

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban women defend gains of revolution in face of US economic war  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 32 SEPTEMBER 5, 2022

## Democrats, FBI attack against Trump is threat to working class

BY TERRY EVANS

The Aug. 8 FBI armed raid on Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate is the latest move by the President Joseph Biden administration, fellow Democrats and a coterie of Never-Trump Republicans in their over-six-year witch hunt — and is one of the most dangerous for the working class.

The blatantly unconstitutional

**Correction: Why we defend constitutional rights**  
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break-in and seizure of the files of the former president sets a precedent that will be used to target workers and our unions as we fight for better wages and conditions and take steps to organize independently of the bosses' Democratic and Republican parties.

During the nine-hour raid, some 30 FBI agents rummaged throughout the massive estate, seizing documents FBI and Biden administration figures

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## Join 'Militant' in fight to end ban in Arizona federal prison!

BY SETH GALINSKY

The fight to overturn the banning of two issues of the *Militant* by officials at the Federal Correctional Institution in Phoenix is winning broad support.

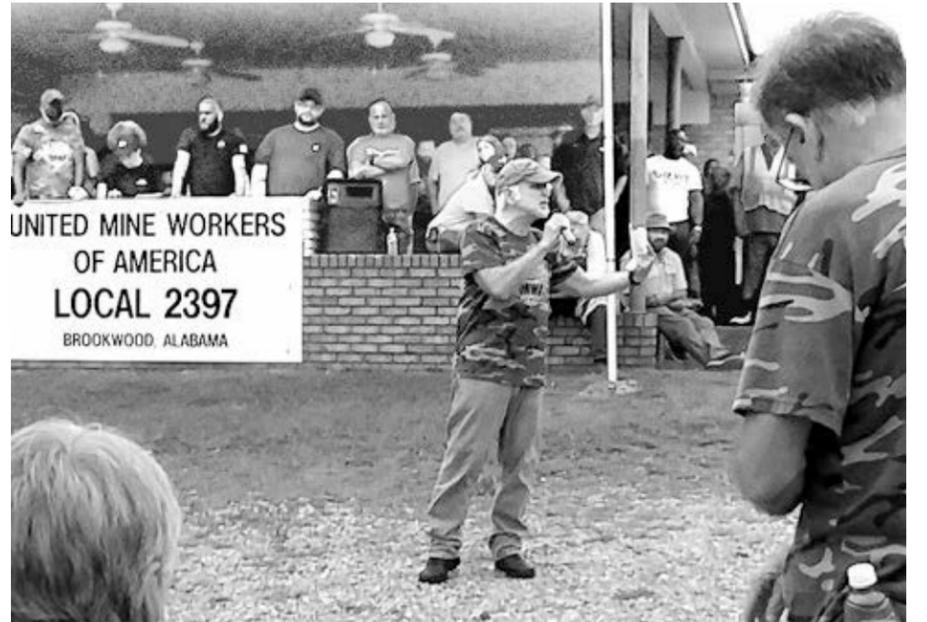
PEN America, the U.S. branch of the international literary and human rights organization; the National Coalition Against Censorship, an alliance of national nonprofit groups; the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press; and the Arizona Newspapers Association, which represents more than 80 newspapers across the state, are among the organizations that have sent letters to the Federal Bureau of Prisons calling for the ban of the socialist newsweekly to be reversed.

Readers of the *Militant* and all those who defend the right to free speech and freedom of the press can use these letters to reach out and win more support — from civil liberties and prisoners' rights groups, union officials, co-workers and others — to strengthen the fight to reverse the un-

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## Striking coal miners: 'We'll stay out as long as it takes'

Union rejects \$13.3 million fine levied by NLRB



Militant/Susan Lamont

United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts speaks to 200 miners, supporters in Brookwood, Alabama, Aug. 17. United Mine Workers have been on strike at Warrior Met since April 2021.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BROOKWOOD, Ala. — “We’re not going to give in to Warrior Met,” striking United Mine Workers of America member Greg Pilkerton told the *Militant* as people were gathering for the union’s solidarity rally here Aug. 17. He is one of hundreds of UMWA mem-

out for the rally, held at UMWA Local 2397’s union hall. The local represents miners who work at Warrior Met’s No. 7 mine. In addition to weekly picket duty, Pilkerton works on track maintenance for a freight rail carrier. Most strikers

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## Defend Ukraine independence! Demand Moscow get out now!



Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group

Artist Yelena Osipova protests in St. Petersburg July 31, celebrated in Russia as Navy Day. “We died for peace,” placard says, referring to war against Nazi invasion. “No to War” in Ukraine!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Six months since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, nothing has dimmed the courageous fight of the Ukrainian people to defend their country’s independence. The front lines haven’t moved in weeks. With no end to the death and destruction, demanding Moscow get its forces out of all of Ukraine remains an impor-

tant fight for working people worldwide.

Despite the numerical superiority of Moscow’s forces, heavy losses are sapping Russian troop morale. Backing for Putin’s war among working people at home was never enthusiastic and continues to wane. Tens of thousands have been killed or wounded on both sides.

For the first time Ukrainian forces

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**Socialist Workers Party campaign: All out Labor Day!**  
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bers who have been waging a hard-fought strike against Warrior Met Coal since April 2021. Pilkerton has worked at the mine for 25 years. “We’ll be out as long as it takes to win a contract we can accept,” he said.

Some 200 striking UMWA miners, retirees, and family members turned

## Protests in Puerto Rico demand gov’t cancel privatization, end power blackouts

BY SETH GALINSKY

Outrage and protests are growing in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico in the face of repeated power blackouts one year after the government turned over control of the antiquated and decaying public electric grid to Luma Energy, a U.S. and Canadian joint venture.

Despite seven rate increases approved by Puerto Rico’s Energy Bureau this year alone, the grid keeps failing. Some small businesses have closed because they can’t afford to run backup generators. In one recent blackout Aug. 17, more than 230,000

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## It costs \$300,000 to raise a child as inflation ravages workers’ families

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With prices rising at the fastest rate in more than four decades, the costs for food, housing, clothing, health care and child care continue to devour the meager resources of working people. According to the Brookings Institution, it now takes more than \$300,000 for a working-class family to raise a child through high school.

For the seventh consecutive month food prices rose in all major categories, including meats, poultry, fish, dairy products, fruit and vegetables. Egg

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Strikes by UK rail workers spread to other industries

Case workers fight on wages, schedules

# Inflation robs workers' families

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prices were up 38% from a year ago and grocery prices overall rose 13.1%. This hits workers with low paying jobs particularly hard, as greater proportions of their paychecks are spent on providing food for their families.

Some workers living in Southern California have been crossing the border into Mexico to buy groceries. Gibran Jimenez told NewsNation that he, his wife and their two kids drive for almost two hours to get to Tijuana, where a gallon of milk is 50% cheaper than in the U.S. and a four-pack of toilet paper costs \$4 less. "I gotta save as much as I can, every penny counts," he said.

Jennifer Smith, who lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with her husband and five children, told the *Wall Street Journal* their grocery bill has skyrocketed. She said meatless Mondays and clean-out-the-fridge Thursdays are new additions to the family's bill of fare. "Our kids are back-to-school shopping now," she added. "Everything has gone up."

According to the National Retail Federation, families will spend an average of \$864 on back-to-school needs, \$168 more than in 2019. Parents are often directed by schools to retail store websites where lists of required supplies can amount to more than \$100 and include everything from crayons and reams of paper to disinfecting wipes.

Chains aimed at workers that had been booming — like Target — report sales are falling now, as workers switch to Family Dollar or other cheaper outlets. Target reported its second quarter profits fell 90% while Dollar Tree, which owns Family Dollar, said the chain looks to open 590 new stores this year.

And for many workers there just isn't a "cheaper" store to turn to.

Child care continues to be one of the

greatest costs for working-class families, with many trying to juggle work schedules and calling for help from relatives in an effort to cut expenses.

Rents continued to rise in July, up 6.3% over the past year. And increasing numbers of working people seeking to finance a home find rapidly rising prices and mortgage rates make it more difficult to do so. "U.S. Housing Affordability in June Was the Worst Since 1989," headlined an Aug. 12 *Wall Street Journal* article. According to the National Association of Realtors, the average mortgage payment in June was \$1,944, nearly \$650 higher than in January.

