

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Unionists from Cuba, US, Latin America discuss way forward**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 27 JULY 24, 2023

## SWP meeting in California maps out bold 2024 campaign

BY MAGGIE TROWE

LOS ANGELES — “Laura Garza is not just a Socialist Workers Party candidate in California. This is a campaign for the working class in the United States,” Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for mayor of Fort Worth, Texas, last May, told more than 40 people at a meeting here to support Garza’s campaign for U.S. Senate. “Socialists will use the California example to increase our political work across the country.” A long-time trade unionist, Garza is a freight rail conductor and member of the SMART-TD union.

The week before the meeting Garza joined picket lines of striking UNITE HERE Local 11 hotel workers. Her campaign supporters also joined “practice picketing” by Teamsters in Riverside as the July 31 UPS contract expiration nears.

“Hotel workers told us they don’t earn enough to live near their jobs,”  
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## Canadian longshore workers fight for raise, job protection

Bosses look to Ottawa to ban Pacific Coast strike



Striking ILWU dockworkers rally in Vancouver, British Columbia, July 9, drawing widespread solidarity. Support has come from UNITE HERE Local 40 members on strike at Sheridan Hotel at the airport, and from dockworkers’ unions in Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.

BY JIM YATES

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Some 2,000 International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada dock and warehouse workers and supporters ral-

lied downtown here July 9 in a show of strength and solidarity for their strike. The strike by 7,400 union members has shut down all maritime traffic at Canada’s 30 West Coast ports.

**SOLIDARITY HELPS WIN UNION STRUGGLES**  
 — editorial page 9

On July 11 the federal government instructed its mediator to make a proposal of terms to end the strike within 24 hours, then another 24 hours for the bosses and the union to ratify it. This is a threat to pass a law that would force the strikers back to work and prevent them from winning their demands.  
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## NOW conference participants debate over perspectives

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

ARLINGTON, Va. — Some 250 women and men gathered for the National Organization for Women’s annual conference here June 30-July 2. The theme was “We Won’t Stop: Organizing Until Equity for All.” The NOW leadership promoted a renewed effort to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, to work to overturn the Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision holding abortion isn’t covered by the Constitution, and a push to reelect President Joseph Biden along with other Democratic Party candidates in the 2024 elections as a strategy for advancing women’s rights.

First proposed in 1923, the ERA states “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state, on account of sex.”  
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## What is road to unify, strengthen working class?

BY TERRY EVANS

In a 6-3 vote the U.S. Supreme Court overturned admissions programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina June 29. The court ruled that both colleges used race to favor some applicants at the expense of others, violating the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

Harvard said its admissions offi-

**Defense of rights key in Supreme Court college admissions ruling**

cers “can and do take an applicant’s race into account when assigning an overall rating.” UNC said it considers “the race or ethnicity of any student.” These programs provide a gateway into privileged sections of the upper middle-class meritocracy and professionals for a tiny number of Blacks and other oppressed layers of the pop-

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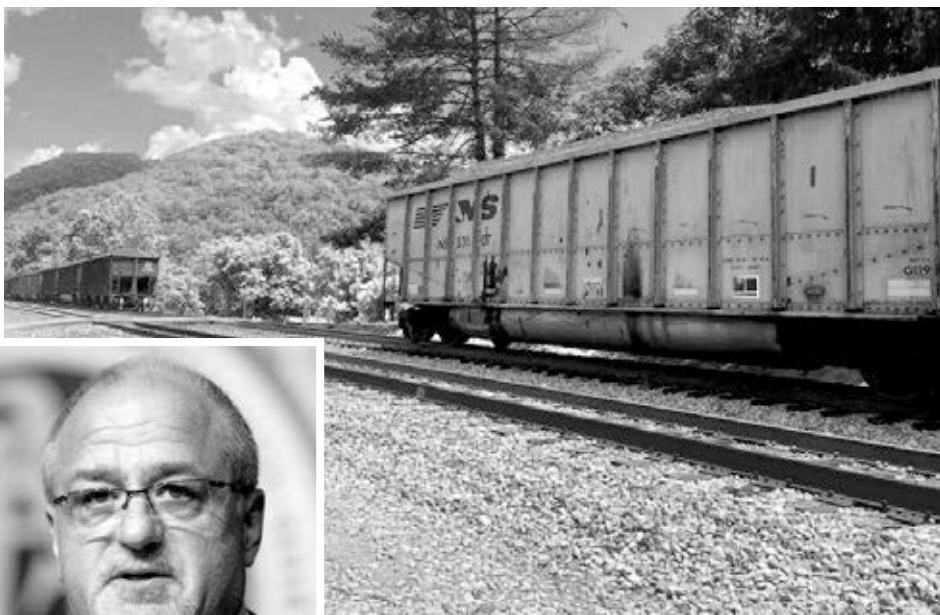
## Working people in Ukraine show resolve to defend their sovereignty

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Despite Moscow’s air superiority and greater troop numbers, the Ukrainian army and thousands of volunteer fighters continue to push back President Vladimir Putin’s attempts to conquer Ukraine. They’re backed by a civilian population growing more determined as the brutal consequences and growing hardships caused by the war mount.

“I do not see disabled people. I see superheroes,” Oleksandra Kabanova told the *New York Times* in Lviv, as she waited for her husband, Oleh Spodin, to complete physical therapy after he lost a leg at the front. She proudly pointed out that Spodin had volunteered to help rescue a wounded comrade when he was  
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## Rail unions seek control over safety, work conditions as derailments grow



19 cars on Norfolk Southern train derail in Elliston, Virginia, July 6. Inset, Randy Fannon, safety officer for BLET rail union, says profit-driven rail bosses could have caused a disaster.

BY TONY LANE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — The Norfolk Southern train derailment, fire and toxic burn-off here in February, the product of the bosses’ relentless drive for profits, have brought the attention of working people to the fight of rail workers seeking control over their job conditions and safety, as well as area residents’ demands for more say over the cleanup and their health care needs.

That was brought home again July 6 when Norfolk Southern supervisors told a railroad crew in Virginia to keep going

even after they received a “critical alert” over a trackside detector. The crew had stopped the train and verified the wheel was overheating.

Randy Fannon, who leads the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen union’s safety task force, said someone at the railroad’s headquarters in Atlanta told the crew to go ahead and move the train to a siding 8 miles away. They were told to travel at “track speed,” roughly 40 mph.

The crew told union officials that they  
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- Granville Island Brewery workers strike for higher pay



# Debate at NOW conference

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States or by any state on account of sex.” Passed by both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate by 1972, NOW, other women’s groups, trade unions and others campaigned for ratification in states across the country. But only 35 of the 38 required states ratified the amendment before the 1982 deadline.

Plans were discussed for building a July 21 march and rally in Seneca Falls, New York, on the 100th anniversary of the first time the ERA was introduced in Congress. NOW leaders argued that a victory adding the ERA to the U.S. Constitution would provide a basis for restoring federally protected abortion.

Socialist Workers Party members participated in the conference sessions and workshops. They got a hearing for a working-class course to address the crisis of capitalism hitting working people and our families, which is central to the fight for women’s emancipation.

At one panel titled, “Three Realities: Dobbs Threatens Health, Women as Second-Class Citizens, and Clinic Violence,” Sara Lobman, a member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union and Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in New York, spoke on defending workers, women and our families.

“Rising costs of rent, food, medical care and everything else are making it impossible to start and maintain a family,” she said. “Young people can’t afford their own apartments, let alone all the costs that come with raising children. And now the Biden administration plans to end the pandemic relief program for child care. Up to 3 million children could lose access.”

“Many women feel they don’t have

a choice if they cannot afford to raise a family,” Pramila Venkateswaran, president of the Suffolk County, New York, NOW chapter, told Lobman later. “The choice to have a child should come with a choice to a living wage.”

“What’s needed is a union-led fight for jobs with schedules that allow for family time, for affordable child care and for a life outside of work, including an opportunity for union and political activity,” Lobman said. “The unions need to organize a fight for a supplemental income for working families, to allow them to keep working and fighting for a road forward.”

