

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Cuba speaks out at United Nations,
New York meeting
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 86/NO. 37 OCTOBER 10, 2022

Back railroad workers' fight over schedules, jobs, crew size

BY JOE SWANSON

As the *Militant* reported last week, the capitalist media acts like rail workers' contracts are all settled and done with, but the fact is most rail union members either are just now receiving the tentative agreements to look at and discuss or won't see them for weeks.

The two largest rail unions — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and SMART-Transportation Division, which together operate the trains and organize nearly half of all rail workers — have started to send out a draft of the proposed contract offer after union general chairpersons take questions on it from the membership. SMART-TD says the voting process won't be finished until mid-November.

Now, even a number of the bosses' media is reporting that "it's not a done deal" and workers are angry.

The workers biggest complaints — unsafe working conditions and schedules and punitive attendance policies — continue and reportedly are not addressed in the tentative proposal. Under

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Protests in Iran, worldwide hit death of Mahsa Amini

Tehran's 'morality police' harass, brutalize women



Demonstrators block traffic in downtown Tehran, Sept. 21, 2022. Protests have spread across every province, over 80 cities in Iran, into Kurdish region of Iraq, and around the world.

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

Protests by tens of thousands of people over the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman, have spread to over 80 cities across Iran and to every province, as well as into the Kurdish region of Iraq that borders Iran. Amini died Sept. 16 three days after be-

ing detained by the hated "morality" police in Tehran. Protests have taken place worldwide, including 1,000 Iranians and others in London.

Amini was arrested for allegedly violating the dress code law that requires women to cover their hair. The police claim she collapsed while having a heart attack at the police station where she had been taken for "education." Her family suspects she was beaten in the van that

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Support Ukraine independence! Putin's troops out of all of Ukraine!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The determination of the Ukrainian people to prevent Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime from conquering their country was decisive in a series of battlefield victories won earlier this month in Kharkiv province. Putin's response is to call up hundreds of thousands of new troops and threaten a nuclear war, leading to protests by thousands across Russia, the most widespread actions since the beginning of the invasion.

Putin decreed the largest Russian military mobilization since World War II Sept. 21, aiming to rush over a million soldiers, with little or no training, to replace severe battle losses and to relieve exhausted front line forces. He also announced rigged referenda carried out at rifle point in four occupied areas of Ukraine, providing

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SWP campaigns to back labor battles, expand readership of the 'Militant'



Socialist Workers Party campaigner Josefina Otero talks to Rafael Ramirez at the Weatherford truck stop near Fort Worth, Texas, Sept. 27, about importance of fight to defend political rights.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. have kicked off the eight-week campaign to sell 1,350 *Militant* subscriptions, the same number of books and pamphlets that offer a revolutionary road forward, and raise \$140,000 for the SWP Party-Building Fund. They're taking news about today's labor battles and the working-class view on key political

questions to workers' doorsteps, union picket lines and other labor movement activities and protest actions.

At a truck stop in Weatherford, Texas, Sept. 27, Rafael Ramirez discussed the FBI raid on former President Trump's Mar-a-Lago home with SWP campaigners Josefina Otero and Dennis Richter. "People take this stuff lightly," Ramirez said, "but the way politics works if they start going after one thing, they'll go af-

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White House acts to refurbish FBI, target rights workers need

BY TERRY EVANS

Serious blows are being struck to constitutional freedoms by President Joseph Biden's White House, congressional Democrats and the FBI in the course of a mounting number of legal assaults against former President Donald Trump and his family members in the run-up to the 2022 midterm elections. These freedoms are crucial for workers and farmers as we use our unions to fight boss attacks on jobs, wages and working conditions.

Tied into these attacks, the FBI is widening its net to target "MAGA Republicans" — working people who voted for Trump by the tens of millions — that Biden claims "are destroying American democracy." Hillary Clinton echoed Biden's remarks, comparing Trump supporters to Nazis. She described the crowd at a Sept. 17 Trump rally in Youngstown, Ohio, last week as behaving like people "ba-

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Join fight for amnesty for all immigrants living in the US!

BY RÓGER CALERO

Republican governors in Arizona, Florida and Texas have been sending busloads of migrants who've crossed the Mexican border to liberal northern "sanctuary" cities, saying authorities there should be glad to get them. Democratic mayors, like New York's Eric Adams, and other politicians have responded by blaming the Republicans for using the migrants to strain their city's resources.

This cynical demagoguery from both sides aims at increasing divisions among working people by scapegoat-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Striking Kaiser mental health workers rally in California

Dockworkers in UK strike, win international solidarity

Protests hit death of Mahsa Amini

Continued from front page transported her there.

On Sept. 24 several hundred people protested outside the U.N. office in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq. They chanted in Kurdish, “Women, life, freedom!” Some participants were from the Kurdish region of Iran, visiting relatives or looking for better paid jobs on the Iraqi side of the border.

“Many of my friends were there,” Kanyaw Ebubekir told the *Militant* by phone from Sulaimaniyah, also in the Kurdish region of Iraq. “We call Mahsa, ‘Zhina,’ her Kurdish name. Zhina means ‘life.’ It’s important that her Kurdish identity is known, not just the Persian name she must have in her passport.”

Azad Hussein, a carpenter from Baneh, Iran, who was in Erbil to work, told Rudaw news agency that Amini’s death had released anger that had been building up for a while. “The difficult economic situation,” he said, “the repression of freedoms, particularly those of women, and the rights of the Iranian people led to an implosion.”

Also fueling the protests is widespread discontent over the bourgeois clerical regime’s military adventures across Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and beyond. Working people are tired of the body bags, funerals and sacrifice these operations impose on them.

“I just came from a meeting today,” Bahar Munzir told the *Militant*. “Women activists and others from different organizations are calling for another demonstration Sept. 28 in central Sulaimaniyah.”

Outrage over Amini’s death was so deep that Iranian President Ebrahim

Raisi called the family and promised there would be an investigation. But as the protests spread, the police and the Basij, a paramilitary force under the control of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, attacked protesters with tear gas, truncheons, water cannons and increasingly with live ammunition.

Tehran threatens ‘decisive strike’

The regime now claims the protests are “riots” organized by foreign agents and terrorists. Raisi threatened a “decisive strike on the disrupters of security and peace of the country.”

The protests and strikes by workers have been especially strong in the Kurdish region of Iran, where the widespread hatred for the morality police is intertwined with the struggle against the national oppression of the Kurdish people.

“In Shno [Oshnavieh] the people drove out the soldiers,” said Ebubekir. “They were marching on the streets all night.” Oshnavieh is a Kurdish town in Iran near the Iraqi border. The following day government forces retook control of the town.

Iranian high school students called for a nationwide boycott of classes Sept. 26, supported by the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers Trade Unions. Women secondary school students



Protest in Erbil, capital of Kurdish region in Iraq, Sept. 24 after death of Mahsa Amini in Iran. Reuters/Azad Lashkari

called on male students to join them. The Islamic Students Association at Tehran University charged that the government is applying “heretical violence and cruelty to women, which is unprecedented even in the Middle Ages.” They called the laws imposing a dress code on women “a heresy that is neither religion, nor custom, nor ethics nor honor, nor even contained” in the regime’s “own written laws.” Hundreds of people have been ar-

rested across the country — including two leaders of the Islamic Students Association in Tehran — and more than 40 had been killed by the repressive forces as of Sept. 26. “The repression must be stopped immediately,” said a statement from the bus drivers union in Tehran. “All the detainees should be released immediately and unconditionally. Protests, strikes and lawsuits are the indisputable rights of the people.”

