

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Monroe Doctrine' aided fight against colonial rule in the Americas

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 24 JULY 3, 2023

## CL campaign: 'For solidarity with union battles today'

BY JOHN STEELE AND JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — On June 16 Communist League candidate Félix Vincent Ardea, a Canadian National Railway freight conductor and Teamsters union member, and other CN Teamster members joined a 150-strong solidarity march of strikers and supporters of the 330 United Steelworkers union members on strike at the Owens Illinois plant in the Point St. Charles district of Montreal.

A few days earlier, Vincent Ardea presented the party's working-class program at an all-candidates forum in the Montreal electoral district of Notre-Dame-de-Grace-Westmount where he was running for Parliament. The election was June 19.

"The Communist League campaign is not like the campaigns of the other candidates here tonight, which are based on empty promises to do 'good things' for voters in this con-

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## Rail unions: 'Bosses drive for profits cause of derailments'

East Palestine protests demand health care, control



Reuters/Alan Freed

East Palestine, Ohio, town hall meeting Feb. 15, 12 days after toxic train disaster. Residents are winning support of rail unionists in fight to gain control over cleanup, health care.

BY JOE SWANSON

Working people in and around East Palestine, Ohio, refuse to be helpless victims. They're organizing and protesting, demanding control over the

ongoing cleanup and long-term health care following the Feb. 3 Norfolk Southern railroad derailment and release of toxic chemicals. Twenty rail cars — including five tankers of vinyl chloride on an almost 2-mile-long, 150-car freight train, weighing 18,000 tons — went on the ground and many burst into flames.

The vinyl chloride was purposely drained onto the ground by Norfolk Southern and government representatives and set on fire, sending poisonous chemicals into the soil, creeks and air.

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## Working people in Ukraine step up defense of national independence

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The Ukrainian government has launched a counteroffensive aimed at retaking territory seized by Moscow's forces since Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded the country to try to subjugate its people. Ukrainian forces are making slow gains in fierce battles, while the morale of Russian soldiers continues to wane.

Over 100 of Moscow's troops were killed at Kreminna in Luhansk in mid-June when a rocket struck as they stood exposed in the open for two hours to hear their commander give a speech.

Elsewhere, "our unit is demoralized, the soldiers want to surrender, but the officers won't allow it. The commander says you will be shot for that," Yaroslav Yerovslav, a Russian prisoner of war in

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## New indictment of Trump is assault on political rights all workers need

BY TERRY EVANS

Dealing serious blows to constitutional freedoms, President Joseph Biden is using his Justice Department to escalate the Democrats' drive to destroy former President Donald Trump. For the first time ever, a sitting president — who is also a candidate for president — is using his office to try to indict his main rival for the White House and throw him into jail.

The criminalization of political differences is dangerous for working people. Defending the freedoms protected by the Constitution, and pushing back against the U.S. rulers' drive to refurbish the FBI, are at the center of the class struggle today.

Trump was indicted on 37 counts in hopes at least one will stick. Thirty one are under the notorious Espionage

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## Los Angeles Militant Labor Forum panel discusses fight for constitutional rights

BY LAURA GARZA

LOS ANGELES — "Defend constitutional freedoms: Oppose U.S. government spying, harassment and frame-ups" was the topic of the May 21 weekly Militant Labor Forum here. Speaking were Mwezi Odom, from the African People's Socialist Party, and Norton Sandler, from the Socialist Workers Party.

Odom is the chairperson of Hands Off Uhuru! Hands Off Africa! Counteroffensive. The defense committee is fighting the frame-up of APSP Chairman Omali Yeshitela and Uhuru Movement leaders Penny Hess and Jesse Nevel. The three are facing up to

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## 288 dead in train crash in India is result of workings of capitalism



Press Trust of India

Hundreds of working people join efforts to free those trapped in wreckage after high-speed train collision in India. Years of government neglect, underfinancing led to disaster.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Working people worldwide were horrified at news coverage when at least 288 people were killed and more than 1,000 injured in a head-on collision between government-run passenger and freight trains in India June 2. Rail bosses' drive for profits at the expense of safety for train workers and passengers was responsible.

The Coromandel Express passenger train, moving at 80 mph, was given a signal to remain on the main track as it

approached Bahanaga Bazar station in the eastern Indian state of Odisha. But this signal was somehow changed, senior railway official Jaya Verma Sinha told the media, and the train was shunted onto an adjacent track where it rammed into a freight train loaded with iron ore. The engine was tossed on top of the other train and the rest of the cars smashed into each other and derailed.

The collision also flipped some Coromandel Express coaches onto another

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Warrior Met miners protest at Vanguard Group headquarters

Writers fight for pay, contract to afford rent, have savings account

# Legacy of colonial rule, crisis of capitalism fuel fighting in Sudan

BY SETH GALINSKY

Bloody clashes between the Sudan government's armed forces and now insurgent paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded April 15 in Khartoum, so far killing more than 1,000 civilians and wounding over 4,000. At root is the legacy of imperialist exploitation and colonial rule and sharpened competition for profits amid today's deepening worldwide capitalist crisis.

The fighting rapidly spread to other parts of Sudan, especially the long-conflicted Darfur region. As of June 15 at least 2.2 million people had abandoned their homes, including more than 530,000 who fled to Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic or Libya.

Sudan Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary's Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo had joined in an uneasy alliance in 2019 to topple the three-decade dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir after months of massive anti-government protests. They promised a transition to civilian rule.

Instead, in October 2021 they carried out a coup that deposed the acting civilian prime minister, suspended the constitution and unleashed new waves of repression against workers, herders and farmers.

Burhan tried to bring the paramilitary forces under the control of the army. Dagalo resisted, seeking to increase the Rapid Support Forces' power, including by exploring starting its own air force. Underlying all this is rivalry over who will control and profit from the country's gold mines, livestock, oil trade, other lucrative busi-

nesses and scarce water supply.

Washington, Beijing and Riyadh, and many regimes in Africa, are pushing for a cease-fire, worried about the impact the fighting will have on their financial, economic and political interests in the region.

The regime in China is the largest lender to Sudan. The Sudanese government owes over \$5 billion to Chinese entities, as well as about \$2.5 billion that is supposed to be repaid with oil shipments.

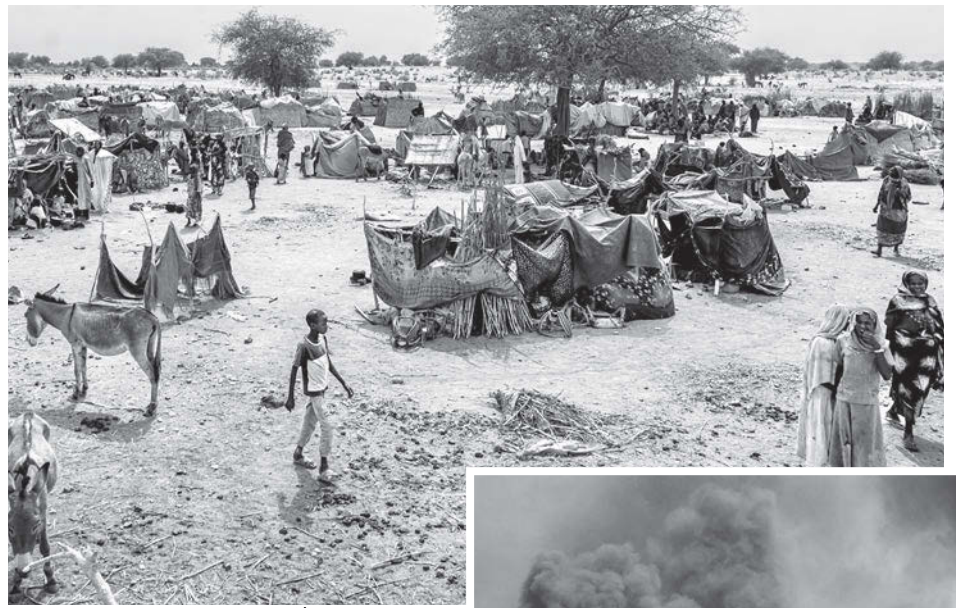
## History of colonial rule, revolution

Sudan has a long history of revolutionary fights against foreign domination. A victorious revolution backed by peasants, nomads, slaves and artisans against British and Egyptian intervention created an independent Sudan in 1885.

But by 1899 the British rulers — with the help of Egyptian troops as well as large landowners and slave traders inside Sudan — reconquered the country. They deepened existing tribal divisions, pitting ethnic groups against one another, as part of a "divide and rule" strategy.

Today Sudan's population has 19 major tribal groups, 597 ethnic subgroups and more than 100 languages and dialects spoken there. Some 70% of the population are Arab Muslims, also torn by clan and class divisions.

Among the biggest divisions British imperialism fostered was between mostly Muslim Arab northern Sudan and southern Sudan, which is predominantly black African tribes with Christian or animist beliefs. After two devastating civil wars, one from 1955 to 1972



Above, Yagazie Emez

Sixty thousand Sudanese refugees camped in neighboring Chad after fleeing fighting since April. Inset, smoke rises over Khartoum, Sudan's capital, during military clashes May 1.



and a second from 1983 to 2005, capitalist leaders in southern Sudan won its independence in 2011 and control most of the country's oil resources.

In power, the Bashir dictatorship created the rural Arab-based Janjaweed paramilitary — which evolved into the Rapid Support Forces — to violently suppress a rebellion by black African groups in Darfur.

Even though its officer corps was primarily drawn from al-Bashir's Arab ethnic group, Bashir feared the army — with a large number of black soldiers, many from Darfur — would not be reliable.

The Janjaweed looted and burned black villages, slaughtering residents and stealing camels, sheep, cattle, food supplies, even suitcases and clothes. They ordered African farmers not to harvest their crops so that the animals they stole could forage.

A prominent slogan at the demonstrations in Khartoum that led to the ouster of Bashir — showing the toilers' desire to overcome these ethnic divisions — was "We are all Darfur."

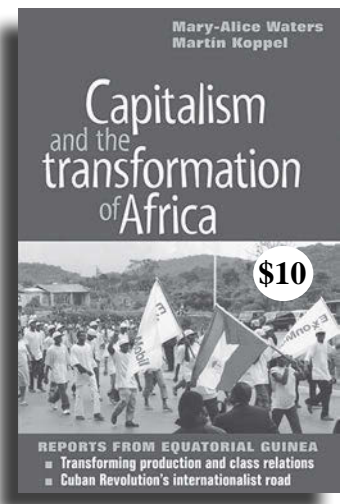
The rivalries in Sudan are intertwined with competition and shifting alliances between various foreign powers operating there. The Moscow-based Wagner Group has been aiding and arming the Rapid Support Forces. The dictatorship in Egypt has collaborated and conducted joint war games with the government. The Saudi regime got help both from the army and the Rapid Support Forces for

its war in Yemen.