President Joe Biden and other administration officials — hoping to jigger statistics to boost Democrats' election chances in 2022 — insist the economy has never been better, with the official unemployment rate at 3.5% and some companies clamoring for more workers. But the fact is factory production in the U.S. has slowed to the lowest level since June 2020, when the pandemic raged, according to an Aug. 1 report by *Bloomberg News*.

"As industries from trucking to fast food complain of labor shortages," writes the *Financial Times*, a number of companies, from Microsoft to Walmart are projecting job cuts. Furniture retailer Wayfair is cutting 870 jobs, 5% of its workforce, and Ford plans up to 8,000 job cuts, part of a "climate-change" shift to building electric vehicles.

## 'Everything costs more'

Isabel Sawhill, a senior fellow at Brookings, matter-of-factly tells the *Wall Street Journal*, "A lot of people are going to think twice before they have either a first child or a subsequent child because everything is costing more. You also may feel like



As prices soar at the fastest rate in four decades, it now costs working-class families over \$300,000 to raise each child. Back-to-school needs alone will cost \$864 this year.

you have to work more."

It's no surprise more workers today are exhausted from pulling overtime or are working two or three jobs!

A growing layer of working people are rejecting those options and have begun to fight for the right to have both a family and a family life. "We want to be able to support a family, not live week to week," Ashley Lee, a striking United Auto Workers member at Case New Holland in Sturte-

vant, Wisconsin, explained.

On strike since May 2, the 1,100 union members are fighting for wages that keep up with inflation, work schedules that allow family time and affordable health care. These same issues have been at the center of union fights from Teamsters at FireKing — who won a 22% increase in wages over five years after a 12-week strike — to rail workers in Illinois, coal miners in Alabama, and in dozens of other labor actions.

## Quebec maritime workers strike

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

SOREL, Quebec — "After 10 years of service, I earn just \$22.16 dollars [US\$17] an hour," Pascal Delisle said on the picket line in front of Ocean Towing Aug. 21. Eight members of United Steelworkers Local 9599 have been on strike here since June 20. These sailors provide staff transfer and guidance services to ships coming into port.

They are now required to work 56 hours a week, and have to be available "on call" for many more. They are resisting employer attempts to make their schedules worse, and are fighting for raises of 15%, 10% and 10% over three years.

"We're facing unbridled capitalism," Delisle said. He proudly pointed to other unions' flags flying on a line in support of their fight. Delisle explained how one ship's captain was

suspended, first with pay and then without, for refusing to work with company-hired scabs.

Union officials point to federal government collusion in the company's strike-breaking. Maritime transport is federally regulated here.

"This is the first time I've been 'replaced' when I've gone on strike," said striker David Tetu, originally from Brittany in France. "I have five kids, Pascal has two. It's not easy, but we need to hold the line here."

Delisle said he was following the strikes by dockers, rail and transport workers in the U.K. "That's the kind of unity we need," he said.

Support their strike! Join the picket at the Sorel port or send messages to Emmerly Schneider, USW Local 9599, 5000, boulevard des Gradins, Bureau 300, Quebec City, Quebec G2J 1N3.

# THE MILITANT

## The SWP is on the ballot in Pennsylvania!

*In a victory against government efforts to bar working people's participation in elections, the Socialist Workers Party will appear on the Pennsylvania ballot for the U.S. Congress. The 'Militant' covers the fights to defend constitutional rights needed by working people.*



Militant/John Staggs  
SWP candidate Chris Hoepfner, with attorney Larry Otter, right, file for ballot July 27.

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## The Militant

Vol. 86/No. 32

Closing news date: August 24, 2022

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

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Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in August, one week in September.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

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E-mail: [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)

Website: [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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# Socialist Workers Party 2022 campaign: 'All out Labor Day'

Socialist Workers Party candidates across the country call on our unions, co-workers and all those who want to fight against the drive of the bosses and their government to make us pay for the crisis of their decaying capitalist system of exploitation and war to join union-called Labor Day actions in early September wherever you are.

Join in strike-support rallies, marches, parades, picnics and other activities to show solidarity with fellow workers in combat — like the coal miners in Alabama who've been on strike for 16 months against the union-busting assault of Warrior Met bosses — and to build the union movement to fight more effectively to defend our rights, improve our wages, working conditions and safety on the job. The labor movement needs to champion the struggles of family farmers and all those who are oppressed by capital.

Our unions need to break from the two parties of the capitalist ruling families — the Democrats and Republicans — and build our own party, a labor party, to fight to take political power into our hands.

We can start with building union solidarity! The fight by hundreds of members of the United Mine Workers of America against Warrior Met Coal bosses in Alabama is crucial for the labor movement. The coal bosses are using the National Labor Relations Board to deal a serious blow to workers' right to strike, and strike effectively. The Joe Biden administration NLRB has fined the UMWA \$13.3 million in an effort to make the union pay the bosses for the security thugs they've hired, for income and profits the company lost because of the strike, as well as for damages to company property the bosses blame on the strikers.

The union will not pay, UMWA President Cecil Roberts says, explaining, "The right to strike in America must be preserved." This fight is in the interests of all working people and needs and deserves widespread solidarity.

Some 115,000 railroad workers, including engineers, conductors, track maintenance workers and many others, are locked in a contract fight with Class 1 rail freight bosses, and are facing government interference. Rail bosses are awash in profits as workers jobs get worse and more dangerous. Today they

confront the anti-labor Railway Labor Act, which makes it illegal for rail workers to strike, instead imposing on them government-mandated mediation and a Presidential Emergency Board. Many are chafing to strike. Freight rail bosses have slashed the workforce to bare bones, with unlivable work hours, and alarming safety conditions that threaten rail workers and those who live near the rail lines.

This too, "is a fight for the whole labor movement," as Greg Regan, president of the Transportation Trades Division of the AFL-CIO told a June 30 labor rally in Galesburg, Illinois.

## A class-struggle labor program

In addition to acting to mount nationwide solidarity with these and other class battles, we need a program to mobilize our ranks and allies to defend our jobs, health and families.

- Today we face the scourge of soaring prices. The Socialist Workers Party calls for escalator clauses in all union contracts, and in social programs like Social Security, covering all working people, that force bosses and the government to increase our wages regularly to cover the complete cost of inflation.

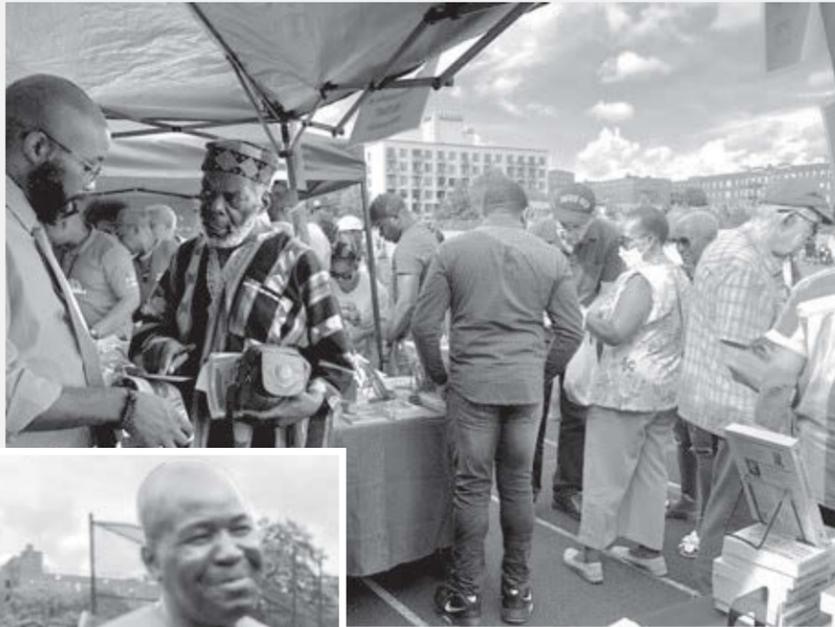
- As the business press warns of recession on top of inflation, the labor movement must assure all who want them to have jobs. We say cut the workweek with no cut in pay — 30 hours work for 40 hours pay — to create jobs. And we demand a government-funded public works program to create jobs and build things like schools, daycare centers, medical centers, that working people need.