Court bans execution by electrocution, firing squad

BY JANET POST In a victory for South Carolina death row prisoners and opponents of the death penalty, Richmond County Court Judge Joselyn Newman issued an injunction Sept. 6 that bars the state from executing inmates by firing squad or the electric chair. Since 1985 seven prison-

ers in the state have been electrocuted. The ruling came in a case brought by Freddie Owens, Brad Sigmon, Gary Terry and Richard Moore, four of the 34 prisoners on South Carolina’s death row. The judge agreed with the prisoners, who said these methods of execution violate the South Carolina state constitution’s prohibition against “cruel, unusual and corporal punishments.” After a series of botched and torturous executions using lethal injections were widely publicized, 25 pharmaceutical companies stopped selling the chemicals used in most of them. Prison officials across the country, including in South Carolina, have been maneuvering to institute alternative methods. The state government then adopted new protocols that would force prisoners, 14 days before their execution,

to “choose” between the 109-year-old electric chair or being shot to death. Newman ruled that South Carolina’s use of electrocution as its default method of execution “ignored advances in scientific research and evolving standards of humanity and decency.” She noted that in the past 50 years only Utah has used a firing squad. The trial included graphic testimony from doctors, professors and others describing the barbarity of these types of executions. In South Carolina, the state’s new electrocution protocol said a copper electrode is attached to the prisoner’s right leg, and another to his head using a copper hat. A conductive solution-soaked sponge is placed between the scalp and head electrode. An electric current of 2,000 volts is sent coursing

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THE MILITANT

Sankara: ‘We are heirs of all the world’s revolutions’

Thomas Sankara was an outstanding communist leader of the 1983-87 popular revolution and government in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The ‘Militant’ makes available Sankara’s writings and ideas as an example and inspiration for working people the world over.



Militant/Ernest Harsch
Thomas Sankara speaks in New York, Oct. 3, 1984, on gains of Burkina Faso Revolution.

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The Militant

Vol. 86/No. 37

Closing news date: September 28, 2022

Editor: John Studer

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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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Website: 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.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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SWP campaign backs labor battles

Continued from front page
ter another.” He bought a subscription to the *Militant* and made a contribution to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

The annual fund is key to financing the party. All the party’s work is based on contributions from workers and farmers.

D’vhonte Jackson, an over-the-road trucker who got a *Militant* subscription last spring, described the steep increases in prices for diesel and insurance. He renewed his subscription, gave a contribution to the fund, and bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*. Jackson said he’s been following the *Militant* and is convinced “Russia should leave Ukraine alone.”

In Cincinnati, three party members took the *Militant* and its pro-union coverage of rail workers’ fight against treacherous schedules, crew sizes and working conditions to the CSX Queensgate rail yard Sept. 16, where 14 workers stopped and got copies of the paper on their way in or out of work. One bought a copy of *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

One worker showed Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Ohio, the bed he’d built into his car. CSX closed the rail yard nearest his home making it harder for him to make it in time to a shift call. He said he often sleeps in his car halfway between home and work when he’s high on the call-in list.

Over 150 people gathered under a giant Ukrainian flag at Bowling Green Park in New York Sept. 24 to protest the Russian government’s recent troop conscription and stepped-up war moves against Ukraine. “The Socialist Workers Party hails the resistance of Ukrainian working people,” Sara Lobman,

SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, told the crowd when invited to take the mic. “We stand with the Russian toilers protesting Moscow’s escalating war moves.”

Explaining that the party has an unbroken record of support for Ukraine’s battle for independence, Lobman said that fight is in the interests of working people in the U.S. and worldwide. One protester got a subscription and several others picked up copies of the paper.

When 81 dockworkers voted by over 98% to authorize a strike at the Port of Quebec, management retaliated by locking them out Sept. 15. Felix Vincent Ardea, the Communist League candidate for Quebec’s National Assembly from Marquette, joined their picket line. The strikers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, told him that the main issue was the bosses’ imposition of 12-hour shifts. “Shifts like these wreck family life and fatigue on the job increases the chance of injury on the job,” agreed Vincent Ardea, a Teamsters union member who faces



Militant photos: above, Sara Lobman; inset, Joanne Kuniansky
Above, Ukrainian protest Sept. 24 in New York against Moscow’s invasion. Inset, Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, speaks at rally.

similar schedule pressures as a conductor on the Canadian National Railway. “It’s one of the central issues in many of today’s labor battles.”
Eleven books, which are on special offer when purchased with a *Militant*

subscription, are featured in an ad on page 6. All other Pathfinder titles are available at a 20% discount.
Join in! Contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

Join fight for amnesty for all immigrants living in US!

Continued from front page
ing immigrants for the unfolding crisis of the capitalist system today.
“We want to transport [them], because, obviously, it’s expensive if people are coming here. It taxes social services and all these other things,” said Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis Sept. 15. “Every community in America should be sharing in the burdens.” The day before DeSantis had sent two planes with 50 Venezuelan migrants to Martha’s Vineyard, a wealthy liberal enclave off the shore of Massachusetts. They were quickly moved off the island to temporary housing on a military base.
After being dumped in places where most of the arriving immigrant workers have no family or other connections, the migrants’ main concern is being able to provide for themselves and their families here and back home. “What we need the most is work,” Gabriel Hernández, from Venezuela, told Univision in New York Sept. 23.

While decrying Republican governors for their inhumane and cruel treatment of migrant workers, Democratic Party officials hide the fact that their policies and practices differ very little.
Contrary to accusations that President Joseph Biden isn’t doing anything to “deter illegal immigration,” some 1.5 million people had been apprehended by the immigration police by the end of 2021, and the Border Patrol had expelled or deported over 1 million more. As of one month before the end of fiscal year 2022, over 2 million immigrants have been apprehended along the southwestern border. These are numbers not seen in the last two decades.
Since 2014, the Obama-Trump-Biden administrations have been pushing their counterparts in Mexico to take on a bigger share in slowing the flow of migrants from Central America. Single adults and families from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador who cross the Rio Grande are immediately expelled back to Mexico.
In recent years even larger numbers have been arriving and calling for asylum from Cuba, Colombia, Nicaragua and Venezuela.
Neither the anti-immigrant rhetoric nor the more genteel-sounding “plans”

in the mouths of politicians are primarily intended to stop immigration. The central aim is to instill fear among undocumented immigrants, and sow divisions among all workers. The bosses use this to keep wages and working conditions low for all.
Rulers turn immigration on and off
The U.S. rulers turn immigration on and off to meet the bosses’ need for labor. Some of it is done through temporary guest workers programs that supply workers to the fishing industry, sugar cane mills, hotels, resorts and many other industries. Some capitalists simply use undocumented workers who’ve managed to get into the country. “Immigrant labor and first-generation refugees have been excellent sources of labor,” Julie Anna Potts, president and CEO for the North American Meat Institute, said in May.
Workers and peasants in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa are forced to migrate by the worsening economic and social conditions they face.
“I used to grow beans, but with the high price of seeds, renting a small piece of land, and low prices, at the end it was no longer worth it,” said a 30-year-old worker from Nicaragua, now living and working on a goat farm in Wisconsin. He asked the *Militant* not to use his name.

