

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
How Cuba's revolution took hold in the Escambray mountains
 — PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 36 OCTOBER 2, 2023

Join campaign to expand reach of the 'Militant'!

The Socialist Workers Party's fall campaign to win 1,350 subscribers to the *Militant*, sell 1,350 books by party leaders and other revolutionaries and raise \$140,000 for the SWP Party-Building Fund is off and running! We're asking our readers to join in!

Communist League branches in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom will be participating in the book and subscription campaign, as

A LETTER TO OUR READERS

will *Militant* readers around the world.

The *Militant* is campaigning to explain the key issues in the United Auto Workers strike against the Big Three and to win far-reaching solidarity. The strike takes place in the midst of an uptick in labor actions, a break

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As 2024 nears, Democrats step up attacks on political rights

BY TERRY EVANS

The Democrats' seven-year-long relentless campaign to drive Donald Trump out of politics and bar him from running for president in 2024 is becoming more frantic as the primaries come nearer.

President Joseph Biden's Justice Department and Democratic prosecutors in Georgia and New York are pushing criminal cases in four venues against Trump as part of this effort. Trials in each of these cases are set to begin before or during the 2024 primaries.

Many of these prosecutions involve charges most often used to target and frame up unionists and opponents of Washington's imperialist wars — RICO laws, conspiracy charges, "domestic terrorism" laws and other thought-control statutes.

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Solidarity with UAW strike! Fight for whole working class



Militant/Naomi Craine

United Auto Workers rally in Detroit Sept. 15, as UAW struck assembly plants at Stellantis in Toledo, Ohio; General Motors in Wentzville, Missouri; and Ford in Wayne, Michigan.

BY KATHIE FITZGERALD

TOLEDO, Ohio — There is a working-class battle taking place in the auto industry today that all workers should support. Some 13,000 United Auto Workers' members went on strike Sept. 15 at the Ford plant in Wayne, Michigan; General Motors in Wentzville, Missouri; and Stellantis' Jeep plant here. Overall, 150,000 union members work for the Big Three. The union says more workers will walk out Sept. 22 if progress isn't made in negotiations.

The union is fighting to undo damaging concessions demanded by the bosses over the years, deal with the blows from today's crippling inflation, and defend workers' jobs and livelihoods amid the bosses' transition from making cars with internal-combustion

engines to electric vehicles.

UAW Local 12 here has close to 6,000 members, and on the second day of the strike hundreds were on picket lines ringing the big Jeep complex. Chants, honking horns, music and the smell of barbecue filled the air. Stacks of wood are stockpiled around burn barrels for the increasingly crisp northern Ohio nights. Striker after striker told the *Militant*

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Protests mark one-year anniversary since death of Zhina Amini in Iran



Militant/Mike Shur

Sept. 16 protest in New York, above, and around world on anniversary of death of young Kurdish woman Zhina Amini. She died in Tehran after arrest by Iran's hated "morality police." Demands included end to counterrevolutionary regime's repression, release of all political prisoners.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Demonstrations took place around the world Sept. 16 to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the death of Zhina Amini, a young Kurdish woman who died after her arrest by the hated "morality police" in Tehran, accused of violating the dress code for women.

Thousands chanting "Women, Life, Freedom" joined protests in the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, France, Austria, Sweden and Belgium; in New Zealand and Australia; and in 18 cities in the United States and 10 in Canada. From New York to San Francisco to London protesters called for freeing all political prisoners in Iran and for

respecting democratic rights. Many carried photos of some of those killed during the protests that swept Iran following Amini's death.

To block renewed street actions in Iran, the bourgeois clerical government arrested scores of people across the country, including leaders of the teachers union, ahead of the anniversary.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the army, along with police, were deployed, especially in the Kurdish region. Kurds, a mostly Sunni minority in majority Shiite Iran, have a long history of resisting the regime's trampling of democratic rights.

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Working people in Ukraine fight to drive Putin out and retake Crimea

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Crushing the Ukrainian nation and its people is at the heart of Russian President Vladimir Putin's determined effort to reestablish the Russian Empire with himself as czar. But his invasion has run up against fierce Ukrainian resistance, with working people fighting to defend their country's independence and reestablish sovereignty over all occupied territory in eastern and southern Ukraine and in Crimea.

Ukrainian missiles struck a Russian navy yard in Sevastopol, Crimea, Sept. 13, severely damaging two warships and the dry docks. Another Russian ship near the port was hit by a Ukrainian drone the next day. In recent weeks, Ukrainian forces have

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Washington seeks bloc with Vietnam in China conflict

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Drawn together by common interests in countering Beijing's expansionist course, Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, met with President Joseph Biden in Hanoi Sept. 10.

"The United States is a Pacific nation, and we're not going anywhere," Biden said afterward. Washington has been strengthening its alliances across the Pacific in the wake of sharpening conflicts

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Farmworkers rally for union contract in Washington state

Explosions in Nebraska rail car, worker killed in Ohio

Ukraine fights to oust Putin, retake Crimea

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also hit two of Moscow's six radar and missile-launch batteries in Crimea.