Venkateswaran invited Lobman to join a panel organized by her NOW chapter later in the year on “labor issues and reproductive choice.”

## Discussion on affirmative action

The recent U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on admissions policy at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina also spurred discussion and debate at the conference. Nathaniel Spruill, from Clarksburg, Maryland, discussed the decision with Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Philadelphia.

“I recently graduated from a magnet high school where race wasn’t considered for admittance. We were supposed to be proud of that, but it would have been better if there were more African American students like me there,” said Spruill. “Do you think discrimination on the job will increase now?”

“The Supreme Court ruling didn’t address discrimination in hiring or promotions on the job,” Hart said. “In fact, some justices counterposed decisions like that in the Weber case, which de-



Workers in 2021 strike at Frito-Lay in Topeka, Kansas, pushed back against brutal schedules and unlivable wages that tear away at workers’ families, and their lives outside work. Participants at NOW conference debated how this fight is crucial to road to women’s emancipation.

fended affirmative action with quotas in a Louisiana aluminum plant, to college entrance requirements.

“The working-class-based civil rights battles of the 1950s and ’60s that toppled Jim Crow segregation and tore down employment barriers for workers who are Black was a victory for the entire working class,” Hart said. “Affirmative action fights on the job that broke out in the 1970s tackled concrete effects of decades of discrimination. They helped unify workers and strengthened the unions. Today it’s not the same. It’s used to benefit the most privileged layers among Blacks, women and others, not strengthen class solidarity.”

Hart pointed Spruill toward *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP leader Jack Barnes.

Hart also spoke with Vanessa Fields, president of Philadelphia NOW. Fields is president of the retirees chapter of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 47. “The recent 37 indictments against Trump under the notorious Espionage Act by the Biden administration is a part of criminalizing political opposition and closing down debate,” Hart said. “Attacks on constitutional freedoms are dangerous for working people, no matter who they’re aimed at today.”

“They are setting a precedent with Trump to go after other political organizations,” Fields said. “I remember how

the FBI infiltrated the Black Panther organization and the bombing of MOVE in Philadelphia. While some people are glad they’re doing this to Trump, they are preparing to go after you.”

“I think that the raid on Trump’s home in Florida was justified,” Natalie Monarrez, an Amazon worker in Staten Island, New York, told SWP campaigner Candace Wagner. “He was hiding secret government documents.”

“Most of the secrets the U.S. government keeps are secret from us, working people, to prevent us knowing the capitalist rulers’ real plans to maintain their rule,” Wagner said. “The real target of the FBI has always been the unions and organizations fighting for change.”

“I’m active in the defense of Leonard Peltier,” Monarrez said. Peltier was a leader of the American Indian Movement in the 1970s. “Not only was he framed up by the FBI, but to this day that agency campaigns to keep him in prison. I’m beginning to understand what you’re saying.”

While the NOW leadership’s strategy of reliance on the Democratic Party dominated the conference, these discussions show the interest in fighting for change among many participants.

In addition to joining the conference discussions, SWP members kept up a literature table that drew considerable attention. Conference participants purchased almost \$250 in books and got six subscriptions to the *Militant*.

## THE MILITANT

### Iran oil workers make gains, back women’s rights

*The Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers in Iran says oil workers are stronger today after striking at over 100 worksites this spring, and backing women who have been protesting the Iranian government demanding their rights. The ‘Militant’ gives voice to these battles.*



Workers blocked gate at Kerman, Iran, copper mine June 30 in protest over pensions. Kargar

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# SWP maps out bold campaign

Continued from front page

Garza said. “They make long, costly drives, and then the hotel charges them \$10 a day to park!”

The fight by workers for the ability to start and maintain a family is a key part of the SWP campaign, Garza said. “Workers have to spend so many hours working and traveling that they have no time left to be with their children, to rest, to read, to go to a union meeting. Rail workers have such grueling schedules that some say BNSF — Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway — really stands for, ‘Better not start a family.’”

“The SWP calls for cutting the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, for cost-of-living adjustments for wages and benefits to offset inflation, for supplemental income for those whose wages don’t make ends meet,” Garza said. “We call for a federally funded public works program to create jobs at union scale building child care centers, hospitals and other things working people need. These also are key for women’s emancipation.”

The public meeting took place after SWP members from across the state met in a convention to discuss the political priorities and make plans for this bold working-class campaign. Party members from Fort Worth, Seattle and Albuquerque, New Mexico, also attended the meeting.

## Defend constitutional freedoms

“The capitalist rulers have escalated attacks on constitutional freedoms working people have fought for,” Betty Stone, a leader of the SWP and organizer of the party’s Oakland branch, said in the political report to the meeting. “The Joseph Biden administration, cheered by liberals and the left, is leading a witch hunt against Donald Trump, Biden’s chief opponent in the 2024 election for president.

“A witch hunt means they start with who they want to jail, then find charges to make that happen, using FBI spying, wiretaps and raids, violating constitutional protections, including the presumption of innocence.”

Biden and his supporters promote hysteria against Trump by labeling the millions who voted for him as “semi-fascists,” Stone said, “justifying trampling on constitutional freedoms as they try to jail him.”

David Brooks recently wrote a *New York Times* op-ed titled, “This is not the time for a third presidential candidate.” It said, “A second Trump presidency represents an unprecedented threat to our democracy. In

my view, our sole focus should be to defeat Trump.”

“This kind of hysteria will reinforce efforts to restrict access to ballot status by working-class parties like the SWP,” Stone said.

“Many workers are asking, ‘Is it OK for a politician to try to get his main opponent thrown in jail?’” Garza told the campaign forum. “‘To forbid the accused access to evidence? To threaten any lawyer who defends Trump with reprisal?’ Our campaign explains that if they can do this to Donald Trump, they will do it to working people.”

“The FBI carried out an armed raid against the African People’s Socialist Party last year,” Garza said. The government has accused APSP leader Omali Yeshitela and two supporters of endangering national security, of working on behalf of the Russian government in a campaign to spread pro-Moscow propaganda and influence local elections. They face up to 15 years in prison.

“The SWP says: Drop the charges!”

## Solidarity with union struggles

“My Democratic party opponents — Adam Schiff, Katherine Porter and Barbara Lee — all claim they are ‘friends of labor,’” Garza said. “But they voted for Biden’s imposition of a contract on rail unionists after the workers voted to strike last year.”

Vincent Auger, SWP candidate for Seattle City Council, encouraged solidarity with members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada, whose strike has shut down all British Columbia ports since July 1. Auger and Henry Dennison, SWP candidate for King County Council, recently joined the dockworkers’ picket lines.

“They’re fighting against contracting out work and for higher wages. A picket told me a 600-square-foot condo in Vancouver costs \$1 million. Talk about difficulty forming a family!” Auger said. He also described the battle farmworkers in Central Washington state are waging to win union recognition and a contract and



Laura Garza, rail worker and SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from California, joins hotel workers in UNITE HERE Local 11 on strike picket line July 2 at InterContinental Hotel in Los Angeles.

the SWP’s demand for amnesty for all immigrants working in the U.S. to unify the working class.

The unionization rate in the U.S. today is low, Garza said, “but that can change when workers struggle and others get inspired. Every victory can have an impact on the next set of fights and awaken workers to our ability to change things. We learn we have the ability to build a powerful labor movement, break from the capitalist parties and form our own party, a labor party based on the unions.

“The working class can form a workers and farmers government capable of wresting power from the capitalist minority,” she said. “The Cuban Revolution showed this is possible with revolutionary leadership. My campaign fights for an end to Washington’s bipartisan economic war against the Cuban Revolution.”

## Join the campaign!

Garza and Kennedy denounced the invasion of Ukraine by the capitalist government of Russia and defended Ukrainian workers and farmers fighting for their country’s sovereignty, while at the same time opposing Washington’s war machine.

During the discussion a participant said he thought the Putin regime in Russia was justified in taking military

action in Ukraine to counter “NATO encirclement” and Ukrainian fascists.