No ‘sanctuary’ from exploitation
Whether in self-professed Democrat-run “sanctuary” cities or places where Republican politicians blame migrants for all their city’s problems, the pariah status and superexploitation of immigrant workers is very much the same.
Until 2019, for example, when the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act was passed, farmworkers in New York state were excluded from overtime pay, a guaranteed day of rest per week, and compensation when injured on the job. That law says they should get overtime pay after 60 hours a week.
Wage differences between union and nonunion construction workers in New York City — where more than 60% of construction workers are immigrants, with 41% of them undocumented, most

of them working in nonunion jobs — is stark, and quite profitable for the bosses. But the biggest cost is in the number of deaths and injuries on the job among undocumented construction workers without union protection.
“The bosses’ practice of using immigrant labor to drive down wages and working conditions isn’t new, and neither is the solidarity necessary to break down divisions and organize all workers into unions,” said Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York.
The capitalist ruling families and the politicians who represent them — Democrats and Republicans alike — accuse immigrant workers of being the cause of unemployment, crime and drug trafficking, and limit funding for health, education and other social services, said Cotton. “They use this scapegoating to trap working people into supporting measures that divide us and strengthen the position of the bosses and their government over all who work for a living — native- and foreign-born,” he said. “The labor movement needs to fight for amnesty for all immigrants in the country. This will put the unions in a stronger position to unite and organize all workers.”
“We have to stand up, organize, and fight for permanent residency,” José Molina, speaking for the National TPS Alliance, told Univision Sept. 19. Temporary Protective Status allows refugees from countries devastated by wars and natural disasters to work and live legally in the U.S. TPS holders joined parades to celebrate Central America’s independence in Los Angeles, New Jersey, and other cities in September, demanding the extension of their status and for amnesty.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, SWP fund
Sept. 17 - November 15

Country	Sub quota	Books quota	Fund quota
UNITED STATES			
Atlanta	75	75	\$9,600
Chicago	110	110	\$14,000
Cincinnati	70	70	\$6,000
Dallas-Fort Worth	65	65	\$5,000
Lincoln	15	15	\$500
Los Angeles	90	90	\$15,250
Miami	45	45	\$5,750
Minneapolis	70	70	\$5,500
New York	115	115	\$21,000
N. New Jersey	70	70	\$7,500
Oakland	90	90	\$15,500
Philadelphia	50	50	\$6,000
Pittsburgh	65	65	\$6,000
Seattle	75	75	\$14,500
Washington D.C.	50	50	\$4,600
Other			
Total U.S.	1055	1055	\$136,700
Prisoners	50		
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	40	40	
Manchester	40	40	
Total U.K.	80	80	
Canada	80	80	
Australia	30	30	
Total	1,295	1,245	\$136,700
SHOULD BE	1,350	1,350	\$140,000

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Crisis produced by hurricane in Puerto Rico result of colonial rule

BY SETH GALINSKY

Over a week after Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Puerto Rico Sept. 18, most of the U.S. colony was still without electricity, and 25% still had no drinking water. The privately owned electric company says that by Sept. 30 it “expects” between 77% and 91% will have their power restored. That would still leave tens of thousands of families without electricity.

“This is not a case of a natural disaster,” Movimiento de Solidario Sindical union representative José Rodríguez Vélez told the *Militant* by phone on his way from Mayagüez to Las Marías Sept. 24. He went there to make sure members of the union federation, which organizes workers at companies such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi, were all OK.

“It’s a disaster because we are a U.S. colony and we don’t even have control,” over how federal emergency funds are spent, he said. Fundamental decisions are not made in San Juan, Puerto Rico, but in Washington, D.C.

Fiona was barely a Category 1 storm, compared to 2017’s Hurricane Maria, which was a Category 4. While Fiona’s winds devastated much of the island’s banana crop and flooding damaged hundreds of homes, most of the island was unscathed. Nonetheless, electricity and water went out everywhere. And in the absence of action by authorities in Puerto Rico or in Washington, working people and others have been organizing to bring food and supplies to those most in need.

“The government wasn’t prepared,” Rodríguez said. Luma Energy, the U.S.-Canadian company that runs electrical distribution, “doesn’t want to spend any money. It just wants to get richer.”

Many supermarkets and other business were still closed as of Sept. 27 because they can’t get diesel for backup generators. Gov. Pedro Pierluisi claimed that there was plenty of diesel, but there were “problems” with distribution.

“There are few open gas stations here,” Rodríguez said. “And those that are open have lines of 80 or 90 cars. It’s chaos.”

Decades of crisis

The electrical system has been in crisis for decades, a result of mismanagement by the bosses of PREPA, the government electric power authority. Money it raised through loans and bond sales wasn’t used to maintain or modernize electrical production. But they added to the massive debts the colonial regime foisted on working people. PREPA’s debt stands at \$9 billion, including \$4.9 billion owed to the employees pension fund.

In 2021 the colonial government gave a 15-year contract to Luma to run the electrical transmission grid. The company refused to honor the union contract with UTIER, which organizes electrical workers, and insisted the workers had to reapply to work there without a union. The overwhelming majority refused.

UTIER called a press conference Sept. 23 demanding that the government bring back thousands of linesmen and other workers who had been pushed out by Luma, to speed the restoration of the electrical supply.

“We know that we can contribute with our experience and knowledge.

We don’t want to be spectators,” said Karlexy Rosario, a linesman who now works at the Department of Education. “We don’t want more lives to be lost because of lack of service.” Twenty-one people have died because of the storm and its aftermath.

But their offer was ignored. Luma, unconcerned that every delay in restoring electricity was a life-or-death question for many, replied that its resources are “sufficient.”

Retired worker Juan Reus used to work for the electric company and American Airlines. “I had to take two jobs to support three kids,” he told the *Militant* from San Juan. He described how the government brought the electrical system to the verge of collapse.

“When I started in 1996 there were almost 8,000 electrical workers,” he said. “When I left in 2011 there were 3,500.” The agency slashed maintenance, left equipment to deteriorate and did little to protect power lines or provide backup from frequent storms.

“There was cronyism,” with patronage positions going to supporters of whatever capitalist political party was in power, Reus said. Workers and the UTIER union fought boss corruption and mismanagement, he said.

It’s worse now that the transmission system is in the hands of Luma, Reus said. “It would be better if the union and workers owned the system.”

In Cuba, where working people made a revolution, taking political power into their own hands, it’s different. “Cuba saves lives,” Reus said. When hurricanes hit, “they take people to shelters.”

Hurricane Ian hit Cuba’s Pinar del Río province Sept. 27, where officials set up 55 shelters and evacuated 50,000 people.

Being a U.S. colony is a huge obstacle facing working people in Puerto Rico. Reus pointed to the Jones Act, a U.S. law that says that any shipment that passes through a U.S. port onto Puerto

Workers in Tunisia protest inflation, food shortages



Hundreds of working people in Tunisia protested in the capital Sept. 25 against rising prices and food shortages, amid a deepening capitalist political crisis engulfing the country.

Demonstrators chanted, “We can’t support crazy price hikes,” and “Jobs, freedom and national dignity.” In the working-class Douar Hicher district of Tunis, the capital, protesters, above, lifted loaves of bread in the air to show their determination to fight for basic necessities. Many people spend hours searching for sugar, milk, butter, cooking oil and rice, facing empty shelves in supermarkets and bakeries.

The Tunisian government raised the price of cooking gas cylinders by 14% this month and other fuel prices for the fourth time this year. These changes, which hit working people the hardest, were demanded by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for the country’s capitalist rulers to obtain loans to “restructure” the government’s huge, unpayable debt to wealthy bondholders.

While inflation is at nearly 9% over the year, unemployment is above 16% and a massive 38.5% for those under 25. At the same time, opposition is mounting to moves by President Kais Saied to increase his executive powers. He suspended parliament in July 2021, firing the prime minister and ruling by decree.

Elsewhere, the IMF is concerned about repayments for the huge loans it has pressed onto governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America. IMF loan commitments already stand at over \$268 billion, but it will rake in nearly double that, some \$436 billion from debt repayments from 55 countries over the next six years. The price of these loans is IMF demands on governments to slash aid and social programs that benefit working people.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

Rico can only travel on a U.S.-flagged ship, staffed by a U.S. crew.

A ship with 300,000 barrels of diesel has been anchored off the coast of Puerto Rico since Sept. 25. Because it’s not chartered under the U.S. flag, U.S. authorities won’t allow it to dock

in Puerto Rico and offload fuel — despite pressing shortages — unless the Department of Homeland Security grants it an exemption.

Retirement under attack

Meanwhile, a deal with wealthy bondholders holding PREPA’s debt is on the verge of collapse.

The Association of Retirees of the Electric Power Authority has been organizing weekly protests to demand hands off their pensions. “The bondholders want a deal where they get paid first,” said Johnny Rodríguez Ortiz, president of the association. “That would leave us with nothing.”