The strikes were aided by "ordinary residents of Sevastopol who constantly send us information about Russian troops," according to Atesh, a Crimean Tatar-led underground movement. Its name means "fire" in the Turkic language of the Crimean Tatars.

In 1944 troops under orders of the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin forcibly deported the entire Tatar population of Crimea to Central Asia, claiming they were German agents. During the upheaval more than a third died. The survivors and their descendants were only allowed to return to their homeland decades later.

As the Putin regime invaded Crimea in 2014, tens of thousands mobilized to protest, especially Tatars. Moscow's forces have responded by raiding homes, mosques and schools; shutting down Tatar newspapers; and banning the Mejlis, the Tatar national council, and its leaders, including Mustafa Dzhemilev.

From Kyiv, Dzhemilev told the *Guardian* in July that the Atesh opposition group is made up of Crimean Tatars and other Ukrainians, as well as some Russians. Working underground behind Russian lines, it has carried out several sabotage attacks, without any arrests so far. The group appeals to Russian soldiers to stop fighting. It expects to recruit hundreds of young Crimean Tatar men for armed resistance when the Ukrainian army's push south reaches Crimea.

While only 13% of Crimea's population are Tatars, they make up the great majority of those arrested or kidnapped by Moscow's occupation forces.

Among the Crimean Tatars fighting today in Ukraine's Territorial Defense Force is Ismael Ramzanov. He had been arrested and beaten in Crimea by the occupation forces in 2018 after organizing protests against the jailing of Tatar political prisoners. Released a year later, he went to Kyiv.

No free Crimea if Ukraine isn't free

"I left my small homeland to protect my big homeland," he told Al Jazeera last year. "I know that without a free Ukraine, there will be no free Crimea."

Said Ismahilov, a former Islamic scholar, now works as a frontline medic alongside Ukrainian soldiers. Like many working people in Ukraine, he volunteered to defend the country as Russian tanks advanced on Kyiv, at the start of the invasion. He became the army's first Muslim chaplain.

"I'm more use to my country doing this than if I were closing my eyes in quiet prayer somewhere far removed from the conflict zone," he told Al Jazeera. In 2014 Moscow-led separatists seized his native city, Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine. An outspoken leader of a small, long-established Muslim community there, he fled from arrest. His parents were Penza Tatars who came from central Russia. They are the second-largest group of Muslims in Ukraine after Crimean Tatars.

During the Bolshevik Revolution under V.I. Lenin's leadership for several years from 1917, Tatars, like other Muslim minorities, were granted religious, cultural and language rights. But once a counterrevolution led by Stalin took hold, Moscow's domination and repression of rights was reimposed.

In the Soviet republic of Ukraine

in the 1980s there were no officially recognized Muslim communities. But since the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukraine regaining its independence, its government has recognized 700 Muslim communities, covering 600,000 people.

Under Moscow's current occupation of eastern Ukraine, many mosques there have been destroyed and religious leaders targeted.

Anti-war protests

In contrast to the courageous determination that marks Ukraine's fighting forces, the Russian army has suffered demoralizing losses despite the Kremlin commanding greater resources and a population nearly four times the size of Ukraine's. Many Russian working people used at the front as Moscow's cannon fodder are exhausted.

Putin is wary about launching another mobilization to replenish his forces for fear of setting off deeper opposition to his war. Despite jailing political opponents and suppressing mass protests against his conscription orders last fall, public demonstrations against the war continue.

On Aug. 20 four individuals in different locations in Russia held one-person anti-war protests. Before being arrested, Anton Malykhin was hugged by a passer-by in the center of Moscow as he held up his placard, saying "No to the war."



Andrei Ivanov protests Aug. 15 at Stalin statue erected in Velikiye Luki, 300 miles west of Moscow, saying Stalin was "a tyrant, a murderer," and his protest was "not only an act against the monument, but also against the war" in Ukraine.

Five days earlier, retiree Andrei Ivanov protested the erection of a statue to Stalin at the gate of the Mikron factory in Velikiye Luki, west of Moscow. Putin has encouraged monuments to Stalin in an attempt to try to identify his regime's murderous assault on Ukraine's independence with the heroic struggle of the people of the Soviet Union that defeated the invasion of the country by the German army in the Second World War.

Stalin was "a tyrant, a murderer, an authoritarian" Ivanov said. His protest was "not only an act against the monument, but also against the war" in Ukraine.

THE MILITANT

Lessons for today from 1973 coup in Chile

Chile's Popular Unity government was overthrown in blood by a U.S.-backed military uprising 50 years ago. During 1971 visit there, Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro warned of coup in the making as he tried to dispel illusions in a "parliamentary road to socialism."



AP photo
Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro is greeted by Chilean copper miners, Nov. 24, 1971.

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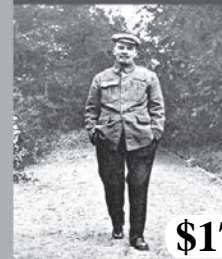
"I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism."

