

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE

Fidel: 'Cuba never had Stalinist purges, forced collectivization'
— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

White House attacks target constitutional protections

BY TERRY EVANS

Backed by Democrats from the party's fraying factions, President Joseph Biden, along with never-Trump Republicans, the *New York Times* and the rest of the liberal press, have stepped up their relentless drive against Donald Trump and the 74 million people who voted for him, attacking constitutional rights working people need.

Biden said "MAGA Republicans" reflect "semi-fascism" in what he cynically described as a "nonpolitical" speech Sept. 1. His administration has relied on the FBI to use jackboot methods against Trump and his supporters. That's what the FBI's Aug. 8 armed raid at Mar-a-Lago and the congressional show trial around the Jan. 6 riot in Washington are all about.

These moves deal blows to constitutional rights conquered in blood by working people.

At issue is not whether Biden's or Trump's politics are better for workers

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'Militant' wins fight against ban in Arizona federal prison

BY SETH GALINSKY

In an important victory for the free exchange of ideas and freedom of the press, prison authorities at the Federal Correctional Institution in Phoenix have reversed their unconstitutional ban on two issues of the *Militant*. The *Militant* has resent the papers to its reader there.

The *Militant* didn't first learn about the reversal from the Bureau of Prisons. Instead, Justin Mazzola of Amnesty International informed the paper of a cryptic email reply received Aug. 31 from the bureau's Western Regional Executive Assistant to his protest letter. The email said, "The issue has been resolved at the institutional level."

The *Militant's* lawyer, David Goldstein, promptly emailed the Bureau of Prisons. The next day senior attorney Eric Hammond of the Western Regional Office replied, clarifying that the banned issues are now "permitted to the intended recipient." He said the bureau had sent a letter via the U.S. mail in-

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Build solidarity with rail workers, Ingedion strike!

Help strengthen, expand the labor movement!



Militant/Edwin Fruit

Sept. 1 rally of Ingedion workers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on strike since Aug. 1. Some 122 members of Bakery Workers union Local 100G are fighting bosses to win contract gains.

Rail workers fight for end to deadly schedules, crew size

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — Mario Aurelio Navarro, a 49-year-old experienced conductor, was killed in a derailment in a Union Pacific rail yard in El Paso, Texas, Aug. 29. Two cars derailed, crushing Navarro and crashing into a neighboring backyard, rupturing a gas line and forcing the evacuation of 50 residents. Navarro's death on the job was entirely preventable. According to a police report, supervisors told him the track was clear, but in fact a derailer had been installed

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Ingedion workers rally, win wide support in Iowa strike

BY EDWIN FRUIT

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Nearly 200 strikers, family members, fellow unionists and community supporters marched and rallied at the Ingedion plant here Sept. 1.

The 122 members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 100G at Ingedion have been on strike since Aug. 1 when they

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Back fight to stop FBI probe against Puerto Rican Cuba brigade members



José Miguel Martí Nieves

Milagros Rivera, center, president of Puerto Rican Committee in Solidarity with Cuba, with Edgardo Román, left, Puerto Rico Committee for Human Rights, others, held San Juan press conference Sept. 1 protesting FBI attempts to interrogate members of recent brigade to Cuba.

BY SETH GALINSKY AND MATILDE ZIMMERMANN

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The FBI "will not frighten us," Milagros Rivera, president of the Committee in Solidar-

Eyewitness Report

ity with Cuba of Puerto Rico, told the *Militant* here Sept. 4. "Our most important message is we are going to continue our united work to defeat the criminal

U.S. blockade of Cuba."

Nearly 60 people in this U.S. colony were either visited or phoned by FBI agents between Aug. 23 and 26. The agents often tried to question people about Rivera or the latest solidarity brigade to Cuba.

Some of the FBI agents falsely claimed the brigade had violated some unspecified U.S. law or had been infiltrated by Cuban security. One agent left a message on the cellphone of the wife

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Defend Ukraine independence! Moscow out of all of Ukraine now!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For over six months, the Ukrainian people have mobilized and fought to prevent Moscow's forces from conquering their country and crushing its independence. Repulsing attacks on Kyiv, the capital, and elsewhere in the northeast, they have sapped the morale of Moscow's much bigger military forces. In the south, Kyiv's army has launched a counteroffensive backed by partisans behind the lines, seeking to retake the Kherson region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces are weakened and have failed to make new gains for many weeks in their efforts to seize all of eastern Ukraine.

At the beginning of the invasion, Continued on page 9

Capitalism's crisis lowers life span of working people

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As part of the crisis of capitalism today, working people in the U.S. have been living through a sharp drop in U.S. life expectancy over the past couple of years. And young people have experienced the worst decline in math and reading scores in decades. This reality goes along with today's skyrocketing prices and boss attacks on wages, safety on the job and schedules that wreak havoc with family life. While the media blames all this

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

British Columbia public workers fight for wage raise

Life expectancy, test scores drop

Continued from front page on the COVID-19 pandemic, it has much deeper roots.

From 2019 to 2021, people here lost 2.7 years from their anticipated life span, dropping it to 76.1 years, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. The last time life expectancy fell that much was in the early 1940s, part of the carnage working people lived through during the second imperialist world war.

These conditions fall disproportionately harder on African Americans, whose anticipated life expectancy is 70.8 years today, compared with 76.4 years for Caucasians. The most precipitous drop was for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, whose life expectancy fell by six and a half years to 65.2 years.

Life expectancy has been declining for years, beginning well before the pandemic. From 1959 to 2010, the U.S. average life span increased from 69.9 to 78.9 years old. But in 2011, on the heels of the 2008 economic crisis, it stopped growing and since 2014 has been declining.

While more than 1 million people in the U.S. have died from COVID, many have lost their lives from what the media terms “unintentional injuries.” This covers up for the scourge of opioid drug overdoses, suicides and the sharp drop in the availability of quality and affordable health care for millions of workers.

Deaths from drug overdoses rose by 15% in 2021 to nearly 108,000 people. Since 1999 there have been some 1 million drug deaths in the U.S., many from the recent spread of fentanyl in the drugs being sold on the street. Drug use, alcoholism and suicide rates are highest in regions where industries have been shut down and good-paying jobs are hard to come by. In West Virginia, for example, where coal-mining jobs have been deci-

imated, deaths due to overdoses are more than double the national average.

U.S. suicide rates rose by 35% between 2000 and 2018, with nearly half a million people taking their own lives from 2010 to 2020. The highest rates were among teenagers and young adults.

At the same time, the percentage of workers who had union protection declined — now standing at 6.1% in private employment.

Over these years — before the pandemic — boss and government attacks on our jobs, wages, working conditions, health care, social services and our unions had battered the working class. The Bill Clinton administration’s decision in 1996 to shut down “welfare as we know it” led the number of families below the poverty line receiving benefits to plunge from nearly 70% to just 23%.

How capitalist gov’t handled COVID

The capitalist rulers responded to the COVID pandemic with widespread government-ordered lockdowns, and the decision to shut down all other health care services for working people. Nursing homes turned into death traps, and residents’ families were barred from visiting.

Under capitalism, the medical industry runs as a business to maximize profits for the hospital and giant pharmaceutical company bosses. This has had an especially big impact in the countryside, where more than 130 rural hospitals have closed over the past decade and over 600 additional rural hospitals — 30% of all rural hospitals in the country — may close in the near future.

With prices soaring, especially in necessities like food and fuel, and good-paying jobs scarce, young workers face increasing difficulties in being able to



Jason Redmond

Lori Spencer was barred from visiting her mother in Kirkland, Washington, nursing home in March 2020. Over 200,000 patients and staff in facilities like this died from COVID, loneliness.

form and afford a family. This is reflected in declining U.S. birth rates, which over the past 15 years have dropped by 20%. The costs for a working-class family to raise a child through high school has risen to over \$300,000.