Sudan — nearly three times the size of Texas, with 45 million people — is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world.

This is despite the fact Sudan is rich in natural resources and the main source worldwide of gum arabic, a key ingredient in everything from soda to Pop-Tarts. Until recently, Sudan was among the top three nations in Africa in livestock, including camels and cattle.

The international repercussions of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has caused increased competition for resources and profits both between the army and Rapid Support Forces and capitalist regimes in the region.



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## THE MILITANT

### Worker-farmer alliance points road forward

*In May, Black farmers in Georgia discussed how to stay on the land when faced with rising debt burden, higher fuel, fertilizer costs and falling returns from crops and livestock. Unity of workers, working farmers is road for toilers to face the capitalist crisis.*



Militant/Susan LaMont

Black farmers with AME Church leaders at meeting in Quitman, Georgia, May 20.

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# 'Solidarity with union battles'

Continued from front page  
stituency," Vincent Ardea told some 70 people. The forum was sponsored by the NDG Community Council. Another 50 watched it online.

"In the context of the economic, social, and moral crisis of capitalism, our campaign aims to help strengthen the union movement and the struggles of workers and farmers," he said. The council asked the candidates to discuss their views on the worsening housing crisis reflected in rising rents, the lack of government-built social housing and rising mortgage rates. Vincent Ardea was the only one to offer a working-class perspective.

"The unions should demand that Ottawa fund and carry out a massive public works program to create jobs at union-scale pay to build and run housing, schools, hospitals, roads, mass public transportation and other things vital for working people," he said.

He explained that as long as land and shelter are commodities to be bought and sold on the market within the capitalist profit system, the housing crisis for workers and farmers will never be solved. "It will take a social revolution to make adequate, affordable shelter a fundamental right."

Vincent Ardea said working people and the unions need to oppose Ottawa and Quebec City's attacks on basic democratic rights, pointing to the federal government's use of the Emergencies Act last year to crush the truckers' demonstration in Ottawa. And the recent adoption of Bill C-13, the revised Official Languages Act, which restricts the right to use English and other languages other than French in Quebec.

"Several weeks ago, the Quebec government banned the use of a government-funded convention center in Quebec City by a right-wing anti-abortion religious organization on the grounds that the organization's views do not reflect 'the fundamental principles' of the province," said Vincent Ardea. "This kind of state censorship threatens the right of free expression and is a danger to the democratic rights of working people."

## Discussions in Rouyn-Noranda

There is an ongoing debate in Rouyn-Noranda — a seven-hour drive north of Montreal — on how to limit arsenic and other toxic emissions from the Horne copper foundry and at the same time defend the jobs and living conditions of plant workers and their families. Along with other questions facing workers, this issue was front and center in door-to-door discussions Vincent Ardea and campaign supporter Joe Young, a mem-

ber of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, had with working people there.

"There must be solutions so that there is less pollution from the smelter," said bank worker Suzie Bertrand. "If there aren't they should just close it."

"The solutions need to come from working people," said Vincent Ardea. "In East Palestine, Ohio, where there recently was a train derailment spilling extremely toxic chemicals, the rail workers as well as those who live in the area have shown the possibility to unite, organize and fight for the health of all."

"They always say that the smelter must close," said a Horne foundry worker who asked that his name not be used. "There are improvements to be made, but we don't need to close the plant. It will not be better if they move to another country where environmental norms are less strict. We don't want to send the problem to others."

"I agree," said Vincent Ardea. "We shouldn't counterpose jobs to reducing the emissions. Workers through their unions need to control production in the foundry, and work with a committee of those who live close by to eliminate dangerous emissions."

"It's difficult to fight against the big companies. They do everything to divide us," said another Horne foundry worker. He described the 2002-2003 hard-fought 11-month strike at the foundry.

# LA forum discusses fight for constitutional rights

Continued from front page

15 years in prison after being indicted May 2 on federal charges of conspiring to act as unregistered agents of a foreign government.

Odom showed forum participants a video of the July 29 FBI military-style assaults on the Uhuru Movement's headquarters and residences in St. Louis and St. Petersburg, Florida. The FBI used flash-bang grenades, drones, armored vehicles and automatic weapons wielded by scores of flak-jacketed agents from an FBI SWAT team. You can view the video on YouTube.

"The vicious raids were on seven properties," Odom said. "They started at 6 a.m. on the East Coast and 5 a.m. in the Midwest. In St. Petersburg, \$40,000 of damage was done. They stole archives, laptops and cellphones."

"This is a struggle for democracy, for freedom of speech," Odom emphasized. "The government is trying to silence leaders of the Uhuru Movement."

"They charge that we are operating as Russian agents because we have run candidates, pushed for reparations, and



Militant/Lynda Little

Félix Vincent Ardea, Communist League candidate in Montreal, speaks at June 12 candidates' debate. "Our campaign aims to help strengthen unions, struggles of workers, farmers," he said.

"We have seen a rise in workers' struggles in the recent period, like the fight of the 55,000 education workers in Ontario last fall who defended their right to strike by defying the government's anti-strike law," said Vincent Ardea. "This shows what we can do when we unite against the bosses and their governments."

Vincent Ardea discussed with Guylaine Lecomte the negative impact on families of long work shifts. She works at a convenience store with her two sons. "At work they always want more. My son works 40 hours a week and goes to school," she said.

"To organize workers to fight against the bosses and their governments to win better working conditions, the unions need to build our own party, based on the unions, that will fight for everyone, with the goal of taking political power," explained Vincent Ardea. "That's not a bad idea," said Lecomte.

The campaign wound up with a June 18 fundraising barbecue attended by 31 of Vincent Ardea's co-workers and other campaign supporters. It raised \$530 to pay for the hundreds of campaign flyers distributed to working people at their doors, on strike picket lines and other working-class struggles.

charged the government with genocide. We don't need Russians to tell us what to do," she said. Supporters of the fight against the frame-up seek to raise nearly \$300,000 for the legal defense effort. Participants at the forum kicked in contributions.

Sandler said the pretext of serving a foreign power has been used by the government for decades to go after militant workers, Black rights fighters, the Socialist Workers Party and others. These foreign-agent laws are a key part of the government's "national security" arsenal — a direct attack on First Amendment protections. "If any of your political positions are similar to some other country's government, you are fair game to be spied on, disrupted and prosecuted."

Sandler noted that the raid on the African People's Socialist Party was within days of the FBI raid on Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago home. Both were organized by President Joseph Biden's Justice Department.

"Currently," Sandler said, "Democrats are pressing seven different civil and criminal proceedings against Trump, all partisan efforts aimed at accomplishing the same goal — preventing him from running again."

The stakes, he said, are substantial in defending constitutional freedoms. "Make no mistake, they may start with Trump but the target is the working-class vanguard and organizations that are the most conscious fighters. The capitalists are in power — it's their police, FBI and CIA. When working people threaten their interests, both parties turn their repressive forces loose against us."

He described the SWP lawsuit against the FBI filed in 1973 that helped expose the extent of the government's vast,

unconstitutional Cointelpro operations against the SWP, Communist Party, Black Panther Party and many others involved in the labor movement, civil rights struggle or the movement against the Vietnam War. The attacks included spying, blacklisting, mail covers, wiretaps, use of undercover informers and break-ins at party headquarters.

Accompanying Mwezi Odom to the forum was her husband, Matsemela Odom, a fellow APSP member, who spoke in the discussion. "I told Mwezi on the way up here that it is an honor to speak at the Militant Labor Forum. Malcolm X spoke at these forums," he said.

He also noted that I.B. Tabata had spoken at Militant Labor Forums. Tabata was a member of a revolutionary organization in South Africa and a leader of the Unity Movement of South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. He was forced into exile by the apartheid government.

Matsemela Odom noted Tabata's preface to the pamphlet *Why Watts Burned*, published by the Los Angeles Local of the Socialist Workers Party. It describes the social conditions and cop brutality that led to the uprising in the Watts section of L.A. in 1965.

What Sandler said about the unconstitutional attacks targeting Trump, Matsemela Odom added, "is spot on."

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# Canada wildfires cover North America with huge toxic smog

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — In one of the worst wildfire seasons in Canada, over 2,600 forest fires have spread across the country, forcing more than 100,000 people to be evacuated from their homes. Hundreds of homes were destroyed as over 23,000 square miles of forest burned. The fires closed down or disrupted mining, oil and gas operations, as well as farms and small businesses.

A thick blanket of toxic smoke from the fires spread across much of Canada and the United States, affecting air quality for millions and disrupting air travel. More than 5,000 firefighters from the U.S., France, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Portugal and Spain came to help control the fires.

On June 7, New York City registered the second most dangerous air quality worldwide, only behind New Delhi. Working people were enshrouded with an orange-grey fog that blotted out the daylight.

While the wildfire season in Canada usually runs from May through October, the number and scope of the fires, especially this early in the season, is highly unusual.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau claims, “We’re seeing more and more of these fires because of climate change.” His views are echoed by other capitalist politicians and the big-business liberal media, who try to blame “climate change” for all of the disasters caused by the workings of capitalism.

However, some scientists and working-class voices like the Communist League have been explaining for years that totally inadequate forest management by Ottawa and its disdain for the consequences for working people would result in a catastrophe.

Following wildfires in 2017 a number of scientific reports called for serious upgrades in forest management, paid for by increased government spending. That never happened.

Parks Canada has only scheduled 23 controlled burns this year, compared to plans to burn or thin 4 million acres of federal land by Sept. 30 in the U.S. The discrepancy isn’t because Washington is more caring. The capitalist rulers in the U.S. have come under mounting pressure since the 153,000-acre Camp Fire wiped out the city of Paradise in 2018, killing 84 people and destroying 18,000 homes and buildings in the



Jashim Salam/NurPhoto via Zuma Press

**Dangerous air quality in New York City June 8 from wildfires in Canada. Widespread destruction by fires is result of profit-driven priorities of capitalist rulers, indifference of government.**

deadliest fire in California history.