— V.I. Lenin, 1922

In 1922 and 1923 Lenin waged his last political battle, a key part of which was defense of the right to national self-determination in Georgia, Ukraine and other oppressed nations inside Russia.

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Lenin's Final Fight



\$17

SPEECHES & WRITINGS

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

Expand reach of the 'Militant'

Continued from front page with decades of defeats and stagnation. Getting the word out can help make a difference.

There is a step-up in the *Militant's* circulation today as working people look for a road forward against today's attacks from the bosses, their Democratic and Republican parties and their government. We have a chance this fall to take this further.

We are championing the Socialist Workers Party campaigns, for local offices this fall and for Senate and Congress in 2024. In the coming months, the SWP will launch its presidential ticket. These campaigns will address all the key questions facing working people and pose the need for a break with the bosses' parties and to build our own party, a labor party based on the unions, that can fight to bring working people to power.

The fall campaigns will kick off Sept. 23 and run until after the fall elections. All subscriptions and books sold beginning on Labor Day will count.

Party supporters and *Militant* partisans will take the campaign to strike picket lines; protests around key international struggles, like the fight for an end

to Washington's economic war against Cuba; on workers' doorsteps in cities and countryside alike; and in special opportunities like book fairs and other political events.

Since Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the largest land war in Europe since the second imperialist world war, capitalist governments throughout the world are seeking to bolster military alliances and increase their weaponry. This increases the danger of new wars and the threat of nuclear disaster.

Militant readers can join in introducing the paper and books to their co-workers, members of their union, neighbors and others they discuss union and political affairs with. And introduce them to the party's campaigns, Militant Labor Forums and party members.

In today's political circumstances, the SWP is looking to recruit and to grow.

The SWP Party Building Fund is crucial to help cover the basic operating expenses of the party — from its national headquarters to increased travel and opportunities for international collaboration.

In addition to the special introductory subscription offer of 12 weeks for \$5, all Pathfinder books are on special



Militant/Bernie Senter

Laura Garza, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, discusses politics with participants at Mexican Independence Day celebration in Oxnard Sept. 17.

at a 20% discount, and 12 titles are further discounted. This includes *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*; *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*; *Teamster Rebellion*; *Maurice Bishop Speaks* and six others. The full list will be advertised in

the next issue of the *Militant*.

Please consider how you can help. And make sure your subscription is up to date. Decide how generous a contribution you can make. Contact the *Militant* directly or get in touch with distributors nearest you, listed on page 8.

John Studer

John Studer, *Militant* editor

SWP campaign wins hearing for party program, solidarity with UAW

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

At plant gates, demonstrations, on workers' doorsteps and strike picket lines, Socialist Workers Party candidates and supporters get a serious hearing on the party's program and respect for their efforts to get out the truth about working-class struggles and build solidarity with them.

Since the national UAW strike against the Big Three auto bosses began Sept. 15, autoworkers from all over the Midwest have joined picket lines at the three plants targeted so far. United Auto Workers member Adam McKinney, his wife, Sandy, and their daughter drove three hours to Toledo, Ohio, from Kokomo, Indiana. "This is a fight for the future, not just for me but for our daughter," he told the *Militant*. "The time for solidarity is now."

After looking over the paper, Sandy McKinney, a teacher, said they talk "about the problems caused by capitalism and what can be done about it" almost every night. They bought a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Are They Rich Because They're*

Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism by Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes.

"Socialist? What do you mean by socialist?" Mark Grey, a railroad signalman asked Socialist Workers Party member Jacquie Henderson at the CSX yard in Cincinnati Sept. 15. He was interested in the front page of the *Militant* and the flyer introducing the SWP candidates for Cincinnati City Council, Kaitlin Estill and Ned Measel.

"We are a working-class party," Henderson said. "Biden certainly showed rail workers this year what a friend of labor he is, didn't he, when he ordered you not to strike and Congress shoved the contract that workers voted against down their throats. And the Republicans are no better. We need to break with both these parties. Workers need to unite in struggle on a road to taking political power ourselves, as a class."

"Isn't it true that while the railroad companies claim they have safety covered by remote devices and then cut jobs," Henderson said, "it's clear that

their only concern is for their profits?"

"I agree," Grey said. "These remote devices are no substitute for workers on the trains and on the ground, with eyes and ears to detect problems."

He said he appreciated their discussion on the dangers to constitutional freedoms posed by the Democrats and the FBI's attacks on former President Donald Trump. "You might be right there, too," he said. "You've given me a lot to think about."

Grey bought a copy of the *Militant* and took a subscription blank to fill out. Over the past several months more than a dozen rail workers have signed up for *Militant* subscriptions at the yard.

On Sept. 17 Laura Garza, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from California, campaigned at a Mexican Independence Day celebration in Oxnard. "When a worker doesn't show up, the work is divided among the rest and we work overtime," Yolanda Salcedo, a member of the California School Employees Association, told Garza. "They have sub-

stitute workers on call but not enough."