Drop in reading, math scores

National test scores released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress Sept. 1 indicate that the performance of 9 year olds in math and reading dropped to the lowest level since the 1990s. The results were class-divided, with reading scores for students from low-income working-class families falling twice as much as those from wealthy or higher middle-income backgrounds.

Making the situation worse were government-imposed school closures during the pandemic, in some cases for more than a year. Students were supposed to master lessons through computer Zoom sessions, or rely entirely on their family — where parents were pressed to stay home to provide day care and education for their children.

This was a far more difficult way to learn, with young people denied the help of teachers and social interaction with others their own age.

Under capitalism, and its sharpening class inequalities today, the propertied rulers care little about education for working-class youth. Most young people never get taught they have any-

thing to look forward to after getting out of school, except maybe more debt. They’re thrown out into an ever worsening “job market,” as the bosses look for every opportunity to boost profits at our expense. They drive to make us produce more, with less and less workers, and schedules that are simply unlivable.

The most important new thing today is the strikes and social struggles taking place. They are “part of preparing the working class for the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize we’re capable of taking power and reorganizing society,” as Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes explains in *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*.

In New International no. 10
**Imperialism’s March
Toward Fascism and War**
by Jack Barnes



“Of all capitalism’s evils, the most fundamental one is how that system of exploitation reproduces its social relations as a condition of producing its profits. How its workings, its blind methods of functioning, keep grinding toiling humanity into the ground.”

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THE MILITANT

Build union solidarity with Corn Nuts strike!

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union members, veterans of a 113-day strike in L.A., brought solidarity to fellow union members at Corn Nuts in Fresno Aug. 27. The ‘Militant’ spreads the news and builds support for labor battles worldwide.



Militant/Bernie Senter

Bakery workers struck Corn Nuts in Fresno, California, Aug. 15 for affordable health care.

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

Labor Day actions get word out on workers strike battles

Across the country thousands of workers gathered and marched in Labor Day actions across the country. Many featured workers on the front line of today's strike battles, including miners locked in a bitter 17-month fight with Warrior Met Coal bosses in Alabama, mental health workers on strike at Kaiser in northern California, rail workers all across the country and more. Below are a sample of reports the Militant has received from unionists who participated.

Solidarity with today's labor battles! Join the fight!

Striking coal miner featured at Atlanta Labor Day rally

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — “We’re in a long, hard struggle and fight against corporate greed,” Brian Kelly, president of United Mine Workers of America Local 2245, told some 200 unionists and others at the Labor Day rally here. Kelly is one of some 1,000 UMW members who have been waging a hard-fought strike against Warrior Met bosses in Alabama, which is going into its 17th month.

“Solidarity means a whole lot to us, your donations, your support, your coming to our rallies, because with solidarity we have strength in numbers and this goes a long way,” he said to applause. “This is what unions are all about.”

After the rally, which was sponsored by the Atlanta-North Georgia Labor Council, everyone gathered at the United Auto Workers union hall for food, music and more speeches. Kelly spoke again, explaining how in 2015 the previous owners went bankrupt and War-



Militant/Marklyn Wilson

Mine Workers Local 2245 President Brian Kelly speaks at Atlanta United Auto Workers hall on Labor Day about Warrior Met strike.

rior Met took over. They imposed major concessions on health care, pensions, a \$6 per hour wage cut and more. The bosses promised the cuts would be restored when they started turning a profit.

“Coal mining is a dangerous job. We were working up to 16 hours a day, seven days a week. We were only off Christmas, Christmas Eve and Thanksgiving,” he said. “And Warrior Met has made record profits.”

Kelly denounced the letter the union received from Warrior Met, which lists 40 strikers the company says it won’t allow to return to work, without giving any reasons. “I’m one of them,” Kelly said.

“We need a resurgent union movement,” he said. “Solidarity can make this happen.”

Striking nursing home workers lead Pittsburgh Labor Day march

BY CANDACE WAGNER

PITTSBURGH — Striking nursing home workers, mostly from the Grove nursing facility in nearby Harmony, joined the Labor Day march here. They are among 700 workers at 14 sites around the state who walked off the job Sept. 2. The workers are organized by Service Employees International Union Healthcare.

This rail worker visited the picket line in Irwin on the first day of the strike to extend solidarity and learn more. SEIU Healthcare chapter President Shannon McBride said, “The issues are wages, more staff and better health benefits.”

Myra Taylor, a nurse at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh and vice president of the union there, also joined the picket line in solidarity. “The conditions here affect all of us. Staffing and safety, patient care, are



Militant/Kathie Fitzgerald



Inset, Militant/Eric Simpson

SEIU nursing home workers, who went on strike Sept. 2 at 14 sites in Pennsylvania, join Labor Day march in Pittsburgh. Right, striking health care workers at Kaiser in Northern California at Labor Day rally in Oakland.

the same issues at the hospital,” she told me to put in the *Militant*.

N. Calif. Kaiser mental health workers lead California action

BY ERIC SIMPSON

OAKLAND, Calif. — “We teach our patients to have self-respect,” adult therapist Sabrina Chaumette told a Labor Day rally of hundreds outside the Kaiser hospital where she works here. “Our being on strike is an example of self-respect. We can tell our patients that we gave everything we could to bring them the care they need.”

Some 2,000 mental health therapists and clinicians, members of the National Union of Healthcare Workers, are on strike at Kaiser facilities across Northern California and Hawaii.

Kaiser — supposedly a “nonprofit”

outfit — made \$8.1 billion in net profit last year. Woefully inadequate staffing and unsustainable work schedules that preclude providing necessary care are the central issues in the strike. Kaiser bosses are refusing to negotiate.

“The day before we went on strike I saw three teens who had attempted suicide. My next available appointment for them was in November,” Chaumette told the rally.

“There has been a 30% rise in the teen suicide rate over the last years,” striking family therapist Brendan Hinkle told the *Militant*. He has worked at Kaiser in the Sacramento area for 25 years.

“We do this work because of our values and our ethics,” he said. “We want to help people, it’s our calling. It is an ethical and moral injury to all of us to work under these conditions.”

Ingredion workers rally, win support in Iowa strike

Continued from front page

voted down the bosses’ contract proposal. Issues of contention include company demands for increased health premiums, elimination of union positions, a schedule of 14 straight days on 12-hour shifts, and elimination of overtime after eight hours work.

Workers told the *Militant* another important issue was the bosses’ insistence on their right to force you to come in on your day off.

Ingredion is a food-products conglomerate with 12,000 workers in 26

countries. It reported net sales of \$7 billion in 2021.

At a rally held before marching around the plant, speakers thanked fellow unionists and the community for coming out. Ray Custer of Teamsters Local 238 said his union supported the strike and that Cedar Rapids is a union town. A Teamsters truck was parked nearby where donations and supplies were stored for the strikers.

“Just like with the John Deere and Case workers in Iowa, the so-called essential workers are considered expendable by the bosses,” Charlie Wisman, president of the Iowa AFL-CIO, told the crowd. He was referring to the over 10,000 members of the United Auto Workers at 14 John Deere plants who struck last fall against divisive two-tier wages, and the 1,000 UAW members now on strike at Case New Holland plants in Iowa and Wisconsin.

Wisman said support from other unions and the community really helps in negotiations with the company.

Lou Bromwell, who has worked at the plant for 17 years, explained that his whole family had come down with COVID and that the company took away his health care when the strike began.

“I worked hard for the company to make its profits,” Elaine Sweigwer, with 27 years in the plant, said. “Now they want to raise my health premi-

ums and take away the time I want to spend with my family.”

Jason Davis, an international representative with the union, explained that companies like Ingredion are making record profits today. “The bosses at Ingredion, like those at Nabisco, Kellogg’s, Jon Donaire and Frito-Lay, all of which were on strike last year, don’t want their workers to have decent wages and working conditions,” he said.