- Our unions must take on the fight for workers control of production, to ensure working conditions are safe and put our class in charge of determining what is made and how to meet human needs. This will also allow us to expose the real costs of production, help bring down prices and protect the environment.

- The working class needs its own foreign policy. The bosses take their profit-driven system overseas in search of investment, raw materials and markets. Whenever needed, they fight wars to defend and extend their profits and punish their rivals.

Workers in the U.S. have an interest

## 'Militant,' books by revolutionaries popular at Grenada Day



Militant photos by Tamar Rosenfeld



BROOKLYN — The Socialist Workers Party and Pathfinder books got a great political response at the Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique Day activities held here Aug. 21. The all-day festival draws hundreds of people, mostly Grenadians, who live in New York and the region. It features food booths, cultural performances and stands selling T-shirts, spices and other goods.

The booth was set up by Pathfinder Press and staffed by members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party. There was no festival the last two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Maurice Bishop Speaks* and *New International no. 6*, with the feature article "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop" by Steve Clark and articles by Fidel Castro, were displayed at the booth along with books on U.S. working-class struggles, analysis of the deepening crisis of capitalism, Cuba's socialist revolution and more. Bishop was the central leader of the New Jewel Movement, which led the 1979 Grenada Revolution to victory. He was killed and the revolution overthrown in 1983 by Stalinist counterrevolutionary Bernard Coard, opening the door for Washington to invade.

The Pathfinder booth — the only one offering material on the revolution and its lessons — was bustling all day. Many people who as youth had participated in the revolution came by to discuss and debate. Equally important, many young people who had only heard of Bishop and the revolution from parents or grandparents came by to learn more. One had purchased *Maurice Bishop Speaks* at a previous Grenada Day and liked it so much he came back this year wearing a T-shirt he had made featuring the book cover (inset).

Seventeen participants signed up for subscriptions to the *Militant*. Thirty bought copies of *Maurice Bishop Speaks* and 17 got copies of "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop." Some 60 books were sold in all.

Those staffing the booth included Willie Cotton (left of main photo), the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York, and Sara Lobman, the party's candidate for U.S. Senate.

— SARA LOBMAN

in defending the fight being waged today by the people of Ukraine for their independence and against the murderous invasion by Moscow. Demand Russian troops get out of Ukraine!

- To carry out a class-struggle program like this requires working-class political independence. This means our own party, a labor party, to take on the twin parties of the bosses and bankers, to fight to bring workers and farmers to power.

SWP candidates and supporters will take the discussion about the need for labor solidarity, and for this class-struggle program and perspectives to fellow workers on Labor Day. Join us!

## Build the labor movement!

To build the labor movement, and advance the fighting perspectives it needs to make progress, it is important to not undercut this solidarity by encouraging any separate, ultraleft events as is being done by some self-proclaimed labor "leaders" and so-called socialist organizations such as the Workers World Party.

One example of this is the "The Hot Labor Summer Day March for Recognition," being built by Chris Smalls, of the Amazon Labor Union in New York on his Twitter account. The poster for this

event, with no sponsors listed, shows Smalls holding an Amazon package in flames, and calls for protests at the homes of Amazon Executive Chairman Jeff Bezos and Starbucks Chairman Emeritus Howard Schultz, as well as a Times Square rally on Sept. 5.

These actions are purposefully counterposed on the same day as working people and their families will be joining together at union-sponsored Labor Day activities where broad support can be won for crucial labor fights and social struggles.

They're a dead end on the road to rebuilding the labor movement. All out Labor Day!

## Socialist Workers Party 2022 candidates

### California

Eleanor Garcia, US Senate  
Joel Britton, Governor

### Florida

Rachele Fruit, Governor

### Georgia

Lisa Potash, US Senate  
Sam Manuel, Governor

### Illinois

John Hawkins, US Senate  
Naomi Craine, Governor

### Minnesota

Gabrielle Prosser, Governor  
Kevin Dwire, Lt. Governor  
David Rosenfeld, US Congress

### Nebraska

Joe Swanson, US Congress

### New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, US Congress  
Lea Sherman, US Congress

### New York

Sara Lobman, US Senate  
Willie Cotton, Governor

### Ohio

Samir Hazboun, US Senate  
Jacquie Henderson, US Congress

### Pennsylvania

Osborne Hart, US Senate  
Candace Wagner, Governor  
Chris Hoepfner, US Congress

### Texas

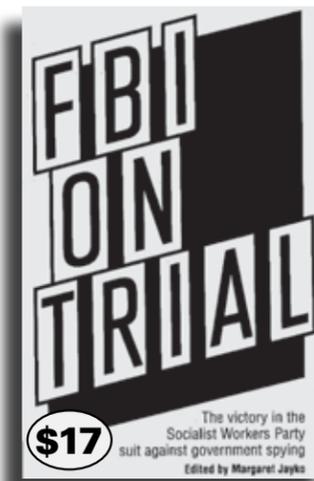
Alyson Kennedy, Governor  
Gerardo Sánchez, US Congress

### Washington, DC

James Harris, Mayor  
Arlene Rubinstein, Delegate to House

### Washington state

Henry Dennison, US Senate



pathfinderpress.com

# FBI raid threat to working class

Continued from front page

claim were “classified” and “items of national security.”

They also snatched Trump’s passports, inferring he might flee the country to escape prosecution. Some liberal news outlets initially denied Trump’s claim the passports were taken, until the FBI made public they had returned them 10 days later. Trump says he had been collaborating with federal archivists over the disposition of the files, as all previous presidents have done, a fact known to the White House. He also said he had declassified all the documents when he was president.

The warrant used to execute the raid cites both the notorious Espionage Act, used by the Barack Obama administration to target and try to silence the press, and Section 2071 of the U.S. Code, which prescribes a prison sentence for anyone who “conceals, removes, mutilates, obliterates or destroys” government documents. Passed with bipartisan support in 1917, the Espionage Act was used to frame up and jail Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs for his opposition to the U.S. rulers’ imperialist aims in the First World War and his support for the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution.

Judge Bruce Reinhart, who authorized the raid, says he’ll release a highly censored version of the affidavit the Justice Department used to obtain the warrant. This leaves the Trump-hating press free to publish anonymous leaks purporting to say why the raid was necessary, as they’ve been doing daily. To gin up their smears, the *Washington Post* alleged the seized documents were “relating to nuclear weapons,” citing nameless “people familiar with the investigation,” as if it were a fact.

Trump sued the FBI Aug. 22 demanding they keep their hands off the seized material until a third party is appointed to review it, and demanding the government provide more detail about what was confiscated and return any item not listed in the warrant.

## Witch hunt targets working people

The FBI — the capitalist rulers’ main political police agency — has been a key weapon in the Democrats’

war against Trump since 2016, when then FBI Director James Comey and other agents collaborated with the Hillary Clinton campaign to try to stop Trump from getting elected. Since then, former FBI chiefs Comey and Robert Mueller, with help from Trump-hating agents like Peter Strzok, have been an integral part of never-ending efforts to stop him from ever running again, and, if possible, get him thrown in jail.

In fact, in its reporting on the Mar-a-Lago raid, the *New York Times* relied on Strzok — whose crusade against Trump led to his being fired in 2017 — as an “expert” on national security.

The FBI was fed the now famously discredited Steele dossier, stuffed with scandalous and completely unverified claims against Trump by Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign. The dossier’s big lie said Trump was a tool run by Russian President Vladimir Putin. It was used to get a warrant to wiretap Trump campaign official Carter Page, and to set up a two-year fishing expedition and impeachment drive run by Mueller to go after Trump.

Mueller ordered highly publicized armed raids on Trump’s associates. Seven were charged as Mueller’s crew of prosecutors tried to lean on them to finger the president. None ever coughed up evidence enabling Mueller to charge Trump.

This collaboration between congressional Democrats, the FBI and now the Biden administration has continued unabated. Democrats have grabbed onto the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Congress to hold a series of show trial hearings aimed at smearing Trump. But they’ve failed so far to muster anything that can be used to get rid of the former president.