"We need to use our unions to fight against the worsening working conditions we face on the job today," Garza said. "That's what is happening more now with the strikes taking place by autoworkers, hotel workers and others."

Participants at the event bought three *Militant* subscriptions, eight Pathfinder books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and nine signed the petition to place Garza's name on the California ballot.

To meet an SWP candidate or join in campaigning with the party, contact SWP campaign offices listed on page 8.

Correction

In *Militant* issue no. 35, the Socialist Workers Party statement titled "Protest Abbas' defense of the Holocaust" should have read, "Some two-thirds of European Jews [not all Jews] were killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust."



Militant

Socialist Workers Party member Betsy Farley, right, discusses significance of United Auto Workers strike with Local 12 members on the picket line in Toledo, Ohio, Sept. 18.

Join Socialist Workers Party 2023-2024 campaigns

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NY forum discusses fight for jobs, amnesty for immigrants

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — “Fight for jobs for *all* workers! Build the unions! A working-class response to the ‘migration crisis’” was the topic of a lively discussion at the Militant Labor Forum here Sept. 16. Speaking for the Socialist Workers Party was Sara Lobman, the party’s candidate for City Council District 8.

With the arrival of more than 110,000 immigrants here since the spring of 2022 there have been protests in some neighborhoods against the city providing these migrants with housing and care there, Lobman said. Democratic Mayor Eric Adams demagogically claims that “this issue will destroy New York City” and tries to play workers against each other by saying the influx will result in steep across-the-board budget cuts affecting working people. At the same time, the SWP candidate pointed out, the city budget in fact has billions of dollars allocated to a “rainy day” fund for special circumstances.

“I recently visited neighborhoods in Staten Island where one of protests had taken place,” said Lobman, “and found workers there were open to talking about the issue. One guy from Poland explained he’s not against immigration: ‘After all, I’m an immigrant myself.’”

There is less anti-immigrant sentiment among working people in the U.S. today, as immigrant and U.S.-born workers work in the same factories and shops and live in the same neighborhoods. It’s under the pressure of low wages and competition for jobs that bosses promote scapegoating of immigrants to divide workers and strengthen their hand. They aim to attack all workers and divert attention away from the fact that the crisis facing workers today is the result of the deepening crisis of their capitalist system.

There is a crisis facing working people in New York, Lobman said. Homelessness is through the roof, crime is rising, and rents are sky high. But immigrant workers aren’t responsible for any of this. The deepening crisis of capitalism and its profit system is.

“The bosses want us to fight among ourselves for ‘limited’ resources,” she said, “but workers create the wealth, most of which goes into the pockets of the ruling class as profits.”

“What’s needed,” the socialist candidate said, “is a program to unite all workers. The SWP calls for jobs at union-scale wages, with schedules so that workers can spend time with their families and participate in union activities and politics. All union contracts, Social Security and other social benefits should include cost-of-living clauses so that as inflation rises so do wages and other benefits.

“We need a massive federally funded public works program that could provide decent jobs to millions, building child care centers, housing, repairing roads and the subway, and other things working people need,” she said. “And while we use our unions to fight for higher wages and social benefits, we need supplemental income to help make up the difference between what workers and their families need and what they’re getting today.”

Central to winning these things is building the unions, Lobman said.

One example she pointed to is the

construction industry in New York. Historically construction has been one of the most heavily unionized and highest-paying jobs in the city. But in recent years the bosses have hired tens of thousands of workers without papers the government considers sufficient and the unions are shrinking, immigrant workers are paid less and working conditions are increasingly dangerous.

Build unions to unite working class

“The way forward is for the unions to recruit everyone on the job, regardless of what papers they do or do not have. This is crucial to unite all construction workers and organize a fight to rebuild the unions,” Lobman said.

The SWP demands amnesty for the 11 million undocumented workers living and working in the U.S. and an end to deportations. “This is a life-and-death question for the labor movement and the entire working class, to be able to fight as equals against the bosses and their government,” she said.

Over a million immigrants arrive in the U.S. every year, most with “papers,” many without. It’s the needs of the capitalist class for labor that determines how many, not the existence or lack of walls on the border.

“In fact, there is no ‘immigration crisis’ today, as capitalist politicians of all stripes claim,” Lobman said. “The bosses want more workers, and they want to cut wages.”

The number of H-2A visas granted to temporary agricultural workers from abroad has exploded. In fiscal year 2022 it climbed to 298,000, from

Anti-union RICO law used to indict Atlanta protesters

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — Just weeks after former President Donald Trump and 18 of his political associates were indicted here on Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization charges, 61 opponents of the construction of an Atlanta police- and firefighting-training facility were charged with violating Georgia’s RICO Act.

The same grand jury that indicted Trump and his supporters also returned these charges. They were announced by Georgia Attorney General Christopher Carr Sept. 5, targeting a number of anarchists and middle-class radicals who had set up a “Defend the Atlanta Forest” encampment at the site and, Carr says, “conspired to prevent the construction of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center.”

