for U.S. Senate in Washington state. “Henry Clay Dennison, a rail worker, is running as the Socialist Workers Party candidate,” the paper said. The party “focuses on giving working people a chance to organize, defend themselves and ‘make gains amid deepening world capitalist crises,’ Dennison wrote in his voters guide statement.”

“Only a revolutionary government of workers and farmers can build a society in the interests of the majority,” Dennison wrote. “That’s what the SWP fights for.”

To join the *Militant* subscription renewal drive and campaigning for SWP candidates, contact the nearest SWP branch listed on page 8.

Jacquie Henderson contributed to this article.

‘Militant’ Renewal Drive June 25-August 2 (week 3)				
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Book quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Atlanta	18	10	18	12
Chicago	25	10	25	13
Cincinnati	18	13	18	12
Dallas-Ft. Worth	16	15	20	20
Lincoln	5	2	5	3
Los Angeles	25	17	25	14
Miami	7	7	7	4
Minneapolis	16	8	16	5
N. New Jersey	16	6	16	7
New York	25	10	25	4
Oakland	20	11	20	8
Philadelphia	8	5	8	5
Pittsburgh	12	4	12	1
Seattle	16	8	15	9
Washington	13	4	13	4
Total U.S.	240	130	243	121
Prisoners		21		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	12	10	15	21
Manchester	10	6	10	8
Total U.K.	22	16	25	29
Canada	25	17	25	19
New Zealand	5	6	5	0
Australia	7	4	7	1
Total	299	194	305	170
SHOULD BE	300	180	300	180

Sri Lanka protests continue against new president

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of protesters occupying the residence of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the office of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe handed the buildings back to the government July 14 after Rajapaksa fled to Singapore and resigned.

The occupation of the luxurious residence exposed the class divisions in Sri Lanka, where millions are skipping meals because of the deep economic and social crisis, while the ruling rich and capitalist politicians live in extravagance.

On July 20, Parliament — dominated by Rajapaksa’s party — voted to elect Wickremesinghe president.

The middle-class-led protest movement, which has kept up a camp since April 9 near the presidential palace, had opposed the selection of Wickremesinghe, instead calling for an “interim government” to initiate steps toward new elections.

After Wickremesinghe’s election,

the Inter University Students Federation said it would continue its campaign to “chase away the Ranil-Rajapaksa junta.”

But a change of faces from one bourgeois faction to another will do nothing to offer a road forward against the capitalist government that has put the crisis on the backs of working people for years.

A combination of the worldwide decline in trade and production, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, along with the disastrous decision last year by Rajapaksa to ban the import of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and impose 100% organic farming on the country’s farmers — reversed after protests — has brought the country to bankruptcy.

The regime in Beijing bears a special responsibility for the crisis facing working people in Sri Lanka. China’s rulers saddled the country with “Belt and Road” projects that helped bank-

rupt it. Beijing now controls the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota.

With less than \$25 million in cash on hand, the government has stopped making payments on its \$51 billion foreign debt, \$6.5 billion of it owed to Beijing. The government restricted the sale of fuel. Drivers now wait on mile-long lines for days at a time to get a few gallons of gas, while the price of food has skyrocketed.

The course of Rajapaksa’s government was pointed to by bourgeois opposition parties to promote the illusion that the problem in Sri Lanka is corruption tied to one family or party. But this is just one piece of the capitalist exploitation and imperialist plunder of the natural resources and labor of the people of the country.

Capitalist lenders from the World Bank to the International Monetary Fund, from Beijing to New Delhi and beyond, are jockeying to get their hands on loan repayments and to profit by sinking Sri Lanka further into debt.

Bosses shutting Farmer John is blow to workers and farmers

BY BILL ARTH

LOS ANGELES — On June 10 Smithfield Foods announced the closure of its Farmer John plant near here in Vernon, which slaughters almost 2 million hogs a year. Smithfield is owned by Hong Kong-based WH Group Ltd., the largest pork company in the world.

Talks with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770 over a new contract for the nearly 2,000 workers at the plant had been scheduled to start two days earlier. Instead, Smithfield bosses announced they were closing the plant next February, and that there would be no new contract.

Smithfield also announced it would slash hog purchases from its giant farm in Utah and close farms in Arizona and California. The company said it is “taking these steps due to the escalating cost of doing business in California,” on top of rising inflation, supply chain issues and the passage of Proposition 12.

This proposition, which imposes more expansive space requirements for hogs, was approved by California voters in 2018 and bans the sale of pork in the state if producers’ confinement standards don’t meet with these new requirements. The American Farm Bureau Federation and National Pork Producers Council have filed a challenge with the U.S. Supreme Court against the constitutionality of the proposition. The big pork monopolies claim it would raise the cost of pork by 15%.

Smithfield’s Circle Four Farms in Milford, Utah, which spreads over 35 miles, is a concentrated animal feeding operation where animals are raised in confined situations. This farm turns out over 1.2 million hogs every year. Officials in Beaver County, where Milford is located, estimate the closure of Farmer John will result in the loss of 250 jobs in a county of 6,500. Smithfield also has contracts for hogs with farmers in Arizona, Utah and California.

The decision by Smithfield is a blow to workers, farmers and farmworkers in California, Utah and Arizona. Thousands will lose their jobs.

This reporter was part of a recent team of *Militant* supporters that talked to workers at the Vernon plant gate. “This is all about corporate greed,” Marcus Brown told us. “The system needs to be fixed all the way down.”