Don Teff, who works at a Quaker Oats plant here, joined the picket line wearing his Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers union shirt. “Our plant employs over 600 workers and even though Iowa is a so-called right-to-work state, almost all the workers are in the union,” he said. “I thought it was important to come out and show our support for the Ingredion workers.”

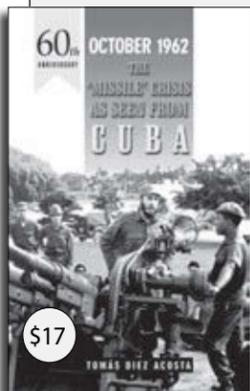
Near the end of the rally the pickets walked in front of one of the buses transporting scabs into the plant. In addition to the Ingredion strikers, workers at the action included members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, BCTGM Local 10G, Carpenters, Postal Workers, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Send contributions and support messages for the strike to BCTGM Local 100G, 500 J St. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404.

Special 60th anniversary offer

October 1962: The ‘Missile’ Crisis As Seen From Cuba

In October 1962, Washington pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war. Here, for the first time, the full story of that historic moment is told from the perspective of the Cuban people, whose determination to defend their sovereignty and their socialist revolution blocked U.S. plans for a military assault and saved humanity from the consequences of a nuclear holocaust.



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Fight FBI probe in Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

of 73-year-old committee activist José Santiago saying the brigade was being investigated for “criminal activity.”

This probe by Washington’s political police is an attack against opponents of the U.S. government’s economic and political war against Cuba’s socialist revolution and a threat to political rights in Puerto Rico.

Two *Militant* correspondents joined more than 50 supporters of the solidarity committee Sept. 4 at a long-planned social at the Isla Verde beach here, demonstrating the group’s refusal to let FBI harassment interfere with their activities. The *Militant* interviewed Rivera along with several brigadistas and committee activists during a two-day visit.

As soon as Rivera learned that the FBI was visiting brigade participants and supporters, she sounded the alarm, telling people they were not required to talk to the FBI. The U.S. political police agency has a long history in Puerto Rico, as well as on the mainland, of framing up, harassing and giving the green light to violent attacks on union militants, opponents of U.S. government policies, Black rights groups and supporters of independence for Puerto Rico.

The committee held a press conference Sept. 1 together with the Puerto Rican Committee for Human Rights. Messages of support have come in from dozens of individuals and groups from around the world.

Rivera estimates that 15 or more FBI agents were involved in the operation. Some indicated they had been sent directly from the U.S., and a few didn’t even speak Spanish. At least a dozen activists were visited at their homes by agents operating in pairs. The rest received phone calls.

“This is a serious threat,” Edgardo Román, spokesperson for the Committee for Human Rights, told the *Militant*. It’s possible that the FBI could escalate its harassment with search warrants and subpoenas to appear before a grand jury, he said. “We have to be prepared.”

Everything the Cuba solidarity committee has done is public. It has nothing to hide. “It’s legal to travel to Cuba, it’s legal to associate with others in solidarity with Cuba, it’s legal to send humanitarian aid,” he said. A few weeks before the FBI visits began, the committee had launched a campaign to buy medical supplies for victims of the devastating fire at oil storage tanks in Matanzas, Cuba, that further weakened the electrical grid on the island.

The FBI is targeting the committee, Rivera told the *Militant*, “because even though we live in a U.S. colony, we dare to give solidarity to Cuba and the Cuban people.”

“We’re going to keep telling the truth, that Cuba is an example for the whole world. It has made a contribution to humanity.” One of the most recent examples, she said, is Cuba’s internationalist medical volunteers, who went to 40 countries to help fight COVID-19.

“Nothing will stop us,” Rivera said. “Our next brigade will go to Cuba in

July 2023 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Fidel Castro-led attack on the Moncada Barracks that marked the opening of the revolution in Cuba and the 125th anniversary of the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico.”

Intertwined struggles

More than 90 people were part of the monthlong Juan Rius Rivera Solidarity Brigade in July, the committee’s 31st annual brigade, open to anyone who opposes the U.S. embargo.

Many of those interviewed pointed to the intertwined struggles of the Cuban and Puerto Rican people, first against Spanish colonial rule and then against U.S. imperialist domination.

This year’s brigade began by participating in an event honoring the Cuban Five — revolutionaries who were framed up by the FBI and spent up to 16 years in prison in the U.S. — and Oscar López, who spent 36 years in jail in the U.S. for his activities in support of independence for Puerto Rico.

Brigade members met with Cuba’s mass organizations, brought medical and school supplies, and joined in volunteer labor side by side with Cuban workers and farmers.

“For a month, we shared the same food, went through the same electrical blackouts,” said committee member Solimar Ortiz. In Puerto Rico the frequent blackouts are a result of decades of neglect, cutbacks and corruption caused by colonial rule. In Cuba, the blackouts are largely a result of the decadeslong U.S. economic embargo.

Brigade participant Carmen Virginia López, who is 68, was taking a nap when two FBI agents knocked on her door. López has traveled to Cuba 21 times over the last couple decades.

“They asked me if I know Maria Milagros,” López said. “Milagros lives in the same building, so I said I know her.”

“They said they wanted to ask some questions about Milagros and asked if they could come in. I said no. They invited me to go somewhere else to talk ‘more comfortably.’ I said I have nothing to talk to you about and closed the door.”

López noted that José Martí, the leader of the fight to free Cuba from Spanish colonial rule, always linked Puerto Rican independence to that of Cuba. “We still have not won it, but Cuba shows that it’s possible to be free, to throw out the bourgeoisie,” she said. “That you can be free of foreign interference, have your own government, to live with dignity.”

FBI agents sneak in

Two FBI agents were stopped by a security guard at the entrance to the high-rise building where retired teacher Juan Camacho lives. The guard said she couldn’t let them in without permission. When she turned away to get her supervisor, the agents snuck in.

When the agents got to his door, they asked Camacho if they could come in. He said no. They asked if they could just talk to him from the doorway. “We have nothing to talk about,” Camacho answered.

Camacho first visited Cuba in the 1980s but was not part of the most recent brigade.

There has been “reciprocal solidarity” between Cuba and Puerto Rico even before Cuban workers and farmers overthrew the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, Camacho noted. Fighters for Puerto Rican independence in the late 1800s spilled

Communist League candidates campaign in Canada



Militant/Mary Ellen Marus

MONTREAL — Katy LeRougetel, a bakery worker and Communist League candidate in the Oct. 3 Quebec provincial elections for the riding of Anjou-Louis-Riel, and fellow CL candidate Félix Vincent Ardea in the Montreal riding of Marquette, have been knocking on workers’ doors and joining labor actions like Labour Day in Montreal and Toronto Sept. 5, introducing the party’s campaign. Above right, Vincent Ardea in Montreal.

They plan to turn in petitions to get on the ballot in the next few days, already having gathered more than the requirement of 100 signatures each.

LeRougetel and campaign supporter Mark Grieve met Kevin Watson at Toronto’s 150th anniversary parade. An elementary school teacher and union member, Watson talked about the 2020 teachers strike that was cut short as the pandemic hit. Although class sizes were to be capped, “they keep increasing to 30-plus students, and teachers wages have not gone up as much as the rate of inflation,” he said. “If we’re to win on big social issues like these,” LeRougetel said, “unions need to draw other working people into the fight.”

“No matter who you vote for, you vote for the bosses,” Jacques Langlois, a union worker in a galvanizing plant, told CL campaigner Annette Kouri as he signed to put LeRougetel on the ballot Sept. 3 in Anjou. “And they don’t like unions. It’s gotten worse in the plant since the company was bought out by Americans.”

“I’ve worked for U.S. and Canadian bosses — at Bombardier, for example — and they’re both bad,” replied Kouri.

“True, in the end they’re all the same,” Langlois agreed. Pointing to the French-language edition of *In Defense of the US Working Class*, he said, “I’ll take that book. We have people from all over the world where I work, I’ll take it in.” He doesn’t read English but got the *Militant* to take in for co-workers.