U.S. District Judge Laura Taylor Swain, who has been supervising U.S.-imposed financial restrictions on Puerto Rico, ordered a new hearing for Sept. 28 on the PREPA debt. Bondholders have asked Swain to end its 2017 bankruptcy, impose a receiver, and raise electricity rates to ensure they get paid. Rates have already been raised seven times in the last year.

“The debt is simply unpayable. We say cancel the debt!” Rodríguez said. “Some people are afraid to say that. They say it sounds too much like what Fidel Castro said years ago. But I say it.”

Oppose FBI attack on Cuba Solidarity Committee

The FBI is expanding its efforts to intimidate Cuba solidarity supporters from Puerto Rico to the mainland, visiting or calling at least four people on the West Coast and Midwest over the last few weeks.

The harassment began in Puerto Rico over three days in late August when FBI agents visited or called nearly 60 people, largely participants in July’s Juan Rius Rivera Solidarity Brigade to Cuba. The annual brigade is organized by the Cuba Solidarity Committee on the island. Some FBI agents claimed that they were investigating “criminal activity” or alleged “infiltration” by Cuban security agents. At least 15 FBI agents were directly involved.

As soon as Milagros Rivera, president of the committee, learned of the visits and calls, she sent out an alert, letting people know that they don’t need to talk to the political police agents. “Our most important message,” she said, “is we are going to continue our united work to defeat the criminal U.S. blockade of Cuba.”

The committee organized a press conference and has won messages of support from dozens of organizations around the world.

Since then opponents in the U.S. of Washington’s economic war against Cuba have been contacted by the FBI. Two FBI agents on Sept. 20 visited the Los Angeles home of Mark Friedman, a member of the U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee there. They claimed someone said he “would help them on the issue of Cuba.” Friedman wasn’t home.

The FBI has a long history of violating the constitutional rights and trying to disrupt the activities of labor unions, Black rights organizations, the Socialist Workers Party and anyone who opposes Washington’s war moves abroad.

Milagros Rivera will be the featured speaker at a public meeting in New York City Oct. 28 to denounce the FBI harassment. The evening meeting will take place at the First Spanish United Methodist Church (“The People’s Church”) in East Harlem.

— S.G.

Save the date...
Oct. 29 -- End US embargo against Cuba
March and rally in New York before UN General Assembly vote
For more info: 917-887-8710

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Striking Kaiser mental health workers rally in California

OAKLAND, Calif. — People driving past honked in support as mental health workers on strike against health care giant Kaiser Permanente in Northern California rallied in front of the company's headquarters here Sept. 23. More than 2,000 therapists, psychologists and social workers, members of the National Union of Healthcare Workers, have been on the picket lines since Aug. 15 fighting for increased staffing.

"One suicide is one too many," read the union banner, which included photographs of patients who have committed suicide.

"Patients have to wait two to six months to see a therapist," counselor Steve Schoser, who chaired the rally, told the crowd. "Then they have to wait four months until the next appointment. That's why we're on strike." They are demanding Kaiser hire more staff to allow them to treat patients properly.

April Jordan, who lives in Richmond, spoke about her son, Basil Faulkner, who suffered from depression. He killed himself six weeks ago after failing to get an appointment. "My son needed care," she said. "He went to Kaiser many times and got no help. The last time, he and his girlfriend waited in the lobby for two hours and were sent home with a phone number. If I walked in with a broken foot, I'd get treated."

"If you're on fire, you can't wait six weeks for some water," Queen Adu-Poku, a regional director of the National Association of Social Workers, told the rally. "Maybe you can't appeal to the conscience of someone who doesn't have a conscience, but I have one!"

Many strikers say isolation experienced by millions during the COVID-19 lockdowns increased the need for mental health care. "Since the pandemic the severity of mental illness has increased," Olivia Salvador, a clinical social worker, told the *Militant*.

On Sept. 25, leaders of the National Union of Healthcare Workers said that the strikers overwhelmingly rejected Kaiser's last contract proposal by a 1,349 to 222 vote.

Send messages of solidarity to Northern California Office, 1250 45th St., Suite 200, Emeryville, CA 94608. Phone: (510) 834-2009. Fax: (510) 834-2019. To contribute to the strike fund go to nuhw.org/kaiserstrikefund.

— Jeff Powers

Dockworkers in UK strike, win international solidarity

LIVERPOOL, England — Over 600 dockworkers, organized by the Unite union, went on strike here Sept. 20. Mass, lively pickets have been set up in front of the port.

The port workers and maintenance engineers rejected a pay increase of 8.3% and a signing bonus of 750 pounds (\$813). This would have meant a cut in real wages, as inflation in the U.K. has been hitting double digits this year.

"As a union, we will never recommend anything below inflation," senior union steward John Lynch told the *Militant*. Peel Ports Group bosses "claim we're on 43,000 pounds per year" to discredit the strike, he said, but the basic pay is actually 22,000 pounds, which can go up to 32,000 pounds over time.

Solidarity has come from dockworkers' unions in Portugal, Denmark and the United States, and representatives have visited the pickets. At a Sept. 24 solidarity rally on the picket line, a number of trade unionists spoke in support. "I've come here with a group from Cammell Laird," said Unite regional officer Ross Quinn, who was part of a strike at the shipbuilder in 2018. "We've raised 1,000 pounds from Unite and GMB members there. Pictures of Liverpool dockers [on strike] are spreading right across the labor movement."

Ken Riley and Mark Bass, representing the U.S. International Longshoremen's Association, brought their union's support. "International solidarity is the only way forward, especially for dockworkers. We have to be in lockstep with each other as we face the power of global shipping companies and governments," Riley, international vice president of the ILA, told the *Militant*.

"We can't forget the fight by Liverpool dockers in 1995, our slogan is: 'You'll never walk alone again,'" Riley



Militant photos: Jeff Powers

Above, rally held by National Union of Healthcare Workers in front of Kaiser Permanente headquarters in Oakland, California, Sept. 23. Workers have been on strike since Aug. 15 fighting for increased staffing. Inset, rally chair Steve Schoser and April Jordan, whose son Basil Faulkner committed suicide after failing to get timely appointment to deal with his depression.



said, referring to the 1995-98 port bosses' lockout of dockworkers here, after workers refused to cross the picket line of 80 dockworkers fired at the Torside company. The strike ended in a 28,000 pound settlement for the locked-out workers, but none won their jobs back.

The ILA delegation plans to go to Felixstowe next, where dockworkers will begin a second round of strike action Sept. 27. Workers at the two ports will be on strike simultaneously for a week. "This is unprecedented, 60% to 65% of imports and exports will grind to a halt," Lynch said.

— Hugo Wils

IAM locals strike Weyerhaeuser lumber in Washington, Oregon

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Over 1,100 lumber workers struck Weyerhaeuser operations in Washington and Oregon Sept. 13. Four International Association of Machinists union locals organize workers at four sawmills, two log export facilities, two log truck operations and seven logging camps. Pickets are up at six of the sites 24/7.

"The key issues in the strike are fairness and respect on the job," Brandon Bryant, president and directing business representative of IAM District W24, told the *Militant*. "We

are fighting corporate greed. The company set new records for profit in three of the last four years. Trees don't make wood — we make wood out of trees. We log, load, haul and cut.

"They propose we pay a premium on health care, which we have never done. And it is a minimal health care plan," he said. "And their wage proposal doesn't meet the rising cost of living. We deserve to gain, not lose."

Weyerhaeuser is the second-largest softwood lumber company in North America, and the largest in the U.S.

Bryant said economic questions are being bargained together for the four locals, which have 14 separate contracts that govern work rules and other noneconomic matters.

None of the company's mills are operating, and workers aren't crossing the picket lines, he said. "A few contract workers went in and got their tools with our permission and left.