At its heart, this ongoing crusade is aimed at the millions that Clinton



Minneapolis Morning Tribune/Eric Mortenson  
Front page of Minneapolis paper, June, 1941, reports on FBI raid on SWP office, attacks on Teamster union, part of Roosevelt administration drive for intervention into second world war.

condemned as “deplorables,” workers who voted for Trump, hoping to change the conditions they faced. The rulers’ growing fear of the working class provokes them to use any and all means to prevent workers from affecting an election again. The FBI plays an irreplaceable role in this operation.

## FBI attacks workers, SWP

For decades the FBI has spied on, disrupted and framed up militant workers, fighters for Black rights, opponents of imperialist war and communists like the Socialist Workers Party with the very same methods used against Trump today.

The expansion of the political police after 1917 was the capitalist rulers’ response to the impact of the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution on workers and farmers in the U.S., who were inspired by its example. Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt turned the FBI loose to go after vanguard workers as the capi-

talist rulers organized to push back against the industrial unions and take the U.S. into the second imperialist world war for the domination of markets and resources worldwide. The Socialist Workers Party along with leaders of the Teamsters union were their first targets.

FBI agents and U.S. marshals raided the SWP headquarters in Minneapolis June 27, 1941, seizing literature that would detail “startling revelations on subversive activities,” the *Minneapolis Tribune* ominously asserted. This was a barefaced lie. That fact didn’t stop the government from using the newly adopted thought-control Smith Act to prosecute 18 leaders of the Teamsters and the SWP.

The blows against constitutional rights carried out by the FBI today target Trump, one of the capitalist class’s own. Such assaults will be used more widely against working people and our unions as our struggles against the bosses and their governments mount.

# Protests demand Puerto Rico gov’t end privatization

Continued from front page  
homes and businesses were without power. Luma officials say it was caused by overgrown vegetation.

Along with the blackouts there have been repeated fires at substations and power surges that destroy home appliances.

As calls to cancel the lucrative 15-year government contract increase, even Gov. Pedro Pierluisi — a central architect of the privatization of the grid — has been forced to criticize the company, demanding that Luma change its “execution plan” and “speed up” its work, while continuing to defend the profit-gouging set up.

Over the life of the deal, Luma is to get control of some \$10 billion allocated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to repair damage from Hurricane Maria in 2017 — which left many of the island’s 3 million people without power for a year or more — on top of the \$100 million a year it gets for managing the grid. Power generation remains in the hands of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority.

The whole electrical system in Puerto Rico has been on the verge of ruin for decades, a byproduct of the plunder of the island’s labor and natural resources by the U.S. colonial rulers.

From 1996 to 2015, the government sold billions of dollars in bonds — mostly to U.S.-based capitalists — then laid off thousands of public workers to make debt payments. The electric utility was particularly hard hit, with the workforce slashed nearly in half. Skilled workers retired early or left for better paying jobs in the U.S. Routine maintenance wasn’t carried out, much less the replacement of obsolete equipment.

When Luma took over, the bosses refused to honor the contract with the UTIER electrical workers union and insisted that each worker reapply to keep working there. Of the 800 linesmen at that time, less than 200 stayed on. “Luma doesn’t even have 350 linesmen now,” UTIER President Ángel Figueroa Jaramillo told the *Militant* by phone from San Juan Aug. 23. “The problem is their model of privatization, whose aim is to generate profits on the backs of the people of Puerto Rico.”

UTIER is among the organizations demanding the contract with Luma be canceled when its supplementary agreement comes up for renewal in November. In the short term, the linesmen and other workers who have decades of experience with Puerto Rico’s complicated electrical

grid need to be brought back to their jobs, Jaramillo said. “In the longer term there needs to be a transformation” in the organization of the public electric system.

“It’s been a disaster,” Mildred Laboy, a retired teacher in Humacao, said by phone. “It’s so bad that even members of the party in power are calling for the contract to be annulled.”

“The outages here in Humacao have been short, but in other towns they often go two or three days without light,” Laboy said that in just a year her electrical bill has increased from \$140 a month to \$285. “And I don’t have an electrical stove or major electrical appliances.”

Laboy hopes to join a protest in San Juan Aug. 25 demanding the cancellation of the contract with Luma.

In the face of public outrage the company set up a new website that touts its “progress.” One of its achievements: “154 miles of power lines cleared” of overgrown vegetation. But the site makes no mention of the condition of the rest of the more than 18,000 miles of lines across the island.

Meanwhile, another hurricane season is approaching.

Luma has repeatedly ignored requests for comment by the *Militant*.

## —CALENDAR—

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**Caravan Against the U.S. Blockade of Cuba!** Sun., Aug. 28. Assemble at 10:30 a.m. at 999 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Car/Bike Protest Caravan to End Washington’s War Against Cuba!** Sun., Aug. 28. Assemble at 2 p.m. at the southwest corner of Kostner and 26th St. Cars will be decorated and caravan will drive through Pilsen neighborhood. For more information: [chicubacoalition@gmail.com](mailto:chicubacoalition@gmail.com); call/text: (630) 915 0654.

### NEW YORK

#### New York

**Defend Freedom of Speech and Assembly in NYC! End the Illegal U.S. Blockade Against Cuba!** Sat., Aug. 27. Gather at noon, First Spanish Methodist Church, 163 E. 111th St. March to Dos Alas (Two Birds) Mural for rally, 201 E. 105th St. For more information: <http://www.us-cubanormalization.org>

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Case workers fight over wages, schedules, health care

STURTEVANT, Wis. — The 600 members of United Auto Workers Local 180 here, and 430 in UAW Local 807 in Burlington, Iowa, remain strong in their strike against Case New Holland. The strike began May 2.

Case New Holland is an international conglomerate with over 70,000 employees worldwide. In the U.S., Case makes tractors as well as component parts assembled elsewhere.

“We are fighting for a wage increase to keep up with inflation. We want to choose when we use our vacation time and an end to excessive overtime,” Gavin Decheck, a material handler with 15 years seniority, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent on the picket line. “The company’s offer for health insurance for a family includes a deductible of \$13,500. You might as well pass on the insurance and roll the dice, hope no one in the family gets sick.”

Jeff Nitz, a tool and die maker with 25 years seniority, talked about the grinding schedule that wrecks havoc with family life. “I don’t want to be here working on weekends. Now we work two Saturdays per month and the company wants to increase it to three,” he said. “We are asking for no change in health insurance and to keep our cost of living adjustment.”

These workers need help getting the facts about their strike spread far and wide, and solidarity to strengthen their fight. Contributions and messages of support can be sent to UAW Local 180, 3323 Kearney Ave., Mount Pleasant, WI 53403, and to UAW Local 807, 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601. Volunteers on the picket line are welcome!

— Dan Fein

## Strikes by UK rail workers spread to other industries

MANCHESTER, England — Union actions across the U.K. demanding pay raises are drawing in tens of thousands as anger mounts about the hit workers are facing from inflation.

After two days of strike actions

Aug. 18 and 20, members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union held solidarity rallies around the country.

Britain’s Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps complained that train cancellations on non-strike days were caused by workers refusing to work overtime. Shapps claims these were “unofficial” strikes.

“What’s ‘unofficial’ about taking your day off?” Jim Hopkins, train driver and Longsight branch secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, told the *Militant* at the Manchester Piccadilly station picket line during an Aug. 13 strike. Bosses talk about “a work-life balance,” he said, but they “will stop at nothing for their profits.”

Some 1,900 dock-workers organized by Unite at Felixstowe, the U.K.’s largest container port, struck Aug. 21 for eight days, their first strike action in 30 years. A just-concluded four-week strike by 1,800 bus drivers working for Arriva in the northwest of England won an 11.1% pay increase backdated to April.

Royal Mail postal workers organized by the Communication Workers Union have set strikes over the next few weeks, and members of the same union working for British Telecom have set strikes for Aug. 30-31.

Recent weeks have also seen a spate of wildcat actions, including walkouts at seven Amazon depots where unions are not recognized, after bosses offered a 35 pence (41 cents) per hour raise. The Royal College of Nurses with close to half-a-million members will begin balloting for strike action Sept. 15 for the first time in the union’s history.