The investigation was led by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in partnership with other cop organizations, including the Atlanta police and the FBI.

Georgia’s RICO law is one of the broadest in the country. It allows prosecutors to weave together a wide variety of alleged crimes by claims that they advance a single goal. There is no requirement under Georgia law that those charged even know each other. And it is set up with sentences of up to 20 years in prison to encourage witnesses to turn against each other and force confessions through plea bargains.

RICO laws have been used for years to target unions and intervene in and impose government control over them. Court rulings, including by the U.S. Su-



Militant/Naomi Craine

May 1 march and rally in Milwaukee protests attacks on immigrant workers. Bosses scapegoat immigrants to divide working class, push down wages as capitalist crisis deepens today.

77,010 a decade ago. In the first five months of this year, there have been over 163,000 visas granted to farmworkers from Mexico alone. With no union representation and few rights, these workers face low wages and harsh conditions from the bosses.

The integration of immigrants into the U.S. working class has made our class stronger, Lobman said. That doesn’t mean that calls by some middle-class radicals for “open borders,” which would lead to a crisis for working people on both sides of the border, is in the interests of working people.

Immigrants seeking work permits in New York face a labyrinth of bureaucratic and confusing procedures. Those requesting asylum have to wait nearly six months until they can even apply for one. And they have to come up with nearly \$500 to file the forms, and hundreds more to get help filling them out.

In the forum discussion two women

workers from Mexico were eager to talk about their experiences. “Most workers, like me, are undocumented,” said one. “For all these people the government says it will give them work permits, many haven’t gotten them for years. Most work without a permit.”

“I make \$17 an hour as a home care aide,” said another, “but what the company charges for the work I do is \$45 an hour. This is outrageous. This has to change, but politicians do nothing. I say the Democrats and Republicans are the same thing.”

“Everyone living in the U.S. should be able to live and fight together here as equals,” said Lobman. “To most effectively wage this struggle, workers need to break with the two bosses’ parties and build our own party, a labor party based on the unions. Such a party can help lead the fight for amnesty, fight for jobs and rebuild the labor movement on a much broader political basis.”

preme Court, have given broad leeway in using these anti-labor laws. The 109-page RICO indictment alleges a total of 225 “overt acts,” including “payment of \$12.52 for forest kitchen materials,” “\$52.22 reimbursement for forest kitchen food,” and a reimbursement of \$93.04 for “camping supplies.”

‘Domestic terrorism’ charges

It also charges 28 defendants with “domestic terrorism,” claiming they threw Molotov cocktails, rocks and fireworks at firefighters and cops, as well as damaged construction equipment and vandalized the homes and offices of site contractors. Some individuals associated with the encampment have taken credit for many of these actions. In doing so, they provided the cops and government with a pretext to carry out their assaults on all those there.

Georgia State Patrol cops shot and killed Manuel Teran Jan. 18 during a “clearing operation,” claiming he shot at officers first.

Chris Bruce, policy director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, condemned the state’s use of domestic terrorism charges. It defines domestic terrorism as any felony meant to “intimidate the civilian population” or “change or coerce the policy of the government.”

Authorities also arrested three people who raised bail money for protest participants, claiming they engaged in money laundering. A heavily armed SWAT team in riot gear surrounded their house in May to arrest them. Oth-

er people are indicted for handing out flyers in April that identified one of the troopers involved in Teran’s death, and for posting material on websites, such as “calling for a week of Solidarity.”

Lyra Foster, an attorney representing several of the defendants, said, “This is a naked political attempt to criminalize political dissent.”

On Sept. 11 other opponents of the training facility submitted more than 116,000 signatures, twice the requirement, to put a referendum on the facility on the Atlanta ballot. Their petition has been challenged by city officials.

Prosecutors say the roots of the “conspiracy” go back to 2020 protests in Atlanta held after the cop killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police. As part of these actions, antifa forces carried out attacks on police stations and burned down a Wendy’s restaurant.

Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from Georgia, denounced the RICO indictments against both the Defend the Atlanta Forest protesters and former President Donald Trump.

“These laws are a threat to the unions and to our rights. No matter who is targeted today, workers, the unions and working-class political groups like my party, the Socialist Workers Party, are the ultimate target,” Potash said. “The defense of hard-won constitutional freedoms is crucial for the struggles of working people.”

“Drop all RICO charges against Trump and his associates, as well as the Defend the Atlanta Forest protesters.”

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Farmworkers rally for union contract in Washington state

SEATTLE — Over 200 farmworkers, unionists, and students gathered here Aug. 31 to support farmworkers fighting to organize into a union at Windmill Farms, based in Sunnyside. The event was organized by the United Farm Workers union and Students for Farm Workers at the University of Washington. Protesters organized a “human billboard” of signs explaining the fight that stretched along several blocks of a busy downtown street here, and then marched to a nearby park for a lively rally.

Workers at the mushroom-picking facility voted to join the UFW a year ago, when the facility was owned by Ostrom Mushrooms. Workers and the union have been fighting for a contract with better working conditions, and against firings and other retaliation by the bosses.