"We are getting a lot of community support. I tell people if they're hungry, go to the Raymond picket line. They have so much food," Bryant added. He and other unionists at the strike headquarters here said they have received solidarity from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, United Steelworkers, Teamsters, Oregon Education Association, Oregon Nurses Association, Service Employees International Union, the plumbers union and an array of area elected officials. "The Longshore union has been great. They offered the kitchen at their hall for our use," he said.

ILWU Local 21 here fought a long and bitter strike 10 years ago against EGT Development, which tried to operate nonunion on the docks, right next to the Weyerhaeuser facility.

Show your support! Join the picket lines. Send messages of support and donate food and supplies at the locations listed at www.iamw24.org.

— Jacob Perasso

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 13, 1997

SYDNEY — On September 8 coal miners at Rio Tinto's Hunter Valley #1 mine resumed strike action after the company suspended two workers for refusing to transfer from their usual jobs to work in the coal preparation plant. The strike resumed two days before the end of a seven-week negotiation period which had not resolved the conflict.

Since 1993 Rio Tinto has campaigned to have all employees on nonunion individual contracts, and has successfully eroded union coverage at its vast iron ore, diamond, gold, bauxite, and aluminum smelting interests.

The strike at Hunter Valley #1 mine is the company's opening shot in their war to break the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union in the coal industry. Only seven union members have signed nonunion individual contracts. The remaining 430 miners have no intention of giving up hard-won gains.



October 13, 1972

The release of three U.S. prisoners of war on by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has exposed the Nixon administration's lack of concern with U.S. servicemen held prisoners. All three were pilots shot down over Vietnam.

Previous prisoners released by the Vietnamese have been taken into military custody and "debriefed" on the Indochina war. In several instances prisoners who went into this custody as opponents of the war emerged as supporters of it. Antiwar statements by the released pilots pose a threat to the government's pro-war propaganda. When they arrived in New York they were immediately taken away by the military.

Despite the administration's crocodile tears about the POWs, the government is more concerned with denying them their constitutional rights to free speech and "recapturing" them than freeing them.



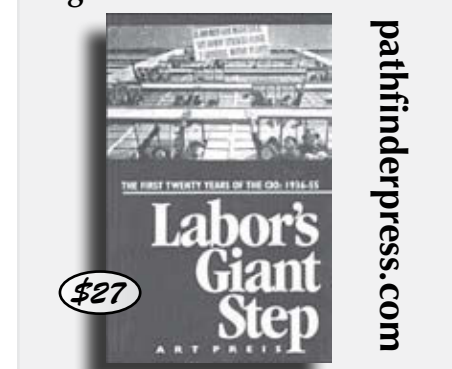
October 13, 1947

CLEVELAND — One independent labor candidate qualified for a place on the ballot as a council candidate in November's elections and two others missed out by narrow margins in last Tuesday's primary elections.

Eight union men ran for City Council in the 33 council races. Four ran as independent labor candidates. Four designated themselves as Democratic or Independent Democratic. All four running as Democrats failed to qualify. No union candidate received official Democratic Party endorsement or support. All eight had to organize and finance their campaigns without aid of any established party machine.

Cleveland's primaries were of national significance because they furnished instructive examples of a variety of labor election tactics and policies that will likely be repeated on a broad scale throughout the country.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



Putin's troops out of all Ukraine!

Continued from front page

a pretext for claiming to incorporate them into Russia.

Chanting “No to war!” “No mobilization!” and “Send Putin to the trenches!” thousands protested in scores of cities and towns across Russia, from St. Petersburg in the west to Ulan-Ude in the east.

More than 1,300 people were arrested in Moscow and 1,000 more in other parts of the country. Some young men have been issued draft notices while they were detained for joining protests.

“Coming out now is very dangerous, otherwise there would be many more people,” Vasily Fedorov, a student at a protest in Moscow, told France24. As more Russians learn the truth about the Kremlin’s invasion, “they will come on to the street, despite the fear,” said Alina Skvortsova, 20, who was also at the action.

Putin signed a new bill Sept. 24 doubling the punishment to 10 years in prison for troops who surrender, desert or refuse to fight. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky promised no Russian prisoners of war held in Ukraine would be returned to Russia against their will.

After Putin’s Sept. 21 decree, tens of thousands of fighting-age men fled Russia by plane, bus or car. Long vehicle lines formed at border points with Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

Protests in Russia over call-up

“Why are you taking our children?” shouted a group of women demonstrating Sept. 25 in Makhachkala, in Dagestan, a majority-Muslim region in southern Russia. “Who was attacked?” they chanted. “Russia has attacked Ukraine! Stop the war!” Over 300 soldiers from the region have died in the conflict, 10 times more than in Moscow. There are similar disproportionate numbers of deaths in other parts of Russia that are home to oppressed nationalities.

Police also assaulted protesters with stun guns and batons, detaining over 100. Angry residents blocked a federal highway in the region near Endirey that day, refusing to move as police fired warning shots.

In Yakutia near the Arctic Circle, 47 of the 300 people living in the village were called up, removing a majority of working men from the village — reindeer herders, hunters and fishermen.

In early September Russian forces were routed by the Ukrainian army’s rapid advance in the northeast around Kharkiv. From their new foothold, Kyiv’s forces have put Russian positions along the line under pressure. In the south, Kyiv’s forces are making slow advances against dug-in Russian units, aiming to liberate Kherson.

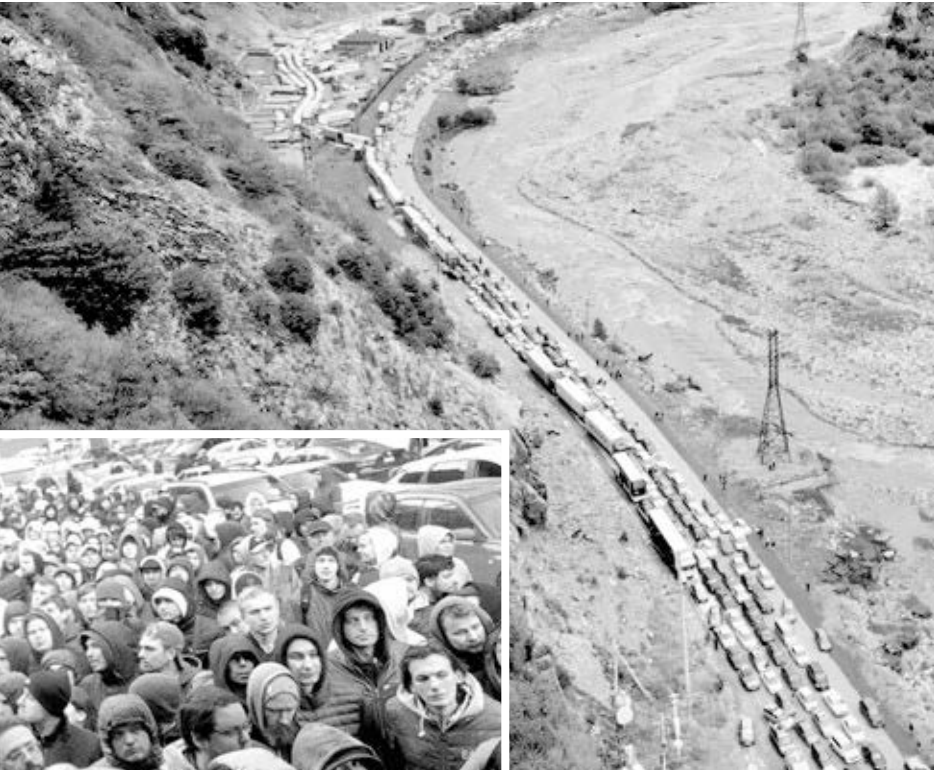
Resistance to rigged polls

Parts of Kherson make up one of four occupied areas of Ukraine, along with parts of Donetsk and Luhansk, as well as Zaporizhzhia in the south, where Moscow staged sham referenda on joining the Russian Federation Sept. 23-27. Putin warns that any further Ukrainian counteroffensive into those areas will be treated as a direct attack on Russia. Moscow will respond, he threatens, with all its military might, including a thinly veiled threat to use nuclear weapons.