Controlled fires are a crucial component of forest management planning. Clearing forests of the tinderbox of dead and small trees, dry shrubs and grass that fuel fires reduces the number and scope of deadly, uncontrollable blazes.

Ottawa’s reckless disregard for safety was exacerbated by an ex-

tremely dry winter with significantly less snow than usual, leading to even greater dangers of forest fires and widespread destruction.

The *Globe and Mail* wrote a 2021 editorial warning of the consequences if Ottawa failed to act. It was entitled “Canada’s massive wildfires are the result of decades of bad decisions.” These “bad decisions” are the product of the profit-driven priorities of the capitalist rulers.

This is compounded by the refusal of capitalist developers to cut profits by putting money into building homes with fire-resistant materials, at sufficient distances from forests and with enough space between units. Such measures are required to lessen the risks of living in fire-prone areas.

It is estimated that more than 12% of people in Canada, including nearly one-third of Indigenous people on reserves, live where the danger of forest fires is greatest.

## ‘Capitalist greed, gov’t indifference’

“Forest fires are a natural phenomenon,” Félix Vincent Ardea, a conductor for Canadian National Railroad and Communist League candidate in the June 19 by-election in Notre-Dame-de-Grace-Westmount in Montreal, told the *Militant*.

“But the almost unprecedented scope of this year’s wildfires, and the devastation faced by tens of thousands of workers and farmers across Canada who have been forced to evacuate their homes and farms, is a product of the greed of capitalist corporations and the cynical indifference of a government that serves their interests, not those of working people.

“The unions need to fight to force the federal and provincial governments to immediately put into place an effective forest management, under workers control, backed by the necessary financial resources,” he said.

“Working people need to fight for a massive government-funded public works program to put thousands to work at union rates to rebuild housing and infrastructure destroyed by the fires.

“Through such a struggle working people will see ever more clearly that labor must break from the capitalist parties and build our own party, a labor party based on the unions, to fight to defend the class interests of workers and farmers.”

## Protest demands justice in Iowa apartment building collapse

BY WILLIE COTTON

The Davenport, a 116-year-old apartment building in downtown Davenport, Iowa, partially collapsed May 28, killing Branden Colvin Sr., 42; Ryan Hitchcock, 51; and Daniel Prien, 60; and injuring many others. Fifty tenants lost their homes and possessions in the 78-unit building that stood near City Hall.

Less than 24 hours later, city officials announced demolition of the building would begin the next day, that efforts were transitioning from rescue to recovery. A growing angry crowd who still had friends and family trapped in the building gathered there. Then resident Lisa Brooks called her daughter to say that she was still on the fourth floor. She waved out the window to cheers from her family and the crowd below who chanted, “get her out.”

After Brooks’ rescue 150 people protested demanding “find them first.” Five people were still unaccounted for. City

officials backed off. Several days later, after everyone in the building was accounted for, demolition began.

Quanishia “Peach” White Berry and Lexus Berry told the media they were sitting in their apartment and saw a crack open above the bathroom door. They grabbed their cats to leave. Lexus made it to the door as the building collapsed, but Peach was buried. Lexus can be heard saying, “My wife is in there,” while officials were giving a press conference. Six hours later rescuers had to amputate her leg above the knee to free her from the rubble.

“I don’t know that anyone can anticipate a building collapsing,” Mayor Mike Matson insisted.

But in January 2020 a building inspector wrote that dangerous conditions at the building might mean closing it down. Over the next two years, photos show bricks missing and crumbling, cracks in the walls and

evidence of water damage throughout the building.

Tenants complained to authorities about not having heat or hot water, of leaks and mold. Shauna Dixon told The Associated Press that the wall in her apartment bowed and the window frame pulled away from the wall. When Dixon notified building management, “nothing came from it,” she said.

This February new problems were found. Ryan Shaffer from R. A. Masonry, who bid to do work there, told the *Quad City Times*, that owner Andrew Wold “wanted to cut the cost by cutting out the shoring and supporting of the building. I said, ‘If we don’t do it this way exactly, I’m not putting my guys in there. Somebody is going to die.’”

Wold restarted work himself in April, and passed city inspections on April 12, April 21, and May 1. Up to hours before the collapse Shaffer warned Wold’s workers to get away, that the building was dangerous. No one warned the tenants.

Under pressure, Davenport authorities released documents showing years of complaints and violations at the building, and that city authorities knew about the dangerous state of the building and did nothing. This puts the lie to the mayor’s claim that “no one could have anticipated the disaster.”

As of June 18 the only action against Wold has been fines of \$300 and \$95 in court fees.

Some 100 people protested outside the June 7 City Council meeting. “Being out here and telling the city leaders that they will be held accountable is really important right now,” Christina Castaneda told the *Times*. “It starts with who owned the building, but this goes to the people who allowed that building to be occupied.”

*Willie Cotton was born and raised in the Quad Cities and knows people who were in the building.*



Nikos Frazier/Quad City Times via AP

**Protest June 7 at Davenport, Iowa, City Hall, with partially collapsed apartment building in back, demands owner, city officials be held responsible for deaths, injuries, loss of homes.**

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Warrior Met miners protest at Vanguard Group headquarters

MALVERN, Pa. — Several hundred United Mine Workers of America members and retirees and other unionists demonstrated at the Vanguard Group investment company headquarters here June 6 in solidarity with Warrior Met Coal union members. They are demanding to be rehired with their union intact after a nearly two-year strike in Brookwood, Alabama.

Another key demand is to restore the jobs of 41 strikers barred by the company for alleged picket line violations. This includes many of the strike leaders.

Vanguard has the largest holdings in Warrior Met. The mine is now one of the most profitable U.S. coal companies.

Warrior Met was set up by the biggest outstanding creditors, including Vanguard, when the previous owner, Jim Walter Resources, went bankrupt in 2015. The new owners told miners they had to accept deep cuts in wages, benefits and working conditions or the mine would be closed, with a promise to make it up to them when the company got back on its feet.

But when the contract expired in 2021, bosses offered little change over the previous concession contract. The miners rejected it and went on strike.

Miners are gradually returning to work after a February “unconditional offer to return to work” agreement between the international union leadership and company. They are going back to jobs alongside scabs hired by the bosses during the strike. Miners who worked there for years are facing company-imposed obstacles to their return, including drug testing, physicals, safety retraining, new 12-hour shifts and more. The company still refuses to bargain for a contract. In addition, the union now faces a decertification petition filed with National Labor Relations Board.

“We got to get a contract,” Leonard Ward, a retired Warrior Met miner who also worked there under both owners for a total of 41 years, told the *Militant*. “Got to keep the union in those mines.”

Ward and other miners traveled to the rally from Bibb County, Alabama, in two UMWA vans. His twin brother, one of the returning miners, was forced to take two physicals and retrain on a new

job after 40 years in the mines.

During the strike, the union faced scabs and a NLRB multimillion-dollar fine for the company’s profit loss.

A few days before the UMWA rally, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 1 that companies can sue unions and their members if they go on strike and it hurts the bosses’ business. In reporting this, financial media outlets noted that strikes by workers were up 50% last year.

— Osborne Hart

## Writers fight for pay, contract to afford rent, have savings account

NEW YORK — More than 200 striking members and supporters of the Writers Guild of America held a lively picket here June 12, six weeks since walking out against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers.

Among the key issues are the union’s demand for a pay raise to keep up with inflation and that writers get paid for a minimum number of weeks per show and get residuals from rebroadcasts of streamed shows based on viewership.

Writers have the same challenges that other workers face, Writers Guild East Executive Director Lowell Peterson told the *Militant*. “The employers are trying to get a smaller number of writers to produce more scripts in fewer weeks” to increase profits. Solidarity by other unions “has been a big boost,” he said.

The 160,000-member Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists union voted by 98% to authorize a strike when their contract runs out June 30. The Directors Guild of America’s contract runs out the same day.

The rally and picket line, led by the union’s “Women’s Salon,” featured national AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and Secretary Treasurer Fred Redmond.

“While Comcast, Disney, Fox, Warner Bros., Paramount, and Netflix collected almost \$30 billion in entertainment operating profits each year from 2017 to 2021,” the Writers Guild said in a statement, “writer pay has actually decreased.”

“It’s no longer possible to have a middle-class lifestyle. It seems almost impossible to afford rent, to occasionally go out to eat, to have a savings account,” said striker Julia Young.



Militant/Osborne Hart

United Mine Workers and supporters demonstrate at Vanguard Group investment company in Malvern, Pennsylvania, June 6, demanding Warrior Met Coal rehire miners with union intact.

Because the run length of shows is so unpredictable, residuals — a tiny cut that writers, actors and others get from the replay of shows — are a key question for surviving in between jobs.

Streaming services like Netflix refuse to release viewership figures on which residuals are calculated, said Young.

“We get paid a weekly rate,” Young added. “Some days we might work 12 hours or more to get a show into production. I’m learning a lot about the labor movement and why we need unions.”

Visit [www.wgacontract2023.org](http://www.wgacontract2023.org) to find and join the picket line nearest you.

— Seth Galinsky

## Free Ed Poindexter, former Black Panther framed up 53 years ago

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — This coming Aug. 31 marks 53 years 78-year-old Edward Poindexter will have been in prison. A number of organizations that support prisoners’ rights are reporting Poindexter’s left leg was amputated below the knee recently. Neither his family nor his medical power of attorney were notified of the amputation. Poindexter has diabetes and receives dialysis five days a week. He underwent triple bypass heart surgery in 2016.

Known as the “Omaha Two,” Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (formerly David Rice), were leaders of the Black Panther Party in Omaha in the late 1960s. They organized protests against police brutality, including the 1969 killing of 14-year-old Vivian Strong. They were targeted by the Omaha police; agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; and by the FBI as part of its notorious Cointelpro

spying and disruption program.

In August 1970, they were framed up on charges of killing an Omaha police officer, who had been lured into a home where a suitcase bomb exploded.

Supporters of Poindexter and we Langa have forced out into the open government documents showing how authorities were out to discredit and dismantle the Panthers’ political work. Omaha police and the Douglas County Attorney denied crucial evidence to their defense team, according to an FBI memo obtained during post-conviction discovery. Witnesses placed them elsewhere at the time of the killing. Nonetheless, Poindexter and we Langa were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. We Langa died in 2016 after 45 years behind bars.