Campaigners raised their support for Ukrainian independence against Moscow’s invasion, and explained their opposition to sanctions on Russia. Some at the Montreal Labour Day action voiced support for Russia, saying it was defending itself against NATO, Vincent Ardea told the *Militant*. He said, “Supporting the Ukrainian people’s fight for their self-determination is crucial to building a revolutionary workers’ party today.”

— PHILIPPE TESSIER

their blood in Cuba, joining the fight against Spanish colonial rule.

But Puerto Ricans can learn many lessons from the overthrow of Batista in 1959 and Cuba’s socialist revolution, Camacho said.

The “fundamental element” he said, is that Cuba won its “total independence because they carried out the program they promised,” the program Fidel Castro explained in “History Will Absolve Me,” his courtroom speech after the failed attack on the Moncada Barracks. Cuban revolutionaries printed the speech and distributed it all across the island. “A key part of the program was the land reform.”

Need for support

The fight against the FBI harassment is winning support, including from unionists.

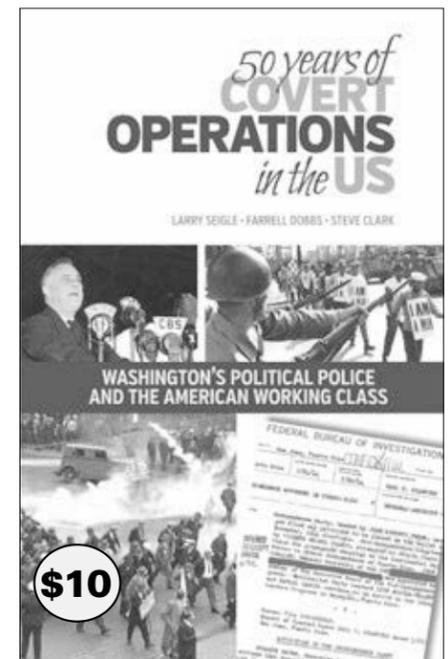
The harassment of the Committee in Solidarity with Cuba is a threat to the working class and the unions, José Rodríguez, a representative of the Movimiento Solidario Sindical, a union federation that organizes workers at private companies, including Coca-Cola and Pepsi, told the *Militant*.

If they can do this to supporters of solidarity with Cuba, Rodríguez said, “what about unionists who oppose government measures, environ-

mentalists, feminists, anyone who opposes government policy or who is fighting for a better world?”

The Committee in Solidarity with Cuba is planning a protest at the Federal Building in San Juan Sept. 17 at 11 a.m. against the U.S. economic war on Cuba and against the FBI harassment.

Messages of support denouncing the FBI harassment can be sent to escpr2020@gmail.com.



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Oklahoma carries out execution, sets 24 more over next two years

BY JANET POST

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt ordered prison authorities to carry out the execution of death row prisoner James Coddington at the state penitentiary in McAlester Aug. 25. He did so after denying an Aug. 3 recommendation of clemency from the state Pardon and Parole Board.

Coddington was the fifth inmate put to death since the state resumed executions last October after a “pause” of seven years following a series of highly publicized botched procedures.

On July 1 the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals released an unprecedented new schedule of 25 executions over the next two years, covering almost 60% of the 42 prisoners currently on death row. This includes “prisoners with severe mental illness, brain damage and claims of innocence,” reported the Death Penalty Information Center.

Coddington had worked at a car parts store in Oklahoma City and was sentenced to death in 1997 when he was 24 years old for killing his boss, Albert Hale. Addicted to crack cocaine, he had gone to Hale’s house to borrow \$50 to buy drugs. When Hale refused, Coddington hit him in the back of the head with a hammer and took money from him. Then he robbed a series of convenience stores and gas stations. He confessed to the killing and robberies.

He had “repeatedly acknowledged his crime and expressed remorse for killing Albert Hale,” wrote Rev. Don Heath, chair of the Oklahoma Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, in an Aug. 28 op-ed in the *Oklahoman*. “James died a changed man. He has been a model prisoner.”

As Coddington lay strapped down in the death chamber, he said he was disturbed that Stitt “didn’t give a reason” for his decision, said Heath, who was with him during the execution. Coddington then thanked his family, friends, and lawyers, and said he “didn’t blame” Stitt.

Opponents of the death penalty pro-

tested Coddington’s execution near the governor’s mansion. Among those backing commutation of his sentence were former Oklahoma House Speaker Kris Steele and Justin Jones, the former director of the state Department of Corrections.

In 2014 more than 20 death row prisoners had filed a lawsuit against the state’s lethal injection protocol. They argued it violates the Eighth and 14th Amendments to the Constitution since that mixture of drugs had proven to cause cruel and unusual punishment.

One of the drugs, potassium chloride, causes extreme pain “similar to being burned alive,” wrote Oklahoma Watch. On Oct. 28, 2021, during the first execution after the moratorium ended, prisoner John Marion Grant “began convulsing so much that his entire upper back repeatedly lifted off the gurney,” Fox 25 TV reported.

The prisoners’ legal challenge was denied by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 in a 5-4 decision. The court said that the prisoners had failed to prove that those being executed suffered a level of pain that would violate the Constitution, and that the burden for



Oklahoma Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Protest against execution of James Coddington and the death penalty Aug. 25 in front of Oklahoma City mansion of Gov. Kevin Stitt, who threw out recommendation of clemency.

proposing an alternative drug was up to the prisoners themselves.

After new evidence was presented showing dozens of errors in executions, the prisoners’ case was reopened in 2020. It is now under appeal to the 10th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. That court denied a motion to stay all executions until the appeal is heard.

The next Oklahoma execution is set for Oct. 20. Benjamin Cole, 59, was convicted of killing his 9-month-old

daughter in 2002. But he has “profound mental illness and brain damage,” his attorneys argue, meaning he is not fit for execution.

They say Cole is “largely catatonic, rarely leaves his cell, cannot care for his basic hygiene and can no longer walk. They believe he suffers from parkinsonism and has had decades of untreated schizophrenia.”

The Pardon and Parole Board will hear Cole’s clemency appeal Sept. 27.

British Columbia public workers fight for wage raise

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN AND FRED NELSON

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The British Columbia General Employees’ Union, representing some 33,000 public sector workers, voted 95% for strike action to fight for cost-of-living protection against soaring prices. On Aug. 15, 950 workers walked off the job at the B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch Wholesale and Distribution centers in Delta, Richmond, Kamloops and Victoria as the first step in the fight.

Strikers at the Richmond picket line told the *Militant* they wanted a 5% raise per year for two years or cost-of-living protection, whichever was greater.

“We want wage increases that allow them to catch up,” British Columbia General Employees’ Union President Stephanie Smith told CTV News. “Also, just as important, some form of inflation protection for those wages — the same sort of protection wages that they themselves as MLAs [members of the Legislative Assembly] enjoy and have enjoyed since 2007.”

The union already turned down an offer of roughly an 11% increase spread over three years, plus a 2,500 Canadian dollars (\$1,900) signing bonus, saying it was well below the current rate of inflation.

“This fight is important for all workers. We’re all facing rising costs,” Mike

Smith, a member of the International Association of Machinists at Avcorp Industries in Delta told the *Militant*. “We need to stand together.”

On Aug. 22 the union announced a ban on overtime, seeking to increase the pressure on the British Columbia government to address the chronic understaffing, high turnover and extreme workloads. Negotiations resumed the next day and the union stepped back from the ban and called off further strike action.

“This has been a long time coming,” striker Steve Lee, a member of the union for 29 years, said on the Richmond picket line. “They’ve been giving us the short end of the stick for a long time. They always try to divide and conquer.”

Strikers told us that teachers, nurses and firefighters have visited the picket line to show solidarity along with Machinist union members from Delta. Cars and trucks passing by honked their horns in support.