Despite this, there was resistance to the rigged poll.

More than 50 people rallied Sept. 23 in Snihurivka, an occupied city in the Mykolaiv region, calling for a boycott of the vote. Snihurivka has always been part of Ukraine, they said.

In a sharp break with Moscow, the government of Kazakhstan Sept. 26 refused to recognize the fake referenda in the Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine. It cited the need to recognize “the terri-



Above, t-online; left, Business Ukraine magazine

Thousands of Russians have fled since Putin imposed new draft. Above, mileslong line of cars at Georgia border. Left, Russian men at border seeking to avoid becoming cannon fodder for Moscow’s Ukraine war.

torial integrity of states, their sovereign equality.” This shows how Putin’s war has accelerated efforts by this and other Central Asian countries — former Soviet republics — to get out from under Moscow’s domineering role.

Working people are the backbone of the resistance to Moscow’s invasion, volunteering for the Ukrainian armed forces or territorial defense units and aid networks. But they also confront attacks from Zelensky’s capitalist government, which has banned strikes and protests and enforced anti-labor laws long sought by the bosses. In plants that are still working, bosses have forced wage cuts of up to 50% while inflation has surged to over 20%. Unemployment

has tripled during the war to 35%.

“Wars are won or lost by the actions of different classes,” John Studer, editor of the *Militant*, told a Militant Labor Forum in New York Sept. 23. “We know that from the experience of World War II and Vietnam. What will be decisive in ending this war is the fraternization, solidarity and unity of workers in Ukraine and Russia.”

“Out of today’s conflicts, new wars are being prepared that can lead to a world war with the potential for nuclear catastrophe,” he said. “The stakes are enormous for the working class. Workers and farmers in Cuba showed what is possible when they made a socialist revolution taking political power into their own hands.”

25,000 Ukrainian children made ill by Chernobyl treated by internationalist Cuba

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

On April 26, 1986, an explosion blew apart the top of reactor No. 4 at the Soviet nuclear power plant in Chernobyl, in Ukraine, releasing huge amounts of radiation into the atmosphere. More than 2,000 square miles of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia were contaminated, with clouds of radioactive dust reaching Sweden and other countries.

The disaster was caused by Stalinist misrule and contempt for working people. Soviet officials had decided to build the reactor without a containment structure or other safety features that would have impeded a release of radiation. When the reactor exploded, Moscow did all it could to cover up the disaster. It delayed evacuating people from the area and showed total indifference to the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers and soldiers joining efforts to contain the leaking reactor and clean up the area.

Castro asked one of the young women accompanying the children how many people had been affected. She said there were as many as 100,000. Castro conferred on the spot with other government representatives. Hours later, before the second plane arrived, he announced that Cuba would take 10,000 children. The program ran through 2011, with doctors treating more than 25,000.

Tarará medical facility

To carry out this project, 7,000 Cuban volunteers joined work brigades that over the course of three months helped transform the seaside Tarará youth camp into a center for medical care and

Cuba speaks out at United Nations, New York meeting

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla spoke at the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 21, condemning the “ruthless and unilateral economic, commercial and financial blockade” of his country imposed by the United States government for more than 60 years.

Rodríguez and Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío were in New York for the annual opening of the assembly. Rodríguez also participated in a public meeting of some 400 people at Riverside Church Sept. 24. Cossío was interviewed by Amy Goodman and Nermeen Shaikh on the radio show “Democracy Now” Sept. 22.

The goal of U.S. policy against Cuba is to “generate material shortages, scarcity, and suffering” in order to “sow discouragement, dissatisfaction and cause damage to the Cuban people” and their socialist revolution, Rodríguez said at the General Assembly. He explained that Washington pressures other governments, banks and companies not to do business with Cuba to prevent any flow of foreign currency into the country. They want to “provoke economic collapse.”

In response to a question by Shaikh about the effects of the embargo, Fernández de Cossío emphasized, “The aim of U.S. policy since 1960 has been to make life as difficult and as unbearable as possible for the people of Cuba, with the ambition that that would lead to the overthrow of the government.”

“The United States cannot accept ... a government in this region that

is not subject to the demands of corporate interests, whose government cannot be bought with money, where politicians respond to the people and not to who pays the most, where we can carry our social health, educational, housing policies without having to ask the permission of the International Monetary Fund,” he added.

On Nov. 2-3 the U.N. will hold a debate and vote on a motion demanding Washington end its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. A similar motion introduced last year passed 184-2. This year will mark the 30th time the U.N. has passed such a demand on the U.S.

The administration of President Joseph Biden maintains the highly aggressive sanctions imposed against Cuba by the former administration of Donald Trump, Rodríguez emphasized.

The decision just that morning by the White House to increase staff at its Havana Embassy to begin processing full immigrant visas in early 2023 “is a positive step,” the foreign minister said. This makes it easier for Cubans to reunite with family members in the United States.

“The human damage [U.S.] policy generates for all Cuban families,” Rodríguez said, “is enormous, cruel and immoral.”

“Despite the enormous challenges,” Rodríguez said, “we defeated COVID-19 with our own resources, vaccines and the strength of our public health and science system.” Cuba is using three vaccines developed within the country. It has the highest vaccination rate in the

Lebanese toilers seek their money after banks freeze funds



AFF/Arwar Amro

Sali Hafiz, right, at May 23 protest in Beirut, instantly became a folk hero across Lebanon after she entered a bank Sept. 14 with a fake gun and demanded \$20,000 of her own money. Earlier the bank denied her request to withdraw money she needed to help with a family member’s cancer treatment. She left the bank with \$13,000 and an official bank receipt. “We are not criminals, we have the money, but [banks] are stealing it,” Hafiz said.

Lebanese bank directors have frozen deposits for more than two years and limit how much money people can withdraw. Most of those who deposited U.S. dollars have been restricted to withdrawing money in Lebanese pounds at much lower rates than the real value.

Hafiz’s success opened up the floodgates, with at least eight others carrying out similar actions over the following week. On Sept. 22 the banks shut their doors indefinitely. Depositors can only access their money from ATM machines in the highly inflated local currency.

Working people in Lebanon have been battered by the nation’s worst-ever economic crisis. The country’s currency has lost nearly 90% of its value, while unemployment has soared, pushing 75% of the population into poverty. The inflation rate in August was 137% over a year earlier, the highest in the world.

Pushing the crisis onto the backs of working people, the capitalist rulers there have ended subsidies on medicine, wheat and fuel. A tank of gasoline for cars now costs almost a worker’s monthly minimum wage.

— VIVIAN SAHNER

world and was the first to develop vaccinations for children as young as 2 years old. “At the worst moments of the pandemic we sent 58 medical brigades to 42 countries and territories,” he said.

Both Rodríguez and Fernández de Cossío addressed the war in Ukraine. “There’s a huge responsibility of the U.S. government pushing NATO in an aggressive position against Russia,” Fernández de Cossío told Shaikh. “At the same time, Cuba cannot support and does not support the transgression of the sovereign borders or the sovereignty and territory of any country.”

Rodríguez also reiterated Cuba’s commitment “to self-determination and independence of the people of Puerto Rico.”

At the Riverside Church program, organized by The People’s Summit, Rodríguez was joined on the panel by Venezuelan Foreign Minister Carlos Faría; Kristin Richardson Jordan, a member of the New York City Council; Claudia de la Cruz, from the People’s Forum; and Vijay Prashad, from the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research. The foreign minister of Eritrea attended the meeting.

Rodríguez ended his presentation at the Riverside Church by thanking those in the U.S., including Cubans living here, for their activities demanding an end to the embargo.

Court bans electrocution, firing squad

Continued from page 2

through the prisoner’s body for 4.5 seconds, followed by 1,000 volts for 8 seconds, then 120 volts for two minutes.