— Hugo Wils and Pete Clifford

## ‘No contract, no crunch!’ say strikers at Corn Nuts factory

FRESNO, Calif. — “No contract, no crunch!” is a slogan of the 40 workers, the entire production unit, who went on strike at the Corn Nuts plant here Aug. 15. They explain the company refuses to seriously negotiate with them and their union, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 85.



Militant/Ólöf Andra Proppé

Aug. 20 Manchester rally during strike by 40,000 members of Rail, Maritime and Transport union for a pay raise, better schedules. Rail strikes were one of many union actions across UK.

After the company was taken over by food giant Hormel in June 2021, the new bosses slashed their medical plan without notifying them or talking to the union. The plant, the only one producing the popular snack Corn Nuts, is shut down with picket lines up 24/7.

Hormel unilaterally jacked up deductions from their paychecks and imposed higher deductibles as well as out-of-pocket payments, forcing many workers to run up medical debts in the thousands of dollars. “I had to have surgery and the only way I could pay for it was to go into my retirement 401(k),” Raul Hernandez told the *Militant* on the picket line Aug. 19. Like many here, Hernandez has worked at the plant for decades. “We’re all out together,” he said.

Teresa Kyle, with 27 years at the plant, pays about three times more than previously for health care. She said workers have been working seven days a week to cover their bills. Hormel has put in robots and cut the workforce from 60 to 40. They have also put the workers on an attendance system that reduces the number of days off.

“The company isn’t bargaining in good faith,” Local 85 Vice-President John Weidenbach told Univisión 21.

“We are getting lots of support from

members of the community,” said Elena Martinez, who was picketing in solidarity with her striking sister. With temperatures going up to 105 degrees, supporters are bringing by cold drinks and food. The strikers get supporting honks from workers driving in and out of the Amazon warehouse parking lot across the street.

Help build solidarity with this strike! Join the picket line or bring refreshments to pickets at 4343 E. Florence Ave. in Fresno. Email letters of solidarity to strikeline organizer Jerry Gil at Jerry@BakersUnion85.com, who shares them with strikers.

— Betsy Stone

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



### September 8, 1997

The statement below was released by Olga Rodríguez, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of New York City, and Robert Miller, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New Jersey.

“We salute Abner Louima for standing up to fight the horrendous brutality that New York cops inflicted upon him. We call on all working people to join our Haitian brothers and sisters August 29, to march in New York City in the Day of Outrage Against Police Brutality, demanding ‘Justice for Abner Louima!’

“Workers of oppressed nationalities and immigrants are special targets of cops in a social system that profits from fostering racism and anti-immigrant hostility to maintain layers of workers in pariah status. Cop brutality and racism is an integral part of this picture. Every time cops lift a club against a worker, they deal a blow to all workers.”



### September 8, 1972

Nineteen escaped political prisoners surrendered on Aug. 15 to troops of the military dictatorship at the Trelew airport in southern Argentina. On Aug. 22, a quick burst of gunfire in the Trelew naval air base ended the lives of 16 young Argentine revolutionists. Defense attorneys for the slain prisoners denounced the deaths as “a virtual execution.”

Public reaction to the killings was immediate and angry. The bodies of the revolutionists became focuses of public protest when they were sent back to cities all over Argentina. Despite repression, the protests quickly assumed a very broad character.

An Aug. 25 Associated Press dispatch from Cordoba reported, “This industrial city of nearly a million people was crippled today by a 14-hour general strike protesting the slaying of the 16 guerrillas and supporting a demand for higher wages.



### September 8, 1947

Popular anger at the high cost of living is being further inflamed by awareness of capitalist profiteering and thievery. Corporation “earnings” are at such fantastic heights, monopoly price-fixing and price-gouging have become so open, that the government and press can no longer hide the direct link between rising living costs and profits.

In recognition of this fact, Wall Street’s Republican and Democratic agents in Washington are now in a political duel of “probes” and counter-“probes,” trying to shift sole blame for inflation on each other.

Corporation net profits for April, May and June were the “biggest on record.” These profits are being amassed while production has been on a steady decline for the past five months and retail sales fell off. Price rises have cut the buying power of the dollar to 50 cents, according to Associated Press.

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# Cuban women defend gains of revolution in face of US economic war, worldwide capitalist crisis

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL, SETH GALINSKY AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

**NEW YORK** — After more than two years of debate involving millions of Cubans, a nationwide referendum will be held Sept. 25 to vote “yes” or “no” on a new Families Code. If approved, it would replace the Family Code adopted nearly 50 years ago in a similar referendum, which registered the enormous advances in the social and economic status of women conquered in the first decade and a half of Cuba’s socialist revolution (see box on facing page).

The proposal seeks to codify further economic and social gains of women and register changes in social attitudes since the 1975 document was adopted.

It also addresses some of the economic difficulties affecting families in Cuba today, especially regarding responsibility for care of the elderly and children. It deals with a range of contentious social issues, from the rights and responsibilities of parents versus the rights of minor children, to common-law relationships and same-sex marriage.

Over a three-month period ending April 30, some 78,000 meetings to discuss the code were held across the island — in every neighborhood as well as in workplaces and rural areas. The draft, originally prepared by a commission established by Cuba’s Council of State, has been revised many times through these and other debates, culminating in a National Assembly session that approved the text to be voted on in September, which is version 25.

While they were in New York City in March for a meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, *Militant* reporters had the opportunity to talk about the draft Families Code and related economic and social questions with Teresa Amarelle, general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), and Osmayda Hernández, the FMC’s international relations director. Amarelle is also a deputy in Cuba’s National Assembly of People’s Power and a member of the Council of State.

At the time, the neighborhood meetings were in full swing. Amarelle and Hernández, like FMC members around

the country, actively participated in these discussions from the start.

## Registration of gains for women

Amarelle noted that the original 1975 Family Code had registered the enormous gains women made during the first years of the revolution. It replaced the prerevolutionary laws on marriage, divorce and alimony that codified the property relations of Cuba’s former capitalist ruling class.

The proportion of women in the labor force has continued to increase, from 24% in 1974 to 55% in 2020. That, together with their rising educational level and involvement in all aspects of Cuban society, has further changed broad social attitudes regarding women.

The new proposed code registers some of those changes. For example, it prohibits domestic violence against women. The 1975 Family Code did not broach the issue, and it was not uncommon at that time for some to deny the existence of the problem. Over the decades, however, the FMC, a mass organization with 4 million members, has played an important role in pushing back the acceptance of domestic violence as “normal” and in protecting women who face it.

Another change is in the legal age for marriage. Under current law it’s 18, but girls can marry at 14 and boys at 16 with their parents’ consent. “It was discriminatory — one age for females and another for males,” Amarelle said.

It also contributed to teenage women dropping out of school and giving up job opportunities after they became pregnant and faced pressure to get married. Helping reduce the high levels of teen pregnancies is one of the FMC’s priorities, working through its neighborhood Counseling Centers for Women and Families (*Casas de Orientación*), which are in every municipality.

“After some discussion we decided the code should establish a minimum age of 18 without exceptions. That proposal is widely supported,” Amarelle noted.

## Care of children and elderly

Articles in the Cuban press describe the “Families Code” as recognizing “many types of families,” and the draft states that what defines a family is a relationship based on “love, affection, solidarity and responsibility.” That’s the future the code strives to bring closer, but it’s far from the reality in a world where commodity relations rule.

As Frederick Engels, co-founder with Karl Marx of the modern communist workers movement, explained with such clarity, what has determined the character of the family at all stages of class society is not love but private property. “True equality between men and women,” he noted, “can become a reality only when the exploitation of both by capital has been abolished and private work in the home has been transformed into a public industry.” That is as true in Cuba as elsewhere.

Much of the new code, in fact, deals with questions of property. The draft document, Amarelle explained, takes up inheritance questions and establish-



Child care center, Pinar del Río, June 2022. First such centers were set up in 1961 under leadership of Federation of Cuban Women to enable women to work and participate in the revolution.

es options for the disposition of property within a marriage and the division of property — such as housing — in a divorce. Cuba has the highest divorce rate in Latin America, a registration, among other factors, of the economic advances and status of women that the revolution made possible.

Among the biggest, and most debated, questions taken up in the Families Code is responsibility for the care of children and elderly relatives. Cuba, with an average life expectancy of 79, has an aging population — more than 20% are 60 years or older. Given the longstanding housing crisis, it’s common for a household to include parents, children and grandparents living together in cramped quarters.