“The *Militant* sent a reporting team to Ukraine during the 2014 Maidan uprising against the repressive Moscow-backed government of Victor Yanukovich,” Garza said. “This was a mass mobilization led by hundreds of thousands of working people demanding their rights, not a fascist movement.” She encouraged people to read the *Militant*’s online coverage of the Maidan available on the paper’s website.

The statewide SWP convention laid out ambitious plans to campaign across the state and beyond in coming weeks.

“We’ll be campaigning in rural California as well as metropolitan areas,” Garza said, meeting with small farmers and other small proprietors as well as farmworkers. “The SWP campaign will talk with working people in towns near the Mexican border, in rural counties to the north and in the area around Tulare Lake near Corcoran, where record rain and snow last winter has resulted in the reappearance of a lake that was drained out of existence for irrigation 100 years ago, inundating land and houses.”

To join the effort, or make a contribution, contact the SWP campaign office nearest you listed on page 8.

# Illinois aerospace workers strike rally draws solidarity

BY DAN FEIN

BEDFORD PARK, Ill. — Four days after voting down Northstar Aerospace bosses’ “best, last and final offer,” 123 International Union of Electrical Workers/CWA Local 14430 members went on strike at midnight June 5. They organized a picket line rally here July 10.

Some 75 union members and a handful of supporters participated. The company makes transmission parts for Apache and Chinook military helicopters. The strike is solid, no one has crossed the picket line and no production is going on.

“We last went on strike in 2000-2001 and it lasted 11 months. The company had few orders at that time,” Kevin Bowen, assistant chief steward with 43 years at the plant, told the *Militant*. “Now, with no production and many government contracts, the company is losing millions of dollars.”

“We’ll stay out as long as it takes. We won’t go back until we get what we want,” he said.

Anthony Egizio, a member of the union negotiating committee, said, “We need higher wages to keep up with inflation. The company wants to be able to change our health insurance on a moments notice. Our position is that if they want to push health insurance premiums up by more than 4%, we need to negotiate it. And the company is pro-

posing a stricter attendance policy.”

Speaking at the rally along with Egizio were Robert Reiter, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and U.S. Congressman Sean Casten.

In late June a company lawyer told the union you’ll be out on the street until Christmas. The next day strikers dressed up as Santa Claus, played jingle bells over their sound system and set up an inflatable Christmas tree.

Join the 24/7 picket line at 6006 W. 73rd Street here.

## Correction

The article “Crises of child care, education, medical care hit workers hard” in *Militant* issue no. 25 incorrectly said medical debts make up about half of all outstanding debt in the country, reporting erroneous data from the *New York Times*. Medical debt comprises at least \$195 billion. Total household debt is \$17 trillion. It should have said that over the past five years, more than half of U.S. adults went into medical debt.

## Join Socialist Workers Party campaigns Fight in the interests of the working class Solidarity with workers’ struggles today

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Laura Garza, U.S. Senate

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Osborne Hart, City Council

### Seattle, Washington

Rebecca Williamson, City Council  
Vincent Auger, City Council  
Henry Dennison, King County Council



# Unions seek control over safety

Continued from front page

weren't comfortable with going that fast, so they kept the speed at around 20 mph. But 19 cars on the train still derailed.

"We're just lucky right now that it's coal," Fannon said. "If it had been ethanol or LP gas or chlorine or anything like that, it could have been a totally different situation."

A Norfolk Southern spokesperson told the press, "This derailment should never have happened. It is unacceptable. We are working to achieve our goal of being the gold standard for safety in the railroad industry, and this incident strengthens our resolve."

The National Transportation Safety Board announced the next day that they were opening an investigation. Fannon made his comments before this announcement. Union officials and company representatives are not supposed to speak on NTSB investigations until the agency releases its findings.

This new investigation comes on top of two probes into Norfolk Southern's responsibilities in the East Palestine disaster.

Norfolk Southern bosses themselves moved June 30 to try and foist some of the cost of the East Palestine derailment onto Union Tank Car Company, which built the tank cars that contained vinyl chloride; three companies that owned or leased them; Oxy Vinyls, which manufactured and loaded the toxic gas; and Dow Chemical, which made and loaded other dangerous chemicals that leaked in the town's air, water and soil.

Oxy Vinyls denied responsibility. "Norfolk Southern's lawsuit is a meritless disinformation campaign masquerading as a legal filing," a company spokesperson responded. "Norfolk Southern's recommendation to simultaneously detonate the rail cars containing our product — contrary to the available information about the rail cars' condition or the product properties — appears to have been needlessly rushed to prioritize Norfolk Southern's rail line operations."

Details about this were brought out by rail union officials at the NTSB hearings here June 22-23. Oxy Vinyls had urged Norfolk Southern not to pursue the uncontrolled burn-off of their product, but Norfolk Southern bosses didn't give this information to anyone else.

## For government-funded health care

Working people in and around East Palestine are fighting to get the assistance and health care they need in the wake of the derailment. The Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment has been demanding Ohio Gov. Michael DeWine press President Joseph

Biden to issue a formal declaration of a disaster here. After months of pressure, DeWine did so July 3.

"Why did it take so long?" Jami Wallace, president of the Unity Council, told the *Militant*. "It's more than five months since the derailment. And more importantly, in the letter he makes it seem like we have been taken good care of by Norfolk Southern. Absolutely not true. I'm still fighting to get the water that seeps into my basement tested and to get them to check the town's storm drains. After the heavy rain we had, the chemical sheen on Sulphur Run creek came back."

Wallace also raised some of the problems they've had with local authorities. "We were going door to door early on to talk to those in their homes about their health problems and needs. We were told that a city ordinance forbids canvassing."

Hilary Flint, vice president of the council and a resident of Enon Valley, Pennsylvania, joined a July 6 solidarity rally in Pittsburgh for the United Electrical Workers members on strike against the Wabtec corporation in Erie. "I see a synergy between our fight in East Palestine against Norfolk Southern railroad's disruption of our lives and the demands that the workers at Wabtec are fighting for," she told the *Militant*. "I'm pro-union in general and we need the unions in our fight."

"At the rally I was asked to speak at a meeting of the Beaver-Lawrence Central Labor Council about our continued fight." She added there is a protest planned in East Palestine Aug. 3 to mark six months since the derailment.

East Palestine resident Jessica Conard told the *Vindicator*, the Youngstown, Ohio, paper, that a presidential disaster declaration could open the door for people here "to take advantage of Social Security 1811A for long-term health needs." The paper reported there will be a March for Medicare for All at the Columbiana County Courthouse July 22 to press for the act's implementation.

## Unions push for more training

One part of the National Transportation Safety Board's investigation is to look at Norfolk Southern's "safety culture." Prior to the recent NTSB hearings here, board officials did an interview with a number of rail union members that paints a graphic picture of the rail bosses' disdain for training new employees.

Tim Sloper, legislative representative for SMART — Transportation Division Local 768, said that when he hired on in 1999, he had an initial conductor training period of six

## Pittsburgh rally backs striking Wabtec workers



Militant/Tony Lane

PITTSBURGH — Two hundred and fifty people rallied at the Wabtec corporate headquarters here July 6 to back 1,400 members of United Electrical Workers Locals 506 and 618. The locals have been on strike at the company's locomotive manufacturing plant near Erie, Pennsylvania, since June 22.

A busload of strikers was joined by supporters at the rally. A banner that read "Same job. Same quality. Same pay" addressed a central issue in the strike — substantially raising the wages of new hires and reducing the time it takes to reach the top rate. Under the 2019 contract new hires started at \$20.47 an hour. It takes 10 years to reach full pay of \$31.49.

"This is 1,400 families affected by boardroom greed," Local 506 Treasurer Bryan Pietrzak told the crowd. "We are fighting an onslaught of union-busting tactics from the notorious Jones Day law firm. We are fighting for a family-sustaining wage for new hires. We are fighting to maintain our health care, vision, and dental insurances, and lastly we are fighting for company accountability by restoring our right to strike over grievances."