Kevin Nunez, 20, has worked at the plant for two years. “I got a job here because no one else would hire me without any work experience. The closing won’t affect me as much as older workers because I’ve just been here a short time,” he said. “I’m young and can find another job, especially now since I have work experience. It will be harder for older workers to find new jobs.” Farmer

John is well known in the Los Angeles working class as a place where workers can start out, from recent immigrants to workers just getting out of prison to youth looking for their first job.

Vernon built by the bosses

Vernon is a “city” with a total population of 222. Near downtown Los Angeles, it is known for its smelly and polluting industries that are surrounded by working-class neighborhoods. Farmer John was established by the Clougherty family as Clougherty Packing in 1931, and its plant here is one of the oldest in the industry, built in the 1950s. In addition to its brand name Farmer John products, it was known for producing Dodger Dogs, sold at baseball games. It lost that contract at the end of the 2019 season.

Workers at Farmer John fought a bitter strike in the 1980s against concessions demanded by Clougherty Packing, part of a series of fights by packinghouse workers across the country against growing boss attacks on wages, line speed, safety and workers’ dignity.

The strike was defeated, and Clougherty imposed lower wages and worse conditions on the workers. While the union continued to have a contract, payroll deduction of dues and the presence of the union on the shop floor were eliminated. Union membership dwindled to a handful.

Workers fought to rebuild the union as the plant was purchased by Hormel in 2005, then Smithfield in 2015. In recent contracts, the union has won back dues checkoff and an increased presence for stewards on the shop floor.

Road forward for packing workers

After the bosses announced the



Militant/Norton Sandler

Eleanor García, center, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, discusses impact of bosses closing Farmer John pork packinghouse with worker July 7.

plant closing, UFCW Local 770 President John Grant issued a statement. “A fair agreement that compensates their workers until next year has been reached, and we hope that another operator will take advantage of the highly trained and stable workforce that makes the Farmer John plant a productive and profitable part of Vernon’s packing infrastructure,” it said.

Workers report that they have received a pay increase of more than \$4 an hour and if they agree to stay until the plant is shuttered next February, Smithfield says they will receive severance pay of \$7,500, as well as \$500 for each year of seniority.

“The labor movement should take a fighting stance against this new assault by the packing bosses,” Eleanor García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, told workers outside the plant July 7. “We need to stand together to fight to defend our brothers and sisters, not try to smooth the way for the bosses to close the plant.

“The labor movement should demand Smithfield open its books to

inspection by a committee of workers and farmers to see the real facts behind the decision to close Farmer John,” she said. “We should organize a delegation of union members to meet with workers and farmers in Utah to get the facts on the impact of the closure there. A committee of workers and farmers should examine the conditions under which hogs are raised to determine humane conditions. Any necessary costs for adjustments should be taken from the profits of Smithfield and other packers, not off the backs of workers, farmers or consumers.

“If the bosses can’t run the plant, we demand the government take it over, and we’ll run it under workers control.

“Workers need to forge an alliance with working farmers — wage slaves and debt slaves both exploited by the capitalists — to fight together against our oppression,” García said. “We need to say, ‘No to farm foreclosures!’ Nationalize the land, starting with large capitalist farms like those Smithfield runs, and turn them over to those who work there.”

U.S. rulers step up economic war on revolutionary Cuba

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

On July 9 Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced another round of visa restrictions, barring 28 Cuban officials, including high-ranking members of the Cuban Communist Party, from being able to travel to the U.S. to participate in trade and political meetings. The measure comes on top of three other rounds of visa restrictions imposed by the Joseph Biden administration since November 2021, as well as four rounds of financial sanctions over the last year.

The restrictions are a piece of the U.S. government’s bipartisan 63-year war against Cuba’s socialist revolution. The U.S. rulers — under Democratic and Republican administrations alike — have imposed thousands of economic and financial restrictions on Cuba, including 243 measures tightening the embargo added by former President Donald Trump and extended by the Biden White House.

The embargo blocks the import of medical supplies, fuel and other vitally needed parts and products; sharply curtails Cuba’s access to the international

banking system; and targets companies carrying out trade with Cuba.

Washington imposed the new restrictions under a Reagan-era policy that suspended nonimmigrant entry to the U.S. by members of the Cuban government and the Cuban Communist Party. Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez condemned the move as a violation of international law.

While the capitalist press gave some coverage to a May announcement by the Biden administration easing some restrictions on travel by and remittances to Cuban families, both of which will be welcome in Cuba, the new sanctions show the aim of the capitalist rulers remains the same — to crush the Cuban Revolution, overturn their government and restore capitalist rule.

The U.S. rulers have sharply stepped up their slanders of Cuba, including in the liberal press, claiming that public actions on July 11, 2021, were massive popular protests brutally put down by a repressive government. The Biden administration says the 28 now denied visas, who haven’t been named, include officials who were involved in the supposed repression.

Those one-day actions that took place in 11 cities, the Cuban government explained, were promoted by U.S.-backed provocateurs. But they drew people genuinely frustrated by the blackouts, food shortages, problems with public transit

and many other difficulties rooted in the U.S. embargo and today’s crisis of capitalist production and trade, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cuban government’s response to the demonstrations was to reach out to residents, organizing with them to collectively work to improve conditions, repair streets and homes, and involve youth who weren’t working into productive activity.

Efforts by Washington to organize a repeat of the demonstrations in November fell flat.

The U.S. rulers underestimated — as they always do — the capacity of Cuban working people and their government to defend the revolution. This was reflected when hundreds of thousands turned out in Havana and across the country for massive May Day demonstrations.