“Recently the Midwest Innocence Project requested a meeting with Poindexter at the prison to discuss taking his case as a wrongful conviction,” Kietryn Zychal, a freelance journalist who for many years investigated the frame-up of we Langa and Poindexter and worked to free them, told the *Militant* May 16.

“Their attorney was told by the prison staff that Poindexter was in the hospital,” Zychal said. “When he was released from the hospital, MIP set up a phone call.” But due to the amputation and his poor health, Poindexter declined to take the call and declined their representation.

“Supporters of Poindexter are trying to see if it’s possible to get him hearing aids and a prosthetic leg,” Zychal said.

The brutal treatment of Poindexter is an indictment of the workings of the capitalist system and how the U.S. rulers use their prisons to protect their class interests. This is no secret to the millions of workers who have been incarcerated or have a relative, neighbor, co-worker or friend who was thrown behind bars.

Poindexter has a cataract in one eye that makes it difficult to read, so please write or type your letter in 18 point or larger font. Send to: Ed Poindexter #27767, Reception and Treatment Center, P.O. Box 22800, Lincoln, NE 68542-2800.

## — 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



June 29, 1998

FLINT, Michigan — Hundreds of unionists and others gathered outside of the General Motors Delphi East plant on June 11 to greet some of the 5,800 union members expected to join the strike against the auto giant.

Just after 7:00 p.m. hundreds of members of UAW Local 651 came marching out of the plant to cheers, chanting, “U-A-W, U-A-W,” and “No Jobs, No Peace.” Present were scores of UAW Local 659 members carrying signs declaring “United We Stand.” They were among the 3,400 workers who walked out at GM’s Metal Fabrication plant on the west side of town six days earlier.

The official reasons for the strike are health and safety, outsourcing, and subcontracting. But like the nine strikes at GM plants over the last two years, workers see the central question as jobs.



June 29, 1973

[June 19 is the 70th anniversary of the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, framed up in the middle of Washington’s anti-communist witch hunt on charges of giving atomic bomb secrets to Russia. The *Militant* headline June 8, 1953, was “Demand Witch-Burners Halt Legal Murder of Rosenbergs. Electrocution of Couple Designed to Terrorize Freedom of Thought.”]

Any unprejudiced observer who reads about the trial cannot help but conclude that [Irving] Kaufman acted as assistant to the prosecutor as well as judge. Kaufman’s frequent reminders to the jury that communism was not on trial and that it was permissible to use the Fifth Amendment to refuse to answer questions served only to suggest to the jurors that communism was in fact somehow involved.



June 28, 1948

The Chinese labor movement was silent for about 20 years after Chiang Kai-shek took power in 1927. The movement rose strongly again after V-J Day. With the defeat of the Japanese imperialists, a political vacuum existed for a while. The labor movement grasped the opportunity and emerged into the open.

There were more than 2,000 strikes from September 1945 to April 1946, involving FOUR MILLION WORKERS. The sliding wage scale was won the first time in the course of this strike wave.

The economic crises again came to a head in February 1947. The capitalist government announced an emergency law of freezing wages. The workers in Shanghai went out in a general strike. Over 200,000 workers from the main industries participated. The government was forced to retreat.

# Beijing bars Hong Kong protest to mark Tiananmen anniversary

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

In an effort to block a June 4 commemoration of those killed in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, Hong Kong's Victoria Park was filled with over 200 booths that weekend, part of a "Hometown Market Carnival." That event was organized by supporters of the ruling regime in China to celebrate — almost a month early — the anniversary of Britain's return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule.

But for decades tens of thousands of people in Hong Kong had packed the park to mark Beijing's brutal crushing of the mass protest for political rights. The large encampment in Tiananmen Square, supported by millions of working people across the country, was violently destroyed by the army 34 years ago. No official death toll has been acknowledged, but estimates range from several hundred to thousands, with many more injured.

This year, notices near Victoria Park announced that no banners, leaflets, posters or anything else with a political message were allowed. They were backed up by the deployment in the area of thousands of uniformed police and anti-riot armored vehicles from the Chinese mainland, known as "Saber-Toothed Tigers."

The government has sharply stepped up restrictions on political space since massive demonstrations rocked Hong Kong in 2019, forcing authorities to suspend passage of a bill authorizing extradition to mainland China. Huge actions demanding greater political freedoms continued through the end of that year.

In 2020 a sweeping national security law criminalizing virtually all forms of dissent was adopted by Beijing and imposed on Hong Kong. The Chinese rulers feared continuing demonstrations there could inspire protests on the mainland.

Over the past three years more than 60 organizations have been forced to shut down, including trade unions, media outlets, opposition political parties and groups like the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, which in the past had been the organizer of the June 4 actions.

In March, three of the Alliance

leaders were jailed for 4½ months, the first sentences under the new law. Chow Hang-tung, one of the three, told the court their sentencing was about punishing people for defending the truth. National security, she said, is being used as a pretext to wage a war on civil society.

"I think the people in authority do a great job in reminding us not to forget June 4," Daniel Chan wrote to the *Militant* June 5. "The more they threaten us not to do anything, the more people are provoked to remember it and do something."

After Debby Chan, a grocery-store owner, posted a few photos on social media of electric candles — representing the candles held up at June 4 protests — three government agents visited her. "The more we're not allowed to talk about it, the more they make these moves, the more I feel it is the right thing to do," she told the press. At the Chinese University of Hong Kong, students created tiny replicas of the "Goddess of Democracy" statue and hid them around the campus leading up to the Tiananmen anniversary. The original, built by protesters in Tiananmen Square, was toppled and destroyed by the Chinese military as they crushed the encampment.

Wearing a black T-shirt or holding a small flower, symbols associated with the 2019 protests, was met with a police response. "I can't help think that the people in authority are more scared than we the people," Daniel Chan wrote. He said more than 30 people had been arrested outside Victoria Park. Four of them were charged with "seditious intent."

In mainland China, even the existence of the Tiananmen Square revolt is a tightly censored subject. Many Chinese internet users reported June 4 their social media accounts had been temporarily or permanently suspended for marking it.

## Weekly protest in Baluchistan hits Iran regime repression



Iran Kargar

For the 37th week in a row thousands took to the streets of Zahedan in the Baluchistan region of Iran June 16, above, to protest repression at the hands of the bourgeois clerical government, despite military helicopters flying overhead prior to the march. The weekly actions there give a boost to fights by workers, women and oppressed nationalities across the country.

"Together we are unbreakable," was one of the popular chants at the march calling for unity with Kurds, Turks, Lurs, Arabs, Turkmen, Gilaks, Talysh and other oppressed peoples.

The march took place on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the June 18, 1983, execution in Shiraz of 10 Baha'i women, whose only crime was refusing to renounce their faith. The regime refused to even turn their bodies over to their families.

Prominent Sunni cleric Maulana Abdul Hamid — the main spokesperson of the movement in Baluchistan — addressed his supporters in the mosque before the march.

"When I hear such news, I get shocked and ashamed as a human and as a Muslim," he said. "Baha'is, Dervishes, and Zoroastrians are human beings. All those who live in Iran, including Muslims and non-Muslims, are Iranians, and their rights must be observed."

"Women who protest in Iran say their dignity and rights must be defended," Abdul-Hamid added. "Give women their full rights and the rest of the problems can be solved."

He also commented on numerous reports that police and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have been harassing people across Iran who commemorate the lives of family members killed by the government during the recent protests. "We hear that sometimes anti-riot forces disturb people in cemeteries," he said. "This is not acceptable."

On June 16 authorities arrested the father, sister and uncle of Abdolfazl Adinezadeh and sent agents to his tomb the next day to prevent a celebration of the youth's birthday. The 17-year-old was shot point blank and killed during protests in Mashhad Oct. 8.

On June 14 the Shiite-based Iranian regime announced that it would not allow Abdul-Hamid to leave the country to go on this year's pilgrimage to Mecca.

— SETH GALINSKY

## Memphis Bakery Workers strike over health care, overtime

BY TERRY EVANS

More than a year after their last contract ran out, nearly 200 members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 390G went out on strike at International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis, Tennessee, June 4. The workers produce soy protein products used by Nestle Purina, Kellogg's, Kind Bars, Abbott and other companies to make baby formula, pet food, nutritional powders and beverages.

The union is fighting bosses' demands for a contract that ends overtime pay, reduces benefits and allows the company to unilaterally change or cut their health insurance with 30-days notice. The company is hiring scabs.

"I'm striking for better benefits, and I'm fighting for my family," striker Susan Tidwell said on the BCTGM website.

"What they're trying to do is take away all benefits we have and have complete control over them," the local's president, Cedric Wilson, told ABC24 News. "So if we don't fight now there's a possibility

we could lose our union."

"The company just can't make changes whenever it wants," Ladarius Morgan, an operator at the plant, said.

A spirited solidarity rally at the picket line June 15 was joined by members of Teamsters Local 667, United Auto Workers Local 2406 and the West Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council, as well as Van Turner, president of the Memphis branch of the NAACP, and local politicians.

"Stay strong and don't give up the fight," Marlene Ramos wrote in a solidarity message on the strikers'

GoFundMe page. Ramos is a member of BCTGM Local 50 in Omaha, Nebraska, that struck Kellogg's two years ago along with fellow unionists at the company's plants in Memphis; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Battle Creek, Michigan.

You can drop off food, drinks and other supplies for the strikers and visit them at their picket line at 4272 South Mendenhall Road. Contributions to the strike fund should be made out to BCTGM Local 390G and sent to BCTGM Local 390G, 7527 Britt Way, Memphis, TN 38125.



BCTGM

Bakery Worker unionists struck International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis, Tennessee, June 4.

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A decadeslong retreat by the working class and unions has come to an end, as owners of capital and their parties shift the burden of their crisis onto working people's backs. More and more workers are saying, "Enough is enough!"

# 'Profit drive causes derailments'

Continued from front page

Rail workers and their unions are part of the fight, challenging moves by the rail bosses to slash crew size, cut the workforce, impose 24/7 on-call work schedules and 12-hour shifts, and other steps to boost profit at the expense of safety.

"There is a sickness within the freight rail industry pervasive enough that it has took hold of all seven Class I rail carriers and rotted them from the inside out," Tony Cardwell, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, the union that builds and maintains tracks, bridges and buildings on the railroads, said in the latest issue of the union's journal. "Sadly, East Palestine, Ohio, has taken the brunt of this cancerous business model, the unfortunate victim of a tragedy that was bound to happen.

"The deliberate mismanagement of Norfolk Southern," he said, "has now threatened the ruination of an American town."