Nearly 100 farmworkers from Sunnyside joined the protest, as well as UFW President Teresa Romero. Members of the Tacoma and Seattle Education Associations, United Auto Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 3000 and several Service Employees International Union locals took part, as well as April Sims, president of the Washington State Labor Council.

“Farmworkers took a day off to come here. They could be fired if bosses find out,” Romero told the rally. “Of the 18 that came forward to organize a union, only five are left. The others have been fired or harassed. When I ask workers what the most important issue is, they tell me, ‘Dignity and respect.’”

Romero said over 100 women have been fired and that the bosses have called immigration officials to deport workers who are trying to organize. “Ostrom sold the company to Windmill, but it’s the same farm, same mushrooms, same managers and foremen.”

“If Windmill Farms makes the mistake of continuing to deny your freedom to unionize, they are going to learn the hard way that the union movement in this state does not give up,” Sims said.

Jose Martinez, one of the fired leaders of the fight, described how initially

it was just two workers meeting with the union. Now it’s 150.

“There is strong labor community in Seattle. Everyone should have the right to a union,” Tricia Schroeder, president of Service Employees International Union Local 925, told the *Militant*. “We pulled together a team from all our locals to come here. There are about 25 of us.”

As a result of pressure from the mushroom workers’ ongoing fight, the Washington state attorney general filed and won a \$3.4 million lawsuit against Ostrom. The suit charged the firings by the bosses constituted violations of workers’ right to organize a union, as well as for discrimination against women. From early 2021 to May 2022, when workers protested and pushed back high picking quotas, Ostrom terminated approximately 79% of its domestic pickers and 85% of its female pickers.

To ensure higher quotas were met, the company used the H-2A visa program to hire mostly male temporary workers, who they thought it would be easier to intimidate. “The company told H-2A workers not to talk with us,” Martinez said. “Almost all were indigenous people from Guerrero and Chiapas, and many didn’t speak Spanish.”

The UFW and groups of farmworkers have been visiting Safeway stores across the state, urging them to pressure Windmill farms to recognize the union.

To support the mushroom workers fight, go to <https://ufw.org/ostrom/>.

— Vincent Auger

Explosions in rail car in Nebraska yard, worker killed in Ohio

OMAHA, Neb. — Rail workers and working people near the world’s largest rail yard, Union Pacific’s Bailey Yard in nearby North Platte, had another narrow escape Sept. 14. A series of uncontrolled explosions inside a shipping container in the yard produced toxic smoke, prompting evacuations of nearby parts of the city of 23,000. The blast from the ignition set several nearby rail cars on fire.

This came six months since the derailment and toxic spill and fire poisoned East Palestine, Ohio, where work-



Militant/Scott Breen

Mushroom workers from Sunnyside, Washington, and supporters rallied in Seattle Aug. 31 in fight for recognition of their union, the United Farm Workers, and for a contract.

ing people are still fighting for health and safety protections.

The explosions in the yard took place inside the bottom container of a stacked rail car carrying 55-gallon drums of dangerous perchloric acid. Authorities are still unsure why the drums exploded.

Perchloric acid is a highly corrosive and potentially explosive liquid that is treated and used in food and drug production, as well as in pesticides, fireworks and explosives.

A few days before the explosion and fire, inspectors from the Federal Railroad Administration had visited the Bailey Yard and found a number of defects in both locomotives and rail cars.

In July and August inspectors found almost a 20% defect rate on rail cars and 73% on locomotives, twice the national average, FRA Administrator Amit Bose wrote to Union Pacific bosses Sept. 8.

Bose said the defects constitute a “significant risk to rail safety” on the Union Pacific, and that the railroad had been reluctant to fix the problems.

He questioned whether the recent layoffs of 94 locomotive craft workers and 44 carmen on the railroad left enough workers to complete necessary repairs.

Brad Halligan, chair of International Association of Machinists Local 180 there, told the *North Platte Bulletin* that Union Pacific had laid off 11 electricians and machinists in the yard Aug. 23, as

well as 83 others across the system. There just are not enough workers to do the job, he said.

On Sept. 17 Fred Anderson, a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, was killed during a remote control operation in a CSX yard in Walbridge, Ohio. He was the fourth CSX worker killed on the job recently.

Rail bosses’ drive to maximize profits at all costs led to disaster.

— Joe Swanson

Teamster Series

Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s

by Farrell Dobbs

“The principal lesson of the Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome.”

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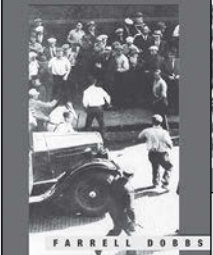
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TEAMSTER BUREAUCRACY

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TEAMSTER REBELLION



—25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—



October 5, 1998

MUTAWINTJI, Australia — In the culmination of a 15-year fight, more than 500 Aborigines and their supporters from around eastern Australia gathered at newly renamed Mutawintji National Park Sept. 5 for a day of celebration to mark the return of its 76,000 hectares (188,000 acres) to the traditional owners. It is the first of five parks in the state to be returned to Aboriginal people by the state government.