In an interview with the *Militant* last September, Carlos Fernández de Cossío, head of the Cuban Foreign Ministry’s department for U.S. affairs, explained that the imperialists bet — wrongly — that the revolution wouldn’t survive after Fidel Castro died, and did so again after Raúl Castro stepped down as president.

“Today this government is led by new generations. Cuba is not capitalist, it doesn’t accept capitalism,” he said. “That represents an obstacle for imperialism in this hemisphere.”

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Teamsters in Indiana strike at FireKing over health coverage

BY AMY HUSK

NEW ALBANY, Ind. — Spirits were high on the picket line in front of the FireKing plant here July 14 where 83 members of Teamsters Local 89 have been on strike since May 9. This *Militant* worker-correspondent visited the pickets along with Jim Horn, a retired member of International Chemical Workers Local 15 at Colgate in Jeffersonville.

FireKing manufactures fireproof safes and cabinets. The plant here is its only production facility, Dale Beanblossom, a picket captain and member of the negotiating committee, told us.

“This is our first strike ever,” said Beanblossom, who has worked in the plant for 36 years. “The main issue is health insurance. Every year they switch health care providers on us. The deductibles are really high — \$13,000 for a family of two. We asked for a Teamsters-run plan and they rejected that. Finally they offered a plan that is close to what we wanted, but then they said they want to keep the scabs working in the plant and hand-pick which union members come back to work after the strike.

“They said this was their ‘last, best, and final offer,’ but we unanimously voted it down,” he said. “Either we all go back or no one goes back! They underestimated us. Not one person has crossed the line. We’re going to win!”

FireKing management cut off workers’ health insurance the first week of the strike, even though workers had paid the premiums for the month. They claim to be bringing the plant back to full production but workers on the line say they don’t have anywhere close to enough skilled people to run the plant, and many of the replacement workers are quitting.

Beanblossom said they have had some success at turning away workers who have been brought in to cross the picket line. He said at first they were just yelling insults at them, calling them “scabs,” but he decided to try a different approach. He began explaining through the bullhorn the conditions inside the plant and encouraging replacement

workers to leave and come back to get hired after the strike was over.

In one case he spoke with a worker who had come in to apply for a maintenance job. The worker was with his wife and baby and said, “I’m sorry but I have to feed my family. I’m a felon and it’s hard to get a job.” Beanblossom passed on the name and number of the worker to the union office and they helped him find a different job.

Striker Heather Hearley said they’ve been trying to get Spanish interpreters to the picket line so they can talk to replacement workers who speak Spanish.

She described conditions inside the plant. “Where my machine is it’s 120 degrees in the summertime. They’ve been short-handed and lied about how they were going to hire more workers. Instead of working us our usual four, 10-hour days they often make us stay for 12 hours or work on Fridays.”

Danielle Sneed, 20, said the company tried to divide workers by proposing to charge workers who smoke higher premiums for health insurance. “They thought those of us who don’t smoke wouldn’t care. But we stood together. Some of the workers here have



Militant/Amy Husk

Members of Teamsters Local 69 stand firm on picket line at FireKing, in New Albany, Indiana, July 14. Working conditions, high costs for health insurance sparked first-ever strike there.

serious health problems, everyone deserves decent health insurance.”

Teamsters International President Sean O’Brien and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman visited the FireKing picket line at the beginning of the strike. Many Teamsters from other areas, and other union members and workers, have come to the picket line and brought solidarity and material support, Beanblossom said.

Teamsters in Boston and San Francisco protested outside the offices of

Champlain Capital Partners, a so-called private equity fund, on July 8. Champlain bought up FireKing in 2020.

These types of funds are notorious for buying companies, boosting their income by an aggressive use of debt and going after workers’ wages and benefits, and then selling them for maximum profit.

The strikers welcome anyone who wants to picket with them. You can donate to their strike fund at www.gofundme.com/f/firekingteamsters.

Strikers at Case fight for pay raise, ‘rational schedule’

BY JOHN HAWKINS

STURTEVANT, Wis. — “Case is in trouble, and they know it,” said Anthony Ford, one of 1,100 workers, members of United Auto Workers Locals 180 and 807, who struck the agricultural implement giant here and in Burlington, Iowa, May 2.

“They’ve only produced 52 tractors in two months here since we went on strike. We used to turn out that many in one week,” he said. “They can’t come close to meeting customers’ demands.”

Case New Holland, whose brands include Case IH and New Holland, is the second-biggest farm equipment manufacturer in the U.S. based on sales, behind Deere and Company. In 2021 the company sold about \$18 billion worth of

tractors, excavators and other farm and construction equipment worldwide.

Before the strike began the company was struggling to obtain semiconductors and other key components in short supply during the past 18 months. New equipment fresh off assembly lines couldn’t be completed for lack of parts.

“The strike has made it worse,” Rod Bierle, manager at Bancroft Implement, a Case IH dealer in Iowa, told the *Wall Street Journal*. “They need to settle the strike. We’re waiting for tractors.”

“This is my second contract fight but my first strike,” picket captain Brian Schneider, a relief worker, told the *Militant*.

“We’re all fighting for the same things — a decent increase in pay to keep up

with inflation, rational schedules so we can have time with our families and putting into workers’ hands the decision on when to take our vacation,” he said.

“There are other important things at stake, for example, safety. Lots of people get hurt on the job. When people come back from being off with a work-related injury it’s common for management to put them right back on the job that hurt them in the first place,” he said. “That shows their attitude toward our well-being and safety.”