"The Class I freight railroads are doing whatever the hell they want to maximize their profits with little to no accountability," Cardwell said.

He also put blame on Democrats and Republicans, who back the bosses. "Politicians can continue to go to places like East Palestine. They can stand on a dais in a shiny white hard hat with an 'I DIG COAL' bannered backdrop, holding a sledgehammer in lieu of their traditional seven-iron and pretend to care about you. But they don't," he said.

One aspect of the bosses' assaults on rail workers is to send them out to work with as little as 13 days of training. On June 14, the Federal Railroad Administration told Norfolk Southern that their conductor new-hire training program is "unacceptable," and mandated it be changed within 45 days.

Last October, Jeremy Ferguson, president of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers — Transportation Division (SMART-TD) union, the largest rail union, sent out a letter warning the membership that "newly hired employees are receiving less than half of the standard training times that existed little more than a year ago." He said this "is unacceptable and a danger to us all." The unions need to take a greater role in control over training, Ferguson insisted.

"One consequence of smaller crews is that new hires do not get to work as a brakeman or switchman for their first few years on the job before being required to work as conductors, with full responsibility for commanding train movement," Lance Anton, a conductor and SMART-TD member in Lincoln,

Nebraska, told the *Militant*. "Though the union has some influence in the training, it is far from enough.

"The union should fight such work conditions in the interest of all rail workers and the people who live near the tracks," he said.

## Fight for control over health care

Workers and farmers in East Palestine continue to report medical difficulties, effects from the Feb. 3 derailment and residual toxic exposure. Dozens turned out for a so-called informational session June 6 at the First United Presbyterian Church. They tore into representatives of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and other government agencies that treated their concerns with disdain.

Many in the audience stood up to report independent testing that shows ongoing exposure to vinyl chloride and benzene. They pointed to urinalysis results indicating elevated amounts of thiodiglycolic acid, which is produced as vinyl chloride degrades in the body.

They were outraged they had never been told that over half of the workers from the Agency for Toxic Substances sent to talk to them on their doorsteps experienced the same symptoms as residents. Four months after the derailment, people said, they still suffer nosebleeds, headaches, rashes, eye irritation, respiratory difficulties and digestive issues.

Like the bosses on the railroad, who exploit workers and push profits over safety, government health authorities tried to turn the blame for these symptoms on working people themselves.

Mark Durno, from the Environmental Protection Agency, had the nerve to say residents' "lifestyle choices," like smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, eating too many raw onions or taking B-12 supplements, could manipulate the levels of metabolite in the body.

"Or the five cars of vinyl chloride

# THE BMWED Journal

BROTHERHOOD OF MAINTENANCE OF WAY EMPLOYEES DIVISION  
of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters



## BMWED ON SAFETY REGULATIONS AND NORFOLK SOUTHERN HEARING

There is a sickness within the freight rail industry pervasive enough that it has took hold of all seven Class I rail carriers and rotted them from the inside out. Sadly, East Palestine, Ohio has taken the brunt of this cancerous business model, the unfortunate victim of a tragedy that was bound to happen. The deliberate mismanagement of Norfolk Southern — a steady drip of cost-cutting, safety-skirting, maximization of operation

Statement by Tony Cardwell, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, in the latest issue of the union Journal. He pointed to "cost-cutting, safety-skirting" and the rail bosses' profit greed that "threatened the ruination of an American town." Support from rail and other unions — the largest organizations workers have — is key for working people in East Palestine charting a way forward.

were ignited might also expose as well. We are getting dismissed and it's very upsetting," East Palestine resident Linda Murphy countered. "I don't eat raw onions like apples. I do not take supplements. I do not smoke. I do not drink. Where's it coming from?"

## Protest at State Capitol

Members of the recently organized Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment conducted a protest at the Ohio Capitol in Columbus June 14 to demand Gov. Mike DeWine stop stalling and demand President Joseph Biden declare an emergency. This would free up Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to aid area residents. DeWine has so far refused.

Protester Ashley McCollum, an East Palestine resident, is barred from returning to her home near the derailment site and has been living in a hotel with her family for months. "The worst thing I

heard was from my 6-year-old," she told the protesters, "who said on Mother's Day, 'I am sorry I couldn't get you a new house so we could have a home again.'"

Another protest has been called for July 22 outside the Columbiana County Courthouse to demand the government invoke the Social Security Act to provide Medicare for all. One provision of the law provides free health care to citizens whose health is impacted by environmental disasters.

Many rail workers and area residents are looking to attend the June 21-23 National Transportation Safety Board hearings on the cause of the derailment and ensuing disaster. Hundreds are expected to attend. Sessions will be held in the East Palestine High School gym. Among those scheduled to testify are representatives of Norfolk Southern, Oxy Vinyls — the Texas company that made the vinyl chloride — and some rail union leaders.

# 288 dead, over 1,000 injured in train crash in India

Continued from front page

adjacent track, causing the incoming Yesvantpur-Howrah Superfast Express traveling in the opposite side to hit them and derail. Nearly 2,300 passengers were riding on the two trains.

Rail officials claim the crash was caused by a problem with the electronic signaling system, saying they'll determine whether this was a "technical or human" error. Whenever possible, rail bosses look to blame crew members for crashes and absolve themselves.

The disdain of the government and its rail bosses for train workers and passengers was in full view. Almost all of the 288 dead had been packed in three unreserved general coaches at the front of the train, where workers are crammed standing shoulder to shoulder, with chains hanging from the roof to try and hang onto.

Unlike the 1,200 passengers in air-conditioned reserved seats, the rail service had no record of the identities of those in the general cars. In fact, officials said only two of the dead identified so far came from reserved coaches. There was no way for relatives and friends to know if loved ones were on the train and whether they survived.

"They were all people like me, poor," Rahul Kumar, a 28-year-old carpenter who had been in one of the Coroman-

del general coaches, told the *New York Times*. "Daily wage workers, laborers and people who can't afford a ticket in the next compartment."

Passengers who survived told reporters the number of deaths far exceeded the government's tally. Nearly 100 of those killed remain in the morgue, the *Times* reported June 11, unidentified and unclaimed.

Trains are a key method of transport in India, carrying millions of workers to jobs. Of the 20 million daily passengers, six out of seven hold unreserved tickets, particularly on suburban runs.

There are nearly 20,000 rail-related deaths yearly, many from falling out of overcrowded cars or being hit by a train at unprotected crossings.

The rail bosses moved quickly to get train service going again, in less than 48 hours, moving mangled rail cars off to the side and laying new track over the derailment site.

## Workers volunteer to save lives

In contrast to the government and rail management, working people in the area volunteered and did everything they could to try to save lives. Deepak Behera was playing football in the nearby town of Bahanaga when the crash occurred. He and other local residents rushed to the area in

total darkness, using flashlights on their mobile phones to search for survivors. "The carriages were so badly turned and crashed that nobody was capable of getting out," he told CNN, adding that he pulled 28 people alive from the carriages, and bodies of others who had died.

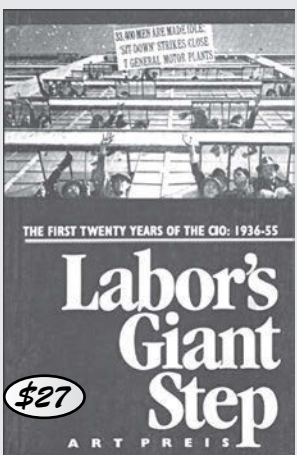
This latest crash and the dangerous conditions on India's capitalist rulers' rail system are rooted in their insatiable demand for profits. The country has one of the largest and oldest rail networks, with decrepit infrastructure. Nearly all of India's rail lines — 98% of 67,000 miles of tracks — were built between 1870 and 1930 under British colonial rule.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, in a drive to modernize the rail system to take in more money, has promoted big investments for station upgrades and fancy new high-speed trains, but little is allocated to repair the tracks.

A report published last year by India's Comptroller and Auditor General said that of the more than 1,100 derailments it examined between fiscal 2018 and fiscal 2021, over one-third were caused by track maintenance issues. It also said track workers are overworked, with overly long shifts.

This will sound all too familiar to rail workers in the U.S.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



See distributors on page 10, or order at [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

# Cuba refutes US claims of new China spy base as ‘totally false’

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The *Wall Street Journal* ran a story June 8 alleging the governments of Cuba and China had made a secret agreement to install a Chinese espionage facility on the island in a new “challenge by Beijing to the U.S.” This is the latest assault by the U.S. rulers against the Cuban government and revolution. The charge was vigorously denied by Havana.

The *Journal* said its sources are “U.S. officials with highly classified intelligence” who claimed Beijing had agreed to pay Cuba “several billion dollars to allow it to build the eavesdropping station.”

“Slanders such as these have been fabricated frequently by U.S. officials,” including ones about “supposed sonic attacks against United States diplomatic personnel, the falsehood about the non-existent Cuban military presence in Venezuela and the lie about the imaginary existence of biological weapons laboratories” in Cuba, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío responded the same day.

“All of these are lies with the malicious intention to justify the unprecedented intensification of the blockade, destabilization and aggression against Cuba and to deceive public opinion in the United States and the world,” Fernández de Cossío said.

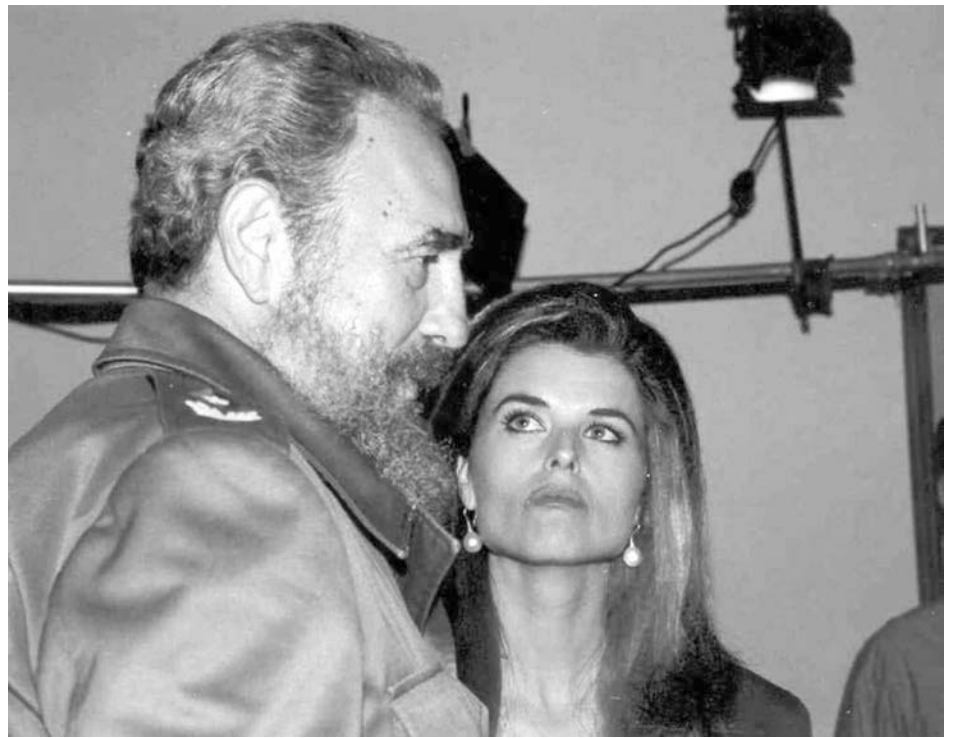
Washington has waged an economic war against Cuba for over 60 years in a nonstop effort to punish the Cuban people for overthrowing the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship and opening a socialist revolution.