Contracts for 400,000 more public sector workers in British Columbia are coming up, including teachers and nurses. The Hospital Workers Union announced Sept. 2 they have reached a tentative agreement for its 60,000 members.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 22, 1997

The statement below was issued by Janet Post, Socialist Workers candidate for Mayor of Miami, and Rollande Girard, candidate for Miami Commissioner, District 1.

The Socialist Workers candidates condemn the September 4 bombings of three hotels and a restaurant in Cuba, in which an Italian man visiting the country was killed. These attacks follow several other such bombings since April.

The labor movement, working farmers, and youth involved in social protest actions have a direct interest in defending Cuba against these assaults. Washington has a well-known record of organizing, encouraging, and covering up terrorist acts against Cuba.

Standing together with our brothers and sisters in Cuba will strengthen the struggles of workers and unionists here, and advance the fighting power of those taking a stand against exploitation and oppression.



September 22, 1972

A wave of prison protests swept Britain in August and is continuing this month, the *New York Times* reported Aug. 5, saying, “At least 10 percent of Britain’s 40,000 prison inmates staged 24-hour sit-down demonstrations to protest prison conditions.”

These actions were called by Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners, an organization that includes ex-prisoners and supporters as well as inmates. PROP sees itself as a prisoners union.

“All these troubles merely reflect how bad the prisons are,” Dick Pooley, PROP’s national organizer, told the *Times*. “The group maintains that prisoners are protesting for basic human rights,” the paper reported.

British Home Office officials in charge of prisons have not resorted to major physical repression for fear of giving the prison movement added political impact and sympathy in the British population.



September 22, 1947

“Eat less and eat less extravagantly.” That is the cynical and brutal “solution” to high prices offered by American capitalism and its bipartisan political machine in Washington. “Eat less” is the program of the monopolies, including the giant food trusts, which are gorging on the greatest profits feast in history.

The only effective answer to these criminals who have a stranglehold on the nation’s food is for the government to seize and nationalize these vital food industries and operate them without profit under workers’ control. That means: EXPROPRIATE THE FOOD TRUSTS!

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Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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Rail workers fight on schedule, crew

Continued from front page
there when work was done on the track earlier.

“Brother Navarro is the fourth TD member who has died while in service in 2022,” said a statement issued by SMART-TD, the conductors’ union.

This latest fatality underscores the fact that the rail bosses’ drive for profits, which has led them to slash crew size and impose unlivable and dangerous schedules, is a crucial question.

These questions are not addressed in the proposed national contract for over 115,000 rail workers organized by a dozen different unions who are facing off against five Class 1 railroads and some 30 local carriers.

The contract for the majority of the unions ran out at the end of 2019. Under the notorious anti-union Railway Labor Act, they entered mandatory talks organized by the National Mediation Board in June 2021. Those talks were unsuccessful and ended June 14 this year, followed by a 30-day “cooling off” period. Then Joseph Biden imposed a Presidential Emergency Board to draw up proposals, which it issued Aug. 16.

Most of the rail unions, under pressure from workers, have said the recommendations are not acceptable and are continuing negotiations. If a settlement is not reached by Sept. 16, the unions are legally free to strike, and the rail bosses are free to lock out workers.

The board recommended a pay raise of about 24% over five years, some of it retroactive, and the bosses have ballyhooed this as the largest in decades. But most, if not all, of the raise will be eaten up by high inflation and increases in health insurance costs. And the proposal does nothing to address the issues of exhausting work schedules, draconian attendance policies, job cuts and speedup.

Overall, the rail bosses have slashed the workforce by 29% over the last six years, resulting in soaring profits. Now the carriers want to impose engineer-only operations on road trains, and have been cutting yard crews to the bone.

One-person ‘crews’

On Aug. 9 CSX unilaterally turned what had been two-person remote control switching crews into one-person jobs in its Selkirk yard near Albany, New York. “Since then, Selkirk employees have been harassed, intimidated, and bullied into accomplishing more work with half the crew,” Joshua Therrien, chairman of SMART-TD Local 212, wrote in a letter to the federal Surface Transportation Board.

“My people were already fatigued and beat down from the employee shortage,” Therrien said. Now “my members

are being forced to work 12 hours vs. 8 hours because the state of the railroad is in shambles. ... They are being yelled at on the radio, met by management in the field and being harassed for not moving quicker, or doing more, and when they can’t find any rule violations, they are flying a drone over our heads 24/7.”

The railroad issued a statement saying, “CSX strongly refutes the allegations of harassment and intimidation.”

Therrien also accused CSX of skimping on routine maintenance in the Selkirk yard. “Crews are operating switches that are hard to operate because there are not enough maintenance workers to properly adjust or lubricate them,” he wrote. “We are walking on road ballast, so that the carrier can save a few pennies on good walking ballast to protect our feet, and we walk around debris.” This description rings true for many rail workers across the country.

“A track crew of three, the same size as it was decades ago, now is responsible for maintaining five times more trackage from our home base in Lincoln into eastern Iowa, including any yard tracks in between, over 100 miles of track and a number of bridges,” Jake Forsgren told the *Militant* Sept. 3. Forsgren has 11 years as a track worker and welder in Nebraska and is the local chair of Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division Lodge 1320.

Track workers travel long distances, at times hundreds of miles from their home base. Travel allowances paid by the companies were last adjusted in 1996 and meals and lodging have not been raised since 2005.

The Presidential Emergency Board acknowledged the BMW “provided scores of anecdotes of employees who were forced to sleep in cars, skip food or eat nothing but fast food, sleep in substandard hotels with bed bugs and criminal activities taking place on premises, or sleep multiple employees in a room even during the COVID pandemic.”

“So far, our national negotiating leadership has been unsuccessful getting a contract with railroad companies,” Forsgren said. “Strike ballots of BMW members were counted the last week of August, resulting in over 97% for a strike if an agreement isn’t reached.”

History of government intervention

The rail bosses’ profit drive, crew cuts and resulting worker resignations have led to many delays in servicing customers. Some major capitalist businesses have appealed to the federal government to intervene. In June the Surface Transportation Board issued an emergency service order directing Union Pacific to prioritize corn shipments to Foster Farms, after the poultry giant complained it might have to euthanize millions of chickens for lack of feed.

But the business associations and government agencies, such as the Surface Transportation Board, are united in their opposition to any strike action by rail workers to fight against their conditions. They are counting on Congress to rapidly order a halt to any work stoppage, as it has done many times in the past.

The last national rail strike took place April 17, 1991, after three years of negotiations, mediation and “cooling off” periods. One of the major issues was the rail bosses’ drive to cut



Over 150 rail workers and supporters rallied July 30 in Galesburg, Illinois, in fight over national rail contract, including against draconian attendance policies and one-person “crews.”

what were four- or five-person crews to two. The strike showed the tremendous power workers have. Virtually all freight ground to a halt.

By the end of the day, Congress passed legislation ordering the strikers back to work, and the unions complied. The vote was overwhelming and bipartisan, with only five representatives opposed. Most of the bosses’ concession demands were imposed.

This record “proves more clearly than ever that organized labor needs its own political party and not the so-called friends of labor in the Democratic and Republican parties,” Joe Swanson, a retired rail worker and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in Lincoln, told the *Militant*. “The SWP campaign supports the formation of a labor

party that would fight for abolition of the Railway Labor Act, which severely limits the right of rail workers to strike.

“Rail workers have historically honored the picket lines of other unions when they go on strike, as they did in the 2021 Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 50G strike at Kellogg’s in Omaha,” Swanson said. “Such acts of solidarity by the entire labor movement can both help and inspire others to stand up and fight. All out in support for the railroad unions in their struggle for a contract and for schedules and crew sizes that protect workers’ health and welfare. This is in the interest of all workers.”

Naomi Craine is a freight conductor and member of SMART-TD.