Schneider recounted an incident where a transmission fell off the line and almost crushed a worker. “She was shaken up and couldn’t be found for a while. Probably just went to sit down somewhere and get it together before going back to work.

“Management didn’t care what happened to her,” he said. “All they were interested in was getting that transmission off the floor and getting work going.”

Laurie Ringham, a subassembly builder with over 15 years at the plant, pointed to the company’s disregard for safety. “Whenever somebody has to be off work for an injury their first instinct is to say, ‘It didn’t happen here.’ When you’re constantly torquing bolts at 200-foot pounds and you injure a shoulder, how in the world did it not happen here?”

“My biggest concern is medical insurance,” she said. “The wage increase they have proposed does not cover increased premiums, not to mention co-pays. The end result is a wage cut.”

Both locals have been receiving solidarity and donations from surrounding communities and the labor movement.

Contributions can be dropped off and messages and checks mailed to the UAW Local 180 union hall, 3323 Kearney Ave., Mount Pleasant, WI 53403. Messages can also be sent to president@uawlocal180.com. Contributions and messages can go to UAW Local 807, 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601. Messages can also be sent to uawlocal807@qwestoffice.net.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 11, 1997

Working people in the United States and around the world should join our brothers and sisters in Cuba in denouncing the latest terrorist bombings of tourist hotels in Havana. Whether the U.S. government has a direct hand in the blasts or not, these attacks are the product of Washington’s policy of economic war aimed at starving the Cuban people into submission.

Forty-four years ago, July 26, 1953, marked the insurrectionary start of the popular movement that a few years later overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship.

The U.S. empire has never forgiven the Cuban people for defending their national independence and the socialism they chose and for refusing to bend their knees ever since, never forgiven the Cuban people for their selfless internationalism as they joined national liberation struggles around the world.



August 4, 1972

JULY 27 — The threat of a general strike in Great Britain has forced the release of five longshore leaders who were imprisoned July 21. This is a massive blow against Britain’s new anti-labor National Industrial Relations Court. The dockers were jailed in an attempt to punish them for staging unauthorized picketing in the ports. A general strike would have been the first since 1926.

The national outcry erupted within hours of their imprisonment under the Industrial Relations Act. It was heralded in the financial press as the British version of the Taft-Hartley Act, as a significant step toward curbing the rising tide of labor militancy. It hasn’t worked out that way.

The nationwide strike was the response to the first use of this act to imprison fellow laborers. The dispute at issue was unauthorized picketing against increasing containerization.



August 4, 1947

For the past 12 days, 4,500 Jewish refugees bound for Palestine have undergone bloodshed and torture at the hands of the British imperialists that Hitler could hardly excel.

Packed like sardines in an American ferryboat renamed Exodus 1947, this mass of tired, hungry, unwashed people, clad in rags, sleeping on boards, endured their hardships in the hope of finding a place where they could begin a new, decent life for themselves. About 17 miles out of Haifa, six British warships smashed into the Exodus from three directions, enveloping the ship in a cloud of fire bombs, gunfire, tear gas.

The British imperialist brigands are not alone in their responsibility for this monstrous episode. President Truman’s crocodile tears cannot cover up the crime of Wall Street’s government in closing the doors of this country to these displaced persons.

Support Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

artillery barrages, Moscow's forces have made fitful progress but also suffered losses. They occupy almost all of neighboring Luhansk, but a couple of Ukrainian-held villages are still tying them up.

Putin believes Moscow's forces — which are disproportionately made up of non-ethnic Russian troops — can continue to sustain heavier losses than those it is inflicting on Ukrainian forces.

As the biggest land war in Europe since the second imperialist world war drags on, Putin anticipates that military and financial backing from Washington and other imperialist powers to Ukraine will weaken. Divisions among them over the course of the war are increasingly evident.

The Russian military is using its artillery superiority to bombard towns in its path with up to 50,000 shells a day.

Long-range precision artillery from imperialist powers has begun to help Ukrainian forces cut into Moscow's huge advantages. A string of Russian ammunition depots and command centers deep behind the front lines have been hit with new longer-range mobile rocket launchers supplied by the Pentagon.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu ordered July 18 that these new weapons be found and destroyed. Shipments entering Ukraine via its western borders are also being targeted.

Putin visited Tehran July 19 for a summit with Ebrahim Raisi and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his Iranian and Turkish counterparts. Erdogan is seeking to mediate talks to get the Russian naval blockade on shipping lanes in the Black Sea lifted so grain can be shipped out of Ukraine. Moscow is seeking hundreds of Iranian armed drones to use in Ukraine.

Moscow's attempts to consolidate control over the areas it occupies are stoking resistance to its rule.

"The Russian occupation administrations in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts are threatening residents with eviction from their homes and expulsion from the area for what they term 'extremist activities,'" Halya Coynash wrote in the July 18 Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group on-line newsletter. "By 'extremists' are meant Ukrainians expressing support for Ukraine" and telling the truth about "Russia's invasion and the crimes it is committing on Ukrainian territory."

Where Moscow tries to prevent Ukrainian from being spoken in schools, it runs up "against opposition from teachers and parents," she said.

The group's July 14 report noted the occupied Kherson region has "the highest number of enforced disappearances and illegal detention among civilians," with 412 victims identified.

Buryatia soldiers refuse to fight

Some 150 Russian soldiers from Buryatia, a region in eastern Siberia, re-

fused to fight in Ukraine in June. They were threatened with prosecution on the spot. After their wives filmed a video appeal demanding their return home, they were sent back July 9-10.