After reviewing electrocution autopsy reports, Dr. Jonathan Arden, a pathologist for the state of West Virginia, testified that the resulting “severe electrical and thermal burns” would be “the equivalent of cooking.” He said that the prisoners would feel “horrific pain” if at all conscious, and the muscles around the chest and lungs would “tetanize,” meaning the prisoner couldn’t breathe.

As for execution by firing squad, the protocol calls for the inmate to be strapped to a backless metal chair with a hood over the head. Sharpshooters 15-feet away take aim with rifles at a target pinned over the prisoner’s heart. If the prisoner isn’t dead after 10 minutes, another volley is fired, then a third if the prisoner is still alive.

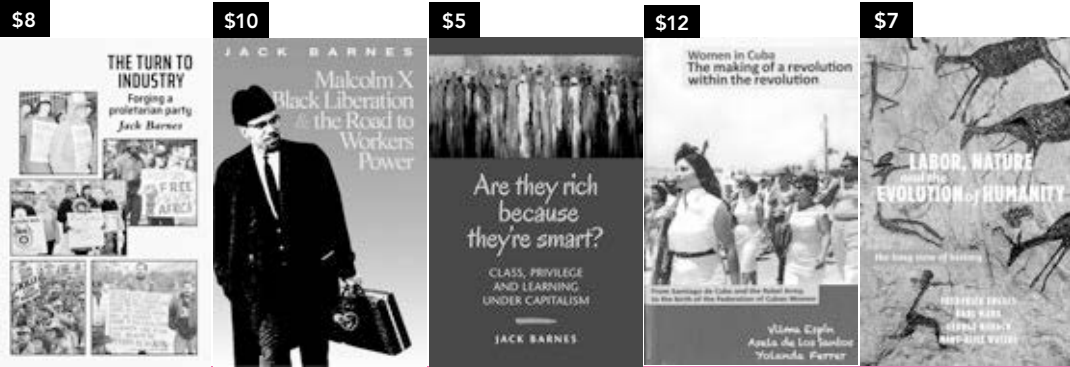
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The FBI: A history of the capitalist rulers' political police

The Spanish-language edition of 50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class by Larry Seigle, Farrell Dobbs and Steve Clark, is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. It traces the capitalist rulers' use of Washington's political police to target the unions and other working-class organizations, as well as mass movements for Black equality and against the Vietnam War. Today the Democrats wield the FBI to go after former President Donald Trump and others, attacking constitutional freedoms vital for the working class. The excerpt is from the chapter "Origins of FBI Assault on Socialist Workers Party." Copyright © 2014 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LARRY SEIGLE

For several years after the First World War, the FBI had functioned as a political police force, carrying out the arrest or deportation of some 3,000 unionists and political activists in 1919 and 1920 (the infamous "Palmer Raids"). But following widespread protests over these and other FBI actions, and with the decline of the postwar labor radicalization, the capitalist rulers decided against a federal secret police agency. ...

By the mid-1930s, however, a vast



AP Photo

Democrat President Franklin Roosevelt, with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, to right of flag, signs 1934 bill increasing federal police powers for use against the labor movement.

social movement was on the rise, with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) at the forefront. The relationship of forces was shifting in favor of working-class organizations. The bosses' old methods could no longer always be counted on. Communist perspectives did not come close to commanding majority support among working people, and in fact remained the views of a small minority, but the bosses were nonetheless concerned that progressive anticapitalist and anti-imperialist political positions advanced by class-struggle-minded union leaders were winning a hearing among a substantial section of the ranks of labor. Especially in times of crisis, such as war, minority points of view defended by established and respected working-class fighters could rapidly gain support.

With this in mind, the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt expanded and centralized federal police power. ...

[T]hese FBI operations began on the eve of the Second World War. They were central to preparations by the US capitalist rulers to lead the nation into another carnage to promote their interests against their imperialist rivals and against the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America struggling for liberation from colonial domination. These operations were directed against the leadership — and potential leadership — of the two major social forces in the United

States that threatened to interfere with the ability of the US ruling families to accomplish their objectives: the labor unions and the Black movement. ...

The drive toward war necessitated an assault on working people at home and against democratic rights in general. Roosevelt gave FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover free rein to use the FBI against the labor movement and Black organizations. The White House and Justice Department secretly authorized many of the illegal methods used by the FBI and turned a blind eye toward others.

This authorization for the FBI to assume the functions of a political police force was done without legislation, which would have had to be proposed and debated in Congress. It was accomplished instead by "executive order," a device that was rapidly assuming a major place in the operations of the government and would increasingly become a major mode of governing in the decades to come.

On September 6, 1939, Roosevelt issued an executive order directing the FBI "to take charge of investigative work" in matters relating to "espionage, counterespionage, sabotage, subversive activities and violations of the neutrality laws." The key phrase was "subversive activities," and the most important decision was to include this slippery concept in the list of responsibilities given the FBI. While there were federal laws against espionage, sabotage, and violation of US "neutral-

ity," no law explained what "subversive activity" might consist of.

Two days later Roosevelt — again by executive decree — made a "finding" of the existence of a "national emergency." This allowed an increase in military spending without having to ask Congress... Simultaneously, the president ordered an expansion of the FBI's forces. His objective, Roosevelt told a news conference, was to avoid a repetition of "some of the things that happened" during World War I:

There was sabotage; there was a great deal of propaganda by both belligerents, and a good many definite plans laid in this country by foreign governments to try to sway American public opinion. ... It is to guard against that, and against the spread by any foreign nation of propaganda in this country which would tend to be subversive — I believe that is the word — of our form of government.


Forty years later, in a Foley Square courtroom in New York City, top Justice Department officials would cite Roosevelt's words as providing legal authority — derived from the president's "inherent powers" under the US Constitution — for the FBI's campaign of spying, disruption, and provocation against the Black movement, unions, and antiwar and women's liberation fighters and against communist organizations such as the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

As the trial of the SWP lawsuit unfolded during the spring of 1981 in Judge Griesa's courtroom, it became increasingly clear that the case revolved around issues far deeper than particular FBI abuses. The historical evolution of the FBI is part of a broader phenomenon in the United States. Underlying the threat today to the rights of privacy and freedom of association is the arbitrary rule by an expanding federal executive power. This power carries out policies at home and abroad that it is less and less able to openly proclaim or mobilize majority support for. It relies increasingly on covert methods to accomplish hidden or half-hidden objectives. ...

[A]dvocating ideas and taking actions that are not illegal — even as defined by reactionary legislation — but are nonetheless considered inimical to the interests of those in power can make you the target of the political police.

**October
BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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Fight for justice for Mahsa Amini!

Millions of working people in the U.S. and worldwide stand with protesters across Iran in response to the death of Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman who died in the hands of the reactionary regime's notorious "morality police." She was arrested on charges of running afoul of the restrictive dress codes the government imposes on women. Thousands continue to protest despite the brutal response of the rulers' repressive forces that has left 41 demonstrators dead.

These are the biggest actions in Iran since protests in 2019 that followed a sharp rise in gas prices. Those demonstrations were fueled by mounting opposition to the Iranian rulers' military and political interventions across the Middle East and their consequences at home. The deadly cost of Tehran's expansionist foreign policy, like its bombardment this week of the Kurdish region of Iraq, falls squarely on working people.

U.S. media claim the Iranian regime's reactionary policies are a result of the revolution that overturned the dictatorial rule of the U.S.-backed shah of Iran. "In the wake of the Islamic revolution in 1979, revolutionaries forced women to wear scarves in public," wrote Najmeh Bozorgmehr in the *Financial Times*.

This turns facts on their head. Women were a powerful part of the uprising and battles afterward to advance the struggles of the working class, oppressed nationalities and their own rights. Laws forcing women to wear the hijab were imposed by *counterrevolutionaries* as part of their drive to overturn advances made in the 1979 revolution and to reinforce capitalist rule.