When the factory was owned by General Electric, the union had the right to strike over grievances. After Wabtec took over the facility in 2019 that right was taken out of the contract the union got after a nine-day strike.

"Our unions at the *Post-Gazette* are fighting for many of the same reasons as the UE workers," Natalie Duleba, a striking newsroom worker at the Pittsburgh newspaper, told the rally — "affordable health care, fair pay and respect from our employers." Duleba is a member of NewsGuild-Communication Workers of America Local 38061, one of the locals on strike there.

The rally also called on Wabtec to start building battery-electric locomotives — which the union says is better for the environment and would create more jobs — in addition to its current diesels. Members of 19 unions, including six other UE locals, as well as environmental groups, took part in the rally.

Members of United Auto Workers Local 1112 — which won a union-recognition vote at the Ultium Cells electric car battery plant in Lordstown, Ohio, in December and is fighting for a contract — joined the picket line in Erie July 1. "The UE's fight in Erie is everybody's fight," UAW Region 9 Director Dan Vicente said. "An attack on UE is an attack on all union workers in this country."

The day after the rally UE reported that negotiations with Wabtec will resume July 11.

Show your solidarity! Picket lines are up 24/7. Build support in your union. Send solidarity messages to UE Local 506, 3923 Main St., Lawrence Park, PA 16511 or via fax: (814) 899-0666

— CANDACE WAGNER

to eight weeks. After that, "I trained on my one single district, which was between Decatur and Moberly, Missouri; it's a 211-mile run. I trained on that district for five months before I was promoted to conductor."

"I was assigned to a specific conductor so that every time that I went to work, that conductor knew what I knew and what I didn't know and so each trip he could teach me something new," he said, "and then, over the course of my five months, when I was promoted, he knew that I was ready to go out there and work on the train by myself."

Today trainees get three weeks of training in Norfolk Southern's Georgia office and then get sent out into the field. "Conductor trainees go with a different conductor every single trip," Sloper said. "There's just no relationship built there to foster a productive learning environment."

In June, the Federal Railroad Administration demanded Norfolk Southern implement immediate changes in its conductor trainee program, saying it suffers from "grave deficiencies" that have included "am-

putations and other serious injuries."

Twenty-eight-year-old Derek Scott Little, a CSX conductor trainee just days away from being "marked up," was killed on the job June 26 at the Seagirt Marine Terminal in Baltimore. The SMART union has announced an online fundraiser for his family. More than 40 rail workers died on the job last year.

This underscores the need for the rail unions to fight and win control over training and work conditions.

## Recommended reading



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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Teamsters ‘practice picketing’ as UPS contract expiration nears

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — With a July 31 contract expiration date looming, and after a breakdown in negotiations with the company, Teamster union members are stepping up “practice picketing” actions in preparation for a possible strike by over 340,000 UPS workers across the country. Outside the warehouse here over 100 union members took part in a 6 p.m. shift-change picket and rally July 6.

They received an update on negotiations from Sam Stewart, Teamsters Local 63 president, who said a number of issues have been resolved in negotiations, but key questions of wages and working conditions for part-time workers who sort packages and load trucks remain. “Part-timers make up over two-thirds of the workforce,” he said. “We won’t leave the part-times behind.”

Both drivers and warehouse workers talked to the *Militant* about their concerns. “Discipline by the bosses” is an important issue for Demonde Morris, a driver for seven years. “They can write

you up if you don’t finish your deliveries within a certain time. And if there is a package missing, they blame the driver. Strengthening union protection against this stuff is important.”

Tiffani Aquirre has worked for UPS as a part-time package sorter since 2018. She is a shop steward and a member of the union’s safety and women’s committees. “Pay raises are important,” she said. “I get \$18 an hour now for four hours a day. Maybe four and half if we’re lucky.”

“I also get called all the time about bosses ignoring safety. They are more worried about reaching PPH [packages per hour] numbers and pushing the flow out than safety,” she said. “They overwork the members by rushing them to work faster. Whenever we stop the belts to catch up with the flow, they complain we are stopping production. They complain when we go to get water or to the restroom. Overall they need to put people first before packages.”

Sherre Wilson, who drives vehicles that move containers in the warehouse, has worked for UPS for a couple years.

## ‘The company has been taking,’ IFF strikers say. ‘No more!’

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — “I’m glad I went on strike,” Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 390G member Macon Thornton told the *Militant* at their picket line here across from the International Flavors and Fragrances plant July 3.

“I’ve worked in there 25 years and at first I was a little nervous about the strike. But our local officers talked to me, and so did my other co-workers. ‘You’re not going to be alone,’ they said. I see now how much support we’re getting from other unions and even a few elected officials. We’re showing the company we’re not going to take it!”

The nearly 200 strikers had been working under an expired contract for almost a year when they walked out June 4. The company is demanding serious concessions in wages and benefits.

“The company has been taking, taking, taking for years,” said Local 390G President Cedric Wilson, who works as a dryer operator. “We can’t accept that anymore, especially the younger workers. They won’t accept it. This is really about our right to have a union.”

The company is demanding overtime be paid only after 40 hours, instead of after eight hours a day. Workers at International Flavors and Fragrances work rotating shifts, with one week on nights, the next on afternoons and the third on days. They are frequently forced to work up to 16 hours. Changing how overtime is calculated would mean a significant loss of income.

The bosses want to end paid lunch breaks and to cut their contribution to workers’ 401(k) retirement plans. IFF also wants to be able to unilaterally make changes to workers’ health insurance with only 30 days’ notice. Dissatisfaction with the quality of the company-provided health insurance and its ever-increasing costs is a big issue for strikers, especially those with families.

Workers at the plant extract protein from soy flakes through a series of complex chemical processes. It is then used by manufacturers to make a wide variety of products, from baby formula and nutritional supplement drinks to pet

food and chocolate bars. “Our plant is kosher too,” one worker added.

New hires at International Flavors and Fragrances have to go through a nine-month probation before becoming permanent employees. Workers in quality control jobs and in the labs are union members, in addition to the operators and other production workers.

“My granddad was a sanitation worker here in Memphis for 60 years,” Sylvia Burks told the *Militant*. “He was part of the 1968 sanitation workers strike that Martin Luther King supported. I was little, but I remember him talking about it. That’s where the ‘I Am a Man’ sign on our picket line comes from. And my dad was a union member at Sealtest and had to go on strike in 1979. I learned from them how we have to stick together.”

Another striker named Burks, a former postal worker, said he started at IFF just nine months ago. “Six of the eight people hired with me have crossed the picket line, but two of us are out here!” he said proudly.

“This strike shows what we can do when we stand together,” Wilson said. “We’ve gotten support from other



Militant/Norton Sandler

Teamsters at UPS warehouse in Riverside, California, join in July 6 “just practicing” picket and rally in preparation for potential strike when old contract for 340,000 workers expires July 31.

“They are constantly after us to go faster. I hate bullying, that’s why I volunteered to be a shop steward,” she said.

Local 63 is organizing another rally outside the large UPS warehouse in Ontario, where some 4,000 workers are employed, July 14.

— Norton Sandler

## Granville Island Brewery workers strike for higher pay

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — “We need a living wage to be able to afford to live in Vancouver and work here,” Aaron Nakonechny, Service Employees International Union Local 300 member and shop steward, told the *Militant* on the picket line outside Granville Island Brewery here July 8. All six workers at the brewery were picketing, greeted with honks from the drivers passing by.

“I commute one hour each way to work because I can’t afford to live in Vancouver. The company representatives told us we don’t understand the ‘complexities’ of a living wage!” Nakonechny added. He said their starting wage is 16.75 Canadian dollars (\$12.60) an hour, and they can get up to \$CA21 after a nine-month probation.

One popular sign said, “We can’t afford the beer we sell.”

The SEIU leaflet strikers distributed explained Granville Island is owned by the Molson Coors Beverage Company through one of its subsidiaries, Six Pints Collective. Molson Coors is the fifth largest beer company in the world, raking in \$10.7 billion in net sales last year.