Buryats are an ethnic group that fought oppression by the Russian czars for centuries. Under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, the workers and farmers government that came to power in 1917 exposed abuses of the Buryats, punished offenders and established an autonomous Buryat region in 1923. Buryats fiercely resisted the forced collectivization of their land during the Stalin-led counterrevolution in 1929 that crushed advances made by the Buryat people.

Today Buryatia is one of the most impoverished areas of Russia. For many young men there, joining the Russian army is the only way to earn a living. Only soldiers from Dagestan in the North Caucasus have had a higher death toll than those from

Akron protests: 'Charge cops who killed Jayland Walker'

BY MAGGIE TROWE

AKRON, Ohio — Hundreds came to the Civic Theatre here July 13 to pay their respects to Jayland Walker. A DoorDash driver with no criminal record, Walker,

25, died June 27 when eight police officers fired dozens of shots at him as he jumped from his car after a police chase. A medical examiner reported June 15 at least 46 bullets hit him from head to toe.

The cops say that Walker fired from his car as he fled a traffic stop. They claim that as he was running away, wearing a ski mask, he turned toward them and reached for his waist. But that is not clear in any of the police bodycam videos released so far. Shots continued hitting Walker after he fell. No one claims he was actually carrying a gun. After the shooting, cops handcuffed him behind his back as he bled to death.

Police say that cops in a neighboring town chased Walker's car the night before, but didn't stop him.

Daily protests, most peaceful, have taken place here since Walker's killing. But some ended in broken windows and damage to small businesses. Several protesters were arrested. A curfew imposed by the mayor was lifted July 17.

One of the shops damaged was Davinci's Pizzeria. "I understand that it's horrible what happened, and I'm right there with them. There should be protests," new owner Wyatt Baer told the Akron Beacon-Journal. "But I don't know why they had to bust in my windows."

Walker's family has called for continuing protests, insisting that they be nonviolent. The day before the funeral they organized a "Unity Gathering" at Remedy Church.

Walker's cousin, Rodray Walker Jr., set the tone, telling the packed church, "We are asking that you continue to unite in a nonviolent manner to raise awareness for injustice in police brutality that continues to happen in the African American communities."

In the wake of widespread condemnation of the killing, Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan declared the day of the funeral a day of mourning. Walker's family invited the public to view Walker's open casket and attend the funeral.

The atmosphere was tense. Those entering had to go through metal detectors



Gas company workers visit depiction of Russian President Vladimir Putin behind bars July 1 in Yekaterinburg, Russia's fourth largest city. As officials gathered in front of media later, they didn't remove Putin's picture for fear it would be seen as insulting. It was covered over later.

Buryatia in the current war.

"When Ukrainians talk about the Russian troops, they always mention Buryats and Chechens," Alexandra Garmazhapova, told the Moscow

Times. "We don't want this reputation." Garmazhapova, based in Prague, Czech Republic, is a leader of the Free Buryatia Foundation, an anti-war group founded shortly after Moscow's invasion.

the route raised their fists in solidarity.

That afternoon SWP members talked with working people in northeast Akron. One man said the police shooting was justified because Walker fled the cops and fired a gun. Others disagreed. "I'm upset about it. I don't think eight cops should have fired on him," said Shelley Soto, 19, a nursing home worker.

Biden's Middle East trip illustrates the decline of US imperialism today

Continued from front page

in Central Asia, along with massive sea and air power.

Other rival capitalist powers have intervened in the region, including the rulers of Russia and Turkey, to advance their own national interests.

Moscow's air superiority and Iran-backed militia forces played a decisive role propping up the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship in Syria, extending their influence in the Mideast. Both the Iranian and Turkish governments aim to use Washington's and Moscow's preoccupation with the war in Ukraine to bolster their own interests.

In Israel, Biden signed a July 14

Iran teachers fight for wages, pensions and free public schools

BY SETH GALINSKY

Teachers across Iran have been stepping up their push to win wage and pension increases to keep up with inflation and to defend free public education. The value of the rial, the national currency, has plummeted 25% since late March. The arrest and prosecution of scores of teachers and union activists has not stopped their protests.

Thousands joined June 16 actions called by the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers Trade Union Associations. Demonstrations took place in Tehran, in the provinces of Mazandaran in the north, Kurdistan in the northwest, Khuzestan in the southwest, Hormozgan in the south, Kermanshah in the west, Azerbaijan in the extreme northwest, Gilan in north central Iran and several other regions.

The Coordinating Council brings together 20 government-recognized regional teachers' unions. It was strengthened by their struggles starting in 2017.

In a June 16 statement, the council noted that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi promised when he was elected a year ago that improving the conditions of working people "will not be tied to nuclear negotiations," a reference to heavy U.S. sanctions on Tehran and ongoing talks with Washington over Tehran's nuclear program.

Raisi also promised that he would create 1 million jobs, and 1 million



Retirees protest at parliament in Tehran Jan. 17. Placards say, "Employed and retired, unity, unity."

housing units a year. "It didn't take long for the promises to be forgotten," the council said. "Instead of reducing the class divide and poverty, our government has targeted the livelihood of teachers and other wage earners."

Over a decade ago Iran's bourgeois clerical government passed legislation saying that public school teachers' pay should be brought in line with their counterparts at the country's universities. Last December, after a round of large teacher protests, the parliament approved a law saying teachers should get 80% of the salaries university professors make. But that law has not been implemented.

The highest paid teachers make under 90 million rials, about \$300 a month, while the value of the rial-to-dollar exchange rate continues to fall.