White House attacks target constitutional rights and protections workers need

Continued from front page
— both are dedicated to defending the class interests of the propertied ruling families at home and abroad.

Biden’s “semi-fascism” remarks are rooted in the capitalist rulers’ growing fear of the working class, those Hillary Clinton famously called “irredeemables” and “deplorables.” The rulers recognize that more of us are beginning to see that the bosses and their political parties have no “solutions” that don’t further load the costs of their system on us.

Every former president reviews material they used at the White House after their term to prepare a permanent archive. The FBI raid at Trump’s estate was timed just three months before the 2022 midterm elections. Lacking confidence they can win on their record, Democrats hope to make Trump and his supporters the issue in November.

“Yet more indefensible conduct by Donald Trump revealed this morning,” shrieked Republican never-Trumper Elizabeth Cheney when the FBI released a photo of “classified documents” scattered strategically on the floor of his estate. What Cheney and liberal media outlets didn’t say was the material was arrayed there by the FBI raiders. They took advantage of the fact that Trump’s attorneys didn’t say was the material was arrayed there by the FBI raiders. They took advantage of the fact that Trump’s attorneys were barred from being present during the nine-hour raid to create the impression Trump was mishandling the documents.

The liberal press immediately began printing all manner of leaks about the documents meant to make Trump’s possession of them look sinister.

Trump went to court to ask for the

appointment of a “special master” — a third party — to review what the FBI snatched and recommend what should be returned. The Justice Department opposed the request, saying they were already poring over the files themselves, and intimating he hid yet more material to obstruct their investigation. U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon granted Trump’s request Sept. 5, ordering the government to cease all its use of the material while the special master she appoints carries out the review. She did allow the director of national intelligence to continue assess-

Women’s conference debates road forward, Democratic Party

BY LAURA GARZA

HOUSTON — The deepening economic attacks on working people and how to win people to the fight for women’s emancipation were discussed by hundreds from across the country participating in a national Women’s Convention here Aug. 12-14. The event was sponsored by Women’s March, which was organized by supporters of the Democratic Party after Donald Trump’s election in 2016.

The conference took place as profit-driven attacks by bosses, backed by their Democratic and Republican parties, are coming down hard on working people, our unions and our families.

Soaring prices and jobs with increasingly debilitating work schedules restrict choices women have about jobs, family responsibilities, and when and whether to bear children. More responsibility for care of the elderly and children is pushed onto workers’ families, especially onto women. Under these conditions more workers have started to use our unions to defend ourselves.

But the reason the conference was organized was to recruit women to work to elect Democrats in 2022 and beyond. This was the central feature of conference plenary sessions, each of which drew up to 600 people. Conference sponsors had provided many of the participants with scholarships to cover the substantial costs required to attend.

A different point of view was presented by members of the Socialist Workers Party and some other conference par-



Organizers of Women’s March in Washington, Jan. 21, 2017, rallied for failed campaign of Hillary Clinton against newly elected President Donald Trump, blaming “deplorable” workers for outcome. Houston conference was organized to recruit for Democrats in 2022.

ticipants, who pointed to recent union struggles and what they open up for fighting for women’s rights and charting a working-class road forward. Party members joined in debates at workshops and around the party’s booth, which was packed during break times.

After hearing this reporter explain in one workshop that “the key divisions are class divisions, not between red and blue states,” Genis Nelson, from San Angelo, Texas, decided to visit the SWP booth.

“We shouldn’t have to constantly fight to be human,” she told Alyson Kennedy, the party’s candidate for

Texas governor. When she was a single mother, Nelson had to work several jobs, “I made just too much to be able to get food stamps.”

She told Kennedy her husband works in the oil fields where his bosses get around a 15-hour limit to the workday. “They call him to start after 9 a.m., knowing they can keep him out working past midnight because the day will have ‘reset,’” Nelson said. The unpredictable hours he works means she can’t hold a job as they have children to look after.

“Our party urges unions to lead a fight for workers control of production,”

up militant workers, Socialist Workers Party members, marchers against Jim Crow segregation, opponents of Washington’s wars and other working-class fighters. That is the reason the U.S. rulers’ political police exists.

Capitalist rulers’ political police

These assaults by the FBI on the constitutional rights of a former president, launched by his bourgeois political opponents, are unprecedented. But the FBI has carried out operations exactly like this to harass, disrupt and frame

ing it for “national security” issues. Liberals complained Cannon was a Trump appointee. *Newsweek* wrote that her ruling was an object of ridicule by “multiple legal experts,” who just happened to be opponents of Trump. One claimed the judge had engaged “in obstruction of justice” by taking the case.

Just two weeks after the Mar-a-Lago raid, FBI agents began trying to interrogate some 60 people in Puerto Rico who took part in a recent solidarity brigade to Cuba. (See article on front page.)

The working class, more than anyone else, needs the rights codified in the Constitution, from protection against government interference with freedom of speech, assembly and of worship and against unreasonable search and seizure. These rights and more are crucial as we fight bosses’ and government attempts to put the burden of their capitalist crisis on our backs.

One example is the miners on strike at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama. They are facing a government order to hand over \$13.3 million to the bosses to “repay” them for their losses due to the strike.

The constitutional right to presumption of innocence is routinely tossed aside in the liberals’ drive to criminalize Trump. Former CIA boss John Brennan revived the discredited FBI smear that Trump was a tool of Moscow. The raid was vital, Brennan claimed, because Russian agents were trying “to gain access to Mar-a-Lago.”

In fact, the notorious 1917 Espionage Act is cited in the warrant for the raid. This anti-working-class law was used to frame up Eugene V. Debs and other opponents of Washington’s imperialist aims, as it intervened in the First World War and went after supporters of the

Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

Two days after charging that Trump supporters ooze “semi-fascism,” Biden said they “represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic” in a speech at Philadelphia’s Independence Hall. Flanked by Marines, Biden claimed they are doing nothing less than “destroying American democracy.”

These sentiments are echoed by other Democrats, like New York Gov. Kathleen Hochul, who told her political opponents they should “get out of town. Because you do not represent our values.”

Deepening crisis of capitalist parties

U.S. politics is presented in the media as a deepening clash between conservatives and liberals. This masks the fact that politics here, and everywhere else, reflect the division between class interests of the small layer of billionaire propertied families on the one hand, and on the other the millions of working people who they exploit and who bear the brunt of the capitalist economic and social crisis unfolding today.

What the capitalist rulers and their middle-class apparatchiks dread is workers using our unions to fight for jobs, wages that match inflation, for control over safety and production on the job and the many other things we need. Through such struggles we discover what we’re capable of accomplishing as a class and recognize why workers need to organize our own political party, a labor party, independent of the exploiting classes and their political parties, to fight for political power ourselves.

Kennedy said. “Workers would do a much better job at safeguarding safety and setting decent working conditions.” She pointed to Cuba, “where workers took control of the economy and changed the conditions of life and work by making a socialist revolution.”

Nelson said she had heard only negative things about socialism, but now wanted to learn more and got a subscription to the *Militant*.

Workshop debates

Panelists at one workshop tried to rally support for Democratic candidates by praising some recent bills and executive orders promoted by President Biden.

“There is a deep economic and social crisis of the capitalist system,” Kennedy said in response to those lauding the administration. “It’s a system based on the exploitation of working people.” She pointed to “strikes against ‘suicide shifts,’ and long hours that make it difficult to raise a family. This is the way we will change things when we stand up and fight, and build a powerful movement of working people that can make a fundamental change, a class change, and put workers and farmers in power.”

During discussion in the workshop “Transformation in Motion: Care Can’t Wait!” SWP member Jacob Perasso pointed to the recent vote in Kansas defeating a proposed change to the state constitution that would have allowed lawmakers to ban abortion. “It showed the Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* opened a much-needed political debate and discussion.”

Panelist Fatima Goss Graves from the National Women’s Law Center disagreed. “I don’t think we had to overturn *Roe* for people to align,” she said.