The strikers had visited the International Longshore and Warehouse Union strike rally in Vancouver the day before to bring support. “Solidarity is very important for unions and workers because we all face similar challenges,” he said.

The strikers hold Solidarity Saturdays at 1441 Cartwright St. here from 12-2 p.m. and 4-7 p.m. Visit [www.GranvilleIslandBreweryStrike.org](http://www.GranvilleIslandBreweryStrike.org).

— Ned Dmytryshyn

BCTGM locals in Memphis and beyond, from Teamsters, United Auto Workers, the NAACP, the West Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council, and several local politicians.”

Strikers welcomed a message of solidarity and donation to the strike fund from BCTGM Local 42 members from Vie de France bakery in Atlanta that was brought to the picket line by Marklyn Wilson and Sam Manuel July 3.

Meanwhile, the company is trying to keep production going with management personnel and scabs, including a few union members who have crossed the picket line. Bosses claim their proposal is their “last, best, and final offer,” said Cedric Wilson.

The BCTGM International asks union supporters to join in a letter-writing campaign to CEO Frank Clyburn backing the union’s demand that the company return to negotiations.

The international union, as well as Local 390G, is encouraging everyone to join the picket line at 4272 South Mendenhall Road in Memphis. The strikers are picketing 24/7. More information is on the BCTGM website.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 28, 1998

FLINT, Michigan — As the strikes by 9,200 workers at two General Motors plants here enter their second month, the world’s largest auto maker is taking new steps to pressure the workers and their union, the United Auto Workers.

GM “needs to cut more than 50,000 U.S. hourly positions to become as competitive as its rivals, even though it has already shed 64,000 jobs since 1992,” said the *Wall Street Journal*.

Reports began hitting the press July 2 that GM is looking for independent auto parts makers to supply the re-opening of up to 10 assembly plants by early August. In another move, GM revived its threat to cut off health-care benefits for laid-off workers in the U.S.



July 27, 1973

Culebra is a small island some 20 miles off the east coast of Puerto Rico. Since 1936, Culebra has been regularly bombed, shelled, and strafed by the U. S. Navy. The complex of Caribbean islands euphemistically labeled the “Commonwealth of Puerto Rico” has been a U.S. colony since the end of the Spanish-American War.

In 1969, the residents of Culebra organized the Committee for the Rescue of Culebra. It gained the active support of the two major pro-independence organizations in Puerto Rico. As for Vieques, where the Navy conducts the same operations, the gradual takeover has desolated the island, once a thriving agricultural area.



July 19, 1948

American workers, like workers everywhere, are deeply interested in the break between Belgrade and Moscow. The enormous Stalinist apparatus of repression has finally cracked open. Each existing crack will deepen and widen. Through each opening, however narrow, the masses will tend to surge through.

Tito and Stalin want the workers to choose between them. They pose all questions as if everything comes down to a choice between a “better” man. These methods have nothing in common with real labor politics. The Tito-Stalin rift is bound to become the starting point for a discussion of ideas and questions which touch the vital interests of working people everywhere.



# Road to unify the working class

Continued from front page

ulation. Their goal is to reinforce the stability of capitalist rule.

Rights that register real progress for working people extend and strengthen rights for *all* the oppressed and exploited. The two colleges' policies have nothing in common with programs to combat discrimination on the basis of race won through the massive Black-led movement that uprooted Jim Crow segregation and terror. Those programs, often called affirmative action at the time, broke down many barriers to hiring, promotion and education for Blacks and women. Their success helped undercut divisions among working people and increased the unity and strength of the unions.

In 1979, for example, the Supreme Court upheld a contract fought for and won by the United Steelworkers union at Kaiser Aluminum, reserving 50% of places on a training program for Blacks and women. Some 39% of workers at the company's Gramercy, Louisiana, plant were African American, but only five of 273 skilled jobs (1.8%) were held by Blacks and none by women.

That victory helped open the door to ongoing fights against employment discrimination on the basis of race, national origin or sex, fights that continue to this day. Efforts to tear down hiring and training hurdles have brought more workers of all skin colors and both sexes together in the workplace. During strikes and labor resistance in recent years, we've seen in practice how greater unity and solidarity increase the fighting potential of the labor movement.

At the same time, over the past several decades what the rulers call "affirmative action" has increasingly been used to further divide African Americans along class lines and to deepen divisions among working people.

In the Harvard and UNC cases, the Justices ruled in favor of a group calling itself Students For Fair Admissions. University programs, the Supreme Court ruling said, must have a goal that can be measured, not one with the intangible aim of "diversity." The ruling contrasted the two college's policies to school segregation cases where "courts can determine whether any race-based remedial action produces a distribution of students" comparable to what it would have been without a history of unconstitutional discrimination.

The court decision also pointed to workplace programs where "courts can ask whether a race-based benefit makes members of the discriminated class 'whole for the injuries they suffered.'"

"Nothing prevents the States from according an admissions preference to identified victims of discrimination" under the Constitution, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in a concurring opinion.

But college admissions programs "may never use race as a stereotype or negative, and — at some point — they must end," the ruling said.

## Programs arbitrary, class-based

Harvard and UNC programs had no measurable goal, the court found, and used an arbitrary selection of racial categories — American Indian, Asian, Black, Pacific Islander, Hispanic and white. This resulted in

fewer Asian American admissions. When asked "how are applicants from Middle Eastern countries classified," UNC's defense counsel responded, "I do not know."

"Personal ratings" scores used at Harvard included measuring candidates for "likeability" and "kindness." African Americans were routinely placed at the top and Asian Americans last. When Students For Fair Admissions sued the colleges in 2014, Harvard instructed its officers to cease using race as a consideration in the "personality" ratings, but not the overall application.

During the trial, Harvard explained that it gives preferences to athletes and "legacy" applicants — children of financial donors, alumni and faculty. Each year these groups make up less than 5% of applicants, but account for 30% of admissions. "While race-neutral on their face," Justice Neil Gorsuch pointed out in a concurring opinion, "these preferences undoubtedly benefit white and wealthy applicants the most."

As part of its case, SFFA submitted evidence that Harvard could maintain a more mixed composition of its student body without using race-based admissions, if it gave applicants from the worst-off families half the preferences it gives athletes and ended special consideration for "legacy" applicants. Harvard, however, flatly rejected forgoing these class-based but endowment-ballooning criteria.

Universities have concluded that "the touchstone of an individual's identity is ... the color of their skin," the court said. They "strip us of our individuality and undermine the very diversity of thought that universities purport to seek," Thomas wrote. He noted that race-based admissions have gone hand-in-hand with colleges offering separate housing, induction and graduation ceremonies for Black and Caucasian students.

In a dissenting opinion, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jack-



UMWA

Rally in solidarity with United Mine Workers strike at Warrior Met, 2021, in Alabama. Today's "diversity" programs have nothing in common with fights like Kaiser case that broke down bosses' racist discrimination, advanced unity among working people and strengthened unions.

son, claimed that the Supreme Court was "entrenching racial inequality."

## 'Equal protection of the laws'

The 14th Amendment was ratified in 1868 after the Second American Revolution. No state, it says, shall "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Thomas pointed out this is a "wholly race-neutral text, extending privileges and immunities to all 'citizens' — even if its practical effect was to provide all citizens with the same privileges then enjoyed by whites." In fact, Thomas said, the amendment "pledges that even noncitizens must be treated equally."

Sotomayor disputed this. Rather than offering a protection, she said the amendment "enshrines a guarantee of racial equality," which "can be enforced through race-conscious means."

But the Constitution doesn't "en-shrine" things. Its great strength is its guarantees against state interference.

In a separate dissent, Jackson made clear her goal is advancing African Americans into the capitalist class and upper reaches of the privileged managerial and professional layers. She noted that only six Blacks are on the 2022 Fortune 500 list of CEOs.

The court's ruling contains one exception, allowing military academies to continue using race-based admission programs. Jackson said this shows the court values racial diversity only "in the bunker, not the boardroom." But neither of these "choices" — becoming a boss or a military officer — offers working people of any skin color a way to fight the racist discrimination that is endemic to capitalist rule, nor to defend our ability to start and sustain families as part of our *class*.