Havana is a signatory to the 2014 Community of Latin American and Caribbean States declaration that the region is a “zone of peace,” the deputy foreign minister noted. “We reject any foreign military presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the numerous bases and military personnel from the United States, especially the military base that illegally occupies” part of Guantánamo.

The Joseph Biden administration initially said the claims in the *Journal* report were “inaccurate.” Then another anonymous White House “source” charged June 11 that China has been operating a spy base in Cuba since at least 2019, when Donald Trump was in office.

The U.S. assertions “about the presence of a Chinese spy base in Cuba are false, totally false,” Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez said in a June 13 statement. “Cuba is not a threat to the United States or any other country.”

The revolutionary government of Cuba has had previous experience with governments that wanted to use the island as a bargaining chip with



Fidel Castro with journalist Maria Shriver in 1988. In 1992 she asked him about 1962 “Missile Crisis.” Castro said “looking back he never would have given the Soviets the OK.” Cuban diplomat Carlos Fernández de Cossío says U.S. charges today aim to “justify their embargo.”

U.S. imperialism and is not interested in repeating that.

In 1962 the Cuban government agreed to the stationing of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, not to defend Cuba, but as an act of international solidarity with the USSR, which was being ringed by U.S. strategic nuclear arms.

Washington took the world to the brink of nuclear war after it spotted the missile sites. Without even consulting the Cuban government, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev made a secret deal with President John F. Kennedy to withdraw the missiles in exchange for Washington withdrawing its nuclear

missiles from Turkey. The deal didn’t include any guarantees against U.S. aggression targeting Cuba.

In a 1992 NBC interview Maria Shriver asked Cuban leader Fidel Castro if he would accept the missiles again under similar circumstances. Castro “said looking back he never would have” given the Soviets the OK, Shriver reported.

On June 20 the *Wall Street Journal* published a new slander, once again from anonymous “current and former U.S. officials,” claiming “China and Cuba are negotiating to establish a new joint military training facility on the island.”

## New indictment of Trump is assault on political rights all workers need

Continued from front page

Act, a witch hunt law used for decades to target militant workers, opponents of imperialist war, the Socialist Workers Party and others.

The former president, and his aide, Waltine Nauta, were also indicted on six additional charges, including the thought-control statute of “conspiring” to obstruct justice. The indictment was handed down June 8 by a federal grand jury, under the direction of special prosecutor Jack Smith.

Trump pled not guilty June 13.

Prosecutors say Trump’s “crime” was his unauthorized retention of “information regarding defense and weapons capabilities of both the United States and foreign countries,” as well as U.S. nuclear programs and military plans. He disclosed some of the material to others, the indictment claims, which “put at risk the national security of the United States.”

“National security” has been a key political smear used in every government witch hunt,” Joanne Kuniandy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey State Senate, told the *Militant*. “Working people and our unions should demand the charges against Trump be dropped.”

“Workers involved in strikes know that bosses use the courts and their government to attack our struggles by restricting labor rights. Last year’s move by Biden and a bipartisan Congress to ban rail workers from going on strike is just the latest example,” she said.

The indictment pointedly fails to mention the Presidential Records Act, which allows presidents to hold onto government documents — classified and unclassified — accumulated during their term in office. Many have

done so, displaying some in museums they build to tout their presidency.

There’s a long record of prosecutors refusing to file charges in previous breaches of government rules on the handling of secret documents. In 2016, Barack Obama chose not to prosecute Democratic Party presidential candidate Hillary Clinton for retaining loads of classified documents among thousands of emails on her personal server and then destroying many of them to cover up her actions. “No reasonable prosecutor,” FBI boss James Comey declared, “would bring such a case.”

Biden himself is being investigated for keeping documents from his days as vice president in numerous places, including by his Corvette in the garage of his Wilmington, Delaware, home. No one expects he will be charged.

To try to conceal the fact that the prosecution of Trump is aimed at fixing an election, Biden ordered his reelection campaign and the Democratic National Committee to say *not one word* about the indictment. Apparently Biden’s wife, Jill, didn’t get the memo. She told the media it was “shocking” that 61% of Republican voters say they’ll still vote for Trump despite the indictment.

Class hatred toward those working people Clinton labeled “deplorables” runs through government attacks on Trump and our political rights. Biden helped pave the way for the prosecution last September when he called tens of millions of so-called MAGA Republicans “semi-fascists” who threaten “the very foundation of our republic.”

“Workers, the trade unions and organizations of the exploited and oppressed must unconditionally oppose anti-constitutional assaults by the

government,” explains the SWP 2022 political resolution printed in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by party leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

“As Leon Trotsky forcefully reminded us in 1939,” the resolution states, “Under conditions of the bourgeois regime, all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements. That is a law of history.”

### Witch hunt Espionage Act

The 1917 Espionage Act used in the indictment of Trump was put on the books during the first imperialist World War to silence opponents of the capitalist rulers’ entry into that conflict over markets and power. The first person convicted was Socialist Party member Charles Schenck. His “offense” was sending out flyers opposing the draft.

Upholding Schenck’s conviction, the U.S. Supreme Court set a damning precedent, used many times since to justify attacks on the First Amendment. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said there was no right to free speech for “a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic.”

Prosecutors are trampling on other constitutional protections. Smith got a judge to force Trump’s lawyer, Evan Corcoran, to be grilled before the grand jury. This is a grave violation of a defendant’s Sixth Amendment right to attorney-client privilege.

The indictment claims Corcoran told the grand jury that the former president hinted to him that the lawyer could re-

move documents that might be damaging to Trump before turning the rest over to the government. This is used to bolster the government’s claim that Trump was “conspiring to obstruct justice.” Like all conspiracy allegations this includes no actual illegal acts and is especially hard to defend yourself against.

At the government’s request, U.S. Magistrate Bruce Reinhart ruled June 19 that Trump is barred from publicly disclosing or discussing the evidence against him. The gag order also restricted Trump’s access to the evidence and bars him from making any copies.

An additional challenge facing Trump is finding the best lawyers to defend himself. Because of the ferocity of the Democrats’ hysteria to cripple Trump, any lawyer who considers representing him has to recognize it can affect their career and more.

“There is a nefarious group that calls itself The 65 Project that has as its goal to intimidate lawyers into not representing Trump or anyone associated with him,” civil liberties lawyer Alan Dershowitz wrote June 15. “They have threatened to file bar charges against any such lawyers.”

All of this is part and parcel of the capitalist “justice” system, being used by Biden and his party in a political witch hunt.

“Over two-and-a-half centuries of struggle, working people have won crucial protections from attack by the capitalist state,” Kuniandy said. “These political freedoms are needed and used by working people whenever we build unions; fight for jobs, wages and health care; or demand an end to the U.S. rulers’ wars; or organize to fight government injustice.”



# 'Monroe Doctrine' aided fight against colonial rule in the Americas

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The Monroe Doctrine, whose 200th anniversary is marked this year, has been the subject of countless articles in the press. Many argue that the foreign policy position announced by President James Monroe in 1823 was a declaration of “imperialist” designs on Latin America, and that Washington’s course today is simply a continuation of that policy.

That explanation is false. It blurs together different historical periods. To understand where we came from and where we are going, working people need to study the history — the concrete conditions and evolution — of the conflict between class forces that has driven U.S. and world politics.

Today we live in the imperialist epoch. But we can’t look at history through 21st century eyeglasses. When the United States was established as a republic in the late 1700s, capitalism was on the ascent. It was the most progressive social system the world had ever seen — a revolutionary advance over outmoded feudalism, which had prevailed for centuries.

As capitalist trade, agriculture, industry, transportation and communications were revolutionized and spread worldwide between the 15th and 19th centuries, humanity’s productive capacities multiplied more than during all its previous existence put together.

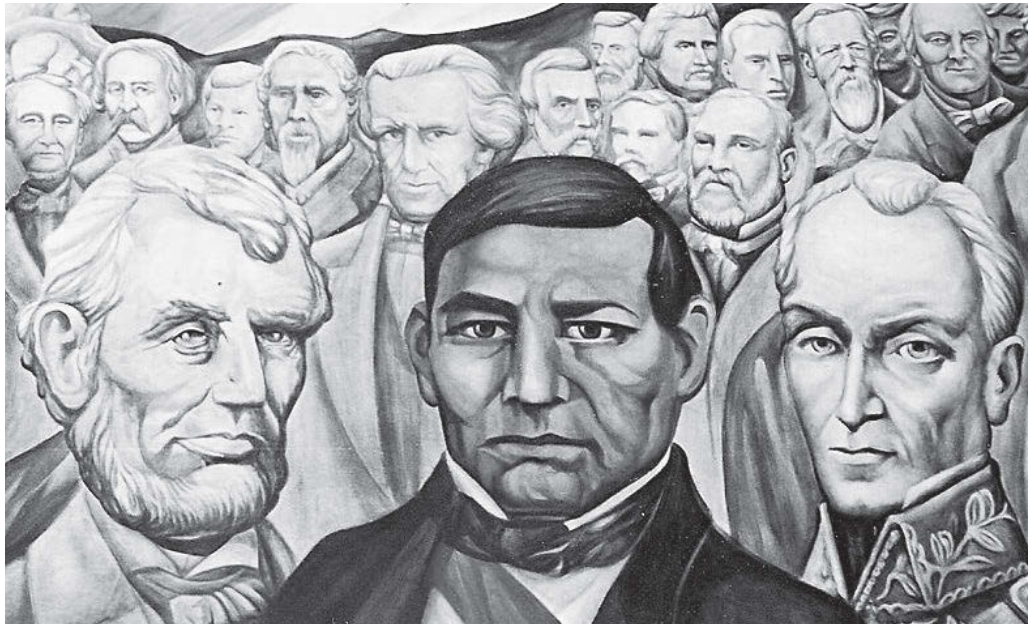
Most importantly, capitalism created the working class — the only class that has the capacity and material interest in leading a successful struggle to replace the rule of the propertied, exploiting classes with a society organized in the interests of the vast majority.