In factories and oil refineries workers set up shoras,

workers councils, to combat capitalist sabotage and fight for workers control of production. Women were part of these battles, joining peasant struggles for land and demanding military training so they could join in the war against the U.S.-backed Iraqi invasion in 1980.

One day after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered women government workers to wear the veil at work, the largest International Women Day's march worldwide took place in Tehran on March 8, 1979. When rightist thugs attacked demonstrators, larger protests against Khomeini's decree were organized. "To deny women freedom, is to deny freedom to the rest of society," chanted 15,000 in Tehran. Khomeini was forced to back down. Women won the right to dress as they please and to participate in and hold office in the shoras.

Tehran's clerical rulers couldn't make their anti-women restrictions law until 1983, part of a broader counterrevolution that targeted workers and farmers and oppressed peoples like the Kurds. They were finally able to consolidate a Shiite-based clerical capitalist regime that continues to hold power.

The resistance by working people to that government's assaults has exploded so widely today because of underlying opposition to the regime's brutality at home and abroad. This is an integral part of struggles by working people worldwide to defend the political space and freedoms we need to organize and fight.

It underlines why the fight for women's emancipation is in the interests of all working people and will be central to working-class battles that lie ahead.

Back rail workers' fight over schedules, jobs, crew size

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these conditions, rail companies have seen hundreds of workers quit this year. And the rail bosses are demanding further reductions in crew sizes down to one!

"BNSF came up with this [attendance] policy because of all the cuts they've made, and they're trying to do all they can to get us to pick up the slack. They haven't hired enough," Jordan Boone, a BNSF conductor in Galesburg, Illinois, told the *Washington Post*. Boone has five children and said since the policy went into effect in February, he has missed most of his kids' sports games, birthdays, recitals and vacations.

"The time away from family has a big impact on our mental health," he said. "I know people that have missed doctors' appointments for months and months because of this policy."

The dangers these conditions create for rail workers, as well as those who live by the tracks, has also been driven home by a series of derailments and deaths on the job over the last 30 days.

Two freight trains collided near Miami International Airport Sept. 24, causing a derailment that put four crew members into the hospital as well as an oil spill that required calling out a hazmat unit.

SMART-TD reported Sept. 20 that Local 1846 Union Pacific conductor Zachery "Zach" Lara and locomotive engineer Steven Brown had been killed Sept. 8 while working near Mecca, California, in helper service assisting a train up a grade. When they made a reverse move into Bertram siding to put their engine away, the crew had a head-on collision with cars parked in the siding.

On Aug. 29, UP conductor Mario Aurelio Navarro was killed in a derailment in El Paso, Texas.

One of the papers reporting the contracts are not a "done deal" is the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. They quote rail workers saying critical issues of scheduling and the attendance policy are not addressed. Jon Hauger, a conductor who works for BNSF out of Houser, Idaho, says the deal's attempt at providing medical leave is "a complete joke."

He said that with what he's learned about the tentative agreement, he feels it was the result of behind-the-scenes political dealmaking aimed at protecting Democrats ahead of the midterm elections.

"This was 100% a way to avert a strike," he said, and he plans to vote against the contract. He said many of his co-workers feel the same way.

The draft agreement reportedly allows members to get off for a grand total of three routine or preventive health care appointments a year without getting points. However, those appointments must be scheduled at least 30 days in advance, and can take place only on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Workers need to be able to get medical care when they need it, not when it's convenient for the bosses. The article describes how 51-year-old locomotive engineer Aaron Hiles, who works on the BNSF between Kansas City, Missouri, and Ft. Madison, Iowa, wasn't feeling well and made a doctor's appointment.

But bosses called him to work, and he missed his appointment. A few weeks later he had a heart attack on his train and died. The BNSF attendance policy "is pretty cruel. Everybody is worried about points," said Hiles' best friend and union brother, conductor Joel Dixon. "It's always a question whether Aaron would still be around if he made that appointment."

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees union, which organizes about 25,000 track builders and repair workers, can have its members sent hundreds of miles from home for work. A key issue is how and when they get paid for these trips. Jake Forsgren, a BMW member working out of Lincoln, Nebraska, talked with the *Militant* Sept. 24. He reported that there has been some progress with employers on away-from-home expenses. "I'm still on the fence" on voting for the agreement, Forsgren said. "The number of sick days we need so far is not enough and the cap on insurance payments has not been lifted."

Rail workers are watching closely what happens with the International Association of Machinists, the only union so far of the 12 involved in the national contract negotiations whose members rejected the deal. The union's 6,600 locomotive machinists, track equipment mechanics and facility maintenance workers voted it down by 75%. The union has set a strike deadline of Sept. 29 if an improved agreement isn't reached by then.

No matter what happens, the fight of the rail workers is far from over.

White House hits rights

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sically drawn in by Hitler."

Constitutional freedoms are not under threat from a rising right-wing conspiracy, much less a fascist movement, but from the White House, using the FBI, the U.S. rulers' political police. Trump faces probes under the Espionage Act; a never-ending series of prosecutions and hearings out of the Jan. 6, 2021, melee at the Capitol; and a growing number of lawsuits.

A three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Sept. 21 that Trump's constitutional rights weren't violated during the nine-hour FBI raid at his Mar-a-Lago estate last month, despite the fact that his lawyers were barred from observing what the FBI did. Trump had won a temporary halt to the government's access to material snatched by the FBI. But buying the government's claim that "irreparable harm" will be done to "national security," the judges also granted the government's request to resume its digging through the documents.

One key task of the White House is to try and refurbish the image of the FBI, the better to turn it loose on workers as the class struggle deepens in years to come.

Protecting "national security" is a longtime ploy used by the government and FBI to spy on, disrupt and harass unionists, Socialist Workers Party members, Black rights fighters and opponents of Washington's wars. It's the capitalist class and its hold on state power that the FBI seeks to "secure," against struggles by working people, our unions and anyone who gets in the rulers' way.

New York Attorney General Letitia James vowed to go after Trump during her 2018 election campaign, turning on its head the presumption of innocence. Based on her hatred of Trump and her judgment that he had to be guilty of something, James went looking for a "crime." On Sept. 21 she filed a lawsuit charging Trump and his children with fraud, alleging they inflated the value of their properties to get better terms for bank loans and insurance.

Such practices are rife among real estate speculators. But such practices rarely actually "defraud" big banks, which have huge resources to scrutinize loan applications to weed out those that don't promise a profitable return.

No matter who the FBI targets — including Trump, a capitalist and past president — their attack sets precedents that will be turned against the working class, our unions and its political vanguard.

FBI goes after 'domestic terrorism'

A glimpse of the expanding scope of today's FBI operations against so-called domestic terrorists was presented in allegations by ex-spy Steven Friend. He was suspended from the FBI after refusing to join a raid by the SWAT team he was assigned to in Jacksonville, Florida. It was tasked with a heavily armed raid targeting individuals alleged to have some minor connections to the Jan. 6 activities.

Friend says the FBI is expanding its probe into the Capitol riot to create the false impression that "domestic terrorism" is widespread and growing. Surveillance is being carried out on people who went nowhere near the Capitol Building, he said, but who are "suspects" solely because of political comments they posted on Facebook.

The trial of five members of the Oath Keepers militia began Sept. 27 on charges of seditious conspiracy for planning to overthrow the government on Jan. 6, 2021. The use of these laws is a threat to workers and our unions. Since they were first adopted in 1798, sedition laws have been used to attack freedom of speech and assembly and to target the labor movement.

Using the Sedition Act, the government raided union halls and broke up the founding convention of the Communist Party, arresting some 3,000 people between 1919 and 1920. In 1941 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Teamsters union in the Midwest were charged with sedition in an attempt to hamstring unions and silence forces campaigning against the rulers' drive to enter the Second World War.

Some 919 people have already been charged with various offenses relating to Jan. 6 activities. That number will likely grow in the run-up to the elections, as Democrats drive to make Trump and his supporters *the* issue, not the paltry record of the Biden White House.

'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