Lively discussion on this continued at the SWP booth. “The *Roe* ruling was unconstitutional,” Kennedy told visitors to the booth. “The court acted like it was a legislative body and cut off discussion.”

“As we join to fight against attacks by the bosses and the government today, we have the chance to win people’s support for access to family planning, contraception and, for those who choose, to abortion,” she said.

Student Brooke Parlor had led a protest for access to abortion in downtown Texarkana, Texas. She wanted to learn about the roots of women’s oppression and bought a subscription to the *Militant* and three books, including *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Frederick Engels. In all, 38 people subscribed to the *Militant* and 126 books were sold from the party’s booth.

Ken Doiron, 19, from Groves, Texas, told Kennedy she “helped organize protests for abortion rights every week in Beaumont.”

Kennedy told Doiron she had visited the city several times during the nine-month lockout of United Steelworkers union oil workers at the ExxonMobil refinery, bringing them solidarity after they refused to accept a union-gutting contract last year. Doiron brought others to the SWP booth and they invited Kennedy to visit them in Beaumont.

Actions promoted at the convention include marches on Oct. 7-9 to turn out votes for Democrats. But they’ll also be an opportunity to discuss what working people face and how best to advance the fight for women’s emancipation.

“A giant has begun to stir ...”



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Fidel: 'Cuba never had Stalinist purges, forced collectivization'

This week — following the death of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev — we are featuring excerpts from Fidel Castro that help explain the course adopted by Cuba's Marxist leadership to rectify problems in advancing the socialist revolution, as contrasted to the course of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. The first excerpt is from "Important Problems for the Whole of International Revolutionary Thought," the Dec. 2, 1986, speech Castro gave to close the Cuban Communist Party's Third Congress taken from New International magazine no. 6. Copyright © 1987. Reprinted by permission.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Castro explains the rectification process, decided by the party, to make a historic political correction in the course of the revolution. Evidence was mounting, Castro said, that the direction they had been heading was not toward socialism and communism, but "to a system worse than capitalism."

The second and third excerpts are from Castro's March 1990 trip to Brazil where he was asked repeatedly whether Cuba would follow Gorbachev's policies of "glasnost" and "perestroika." One is from Castro's exchange with revolutionary-minded religious figures in Sao Paulo March 17. Translation from the Portuguese is by the Militant. The other is from the March 23 Excelsior, a Mexican daily. Less than two years later, the Soviet Union imploded.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

We always saw that the masses were the basic factor in the revolutionary struggle, the great force that makes history. ... [T]hey are under the leadership of the party, because the Leninist idea of the role of the party in a revolutionary process is becoming clearer and clearer. ... The party, its members, its cadres are very moral and humane.



Cuban workers in volunteer construction brigade build child care center in 1980s. Castro said voluntary labor was the "brainchild" of Che Guevara. Castro and Guevara sought to put Cuba's socialist revolution in hands of workers and farmers, opposite class course to Stalinism or Gorbachev's "perestroika."

It was starting to go to pot, but we have reacted in plenty of time so that the party members will not be corrupted, the party will not be corrupted, the young people will not be corrupted, and above all our working class will not be corrupted. ... I'm expressing what we have been seeing in this rectification process. ...

We had to rectify the [kinds of errors we were making] in time, not only for the sake of our own process but also for the revolutionary process in general, since the construction of a new society, the construction of socialism, the road to communism is completely new to humanity. ...

I've seen the examples of what was happening to us; the blind belief — or it began to be blind — that the construction of socialism is basically a question of mechanisms. ... I think that the construction of socialism and communism is essentially a political task and a revolutionary task, it must be fundamentally the fruit of the development of an awareness and educating people for socialism and communism. [Applause]



Before they talked about perestroika in the Soviet Union, we had already begun a process of rectification of errors and negative tendencies. Of course, our process couldn't be the same as that of the Soviet Union, because we didn't make the same mistakes they made. We made mistakes of a different kind and we had to rectify them. ... In our coun-

try we didn't have developments like those resulting from Stalinism — that never occurred — neither the abuses of power, nor the very negative, violent actions against people that took place at certain moments of history there.

We've never used violence against a single citizen. We would never stoop to doing that, because the day we did such a thing — using methods of torture and committing crimes — we'd feel outraged. ... Great abuses of power took place at certain times in the USSR, and other developments that did not happen in Cuba. ...

Certain other things happened here [in Cuba]. One was that, despite the uniqueness that has always characterized our revolution, there were some things we copied from them. One of the things we've addressed through our process of rectification are methods we copied from them that did not produce good results in our country. ... We are correcting errors; we really don't like to use capitalist categories in constructing socialism while they, on the other hand, are increasingly introducing capitalist categories. ... We've also been careful to avoid as much as possible privileges among our leaders, officials, cadres. We struggle against that, but above all, we've made a big effort to maintain the unity between our party and our people, between the revolution and the people. Because what happened in several of these countries was a divorce between the party and the people, between the gov-

ernment and the people. If we made such errors we wouldn't last a moment in face of the United States, a powerful country that blockades us, pressures us, harasses us, wants to destroy us. Without a united, organized, and armed people to defend the revolution, we wouldn't be able to exist next to the United States. So reality shows that we haven't made those types of errors. ...

Does it seem like the easiest thing in the world to make a revolution 90 miles away from the United States and resist for over 30 years the imperialist blockade, the hostility, the slander, the war against us, the permanent threats, which have forced us to invest so many resources and so much energy, and make so many sacrifices?

Who was going to save socialism in Cuba, the Soviet tanks? The Soviets were over there, far away from us, they couldn't have arrived in Cuba in time. The tanks that can come rapidly to Cuba are the U.S. tanks, do you understand? That actually helped us a lot.

Instead of saying, what a misfortune it is living so close to the United States, I can say, what a good fortune to have lived so far away from the borders of the Soviet Union. It never occurred to us to trust that the Soviets would come to save our revolution, had we divorced ourselves from the masses and the people and started to make all sorts of mistakes. [W]hat good fortune that was, because any revolution that is unable to defend itself is a revolution not worth saving. What good is any revolution that must depend on others to save it?



We never experienced Stalinist phenomena in Cuba. There was no purge in Cuba. We did not have one single political prisoner, disappeared or tortured person. We did not conduct a forceful collectivization of agriculture as was the case in Eastern Europe. People used to criticize us, saying we were a satellite of the USSR. Now we are criticized for not doing what the Soviets are doing. ...

To explain all this, it is necessary to go back to Che Guevara's times. Che Guevara used to say that socialism cannot be built based on capitalistic ideas such as benefit and profit. Che was a prophet who saw all things very clearly.

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Further reading
Cuba's socialist
revolution and its
Marxist leadership

Speeches and articles by
Fidel Castro, Che Guevara

Build solidarity with workers' struggles!

Statement issued Sept. 6 by Joanne Kuniandy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey.

Thousands of workers came together in Labor Day actions yesterday. Many featured workers involved in strike battles seeking to push back dangerous working conditions, debilitating work schedules and wages that lose ground to soaring prices.

Working people have a big stake in these battles.

Miners at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama are into the 17th month of a bitter strike to reverse steep concessions forced on them in 2016. Nurses in Pittsburgh and mental health workers in Northern California are walking the picket line demanding bosses hire more staff and ensure patients get the care they need.

Some 115,000 workers are involved in a contract fight with the country's biggest rail bosses across the country, who are backed by anti-union government interference. Their strike deadline is Sept. 16.

Members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at Ingredion and United Auto Workers members at Case in Iowa and Wisconsin are on strike to defend themselves and their union.

These fights unfold after years of a relentless capitalist offensive that has driven down real wages, led to the biggest price hikes in decades, and

a broader social crisis. We face falling life expectancy, rising rates of drug addiction, alcoholism and suicide with deteriorating health care. Every labor battle taking place today is a crucial part of the fight to reverse these conditions.