The owners of Apple, Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson filed briefs defending Harvard for providing them with a "diverse" pool of job seekers.

Jackson's opinion is "a call to empower privileged elites," Thomas responded, "to level the playing field' among castes and classifications that they alone can divine." Jackson seeks to consign African Americans to "permanent victimhood," Thomas said.

It is in the strikes and other class battles unfolding today that workers of all colors and creeds will come to fully recognize our self-worth, and unite to strengthen the working class and the unions.

Clarity on the defense of constitutional freedoms will be an invaluable aid in taking this course.

## After 10 years, 'Lac-Mégantic could happen anywhere'

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — "Another Lac-Mégantic can happen at any moment anywhere in the country," Christopher Monette, Teamsters Canada director of public affairs, told the Montreal daily *Le Devoir* for its July 6 edition.

July 6 was the 10th anniversary of the 2013 derailment and fiery explosion of a runaway train loaded with 2 million gallons of crude oil that killed 47 people and destroyed downtown Lac-Mégantic, a town of 6,000, a three-hour drive east of Montreal.

The article, headlined "Are our railways less and less safe?" also quoted Teamsters Union National Legislative Director Don Ashley. He condemned the Precision Scheduled Railroading system used by Canadian National, Canadian Pacific and other Class I railways that makes working conditions unsafe.

To cut costs and increase profits the system is designed to "maximize the length and tonnage of trains, and reduce the number of workers," Ashley said, pushing more work on fewer workers, with inhumane work schedules.

The railway bosses, cops, courts, and

the government in Ottawa tried to frame up locomotive engineer Tom Harding — who had parked the train before ending his shift that night — and two other employees of the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway on criminal negligence charges. But based on the facts presented during a three-month trial the jury acquitted all three.

"Lac-Mégantic: This is not an accident," is a new documentary released by Quebecois film director Philippe Falardeau. It has been watched by tens of thousands in Canada. It says that the cost-cutting profit drive of the rail bosses in league with government officials was responsible for the disaster.

"There has been no amelioration of the rail safety problem over the past 10 years," Tom Walsh, Harding's lawyer, told the *Militant* by phone July 10. "The cost-cutting is the same. The shareholders want their money."

"These companies are only interested in profit. Look what happened in East Palestine, Ohio," Walsh told *dayF-REURO* in an interview published July 6, referring to the derailment there of a 150-car Norfolk Southern train carrying

vinyl chloride and other toxins.

Since the 2013 disaster the tracks were rebuilt through the center of Lac-Mégantic and trains still run day and night. "The trains are getting longer and longer and there's more hazardous material," resident Gilbert Carette, a member of the Citizens Coalition for Railway Safety, told the press at a July 6 rally at the side of the tracks there. "Equipment is just neglected."

Canadian Pacific now owns the tracks and is pushing the government to start the construction of a railway bypass around the town, promised by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau under pressure from many Lac-Mégantic residents.

But Canadian Pacific's approved bypass route — which would permit monster trains running at 40 mph through the region to east coast ports — is opposed by many area residents. Forty-two property owners are facing an expropriation deadline of Aug. 1 set by Ottawa.

Following his attendance at a somber July 6 memorial event for the 47 townspeople killed in 2013, Trudeau told the press he was determined to proceed with the expropriations.



# Unionists from Cuba, US, Latin America discuss way forward

BY RÓGER CALERO  
AND JOANNE KUNIANSKY

HAVANA — Some 100 trade union representatives and members of labor and political groups from 11 countries in Latin America and the United States exchanged experiences here during an April 24-28 workshop hosted by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) and the World Federation of Trade Unions.

They discussed the challenges faced by the labor movement in the face of the capitalist bosses' assaults on wages and working conditions and how to make maximum use of the opportunities to build solidarity for workers' struggles.

Cuba, where workers and farmers hold power, is the only country where the government encourages the unions to fight to improve safety and conditions and to build solidarity with fellow fighters around the world.

During sessions and informal discussions participants shared experiences about the consequences of bosses' assaults on the eight-hour workday, safety conditions on the job, overtime pay, multi-tiered wages and benefits, and the widespread outsourcing of work to nonunion contractors to weaken the unions.

One trade unionist from Panama reported on ongoing efforts by unions there against government attempts to increase the retirement age and lower social security pensions. Over the last two decades many governments in the region have taken similar steps, and have pushed private retirement funds as opposed to government responsibility, which have brought disastrous results for workers.

Among the common challenges noted by participants were bureaucratic and factional divisions that undermine union power. "Sometimes there is a strike a few blocks down the street from our workplaces but we don't bother to stop by to show support," said the Panamanian trade unionist in one of the workshop sessions. "We need to rescue the practice of sending solidarity messages, make a financial collection, help others' struggles."



Militant/Róger Calero

Unionists from abroad met April 29 with union leaders and workers in Cotorro municipality in Havana at a warehouse for food distribution at subsidized prices. They discussed gains made by Cuban workers through their socialist revolution, impact of U.S. embargo.

Ernesto Freire, regional director for the Americas of the World Federation of Trade Unions, told an April 27 meeting of workshop participants about leadership questions that need to be addressed in building the trade unions.

One of the main challenges, he explained, was the tendency of different political currents within the WFTU to each form their own unions. "They end up with multiple unions in the same factories and industries," he said, "and even several trade union federations in the same country. And they don't work together."

## Union struggles in U.S.

Participants were interested in hearing about last year's nation-wide fight for a contract by rail workers in the U.S., the March school workers strike in Los Angeles and the ongoing struggle by Teamsters-organized workers at United Parcel Service to win a contract that protects them from some of the worst job conditions they face. They were also interested in the unfolding struggle by rail workers and working people in East Palestine, Ohio, following the derailment, toxic fire and social catastrophe in February, which has won rail union support.

Chemical workers from Brazil attending the workshop described their 12-year fight for compensation for workers exposed to chemicals used to make pesticides at a plant owned by Shell Oil and German chemical company BASF in Sao Paulo. Ground water was contaminated, affecting surrounding communities. From 1974 to 2002 the company hid the risks from exposure and misrepresented the results of workers' medical exams. After a fight, the companies were ordered to pay compensation to 1,068 former workers in 2013 and provide them with lifetime medical care.

## Solidarity with Cuban Revolution

"I came to extend solidarity, share experiences, and to do my part to get rid of the sanctions" imposed by Washington against Cuba, said Milton Ayala Castro, president of the National Federation of Small-Scale Fishermen Organizations of Ecuador. "I never thought I would find people from the

U.S. here with so much experience and appreciation for Cuba."

Among trade unionists from the United States participating in the workshop were Michael Vera, a member of the Inlandboatmen's Union in California; members of Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment, who are involved in organizing efforts at Amazon in North Carolina; members of Amazon Labor Union in Staten Island, New York, including Chris Smalls, ALU president; and Bernie Senter from Los Angeles and Joanne Kuniansky from New Jersey, both members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers union and the Socialist Workers Party. They were part of a group organized by the Los Angeles US Hands Off Cuba Committee, which also included members of the United Steelworkers, Los Angeles Tenants Union and other groups.

Before becoming a tugboat captain in California and a member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Marine Division, Vera grew up working on fishing

boats in Alaska, and later in San Pedro, California. Vera and Ayala, from Ecuador, exchanged experiences about the way small fishermen are squeezed — from the high prices they face in running their operations, low prices they receive for their catch, and struggling to pay back bank loans necessary to buy boats and equipment. "We even had to go out fishing on Christmas to meet our contract obligations with the owner of the bank note," Vera said.

Participants also learned about the role Cuban trade unions play in defending workers' interests as they fight to strengthen Cuba's socialist revolution.

A group of unionists from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Niger and the U.S. visited a food warehouse and distribution center in Havana. The center is responsible for the distribution of staples, including rice, beans, sugar, coffee, pasta and other goods at subsidized prices. They also supply hospitals, child care centers and other state institutions in the area at virtually no cost.