Mark Sutton, of the Mutawintji Local Aboriginal Land Council and chair of the event, explained, “In 1983 Paakantji community members from Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Menindee came out and blockaded the main entrance to the park” to protest the lack of involvement of Aboriginal people in how it was run.

The 1983 blockade was part of the new wave of land rights struggles around the country that had risen again beginning in the 1960s.



October 5, 1973

NEW YORK — As Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made his first speech to the United Nations, nearly 1,000 demonstrators marched to the U.N. to denounce the role of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico.

The action was the culmination of a series of meetings and forums. Events celebrated were the anniversary of the birth of Pedro Albizu Campos, the central leader of the Puerto Rican independence movement in the 1930s and 1940s, and El Grito de Lares, the 1868 rebellion for independence from Spain. Thousands rallied in Puerto Rico Sept. 23 to mark the anniversary.

Since the early 1950s, when Albizu Campos tried to get a hearing before the U.N., that body had refused to hear the case. Only in the last year, due to the efforts of Cuban delegate Ricardo Alarcon and protests by Puerto Ricans, has the U.N. Decolonization Committee taken up Puerto Rico.



October 4, 1948

The following speech was broadcast to the workers of Canton, Ohio, by Farrell Dobbs, SWP presidential candidate, on Friday, Sept. 24. [Excerpt]

Thirty years ago, during the First World War, Eugene V. Debs told the truth about capitalist wars in a historic speech here in Canton. Debs told the workers, “Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder.” President Woodrow Wilson ordered immediate prosecution of Debs. He was convicted and locked up.

I have come here to reaffirm the socialist anti-war program of Debs. We denounced the conspiracy of American monopoly capitalism to drag the country into the Second World War.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered prosecution of the Socialist Workers Party for our anti-war stand. In 1941, eighteen leaders of the party were convicted under the Smith “Gag” Act and sentenced to prison.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

New York

Maurice Bishop and the Grenada Revolution, 40 Years Later: An Example and Lessons for Workers Everywhere. Speakers: Terry Marryshow, Maurice Bishop October 19 Martyrs Foundation, Grenada-Cuba Friendship Association; Steve Clark, Socialist Workers Party National Committee, editor, *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution and Its Overthrow, 1979-1983*. Sun., Oct. 29. Reception, 3 p.m.; program, 4 p.m. Donation: \$10. Sponsored by Militant Labor Forum in New York and in Northern New Jersey. 307 West 36th St., 13th floor. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

Fifty Years After the U.S.-Backed Coup in Chile, What Are the Lessons for Today? Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party, editor of “Fidel Castro on Chile.” Sat. Sept. 30, 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite #250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

Solidarity with United Auto Workers union strike!

Continued from front page

tant they believe the "time is now" to take on the auto bosses.

"We haven't had COLA since 2006, we haven't had a pension since 2006 and a lot of other things since then. The only way you make a good living in this plant is to live here," said Craig Mellott, a millwright and strike captain for skilled trades workers. "You work 60 hours a week, and with driving time it's 70. Change gotta come."

"They talk about a good family/work balance, but you don't get any of that working here 70 hours a week!" added Vince Manders, a chief union steward.

Michael Allen, a part-time worker who has been what the company calls a "supplemental employee" for seven years, makes \$16.60 an hour while full-timers make twice that. There is no timeline to make full time, he said, no vacation time, no bonuses, no profit sharing or other benefits — but there is forced overtime.

"They should just roll us over to full time," he said. "We deserve the same pay for the same work and this is hard work!" The battle to end the divisive two-tier pay scale and use of temporary workers is a key part of the strike and one of the reasons workers are determined to fight.

Manders and Mellott don't think this will be a short strike. "There's a lot of good energy here, we need to stay focused," Mellott said. "Solidarity will be really important."

The union is demanding an end to the two tiers; a 40% wage increase over four years; restoration of cost-of-living allowance protection against inflation; pensions — not 401(k) plans — for all



workers; as well as reestablishing medical benefits for retirees and the right to strike over threatened plant closures.

The bosses are drooling over higher profits from electric vehicles, which they say can be built with at least 30% fewer workers. The union is demanding a 32-hour workweek for 40 hours pay to spread work around and prevent layoffs.

A car with a traditional internal combustion engine has 33,000 moving parts. Electric vehicle cars built today have just 13,000. EVs don't have oil to change, oil filters to replace, or need a cooling system.

The Big Three automakers, who have amassed nearly \$250 billion in profits over the last decade, say workers need to

sacrifice so they can compete with non-union companies like Tesla.

The bosses have already taken advantage of the transition to set up separate electric battery companies — outside the master UAW auto contract — along with South Korean bosses. The fight is on for the UAW to unionize them.

Ultium Cells, a joint venture of GM and South Korean LG, is located next door to the now shuttered Lordstown GM plant. It was the first of these plants organized by the UAW. The vote was 710-16 last December.