The United States was born through a deep-going popular revolt. “The history of modern, civilized America opened with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars,” Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin explained in his 1918 “Letter to American workers.”

“That was the war the American people waged against the British robbers who oppressed America and held her in colonial slavery.”

Over the first half of the 19th century, the U.S. developed rapidly, expanding coast to coast. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the 1846-48 war with Mexico, and the 1846 Oregon Treaty were all part of securing for the American capitalists the land, waterways, ports and internal market that helped consolidate a modern bourgeois nation.

From a historical perspective, this process was in the class interests of working people. Only the most thoroughgoing development of capitalism



Mural in Chihuahua, Mexico, depicts from left, Abraham Lincoln, leader of Union forces in 1861-65 U.S. Civil War; Benito Juárez, Mexican national hero who fought foreign occupation, 1861-67; and Simón Bolívar, who led 1811-25 Latin American independence struggles against Spanish colonial rule.

could bring about such a vast expansion of productive forces and put the working class in the strongest position to lead the next historic battles to advance humanity. A more in-depth explanation of this dynamic can be found in the book *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*, by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters.

Another leap forward took place with the Second American Revolution — the 1861-65 Civil War, which overthrew chattel slavery, followed by Radical Reconstruction. By its end, Karl Marx wrote that he could see the social forces that would lead the next American revolution — the developing working class, exploited Western farmers and the oppressed Black population.

The U.S. became the most politically advanced nation in the world. Marx, co-founder with Engels of the modern revolutionary workers movement, called it the “great Democratic Republic.” The Bill of Rights, added to the U.S. Constitution as a result of struggles by farmers and workers after the First American Revolution, contained democratic protections beyond any recognized in Europe: freedom of speech and assembly, separation of church and state, freedom of religion, the right of citizens to bear arms, and freedom from arbitrary search and seizure, among others.

## European colonial threat

Now let’s take a look at where the Monroe Doctrine fits into this history.

In an 1823 message to Congress, Monroe warned European powers that Washington would not tolerate any “future colonization by any European powers” or interference against “governments who have declared their independence” in the Western Hemisphere. There was good reason for this concern.

Despite what some opponents of U.S. imperialism argue today, the biggest threat to struggles for independence and sovereignty in Latin America and the Caribbean through most of the 19th century was *not the United States*. It was the European powers — especially the British rulers.

The British Empire continued to interfere with the sovereignty and economic independence of the fledgling United States. That led to the War of 1812, and then to London’s support to the Southern slaveholders in the U.S. Civil War.

The British rulers flexed their muscles throughout Latin America and the

Caribbean, seeking to replace Spain — which lost most of its American colonies between 1810 and 1825 — as the dominant power.

Eduardo Galeano, in his classic book *The Open Veins of Latin America*, describes how British bankers and merchants dominated South America’s export market — Chilean copper, Peruvian nitrates, Brazilian coffee, Argentine beef. British and French warships blockaded Buenos Aires in 1845 to try to open up Argentina to unrestricted imports of European goods.

## Monroe Doctrine

In 1822 the Monroe administration recognized the new republics of Chile, Argentina, Peru, Mexico and Colombia, and soon after, the newly independent Central American Federation.

In Europe, however, a reactionary coalition of the Austrian, Prussian and Russian monarchies — the “Holy Alliance” — had defeated Napoleon’s armies and was making clear its determination to wipe out all vestiges of the French Revolution and threats of republican rule. They were also concerned that the French invasion of Spain had weakened the Spanish crown and spurred the independence wars in its New World colonies. The Holy Alliance began preparations to back renewed efforts by Spain’s Bourbon monarchy to

subjugate insurgent Latin America.

That was the context for Monroe’s warning to the European powers not to interfere in the affairs of newly independent Latin American nations.

Today, some opponents of Washington’s policies assert that U.S. “imperialism” has been seeking to conquer Latin American territory since the founding of the U.S. But that’s not accurate.

Prior to the U.S. Civil War, small groups of American adventurers organized armed expeditions to Mexico, Central America and Cuba. They sought to grab land for U.S. Southern slaveholding interests. The most notorious was William Walker, who landed in Nicaragua in 1855, proclaimed himself president, and declared slavery legal there, until he was driven out in 1857 by the united Central American armies.

Such adventures were historically doomed to fail — as was the Confederacy’s war of conquest to establish a reactionary slave empire extending into the Caribbean.

## Lincoln and Benito Juárez

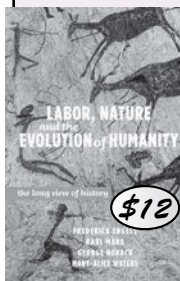
The best illustration of the progressive character of the Monroe Doctrine took place during the Second American Revolution. It was the response by President Abraham Lincoln’s administration to the French invasion and occupation of Mexico.

In 1861, the Mexican government of Benito Juárez, after winning a revolutionary democratic war against the power of the semifeudal landholding classes and Catholic Church hierarchy, declared a two-year moratorium on onerous foreign debts. In response, the British, Spanish, and French governments launched a joint military intervention against Mexico, which Marx denounced as a “new Holy Alliance.” Their goal was not only to make Mexico pay the debt, but to prop up reactionary class forces there and regain a foothold in the Americas. It was also part of efforts by the European powers to aid the U.S. slavocracy in the Civil War.

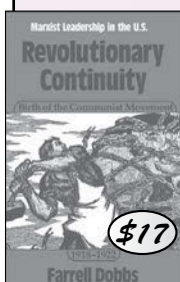
Although the British and Spanish governments backed out of the adventure,

**Continued on page 11**

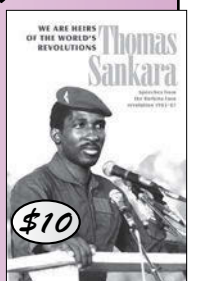
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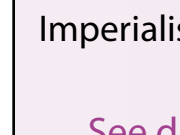
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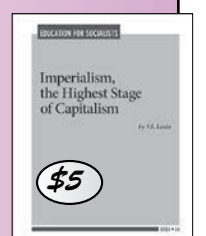
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# The Socialist Workers Party and defense of constitutional rights

As the Democrats ravage constitutional freedoms in their drive to criminalize Donald Trump to stop him from running for president again, we feature *FBI on Trial* as one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for June. It contains the results of the 15-year political and legal battle, won by the Socialist Workers Party in 1987 after forcing out the truth about decades of illegal spying, harassment and disruption by the FBI, the capitalist rulers' political police. This victory for the working class remains a tool to defend constitutional rights today. The excerpt is from the appendix, "Workers' rights versus the secret police." Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LARRY SEIGLE

The secret police apparatus as we know it today began to take shape at the end of the 1930s, on the eve of the war. This is when our case begins.

Roosevelt was replacing the New Deal with the War Deal, as the imperialists prepared to subject humanity to the second world slaughter. As the U.S. capitalists got ready for war against their rivals abroad, they also prepared their offensive against the working class and against Blacks and Chicanos at home. Their aims were to silence all opponents of the war drive, to channel all motion



FBI raid on SWP Minneapolis headquarters, June 27, 1941, hailed by bosses' press, was aimed at party, Minneapolis Teamsters leaders as rulers prepared to enter World War II.

toward a labor party back into the two capitalist parties, and to make working people accept the necessity of sacrifice. All struggles for improvements in wages and working conditions, or for an end to racial discrimination and segregation, had to be subordinated to the needs of the imperialist war.

Because they knew there would be opposition to this course, the employers decided on a big expansion of the FBI. Before this period the FBI was not primarily a political police force. ...

But with the rise of the CIO and the deep-going labor radicalization, the rulers knew that their war drive would require this whole operation to be centralized, upgraded, and brought directly under federal government control. In September 1936, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, acting under instructions from President Franklin Roosevelt, informed all FBI offices that "the Bureau desires to obtain from all possible sources information concerning subversive activities being conducted in the United States by Communists, Fascists, and representatives or advocates of other organizations advocating the overthrow or replacement of the Government of the United States by illegal methods."

By 1938, the Foreign Agents Registration Act was passed and Congress set up the Special Committee on Un-American Propaganda Activities ... forerunner of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The thought-control Smith Act and the Voorhis Act

(which penalized political parties affiliated to international organizations) would be adopted in 1940. ...

[W]orking people saw the results immediately. In the Teamsters union in Minneapolis and throughout the central states region, union militants began to be framed up, arrested, and convicted. In each case, the prosecutors relied on testimony from informers and agents provocateurs. In his books *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy* Farrell Dobbs describes the direct intervention by the FBI, beginning with the 1939 frame-up of Teamster leaders in Omaha, Nebraska, and Des Moines and Sioux City, Iowa.

This antilabor police offensive culminated in the 1941 Smith Act trial in Minneapolis, in which eighteen leaders of the Teamsters union and of the Socialist Workers Party were convicted and imprisoned for advocating forbidden ideas — the things we advocate today. In that trial, the government had three objectives:

First, to purge the labor movement of rebels who wouldn't buy Roosevelt's war drive and militarization, and who were campaigning against it.

Second, to wipe out the stronghold of union democracy represented by the Minneapolis Teamsters, whose leadership was spreading class-struggle methods throughout the Midwest and educating workers in the need for political independence.

Third, to drive the Socialist Workers

Party underground, to make it impossible for our party to function openly, to make us give up our public existence and accept illegality.

Although with the outbreak of the war the capitalists were able to achieve a good measure of success on the first two, they totally failed in their third objective.

The large-scale entry of the FBI into the political arena began around 1938, the same year our party was founded. ...