The warehouse was two-thirds empty, a sign of the tightening of Washington's draconian economic embargo against the Cuban people, which has led to sharp shortages of food supplies, fuel and medicines. Betzaida Castellanos, a CTC leader accompanying the delegation, said, "In previous years the warehouse was usually filled with products all the way to the ceiling."

In an effort to reduce the impact of the shortages on the population, the warehouse operates seven days a week to offload shipments as soon as they arrive and prepare them for rapid distribution. Much of the work is done by workers using their hands. "We have to do it because the forklifts are not working due to the lack of parts and batteries because of the U.S. embargo," Pedro Simón Rodríguez, general secretary of Cuba's Commercial, Restaurant and Service Workers Union, told us.

Bernie Senter contributed to this article.

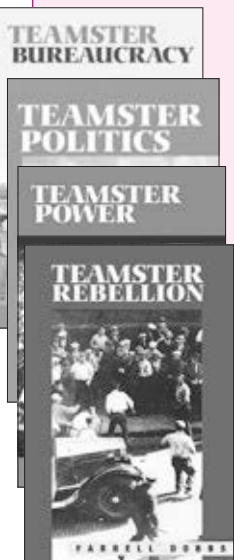
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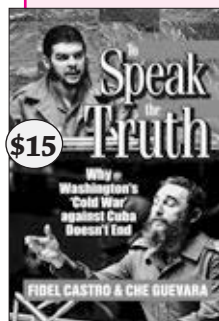
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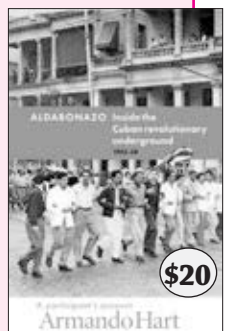
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# How workers mobilized to resist the McCarthyite witch hunt

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July is *Labor's Giant Step — The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55* by Art Preis. Out of his experiences in the labor battles of the 1930s, Preis became a staff writer for the *Militant*. His book deals with those great class-struggle upheavals, out of which strong industrial unions were built. This excerpt from "The witch hunt and labor struggles" describes how all wings of capitalist politics embraced McCarthyism to target the labor movement, trampling on constitutional rights. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ART PREIS

The assault on the organized workers during the first Eisenhower administration was primarily one which came under the heading of "McCarthyism." All wings and tendencies of capitalist politics, the Democratic liberals in Congress included, vied in a campaign of political terrorism disguised as anti-communism. The stifling atmosphere of intimidation created by threat of the communist smear, which was McCarthy's specialty, was thickened by new repressive legislation and direct victimization.

Behind the general smoke screen of anti-communism, one of the most sin-



Protest against House Un-American Activities Committee hearing at San Francisco City Hall in 1960, after being hit by cop firehoses. In 1953 HUAC met in the same place targeting unionists as "subversives." Thousands protested, forcing "government witch hunters to cut and run."

ister anti-union bills was introduced into the Senate in April 1953 by Senator John Marshall Butler, Maryland Republican. He had been elected with Senator Joseph McCarthy's direct aid. Butler's bill required the National Labor Relations Board to deny collective bargaining recognition or elections to any union under "investigation" by the Subversive Activities Control Board set up under the McCarran-Kilgore Act of 1950. Such investigation and denial of NLRB certification were to be based on any employer's mere complaint that a union seeking collective bargaining rights was "communist dominated." If the Subversive Board should "find" against the union, the latter would be permanently banned by the NLRB unless and until such a ruling was reversed by a regular federal court.

On November 1, 1953, the special Senate Internal Security subcommittee, headed by McCarthy's protege, Senator Butler, opened hearings on "Communist penetration of our trade unions." The targets of this inquisition, it was announced, were several of the independent unions which had split from the CIO in 1950, including the United Electrical Workers and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, engaged at the time in conflicts with large corporations. McCarthy carried out one of his highly

publicized and televised inquisitions of alleged Communists in General Electric plants in Massachusetts. Among those who received the stigma of his wild charges and innuendo-loaded questions were local officers of the CIO International Union of Electrical Workers.

McCarthy also conducted a smear hearing, February 19 and 20, 1954, in Albany, New York, on alleged subversive activity by the independent United Electrical Workers in General Electric's Schenectady plant. Hundreds of union workers traveled to Albany at their own expense and the loss of a day's pay to voice their opposition. "The workers jammed the hearing room and hundreds more milled through the corridors and outside the building," reported Harry Ring in *The Militant*. "They booed and jeered McCarthy's tirades and shouted approval of seven subpoenaed GE workers who defied the witch-hunters. Workers in the corridors held aloft for photographers an outsized valentine inscribed: 'GE Loves McCarthy.'"

A Negro worker, amid vigorous applause, turned the attack on McCarthy and denounced him. When McCarthy tried to intimidate this witness, he shouted back: "Go down South and subpoena Governor Byrnes and Talmadge. Yes, subpoena those enemies of my people, of America. Why don't you investigate subversion by GE, of the Jim Crow sys-

tem, of the profits taken from the sweat of my people? You fascist bum, why don't you investigate that?"

Ring further reported: "When the seventh witness leaned forward in the stand to tell him, 'I don't want to be framed. I will rest upon the Fifth Amendment which guarantees that innocent people be protected,' McCarthy suddenly announced that he had received an 'urgent' phone call from New York City and abruptly ended the hearings. He left the courthouse with the boos of the audience ringing in his ears." He never went back.

A companion offensive against unions was unloosed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. The latter group, headed by Congressman Harold H. Velde, a Republican, ran into an unforeseen obstacle when it barged into San Francisco to open a "subversive" hearing in City Hall. Some 6,000 members of Local 10, ILWU (independent), "hit the bricks" on December 3, 1953, to protest Velde's investigation. The waterfront was paralyzed. The CIO Council in the East Bay area denounced the Velde committee as an enemy of democratic rights. The hearings were flooded with "unfriendly witnesses" and "unfriendly" spectators. Scheduled to last 11 days, the hearings were hastily terminated after five days. Velde retreated ignominiously. At the first real resistance by organized labor, the government witch-hunters had to cut and run.


Unfortunately, the top labor leaders did little more than whine that McCarthy, Velde and the like were not "really interested in suppressing communism." That objective, it appeared, was "sincerely" desired by the Democratic liberals in Congress, the traditional "defenders" of civil liberties and labor's rights. ...

It is an irrefutable fact that the New Deal-Fair Deal liberals were the chief authors and sponsors of the first federal laws to (1) make mere opinion a crime (the Smith Act of 1940, rushed through by a Democratic Congress and signed by President Roosevelt); (2) establish concentration (detention) camps in America where political dissenters can be imprisoned without trial during a "national emergency" (McCarran-Kilgore Internal Security Act of 1950); and (3) outlaw a political party (Communist Control Act of 1954).

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# Solidarity helps win union struggles!

Something is different today. More workers are using their unions to fight the bosses' relentless push to drive wages down, weaken health care and pensions, intensify already brutal work conditions and make workers' schedules longer. This profit-driven offensive is eating away at the ability of workers to start and provide for our families, and is backed by a government beholden to the capitalist class. Their assaults lie behind the crisis of opioid and gambling addictions, declining life expectancy and falling birth rates.

Workers' determination to fight these conditions is on the rise. Hand-written picket signs appear with to-the-point and often humorous repudiation of boss demands that we make more sacrifices.

Millions belong to unions today, and the power of the labor movement is looked to by millions more who'd like to be in a union, as well as by working farmers and other exploited producers looking for allies. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union in the U.S. refuses to unload ships Canadian bosses try to redirect from ports there where 7,400 dockworkers are on strike. This solidarity is an example to all.

Every worker can make a difference. Tell your co-workers about the ILWU fight, as well as strikes by

United Electrical workers at Wabtec in Pennsylvania; BCTGM members at International Flavors and Fragrances in Tennessee; and anywhere else our class is locked in combat. Take action!