The draft Families Code establishes that elderly family members, those with special needs and minor children have “the right to be cared for,” Amarelle said. Parents and other close family members will have a legal obligation to assure them food and other necessities.

Women are the caregivers in the overwhelming majority of families, and often have to leave their jobs to shoulder that responsibility. They are already entitled to a full year’s maternity leave — 18 weeks at full pay and the rest at 60% — and can also share the leave time with their male partner or another designated family member.

Under the proposed code, they will be able to seek monetary compensation from other family members as part of sharing responsibility for the welfare of elderly relatives.

## Debate on same-sex marriage

The new Families Code affirms “the right of all persons to form a family, to marry or establish a civil union, and to adopt.”

“It respects those rights for all,” said Amarelle, from married couples irrespective of sex, to single parents, children being raised by grandparents or other relatives and common-law relationships.

The new measure will ease the process of adoption, including for same-sex couples, and allow for surrogate motherhood, as long as no payment is involved. In Cuba it will be illegal for someone to rent a woman’s body to bear a child. A womb is not a commodity.

“Cuban society today is more inclusive. There are fewer prejudices and more respect for individual

rights,” Amarelle said.

The proposed code would give “de facto unions” of two or more years’ duration a legal standing equal to marriage, including for property and inheritance rights. In addition, marriage and common-law unions by same-sex couples would have the same legal status as for heterosexual couples.

The international capitalist press has focused almost exclusively on the same-sex marriage provision, but it’s only one of 474 sections of the Families Code, many of which have been the subject of intense debate. Nonetheless, the proposals to allow same-sex couples to marry and to adopt children have been controversial.

The proposal to define a marriage as a relationship “between two persons” instead of between a man and a woman was initially debated as part of the new Cuban constitution approved in 2019 by popular referendum. Because of the heated debate it generated, however, all mention of marriage was removed from the final text of the constitution. The proposal was incorporated into the draft Families Code, allowing for further discussion.

According to the Cuban press, some 76% of voting-age Cubans — 6.5 million people — took part in the neighborhood meetings on the Families Code. Of these, 62% voiced support for the draft,



Members of peasant family learn to read and write, 1961. Young women were majority of the 250,000 volunteers who wiped out illiteracy in one year. Women’s determination to participate in revolution broke down barrier after barrier inherited from capitalism, as working people gained confidence in their own capacities.

indicating it remains more controversial than the new constitution, which was adopted by an 87% majority.

The Conference of Catholic Bishops of Cuba, in a statement issued in February, said the Families Code has “positive elements such as the strengthening of care for older adults or people with different abilities” and measures to protect women and children from domestic violence. But the bishops voiced opposition to the legalization of same-sex marriage. They also criticized the code as “permeated with what is known as ‘gender ideology’ ... an attempt to forcibly impose a construct of ideas onto reality” that would lead to “indoctrinating children in school without consent of the parents.”

During the National Assembly debate on the code in July, deputy Maria Armenia Yi Reina, a Quaker leader in Holguín, stated, “Although it takes up positions I don’t share, based on my Christian principles and faith, I say yes to the draft and urge its submission to a popular vote,” reported the news website CubaDebate.

Another controversial topic is the proposal to change legal norms on parental rights from *patria potestad* (parental authority or custody) — a widespread legal concept in Latin America and Europe — to “parental responsibility.” This means, the code states, that parents

should be “respectful of the dignity and physical and mental integrity of children and teenagers.” A clause on “gradual autonomy” states that parents and courts should grant minor children increasing say over their lives as they mature.

As Amarelle noted in our discussion, the Families Code will have legal consequences, but social relations cannot be changed by decree. “The laws are there, but we have to do the work of convincing and educating,” she said.

## Tightened U.S. sanctions hit women

Elaboration of the new family code, the FMC leaders stressed, takes place at the same time the Cuban people are confronting the combined effects of the world capitalist economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and a brutal, six-decade-long economic war by the U.S. government. Washington’s bipartisan policy is designed to deprive them of the economic resources to develop and thus “prove” that a socialist revolution only leads to poverty, desperation and ruin.

U.S. sanctions block the import of medical supplies, fuel, spare parts and other essential products; sharply curtail Cuba’s access to the international banking system; and penalize foreign companies that trade with Cuba. The Trump administration imposed 243 measures further tightening the sanctions, which the Biden White House has overwhelmingly maintained.

A disastrous gas explosion that ripped through the five-star Hotel Saratoga in the heart of Havana last May, costing 47 lives, and the even more devastating fire in August in Matanzas that destroyed a significant portion of Cuba’s oil reserves and left 16 people dead, are only two of the most graphic examples of the consequences of depriving the Cuban people of the equipment and technology needed to maintain the infrastructure of a 21st century economy and protect lives.

“Cuban women have been especially hard hit by the U.S. blockade, which has caused shortages of food, medicine and other necessities,” Amarelle noted. “It’s mostly women who wait in line for scarce products. Although we’ve made some progress over the years in men sharing domestic chores, it’s women who do



Machine operator, Villa Clara, Cuba, 2019. After revolutionary victory, proportion of women in labor force grew steadily, including in ‘nontraditional’ jobs.

most of the work at home, taking care of children and elderly grandparents.”

## Measures to protect women, workers

From the very first days of the COVID pandemic in 2020, Cuba’s revolutionary government took measures to protect women and other workers. “When schools closed and many women had to stay home with their children, they re-

ceived 100% of their wages the first month and 60% after that,” Amarelle said.

“We also organized messenger services to deliver food and medicine and provide social contact for older adults and others who were isolated at home during the pandemic,” said Osmayda Hernández. “Many were volunteers. But

for women and families facing a particularly tough economic situation, we proposed to the Labor Ministry that the women be paid, and that was done.”

In May 2021 the Cuban government launched a mass inoculation campaign, using the highly effective vaccines developed by Cuba’s widely acclaimed biotechnology industry. By

Continued on page 8

## ‘The first program for women’s equality was the revolution’

UNITED NATIONS — “The first program for equality that Cuban women won was the revolution itself,” Teresa Amarelle, general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), told the *Militant* during an interview here in March.

“The struggle isn’t over today, of course. We still confront many challenges,” she said. “But it was the revolution that truly allowed women to spread their wings.”

Amarelle cited some of the advances for women in the course of Cuba’s revolutionary movement, led by Fidel Castro, that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959, established a workers and farmers government and carried out the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Millions of working people, including women, were transformed as they fought to transform society.

Those changes began among the combatants of the Rebel Army — including the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon, initiated by Castro — during the struggle to overturn the Batista tyranny. After the 1959 victory, the determination of women to participate in the revolution and the support they received from Castro above all, broke down barrier after barrier inherited from capitalist society.

Women were part of leading the agrarian reform that transformed the countryside. They joined the militias and Revolutionary Armed Forces, and helped lead the medical corps. They were a majority of the 250,000 volunteers who in 1961 taught 700,000 Cubans, in their majority women, to read and write, wiping out illiteracy in one year. In 1960 they founded the Federation of Cuban Women, forged in the heat of these mobilizations.

In the course of two short years, 1961-63, they brought 21,000 young women from rural areas to Havana, with their parents’ permission, to study at the Ana Betancourt School for Peasant Women. They learned to read and write, acquired basic knowledge of nutrition and hygiene and learned to make clothes for themselves and their families, as well as other job skills. They were introduced to the theater, ballet and other art forms.

As their self-confidence grew, they began to see themselves differently and returned to their homes, sharing what they learned and helping bring the revolution to the countryside. Women also began breaking into “nontraditional” jobs, driving taxis and tractors, getting hired as bank clerks and more.

At the initiative of Vilma Espín, a former Rebel Army combatant and longtime president of the Federation of Cuban Women, the first child care centers were set up in 1961.

Maternal and infant death rates fell as the free public health system was established and the FMC educated women on reproductive health. Deaths and mutilations from back-alley abortions became a thing of the past as the health care system provided safe, reliable contraception and abortion was made available in hospitals, carried out by qualified medical specialists under sanitary conditions.