Right to public education

Another issue has been protecting the right to free public education. To make up for budget shortfalls from the lack of promised government funding, schools are imposing tuition and other fees, despite this being a violation of Iran's Constitution. This, teachers say, violates "the rights of 13 million students."

Meanwhile, the government is pushing to hire thousands of Islamic religious seminary students to work as teachers,

while graduates of approved teaching programs are having trouble getting jobs. Many teachers see this as an attempt to extend the imposition of religion over classes on science, history and literature, and to undermine the independence of the schools.

After demonstrations took place across the country in May, marking National Teachers' Day, the government slandered the teachers, claiming they were being used by foreign powers and "Marxists" seeking to overthrow the Islamic Republic.

Iranian police arrested two French teachers, trade unionists who had been visiting Iran on tourist visas, who had met with leaders of the teachers' unions. Cecile Kohler, president of the National Federation of Education, Culture and Vocational Training in France, and her husband were arrested on their way to the airport May 8.

In response, the Coordinating Council issued a statement saying "a part of the government, in an unscrupulous and cowardly act," has falsely accused their teachers of being manipulated by "the invisible hands of foreigners." Teachers have always been against foreign intervention in Iran, the council noted, calling the latest accusations "ridiculous."

Dozens of teachers and union leaders in Iran have been arrested and slandered in the press, the council said. These attacks, the council said, violate the Iranian Constitution's guarantee of the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty. The repression hasn't pushed back the fight by teachers and other school workers.

Family members, friends, union members and others have organized to visit teachers imprisoned across the country and to shine a spotlight on the harsh conditions of their imprisonment, including beatings and torture in attempts to extract false confessions. Several of the imprisoned teachers have begun hunger strikes.

The council leadership has welcomed messages of solidarity from unions around the world, while making it clear that it won't accept any funds from outside the country.

The Iran-based Ensaf News agency reported the Islamic Association of Students of Tehran University and Tehran Medical Science University issued a statement July 18 condemning the most recent arrests of teachers, as well as that of three well-known film directors and others.

"Arresting citizens on charges of expressing an opinion or issuing a statement about current issues has no legal basis," the students said. "The prevention of contact with their families" and other abuses "are clearly against the laws of the country."

Retired teachers held marches and other protest activities around the country July 5. "We have no other goal than our professional demands," retired teacher Ali Sadeghi told a protest of hundreds in Kermanshah. "We inform the security forces [surrounding us] that our protesters are Iranians, and Muslims. We are courageous and we have the right to fight for our rights."

The following week Sadeghi and another leader of the retirees was summoned by the prosecutor's office, a sign that the government is considering bringing charges.

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Constitution, Bill of Rights conquest of First American Revolution

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July is America's Revolutionary Heritage: Marxist Essays by George Novack. A long-time leader of the Socialist Workers Party, he wrote a number of books on questions of Marxist politics and history. The excerpts from the book are from "How the Constitution Was Written" and "Mercy Otis Warren — Mother of the American Revolution." Growing out of the American revolutionary war for independence from British colonial rule, an uprising began by indebted farmers in Massachusetts against government oppression — Shays' rebellion. It helped lead to adoption of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which provides protections against the state that working people continue to need today. Copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

In the previous essay we outlined the role of the northern merchants and the southern planters in the struggle of the American colonies for independence. If we follow the coalition to the next great stage of its work, we find it in the unification of the nation under the Constitution. At this stage, however, the lead in the coalition changes hands and the merchants become the more



"Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States," 1940 oil painting by Howard Chandler Christy
Delegates in Philadelphia, Sept. 17, 1787, submit Constitution for ratification by the states. American Revolution, revolts by farmers and other working people won Constitution, as well as Bill of Rights — 10 amendments that codified crucial protections for the working classes.

aggressive and dominant element.

The cause of this shift is easily traced. The merchant class stood in need of a strong national government far more urgently than its ally in the coalition. Its need was lodged in the classic motivations that have everywhere caused the bourgeoisie to accomplish the task of national unification.



From the outbreak of Shays's Rebellion in 1786 until the adoption of the Constitution of the United States three years later, Mercy Otis Warren once more undertook to organize in defense of the American Revolution. Along with James Warren and Elbridge Gerry, she opposed a federal constitution that did not guarantee any rights to its citizens. The oppositional pamphlet *Observations on the New Constitution, and on the Federal Conventions* was published in Boston in 1788 by "a Columbian Patriot." Traditionally attributed to Gerry, the pamphlet is now accepted as the work of Mercy Otis Warren.

By the time the Constitution was drafted, the men of property desired a strong central government that could quell local disturbances such as Shays's Rebellion. Protection of property was uppermost in their minds. As Mercy wrote to her English friend, the Anti-Federalists "wish for a union of the States on the free principles of

the late Confederation" while the Federalists "are for the consolidation of a strong government on any or on new principles; and are for supporting it by force, at the risk of distorting the fairest features in the political face of America." As Mercy Warren outlined in her pamphlet, the Anti-Federalists objected primarily to the lack of democratic guarantees in the Constitution; there was no provision for the right of freedom of the press, the right of conscience, or the right to a trial by jury. The proposed document did not outline basic civil liberties and would not protect the individual from such measures as the odious writs of assistance. ...

While the Federalists vaguely promised the possibility of constitutional amendments, the Anti-Federalists, including James and Mercy Otis Warren, demanded a bill of rights. As Mercy put it, "The very suggestion that we ought to trust to the precarious hope of amendment and redress, after we have voluntarily fixed the shackles on our own necks, should have awakened us to a double degree of caution."