Bosses' stock-in-trade is to try and divide workers every way possible. The UE strikers at Wabtec are fighting to close down divisive two-tier wages. Over 340,000 UPS workers, Teamsters union members, face a July 31 contract deadline, where bosses there try and pit full- and part-time workers against each other. Striking UNITE HERE hotel workers in Los Angeles demand bosses stop using E-Verify to try and divide workers and superexploit those without papers.

Bosses hope rising prices, low wages and daunting schedules will force workers to back off union activity as they try to cope. But building and strengthening the unions is the road to defending living standards and making family life possible.

Many workers on strike today are doing things they've never done before. These experiences help us recognize our own self-worth and act on our common interests as a class — a class locked in a never-ending fight against the class that exploits us. Build the unions! Build working-class solidarity! We can win!

## Canadian longshore workers fight for raise, jobs

Continued from front page

"We do not want the federal government to be involved in our business. We must force them [the bosses] to the table," ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton told the July 9 rally.

Ashton also answered the bosses' claim port workers are so highly paid that their wage demands should be brushed aside, despite the rising cost of living. "You deserve every penny you get," Ashton said to cheers from the crowd. The union has pointed to the superprofits shipping companies made during the pandemic, when they jacked up their shipping charges as much as tenfold.

"I am fighting for our kids' future and everyone that comes after," Samantha Kailey told the *Militant*. She was at the rally with her 3-year-old daughter, Farah. "Members before us fought for our rights." Kailey has worked at the port here for three years driving a tractor-trailer. Her daughter's sign said, "The ILWU is fighting for my future."

Several hundred workers joined a rally at the waterfront the next day as well, under the slogan, "One day longer, one day stronger."

As much as 25% of Canada's foreign trade passes through the West Coast ports. Vancouver is Canada's largest. The strike is also having a big impact in the U.S., with some \$572 million a day in containers arriving from Canadian ports.

In an important act of international solidarity, U.S.-based ILWU International President Willie Adams announced that union members in the U.S. will refuse to unload ships redirected from Canada to U.S. ports. Already some ships, unable to be unloaded in Canada, have headed back to China.

The ILWU has three main demands: stopping the "erosion" of union work through contracting out, especially of maintenance; protecting jobs in the face of "the devastating impact of port automation"; and ensuring that wages rise in the face of "record high inflation and skyrocketing cost of living." The union says dock bosses are using outside contractors when union workers are available.

The federal government recently approved a plan to increase Vancouver's container capacity by nearly 50% by building a semi-automated container terminal on an artificial island near the Vancouver suburb of Delta. The bosses hope this will boost their profits by speeding up the flow of goods, using fewer workers.

Longshore workers are hired as casuals who report in every day to see if there is work. It takes years to become permanent. One striker told this *Militant* correspondent that after 11 years he still isn't permanent.

"Many years of waiting on call to get one-off shifts at very short notice," ILWU President Ashton said in a July 6 press release. "Income is sporadic and the unpredictability of shifts makes it hard to supplement it with other jobs."

The British Columbia Maritime Employers Association, which represents 49 companies, broke off negotiations July 3, claiming that the strikers' demands were "unreasonable." They proposed the ILWU accept binding arbitration, which the union refused. But as their losses mounted, the bosses agreed to return to the bargaining table July 8.

Bosses at major industries impacted by the strike and the provincial governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan have been calling on the federal government to recall Parliament — currently on recess — to adopt legislation to force the strikers back to work.

In 2021, Ottawa enacted back-to-work legislation against 1,150 striking Montreal longshore workers fighting to eliminate schedules forcing them to work 19 days straight out of 21. The contract imposed by the arbitrator left that unchanged.

### Widespread solidarity

Workers from many different unions have been joining the picket line. The building trades unions sent a coffee truck to the picket line at the dispatch hall here.

The strikers have received solidarity messages from unions around the world, including International Longshoremen's Association locals in the east and south coasts of the U.S., and from maritime unions in Turkey, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, Japan, Chile and other countries. Delegations from the maritime unions of Australia and New Zealand participated in the rally and visited picket lines in Vancouver.

Machinists, union members from Avcorp, an aerospace company, joined the picket line in Delta July 6. Machinists union Lodge 11 Vice President Roneel Sharma read a message to the strikers. "A few years ago when our members were locked out by our employer, who was demanding many concessions that would have gutted our collective agreement, it was members from many other unions and workplaces, including the Longshore union, that reinforced our picket lines and helped us emerge victorious," the message said.

"We are going to fight this government if they try to legislate us back to work," Sussanne Skidmore, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, told the July 9 rally. To send messages of solidarity, get updates on the strike or join a picket line, visit [www.ilwu.ca](http://www.ilwu.ca).

## Ukraine shows resolve

Continued from front page

injured. "These are just new conditions in our lives that we must adjust to," Spodin said.

"My unit is waiting for me," said Denys Kryvenko, who lost both legs and an arm in January in fighting near Bakhmut. He plans to return to the front as an instructor for paramedics or a counselor to fellow soldiers. Bohdan Petrenko practiced walking with his new prosthetic leg, as he told the *Times* he planned to return to his unit as a radio or drone operator.

The resilience of Ukrainian working people is also inspiring others. One-third of the population of 44 million is displaced within Ukraine or abroad, while 2.4 million have lost their jobs. Production has plummeted by 30%. But many of these hardest hit still find ways to help others and to donate to the armed forces to repel the invasion.

Volunteers in Irpin, near Kyiv, use a church to provide services to people forced to leave their homes. They serve 100 free lunches every day. A mobile dentist provides free dental care to pensioners.

Ivan Karaulov runs a bar in Kyiv, hiring people like himself who have been displaced from the war-damaged town of Berdyansk. He captured this outlook, saying, "The war has shown that money is nothing. People are the greatest value."

In Borodyanka 300 residents and dozens of people who fled there shelter in mobile homes. A group of volunteer hairdressers provide them with free haircuts. Secondhand clothes and books are also available.

High morale among working people in Ukraine contrasts with demoralization in Moscow's conscript army and anger of soldiers' families. Three women, from Lermontovo in the Amur region in Russia's Far East, made a video appeal June 26 to protest the treatment of their relatives by the Russian army.

"With shovels, without cartridges, they are forced to go to minefields," they say. "If they do not go to die, they will be killed by their own," by commanders who threaten to shoot them if they refuse orders, one says. She calls the officers "nonhumans."

"Our children are being thrown into hell itself," say parents of soldiers from the 1428th regiment in a July 7 video. They say they got no help when they appealed to Russia's Commissioner for Human Rights.

### US-led NATO expansion

"Putin's efforts to excuse his bloodthirsty invasion of Ukraine on grounds of moves by Washington and other NATO governments are as cynical as they are false. A sovereign and independent Ukraine poses no military threat to Russia of any kind," explains a statement released by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, at the start of the war.

The war is accelerating the drive by Washington and competing capitalist powers to rearm and reassess their alliances, as each prepares for future conflicts to advance their own interests.

Just prior to the July 11-12 NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, the states in the military bloc agreed to admit the Swedish government after bringing in Finland earlier this year. This expands the U.S.-led alliance's military reach across northwest Europe, including the Swedish rulers' submarine fleet in the Baltic Sea and the Finnish rulers' air force.

Washington intends the expansion of NATO to reinforce its place as the dominant "European" military power. But with NATO's growth comes heightened tensions and conflicts among member capitalist states, each of which has competing interests.

The U.S. rulers are using their preponderant weight to pressure Kyiv to the negotiating table. The Ukrainian government only found out July 7 about months of secret discussions between former U.S. and Russian officials about the outcome of the war.

Washington and its NATO allies pretend to support Ukrainian independence, but "their only real concern is to protect their profits and strategic political interests in the region," the SWP statement says. Alongside defending Ukraine's independence the party "demands the withdrawal of all US troops and both conventional and nuclear arms and nuclear missile systems from NATO member countries in Europe!"

The response of working people in Ukraine to mobilize and fight courageously against Moscow's invasion, along with the smoldering opposition to the war inside Russia, has been decisive in preventing Putin from crushing them and subjugating the country.

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