Women have taken part in Cuba’s internationalist missions around the world from the very first days of the revolution. They were among the doctors who served in Algeria in 1963 and the volunteers who in 1966-67 fought side by side with Che Guevara in Bolivia. Two Women’s Antiaircraft Artillery Regiments helped defend Angola’s independence from invasions by the South African apartheid regime in the 1970s and ‘80s. And medical brigades have helped combat the COVID pandemic in dozens of countries since 2020.

— SETH GALINSKY

Women in Cuba  
The making of a revolution  
within the revolution

From Santiago de Cuba and the Rebel Army, to the birth of the Federation of Cuban Women

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# Cuban women defend gains of revolution

Continued from page 7

early 2022, some 90% of the island's population was vaccinated. Schools reopened, workers started returning to their workplaces, and foreign tourism slowly began to recover.

Amarelle described a program the Cuban government has instituted to build or renovate housing — at no cost to the family — for women who have three or more children and face economic hardships. The priority given this program is also part of eventually reversing the sustained decline in Cuba's birth rate.

The FMC also helped launch a neighborhood laundry program called Espumas — a play on the Spanish word for “suds” — that provides jobs for women who cannot work outside the home, usually because they care for children or bed-ridden adults.

“They rent one or two washing machines from the domestic trade ministry, which also supplies the detergent and softener,” Amarelle said. It's a source of jobs and income for the women and meets a real social need.

There is a big demand for child care centers, the FMC leaders said. Cuba has some 1,086 public *circulos infantiles* (children's circles) across the island, with nearly 142,000 kids enrolled, but there are still 56,000 families on a waiting list.

The government has also offered tax breaks for trained child care workers, supervised by the education and public health ministries, to offer private services in their own homes. They charge more than public day care but help bridge the gap for families that can afford it.

In addition, the FMC, together with the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the trade union federation, are promoting child care centers called *casitas infantiles* (children's centers) set up in workplaces — from factories to farm cooperatives — in consultation with the parents, with resources provided by the entities. As of June there were 41 workplace *casitas* in Cuba, with another 44 under development.

With the growing number of elderly, Hernández noted, one resource for families is the adult day care centers — the *casas de abuelos* (grandparents' centers) — although the demand remains much greater than what's available.

“A family member drops off an older adult at the center early in the morning and picks them up in the afternoon.”

“The *abuelos* get breakfast, lunch and a snack there,” Amarelle said. “They take part in exercise programs and cultural activities, learn handicrafts, celebrate collective birthday parties, sometimes even weddings!” The centers also have medical staff.

In face of the ongoing challenges, Amarelle concluded, it's clear the U.S. economic and political war, which is directed at making life difficult for ordinary Cubans in the hopes they will turn on their own government, is not going to end anytime soon.

“We've had to learn to live with the U.S. blockade. We've done it for decades and we've still been able to develop,” the FMC leader said.

That's precisely what the U.S. capitalist rulers cannot forgive — that the workers and farmers of Cuba took the

factories, utilities and plantations out of the hands of U.S. and Cuban capitalist families, established a state and government that would defend the interests of working people, and set an example for millions around the world.

Telling the truth about that example — including the advances in the fight for women's emancipation that the revolution made possible — is the most effective way to win support among working people in the U.S. and worldwide for the campaign to demand Washington end its economic, financial and trade sanctions against Cuba.



Xinhua/Joaquín Hernández

“We've had to live with U.S. economic war on Cuba,” say leaders of Federation of Cuban Women. “We've done it for decades and still developed.” FMC helped launch home laundry program, like one above in Arroyo Naranjo, near Havana, to provide a much needed service and jobs for women.

## Striking coal miners: ‘We’ll stay out as long as it takes’

Continued from front page

have had to get other jobs to get by.

“It's time to get back out there and take control of this strike,” UMWA International District 20 Vice-President Larry Spencer told participants. He reported that recently union pickets succeeded in turning back a crane that Warrior Met was trying to bring onto company property.

“It's very important to be back on the strike lines,” striker Antwon McGhee, who has worked at Warrior Met for 17 years, told the *Militant*. He was one of the pickets who talked to the crane operator, a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers. “The company wanted to get the crane to the mine entrance and told the driver there was no strike!” McGhee said. “We told him what was really happening and he refused to take the crane across the picket line.”

UMWA President Cecil Roberts also spoke at the rally, as he has at most rallies since the strike began. “I was a guest at the recent National Association of Letter Carriers convention in Chicago,” Roberts told the crowd. “Some 5,000 delegates and guests showed their support for you and all the other Warrior Met strikers with a

standing ovation and a contribution of \$50,000 to the union's strike fund.”

Spencer reported the UMWA auxiliary's pantry — which organizes and supplies essentials to strikers and their families — had been flooded a few days earlier because of a broken water main. “Everyone pitched in and worked overtime to clean up the mess and put together the bags of food and other supplies in time for the rally today!”

The rally took place three weeks after the supposedly nonpartisan National Labor Relations Board Region 10 hit the UMWA with a massive \$13.3 million fine, backing Warrior Met bosses' charges that the union should be held liable for the company for costs incurred during the strike. This includes hiring more security, lost revenues from unmined coal, as well as repairs for damages to company sites they blame on union members.

The union rejects the charges and refuses to pay the fine. “What's extremely troubling here is that the NLRB appears to have taken up the company's cause without a second thought,” said Roberts in a statement released Aug. 3 after the fines were levied. “Warrior Met Coal instigated this strike and has brutally extended it through its sustained un-

willingness to reach a fair and reasonable agreement. We have no intention of paying its costs for doing so. The right to strike in America must be preserved.”

### Solidarity with striking miners!

Over 1,100 union members walked out 16 months ago at Warrior Met's operations in Tuscaloosa County, which include the No. 4 and No. 7 mines, a preparation plant and central shop. Picket lines were also set up at several railroad crossings.

Warrior Met — which produces metallurgical coal for use in producing steel by manufacturers abroad — was set up in 2016 by the biggest creditors of the mines' previous owner, Jim Walter Resources, which had filed for bankruptcy. The new company bosses imposed major concessions in wages, benefits, and working conditions on the union as the price miners would have to pay to keep the mines open. The company promised the cuts would be restored when profits started rolling in.

The union estimates the workers gave up \$1.1 billion over the five years of the contract. In 2021, the company broke their promise, offering union members a measly \$1.50-an-hour raise over five years, which the miners overwhelmingly rejected.

The company has been mining coal at both struck mines, using management personnel and scabs, including some union members who have crossed the picket line.

In the fall of 2021, the company won a court order from a compliant Tuscaloosa County Circuit Court judge, which has been extended several times, that barred all picketing and other union activity *within 300 yards* of Warrior Met Coal gates. The court allowed picketing to resume in February, but mandated ongoing restrictions.

The union has been organizing regular solidarity rallies since shortly after the strike started. The next rally will be at 6 p.m., Aug. 31, at UMWA Local 2397's union hall. The auxiliary always provides refreshments.

Solidarity with the UMWA strikers! Come to the Aug. 31 rally! Send checks to the UMWA 2021 Strike Fund, P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Send messages of support to UMWA District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216, McCalla, AL 35111. Email [umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net](mailto:umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net).

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# Why we defend constitutional rights

The importance for working people in defending our constitutional rights and protections from government interference has been driven home by the Aug. 8 raid by the FBI, Washington's political police, at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate.

Since the working class first began organizing to defend itself, free speech and assembly and protection from unreasonable search and seizure, to name but a few of the rights conquered in the Constitution, have been crucial. It is the *utilization* of these rights by millions in hard-fought class battles that has been integral to building unions, organizing opposition to Washington's wars, bringing down Jim Crow segregation and fighting for women's emancipation.

But that is far from the same as saying, as John Studer, the Socialist Workers Party campaign director, is quoted saying in the last issue of the *Militant*, that SWP members "are supporters of the Constitution, as written and strengthened by dozens of amendments."

Some 240 years ago, the American Revolution overthrew British tyranny, established a republic and the victorious coalition of ruling Northern merchants and Southern slave owners put together the Constitution as they set out to organize their newly conquered state power.

The goal was to advance their class interests and to regulate their own class conflicts. That Constitution allowed states to limit who could vote, barring slaves, women and those without property from the franchise. It firmly established the new government to defend the rule of private property. It guaranteed the slave owners would dominate the federal government for decades.