When Thomas Jefferson worked out the Bill of Rights, the Anti-Federalists agreed to support the Constitution.



Sharp rebellion in Massachusetts and the capture of the Rhode Island state government by the indebted

farmers had just served notice on the ruling classes of the precariousness of their position in the face of the rising popular clamor. This notice was served in the South as well as the North; we have [James] Madison's authority to authenticate the stories of rebellion in Virginia. That the planters shared the alarm of the merchants at these storm signals, and that they moved to form a strong central government capable of helping the states to maintain proper rule, is indubitable. ...

We now enter upon one of the most amazing chapters in American history. For the first time in close to three decades the planter-merchant coalition that ruled the country was broken. In a brilliant and vigorous stroke the northern bourgeoisie took independent possession of the state power and, for a turbulent decade, used it like a pile driver to sink the foundations of American capitalism. ...

[Alexander] Hamilton's system was unified by a single conception: the establishment of the rule of the bourgeoisie. ...

Hamilton's program met with violent opposition from the farmers and their representatives, many of whom had opposed the adoption of the Constitution. Gradually, as they realized that the coalition was entirely ruptured by the audacious Hamilton, the large planters under the lead of Jefferson, Madison, [James] Monroe, and similar figures went into opposition. A great battle opened that was to shake the nation to its roots during the next decade.

The agricultural interests were quick to realize that the work of the first administration was conducted entirely in behalf of the mercantile interests, and, further, that it would pay for itself out of taxes and higher prices borne by the agricultural population, who constituted 90 percent of the country. Stung to fury, they launched a tenacious offensive under the able guidance of Jefferson. In this they had every advantage. The revolutionary ferment [of 1776], not yet subsided, was aroused to a wave of leveling radicalism by the stirring news from France [1789 French Revolution].

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Workers need our own party, a labor party

The labor movement should join rail workers in fighting President Joseph Biden’s intervention in contract talks between rail bosses and unions aimed at preventing the workers from using their union power, after they voted by 99% to strike against industry-wide attacks on wages, job conditions and safety.

Biden’s action is one more example that the government is never “neutral” in conflicts between employers and unions. It always sides with the bosses. The twin Democratic and Republican parties exist to defend the interests of the ruling capitalist families.

The U.S. is sharply class-divided. Politics here, as everywhere, isn’t a clash between left and right, or liberals and conservatives. It’s a class struggle. The bosses use all the powers of their state — its army, cops, courts, prisons, political parties, and government “boards” and regulatory agencies — to defend their profits against the vast majority, working people.

Today workers have no party of our own. And most of our union officials tell us we don’t need one, that “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party will serve our political needs and we should leave things to them.

Millions of workers recognize we need unions to fight for better wages and working conditions. But

without class political independence, without our own party, we fight with one hand tied behind our backs. Building a labor party out of our struggles gives our class our own political instrument. Workers can’t choose a “lesser evil” between Democrats and Republicans. There is none. Both parties have decadeslong records serving the U.S. imperialist rulers in their wars against workers and farmers, at home and abroad.

Contrary to what the rulers try to pound into our heads from early on, workers have the capacities to join together and chart a course out of the oppression and exploitation imposed by dog-eat-dog capitalism. A labor party can fight for cost-of-living adjustments in every contract to protect wages from inflation; 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to combat unemployment; and a working-class foreign policy that defends the struggles of toilers not just here, but everywhere we come under economic or military attack — from Ukraine to revolutionary Cuba.

A labor party would unify working people and our allies for the struggles that lie ahead, to overturn capitalist rule and establish our own workers and farmers government. Join the Socialist Workers Party and our candidates fighting for this liberating perspective!

White House bars rail strike, imposes gov’t board

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Rail workers’ contracts ran out months ago, for some in June 2021. Under the notorious anti-working-class Railway Labor Act, the unions were barred from striking and forced into mandatory mediation with the bosses. When that ran out without agreement, the bosses and workers were put into a 30-day “cooling-off” period. Within hours of its ending, President Joseph Biden announced July 17 the appointment of a Presidential Emergency Board to take over the talks, with 30 days to hear the two sides, and issue a proposal for a settlement. Then another 30-day “cooling off” period is imposed for both sides to consider the offer.

The conductors’ and engineers’ unions are among 13 rail unions involved in the negotiations, including the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way and the Transportation Communications Union’s Brotherhood of Railway Carmen.

Collectively, these unions represent some 115,000 railroad workers covered by the various national agreements. They comprise 100% of the workforce that will be impacted by this round of negotiations.

Since the 1880s, each new struggle of rail workers to win better wages and conditions has been met by boss assaults and efforts to “legally” deprive workers from being able to go on strike. This was what led to passage of the 1926 Railway Labor Act, which imposes lengthy delays on unions right to strike and gives the president the power to order federal arbitration.

“I support union rail workers going on strike, this is our only tool against the rail employers to use our collective power against the abuses the working-class faces,” said Lance Anton, an 11-year SMART-TD conductor working in Lincoln.

“Union-organized workers need to see our worth, which only can be done by working together, as the interest of workers and the employers are not the same,” he said. “Our unions need to fight for trains no longer than 50 cars, with a crew of two on each end of the train, because the 2- or 3-mile-long trains today are killing people that live near railroad property.

“A few weeks ago, because there was no protection on a railroad crossing in Missouri, four people died and many passengers were injured after an Amtrak train hit a dump truck and derailed,” Anton said.