To take on the bosses' attacks, the labor movement needs a class-struggle program. To protect workers from inflation we need escalator clauses in every contract and in Social Security benefits, so when prices rise our wages and benefits go up automatically.

To prevent layoffs, cut the workweek with no cut in wages — 30 hours work for 40 hours pay! Fight for a government-funded public works program, at union-scale pay, to create jobs building hospitals, child care centers and other things working people need.

Defend crucial constitutional rights under serious attack from President Joseph Biden's administration today. Unions must join in standing up against use of the FBI, Washington's political police, to deal blows to hard-won protections against government harassment and disruption, whoever is the initial target.

The capitalist rulers' foreign policy is the flip side of their anti-labor policies at home. Workers need our own foreign policy based on solidarity with workers and farmers worldwide.

Workers need our own party, a labor party, to chart a course to lead our class to take political power and construct a workers and farmers government.

Defend Ukraine independence! Moscow out now!

Continued from front page

Russian troops poured north from occupied Crimea to seize Kherson and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, in southeast Ukraine. They have occupied the plant — the largest in Europe — filling its grounds with artillery and tanks. Shelling there severed a power transmission line Sept. 5, disconnecting the plant from the Ukrainian electrical grid for now.

Natalia Kirtenko, a 64-year-old retiree living in Mykolaiv near Kherson, told the *Wall Street Journal* that the step up in shelling in the area has given people hope. "At least we know this means our guys are moving forward," she said. "So our mood has improved."

Counteroffensive in Kherson

Ukrainian forces launched a slow and deliberate counteroffensive to retake Kherson at the end of August. They have targeted supply routes and depots behind the battle lines to try to cut off and weaken Moscow's forces. Ukrainian advances have retaken some villages. A picture of a Ukrainian soldier raising the country's flag over Vysokopillya went viral.

Many of Kherson's 280,000 residents rose up to protest when Russian forces rolled into the city. A savage crackdown by Putin's troops drove protesters off the street, but didn't crush most residents' resolve to free the city of the invaders. While thousands of people fled, most of those remaining are determined to throw off the Russian yoke.

The Kremlin tries to depict the Ukrainian counteroffensive as a costly failure. However, the Russian-appointed administration in Kherson said Sept. 5 that its planned referendum at gunpoint aimed at its forced incorporation into Russia has had to be put on hold.

Kirill Stremousov, deputy head of the occupation authority, acknowledged Moscow's invaders still had to make the population believe that "we are the ones liberating them." The true character of Moscow's "lib-

eration" of Kherson was demonstrated when on Sept. 5 its authorities threatened to shoot anyone trying to cross the Dnipro River to escape.

The Ukrainian southern command reports that deteriorating conditions around Kherson have led the 127th Regiment of Russia's 1st Army Corps to refuse to fight. Russian "personnel in advanced positions were left even without water."

Pavel Filatyev, a Russian paratrooper from the elite 56th Regiment, released an Aug. 1 video calling on fellow soldiers to quit the war. Half the troops in his regiment have resigned their commissions, he said. Filatyev says that the Russian people will become as ashamed of the war in Ukraine as they are today of Moscow's earlier brutal wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya.

In an online account he also describes how Russian troops in the Kherson region came apart amid resistance by the local population and the inability of Moscow to get them needed food and supplies.

Facing persecution and up to 15 years in prison for voicing opposition to the war, he decided to flee. He is seeking asylum in France.

While avoiding imposing a draft, the Kremlin has ordered Russian state companies to designate "volunteers" for the military from employee lists. State-managed railways are instructed to nominate 10,000 workers who will be forced to sign short-term military contracts and be press-ganged to the front lines.

Moscow cuts natural gas supply

The largest ground conflict in Europe since the second imperialist world war has accelerated the deepening economic crisis hitting working people across Europe. Natural gas prices have surged tenfold compared to a year ago. After Moscow's Sept. 5 announcement that it was shutting down the Nord Stream 1 pipeline supplying gas to several European countries, stock prices fell and the euro plunged to a 20-year low against the dollar.

It's working people across Europe who bear the brunt of skyrocketing electricity prices. Likewise, it's working people in Russia who are hardest hit by sanctions imposed by Washington and other imperialist powers.

The sanctions are a barrier to deepening fraternization between Ukrainian and Russian working people.

Putin's invasion has also prompted capitalist rulers worldwide to launch rearmament programs as each prepares to defend their own predatory interests against their rivals.

'Militant' beats ban

Continued from front page

forming the *Militant* of the reversal. As of Sept. 5 the letter has yet to arrive.

"This is a victory for all those who defend constitutional rights and the right of prisoners to read news and opinions of their choosing, to think for themselves, to be participants in world politics," said *Militant* editor John Studer Sept. 2. "It can be used to aid other publications fighting similar bans around the country."

The victory came as a result of growing public support for the rights of the *Militant* and its readers behind bars. In addition to Amnesty International, others sending letters to the Bureau of Prisons included the Arizona Newspapers Association, National Association Against Censorship, PEN America, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, retired Howard University professor John Cotman, and a group of workers from the Bimbo bakery factory in Grand Prairie, Texas.

"Great news!" Anthony Johnson of PEN America wrote the *Militant* upon hearing about the overturn of the ban.

"The *Militant* is such an important publication, especially for those of its subscribers who are incarcerated," wrote Elizabeth Larison, from the National Coalition Against Censorship.

The American Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU of Arizona wrote they are "pleased the *Militant's* appeal was successful." They were about to send a joint letter of protest when the victory was announced. Jared Keenan, ACLU of Arizona legal director, added, "Individuals have a constitutional right to receive information while incarcerated" and publishers "have a right to communicate with incarcerated individuals."

The ACLU is in the middle of a battle with Arizona Department of Corrections officials who have suppressed at least five issues of the *Nation* magazine in state prisons there over the last year, falsely claiming it promotes racial superiority or contained sexual content. The bans violate the First Amendment rights of prisoners and the *Nation*, the ACLU said.

The ban on the *Militant* at the federal prison in Phoenix was in violation of the Bureau of Prison's own rules. The only reason given by prison authorities was an unsubstantiated claim that the *Militant* promotes "political extremism." The rules state explicitly that a publication may not be rejected "solely because its content is religious, philosophical, political, social or sexual, or because its content is unpopular or repugnant."

And, the rules add that the rejection "notice must contain reference to the specific articles(s) or material(s) considered objectionable."

But the warden didn't cite a single word in the paper. And issue no. 25 was returned to the *Militant* without any notice or explanation at all.

The front page of no. 23 features an 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 opposing antisemitism. There is also coverage of the 16-month-long strike by members of the United Mine Workers in Alabama against Warrior Met Coal, and other labor battles.

Goldstein noted that it would be "difficult to find a clearer admission of censorship based on objection to the political content of the *Militant* than Phoenix's admission" the ban was based on "political extremism."

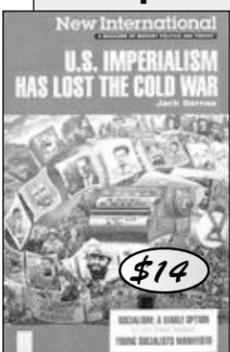
For at least 60 years the *Militant's* subscribers in prison have been able to read the paper with little interference from prison authorities. The *Militant* has more than 170 prisoner subscribers in 25 states, in local prisons, state prisons, and over a dozen federal facilities.

"Supporters of the *Militant* should use this victory to get the paper into the hands of more workers behind bars," said Studer. "Let family and friends who are incarcerated know that they can get a low-cost or free subscription to the *Militant*. Contribute to the *Militant's* Prisoner Fund to make that possible."

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

US Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War



"The Bolsheviks' policy on national self-determination and voluntary federation began to be reversed from the early 1920s by the emerging bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin. The USSR reemerged as a prison house of nations inherited from the tsarist empire." — Jack Barnes

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