While the SWP defends, supports and uses the rights written into the Constitution and its Bill of Rights, a product of class struggle by farmers and other plebeians, this has nothing to do with "supporting the Constitution as written."

It took a Second American Revolution — the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction — before adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, establishing that

citizens' right to vote could not be denied "on account of race, color or previous conditions of servitude."

The overthrow of the Reconstruction governments, backed by the growing capitalist ruling class, and the imposition of Jim Crow segregation over decades of bloody battles crushed voting rights won by African Americans. It took over 85 years until the Black-led civil rights movement uprooted Jim Crow, forcing Washington to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Not until 1920 did women win the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Class-conscious workers are not "supporters of the Constitution," nor the capitalist state institutions it established. We support the rights and protections incorporated in it. One of its great strengths is that instead of flowery declarations, it lists rights — like free speech — which the government is forbidden from interfering with.

This understanding was key for the Socialist Workers Party to lead a victorious political and legal campaign against decades of FBI spying and disruption. It exposed the real role of the FBI as the capitalist rulers' political police, dating back to its raids and prosecution of party and Teamsters union leaders in Minneapolis who were leading opposition to U.S. entry into the second imperialist world war.

The working class has most to gain from defending constitutional protections and the most to lose when they are attacked. Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in 1939, "All suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements. That is the law of history."

The working class, he said, "must stand in defense of freedom of all political tendencies, including their own irreconcilable enemies."

And this is what is at stake in speaking out against the Joseph Biden administration's sending the FBI to raid Donald Trump's Florida estate.

# Defend Ukraine independence! Moscow out now!

Continued from front page

have mounted attacks against military targets inside Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that Putin seized from Ukraine in 2014 and claimed as Russian territory. On Aug. 9, eight Russian fighter jets were blown up at the Saki air base. In the following days, an ammunition depot, power facilities and the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet were also hit. These counterattacks are upending Moscow's plans to launch an amphibious assault on the southern city of Odesa.

Moscow has been pressed to shift forces from the Donbas region in east Ukraine to the south in an effort to defend their occupation of Kherson and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Putin says Ukraine has no right to exist and its people are really Russian. In fact the Ukrainian people resisted centuries of national oppression by the Russian czars, winning independence after the Bolshevik-led 1917 Russian Revolution. Led by V.I. Lenin, the workers and farmers government that replaced capitalist rule overturned the czarist prison house of nations, championing the right to national self-determination.

Lenin led the founding of a voluntary federation of autonomous republics, including the modern territory of Ukraine, embracing Crimea and the Donbas. This led to a flowering of Ukrainian culture and art.

But a bloody counterrevolution headed by Joseph Stalin in the 1930s drove working people from political power and reimposed Moscow's brutal authority over Ukraine and other Soviet Republics. By trampling on the national rights of long-oppressed peoples, the Stalinist regime ensured the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union decades later in 1991.

## Russian soldier: 'Stop this madness'

Today the Kremlin is on a desperate recruitment drive to replace tens of thousands of casualties in its army, offering large amounts of money to "volunteers." In Russian-occupied Donbas, Ukrainian miners and other workers are being forced to join Russian armed forces, the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection

Group newsletter reports. There are no records of those killed, nor are their families being compensated. Women and pensioners have replaced 430 miners taken from the Dovzhanska-Kapitalna pit.

A scathing account of the war was posted online Aug. 1 by Pavel Filatyev, a Russian paratrooper deployed in Ukraine during the first weeks of the invasion. "My conscience tells me that I must try to stop this madness," he wrote.

The Kremlin had no "moral right" to wage war against "another country, especially the people closest to us," he says. Filatyev describes how he developed respect for Ukrainians' courage to defend their country. His unit was marched from Crimea into Kherson. Troop morale plunged as Moscow's occupation of that city ran into local opposition and then an attack on nearby Mykolaiv stalled.

Moscow's high command turned soldiers "into absolute savages, ignoring the fact that they need to sleep, eat and take a shower," he says. "This is an army that bullies its own." Those who've gone through these experiences don't want to "return there and die for something they don't even understand."

Filatyev describes the rusting equipment, lack of provisions and how he and other soldiers were reduced to looting occupied areas for food and clothes. The Kremlin "showered Ukraine with our corpses" and "some soldiers began to shoot themselves" in the leg to get sent home. Filatyev depicts anger in the army's ranks toward Putin, the military command and "the Minister of Defense who did not serve in the army."

He criticizes both Russian and Ukrainian government propaganda, saying it "further fuels hatreds in people." When Ukrainian radio described Russian soldiers in abusive terms as "orcs," it "embittered us more." These comments and his damning condemnation of Moscow's invasion point to the vital need for fraternization between Ukrainian and Russian working people, in and out of uniform, the only road to bring about an end to Putin's war and restore Ukraine's full independence.

# End 'Militant' ban!

Continued from front page

constitutional suppression of the paper.

The warden at the prison banned issue no. 23 of the *Militant* on June 28, claiming that it "contains political extremism" and "is detrimental to the security, good order, or discipline of the institution." Along with the rejection notice, prison authorities sent back both that issue and issue no. 25, even though it's not mentioned in the notice.

In violation of the Bureau of Prison's own regulations, the notice did not cite a single sentence in the paper it claims would justify the ban. In fact, Bureau of Prison regulations state unambiguously that a warden may not reject a publication solely because its content "is unpopular or repugnant."

*Militant* attorney David Goldstein noted in the paper's appeal to Federal Bureau of Prisons authorities that "it would be difficult to find a clearer admission of censorship based on objection to the political content of the *Militant*" than the warden's allegation of "political extremism."

The ban "infringes upon the First Amendment rights of both the *Militant*'s publisher and its incarcerated subscribers," Lisa Simpson, executive director of the Arizona Newspapers Association, wrote to the Bureau of Prisons. "The decision appears to be arbitrary and unsubstantiated."

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press wrote that "the *Militant* does not publish articles that encourage prison disruptions, prison violence, insurrection nor incite criminal activity, rather, the *Militant* champions the battles of the labor movement and highlights the shortcomings of capitalism." The rejection of issue no. 23 for "political extremism," the committee added, "is precisely the kind of viewpoint-based censorship prohibited by the First Amendment."

Nine workers at the Bimbo bread factory in Grand Prairie, Texas, members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 111, signed a petition to the Bureau of Prisons saying they "are joining the fight to defend the right of prisoners to read material of their own choosing and the right of newspapers to have subscribers behind bars."

The *Militant* has been published since 1928. The paper has had subscribers in federal prisons at least since the 1940s. Today some 190 inmates in federal, state and local facilities in 27 states have subscriptions to the paper.

"Why doesn't the prison officials' notice of rejection point to a single objectionable word from the paper?" *Militant* editor John Studer said Aug. 22. "It's because there is nothing in the paper that can justify a ban."

The front page of issue no. 23 includes a feature article opposing Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and another titled "Gun violence, crime are result of today's crisis of capitalism." Inside is a feature explaining the importance of working people opposing antisemitism. There is also coverage of the 16-month-long strike by members of the United Mine Workers at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama, and other labor battles.

"The *Militant* has faced other efforts by officials to suppress its working-class outlook in prisons across the country. We've fought every one, and won the overwhelming majority of those fights," Studer said. "Working people behind bars have the constitutional right to read literature of their choosing, to form their own opinions about the big political questions in the world, and to express their views."

Millions of working people have friends or relatives who are in the prison system, the *Militant* editor noted. "Many would be happy to sign and help win others to write letters calling for the ban to be overturned."

In a similar violation of constitutional rights, Arizona state prison authorities have banned at least five issues of the *Nation*, a liberal magazine, over the last year and a half. Overturning the ban on the *Militant* at the Federal Correctional Institution in Phoenix would strike a blow for free speech and freedom of the press that would strengthen efforts to overturn the ban on the *Nation* and other efforts to defend prisoners' rights to publications of their choice.

To protest the banning of the *Militant* at the federal prison in Phoenix, send letters to Melissa Rios, Western Regional Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, 7338 Shoreline Dr., Stockton, CA 95219, or via email to [WXRO-ExecAssistant@bop.gov](mailto:WXRO-ExecAssistant@bop.gov). Send copies to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com).