What should we do next?

Greg Regan, president of the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, which represents 37 labor unions, including the 13 rail worker unions in today’s negotiations, released a statement commending Biden’s arbitration order.

The 13 rail union tops are urging members to reach out to their U.S. senators and House representatives to press for a “labor-friendly” board, and, if necessary, labor-friendly legislation to bring this round of bar-

gaining to a successful conclusion.

As a six-decade member of the conductors’ union, my question is, haven’t those politicians, Democrats and Republicans alike, proved time after time, again and again their opposition to effective labor unions, particularly against rail unions’ right to strike?

I urge workers to read the four-part *Teamster* series by Farrell Dobbs, who emerged from the ranks of the union to become one of central leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters strikes in the 1930s and leader of the union’s successful 11-state campaign to organize over-the-road truckers. Dobbs went on to serve as national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

The unions must be transformed into mechanisms for independent and militant action by the workers. Government restrictions on the right to strike must be vigorously fought. Internal union democracy must be established so that all questions are debated and decided by the workers themselves. Then, and only then, will organized labor manage to bring its full weight to bear in confrontations with the employers.

Arbitration rigged against workers

Union officials are quick to include a no-strike pledge in contract settlements and refer grievances to arbitration, as opposed to being fought out on the shop floor or the picket line. The workers lose because arbitration boards are rigged against us, invariably being “neutral” on the employers’ side.

“My union’s 99.5% vote to strike shows how railroad crews feel about striking. The company is writing everyone up and harassing us. Even taking the safest course while riding a tank car will get you written up by a boss,” Travis Zuluaga, 32, a Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen member in the Albany, New York, area, wrote to the *Militant*. He’s worked 10 years as a conductor and engineer. “It’s about being bullied and feeling threatened daily.

“We’re concerned about the new anti-worker attendance policy, and a lot of confusion about striking. The last strike was 31 years ago,” he said. Very few members of today’s rail unions have ever been on strike.

I remember the 1991 rail strike. We should begin by having regular meetings of our locals for the membership to set strike policy, including where the organized picketing at rail property locations is going to be, to elect picket leaders for each site, and set a tone of discipline — no alcohol, drugs, or weapons on the picket line or in the union strike hall. To start now to reach out for allies, fellow union members in our area, working farmers, students, family and friends.

Set up to inform union members daily of strike progress, to answer lies peddled by the bosses, including the boss’s media, and organize volunteers for food preparation and distribution.

We need to educate, organize and mobilize.

Fight high prices, for jobs

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ures hide the scope of the crisis. The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is now worth 27% less than 13 years ago.

“It used to be you could get a bowl of fruit lower than your hourly wage,” Janelle Jackson, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, told this reporter in the parking lot of a supermarket in Philadelphia where she works July 18. “Now a bowl of watermelon is \$7.99 and half the size it used to be.”

This past year butter was up by 21.3%; eggs, 33.1%; coffee, 15.8%; health insurance, 17.3%; and airplane tickets, a whopping 34.1%.

Real average hourly earnings are down 3.6% over the last 12 months, the greatest decline since the 1970s. At the same time prices rise, factory production is dropping and new orders are falling at the fastest rate since May 2020.

‘Fuel costs have tripled’

Fuel costs have tripled for truck driver Delores Bledsoe. “It’s making me want to get out of the truck and go drive an Uber,” she told The Associated Press July 13 at a truck stop while hauling freight from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to Wisconsin.

President Joseph Biden sought to downplay the latest figures, as he’s done throughout his presidency, insisting the 9.1% inflation jump was “out of date.” Last month Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell claimed the “economy for now is strong” and “consumers are in good shape,” something nobody who actually works for a living could honestly say.

The Fed — the U.S. government’s national bank — had implemented a steep 0.75% increase in interest rates, forcing higher loan repayments out of workers with mortgages, auto loans, credit cards and other debts. Its board members say a similar interest rate hike, if not more, is likely at the end of the month.

These moves have raised the dollar to a 20-year high against the currencies of major trading partners like Japan and the eurozone. As a result, import costs into the U.S. are higher and governments in semicolonial countries — like Pakistan, Ghana and El Salvador, with some of the highest dollar debts — will find these more and more unpayable, as with Sri Lanka. Bosses and their governments then drive to extract from us more of the wealth produced by the labor of working people and put it into the coffers of banks in the imperialist centers.

The *Wall Street Journal* editors complained July 14 that during similar inflation in the 1970s, “policy makers lacked the will to contain it.” But whenever governments that serve the bosses try to “contain” inflation, it always involves targeting the jobs and living and working conditions of the working class.

For cost-of-living adjustment clauses

“The labor movement needs to fight for cost-of-living adjustment clauses in all union contracts and benefits, so that whenever prices rise our wages go up automatically,” Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from New Jersey, told the *Militant*. “And we need to demand a shorter work-week with no cut in pay — 30 hours work for 40 hours pay — to spread the available work around.”

Inflation is not caused or resolved by bankers tinkering with interest rates. Its origins are in the crisis of the capitalist system. As profit rates decline, capitalists cut investment in capacity-expanding production and equipment. Competition among them sharpens and they press governments to print vast amounts of money. As the supply of money outstrips the output of commodities, prices go up.

Skyrocketing food prices are increasing the number of working people seeking assistance from food banks in order to feed their families. “It’s really impossible to get by now without some help. The prices are way too high,” Tomasina John, a mother of four, told AP as she lined up outside St. Mary’s Food Bank in Phoenix. She said her family had never visited a food bank before.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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