After the Smith Act convictions all of this continued. During the war, the *Militant* was banned for a time from the mail. After the war came the antilabor, anticommunist witch-hunt, beginning with the establishment by the Truman administration of the attorney general's list of "subversive" organizations, an official government blacklist. Our party appeared on it from the beginning. We saw the long, vindictive government effort to victimize Jimmy Kutcher, a legless veteran of World War II who courageously insisted on his right to be a member of the SWP without losing his job or his veterans' benefits. Passports were denied to SWP leaders in an attempt to disrupt not only our party but the Fourth International. ... Our members were witch-hunted out of the maritime industry, and many workers who were members or supporters of the party in other industries were fired. ...

The use of secret police, informers, agents provocateurs, frame-ups, disruption efforts, and all the other things are not incidental to capitalist rule. They are permanent, basic, and essential.

This does not depend on the form of the capitalist state or the type of regime. We often say in popular explanations that the FBI uses police-state methods. This is true, of course. But the FBI methods are also the necessary methods of the political police under a bourgeois democracy. Think about this — the United States is not under fascist rule. It is not a police state. It is a bourgeois democracy, among the most democratic of capitalist regimes anywhere in the world. Yet we have here this massive undercover repressive machine, an army of secret political police. ...

[T]he workers' movement must constantly fight for its rights against this mechanism, fight to uncover it and get out the truth about it.

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## SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

# Build solidarity for today's union battles

Statement by Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City Council, June 21.

Strike battles today, like those by members of the Writers Guild nationwide and Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 390G in Memphis, Tennessee, as well as the showdown between 340,000 Teamsters whose contracts at UPS run out July 31, call for a mobilization of widespread labor solidarity. An injury to one is an injury to all!

Bosses everywhere are looking to cut pay and divide workers with two-tier wage schemes, lengthen the workday and weekly schedules, chip away at health care we need for ourselves and our families, and more — all driven by the crisis of the capitalist system today.

A monthlong fight is being waged by rail workers and by workers, farmers and small proprietors in East Palestine, Ohio, to gain control of the cleanup from the toxic Norfolk Southern derailment there and for guaranteed, long-term health care. This must become a cause for workers and our unions.

Rail workers — who had their right to strike pulled out from under them by the Biden administration and a bipartisan Congress last fall — continue to fight against inhuman hours and working conditions. “The Class 1 freight railroads are doing whatever the hell they want to maximize their profits,” Tony Cardwell, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, said. And that meant the disaster in East Palestine was “a tragedy that was bound to happen.”

Help win your union to send a message of support to the Hall of Fame Central Labor Council there at HOFCLCAFLCIO@sbcglobal.net.

There are more openings to join union struggles today, as workers feel some momentum to defend their class interests. Maximizing solidarity with every fight increases the chances that workers can win. Every victory sets a powerful example.

If the employing class, with the connivance of the big-business media, succeeds in keeping union struggles unknown, it weakens our ability to be victorious. More bosses will be emboldened to take away more. Solidarity is a life-or-death question for workers and for all unions.

Real wages have declined for years. The drive by bosses and their government to dump the crisis of their system on our backs is not going away. It has broader social effects — including the drop in both life expectancy and child births, declining health care and the growing difficulties workers have starting and sustaining a family.

Union struggles for better wages and conditions are the foundation for change. They open the door to international solidarity — with working people in Ukraine fighting to defend their national sovereignty, Iranian toilers battling government repression and others. They also reinforce long-term social struggles to end racist discrimination, combat Jew-hatred and advance the emancipation of women.

Spread the word about today's union fights. Build the labor movement!

## Ukraine steps up defense of national independence

Continued from front page

Ukraine, was quoted by the *Kyiv Post* June 14. “That’s why all the soldiers in our unit are drinking ... this is all the result of the ambition of one person” — Putin.

Russian POW Anton told the *Wall Street Journal*, “What I’m starting to realize is that in this war, we’re not on the side of right.” Another POW said he did not want to be returned home in a prisoner swap.

The Kremlin is stepping up repression against political opponents in Russia, but has been unable to quash labor actions. In the Ural region, up to 150 striking miners refused to return to the surface at the Mariinsky emerald mine June 6, protesting the bosses’ threats of mass layoffs. The miners demanded to speak to Putin, since the mine is run by Rostec, headed by Sergei Chemezov, a close Putin associate.

In May, workers at the Ulyanovsk Automobile Plant went on strike. Instead of 45,000 rubles (\$540) per month, the workers got only 20,000 rubles. Officials promised to investigate. Seven workers were detained by cops who alleged they were “sabotaging” a defense order by going on strike.

Anti-war activist Anatoly Berezikov died in police custody in Rostov-on-Don, southern Russia, June 14. He had been detained in May for distributing leaflets advertising a hotline for Russian soldiers seeking to surrender to Ukrainian armed forces. Cops had tortured and threatened to kill Berezikov. Prison officials claimed he had committed suicide.

That same day Lilia Chanyшева was jailed for seven and a half years for “creating an extremist organization,” the latest in a series of prison terms for Putin’s opponents. Chanyшева is a member of the banned Anti-Corruption Foundation, headed by a bourgeois opponent of Putin, Alexei Navalny, who is also in prison. “Putin has long wanted to eradicate any dissent,” she told the court. He is “synonymous with war!”

The Kremlin has also put on trial 20 captured Ukrainian prisoners of war who are members of

the Azov brigade. The Russian government accuses them of “terrorism” for their heroic defense of the besieged city of Mariupol last year, and of trying to “overthrow” the puppet regime that Putin imposed in the Donetsk region of Ukraine.

On June 4, thousands of Russian emigres in over 100 cities worldwide protested to demand freedom for political prisoners. In Yerevan, Armenia and Tbilisi, Georgia, demonstrators chanted, “Freedom to Navalny” and “No to war!” At least 113 people were detained across Russia for protesting the same day.

The Kremlin is on a recruitment drive to bolster its depleted forces, hoping not to have to launch another round of conscription that it fears would set off wider protests. State corporations, from the energy giant Gazprom to the space agency Roscosmos, are trying to organize militias to boost Moscow’s forces.

The feud by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the chief of Wagner mercenaries used heavily by Moscow in many of its most deadly assaults, continues against the Kremlin’s high command. Prigozhin disputed claims by Putin and others that Ukraine’s counteroffensive had fizzled at great cost to its forces. Ukrainian forces, he said, had suffered “ordinary combat losses” in recapturing over 40 square miles. Prigozhin demands the Russian government institute a much wider conscription drive and impose martial law, a course that would be even more disastrous for working people than that advanced by Putin.

### Dam blast causes major flooding

An explosion ruptured the wall of the huge Russian-held Nova Kakhovka Dam, in southern Ukraine, June 6. Water burst from Ukraine’s largest reservoir to flood the Dnipro River, a front line in the conflict, upstream from recently liberated Kherson. Tens of thousands of residents in low-lying areas in both Ukrainian- and Russian-occupied areas were forced to flee.

In a blow to thousands of workers in the large industrial city of Kryvyi Rih, the draining of the reservoir forced the giant ArcelorMittal steel plant there to halt production. Water to cool the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant has been reduced, endangering safety. Ukrainian farmland was heavily eroded or waterlogged, while falling reservoir levels have impacted irrigation systems farmers depend on.

Kyiv said Moscow blew up the dam from within to slow down its counteroffensive. Without any evidence, Moscow tried to blame Ukrainian shelling.

## ‘Monroe Doctrine’

Continued from page 9

the French regime of Napoleon III carried through the invasion and installed Austrian Prince Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico.

The Lincoln administration backed the Juárez government and opposed the French-led war on Mexico, a clear violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Union Army generals Ulysses Grant and Philip Sheridan massed 50,000 troops near the Texas-Mexico border and transferred weapons to Juárez’s forces.

After the victory of the North in the Civil War, some 3,000 Union Army veterans joined and fought in Mexico’s republican army. And in U.S. cities from San Francisco to New Orleans, groups called Defenders of the Monroe Doctrine and the Society of Friends of Mexico held public meetings to promote solidarity and recruit volunteers for the Juarista army. By 1867, Juárez’s forces expelled the French invaders, a revolutionary victory celebrated annually as Cinco de Mayo.



National Army Museum

1775 Battle of Lexington, by William Barnes Wollen, start of American War of Independence from British colonial rule.

It’s no surprise that José Martí, leader of Cuba’s independence struggle against Spanish rule, wrote in 1889, “We love the country of Lincoln as much as we fear the country of Cutting.” Francis Cutting was a leader of the American Annexationist League, which agitated for Washington to seize Cuba from Spain.

Martí was contrasting his admiration of the bourgeois-revolutionary heritage of the U.S. with Washington’s transformation, then underway, into an imperialist power.

### What Lenin and Sankara explained

It’s Lenin, in his 1916 pamphlet *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, who best described how world capitalism had outlived its progressive character. He explained that imperialism is marked by the domination of finance capital, the rise of monopolies, and the division of the world among the big capitalist powers.

Lenin pointed to the 1898 U.S. rulers’ war against Spain over its colonies — Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam — as the first war of the imperialist epoch.

Imperialism, Lenin noted, is not a *policy* that a government chooses. The drive toward war and plunder is inherent to imperialism. It can only be ended by organizing a revolutionary movement of workers and farmers to take state power and overturn capitalist rule.

In taking a historical materialist approach to understanding developments like the Monroe Doctrine, we can also learn from Thomas Sankara, the outstanding communist and leader of the 1983-87 popular revolution in Burkina Faso.

“Our revolution in Burkina Faso,” Sankara said in a 1984 speech, “draws inspiration from all of man’s experiences since his first breath.” We “draw the lessons of the American Revolution, the lessons of its victory over colonial domination and the consequences of that victory. We adopt as our own the affirmation of the Doctrine whereby Europeans must not intervene in American affairs, nor Americans in European affairs. Just as Monroe proclaimed ‘America to the Americans’ in 1823, we echo this today by saying ‘Africa to the Africans,’ ‘Burkina to the Burkinabè.’”

Sankara saluted the powerful legacy of the French Revolution of 1789, the 1871 Paris Commune and “the great revolution of October 1917” led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia.

We are, Sankara said, “the heirs of all the world’s revolutions.”

### Correction

In the *Militant* article entitled “Forum protests FBI attacks on constitutional freedoms” in issue no. 22, the sentence accredited to Cynthia Wilson was actually information taken from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights investigation into the Minneapolis Police Department’s practices and culture following the May 2020 cop killing of George Floyd.