When Ultium opened up, workers started at \$16.50 an hour and topped out at \$20. A tentative union contract approved Aug. 27 raises the starting wage to \$20 an hour, increasing to

\$21 after six months. All other issues are still on the table.

The transition will also hit the auto parts suppliers, many of which are concentrated near auto plants in Midwestern cities, such as Kokomo, Indiana; Lima, Ohio; and Detroit, as well as hundreds of thousands of related jobs from the steel industry to your car mechanic.

Workers join strike pickets

Some 2,000 UAW members and strike supporters came to the union's Sept. 15 rally in Detroit. A large contingent participated from Louisville, Kentucky, some from the John Deere plant

in Illinois, and Jeep workers came from Toledo. UAW Local 600 members from the Detroit Ford River Rouge plant had a big presence.

UNITE HERE union workers from Detroit-area casinos, who are in contract negotiations, were there. "We're supporting the autoworkers and we may need their support in the future," Terrell George, vice president of UNITE HERE Local 24, told the *Militant*. Members of the Association of Flight Attendants union and Amazon workers trying to organize at the DTW1 facility in Romulus were there. UAW President Shawn

Fain was the main speaker.

There is a sense of pride among these workers. "Last night when we walked off the job at midnight, it was chaotic and organized at the same time," said Keegan Kellums, 24, who works the assembly line at Ford. "Only two of us in the plant have ever been on a strike before. I am so proud of my union for standing up."

The rally ended with a march to join the picket line of 1,000 UAW-organized Blue Cross Blue Shield workers, who went on strike last week. They chanted, "Blue Cross is on strike, don't get sick tonight."

Miners face rise in black lung as bosses reap profits

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Black lung, a devastating and often fatal disease caused by prolonged exposure to dust that scars lung tissue, has been on the rise among coal miners over the past two decades, as the bosses' drive for profits comes at the expense of miners' health conditions and lives. A big cause of this is the huge amounts of silica dust generated by digging through layers of sandstone to gain access to seams of coal.

Silica dust is 20 times more toxic than coal dust and causes severe forms of black lung after just a few years of exposure. Silica dust particles are so fine that respirators can fail to capture them and they get imbedded in miners' lungs.

About one in five miners in the Central Appalachia coalfields of West Virginia, Kentucky and Virginia have black lung, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports. Miners and their union — the United Mine Workers of America — virtually eliminated black lung in the 1970s. Some 40,000 miners in West Virginia walked out of the mines in 1969, in a wildcat strike backed by the newly formed Black Lung Association. They forced the state legislature to pass a bill ordering coal bosses to pay compensation for black lung. Clinics were set up all over Appalachia.

The action inspired thousands of miners to rise up and take back their union, overthrowing the corrupt Tony Boyle regime. The union then fought to establish union safety committees in the mines, gaining the power to shut down production to enforce safe working conditions. Incidents of black lung declined more than 90% from the 1970s to mid-1990s.

Since then, part of a long retreat of the labor movement that is now at an end, coal bosses have been able to greatly increase the number of non-union mines. There they run production with fewer miners working longer hours with greater exposure to the dust. And black lung has had a resurgence.

Under pressure from the union, the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration proposed a new rule this summer to cut the amount of silica dust that miners can be exposed to in an eight-hour shift by half — from 100 to 50 micrograms per cubic meter. As far back as 1974, on the heels of the

big struggles waged by union miners in the coalfields, the change had been recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"At long last, there is a proposed rule to limit the level of silica dust in mines," said United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts in a statement issued June 30. "Workers in other industries have long been protected from excessive exposure to silica dust, but miners were not, even though they work in an environment where silica dust is encountered daily."

In a public hearing in Beaver, West Virginia, Aug. 10, miners discussed the proposed rule and their experiences being asked by company officials to help falsify samples to evade penalties.

"I've got 30 years of experience. I know the tricks and how they operate," miner Terry Lilly testified at the hearing. He has black lung, with just 40% lung capacity. "If we can stop this, we can save some lives."

At a black lung testing center in Oak Hill, West Virginia, at the end of August, Kevin Weikle, 34, found out he has already developed reduced lung capacity from progressive massive fibrosis, an aggressive form of black lung that affects younger miners. "It never crossed my mind that I'd be like this at 34," he told the hearing.

Regulations by themselves accomplish little. It will take a renewed fight by the miners and their union, backed by active solidarity from the labor movement, to enforce the proposed new lower silica dust levels, and to reimpose union-run safety committees with the power to shut production.

'We're at work more than we're at home,' Michigan Ford workers say

BY TONY LANE

WAYNE, Mich. — "There has been a huge hiring at this plant since 2020 — 1,500 to 1,700 workers, all young people starting out at \$16.65 an hour. Many of them with families, and they can't afford much," Steve Kovich, picket captain and member of United Auto Workers Local 900, told *Militant* worker-correspondents Tony Lane and Cherise Weston at the Ford assembly plant here Sept. 18. "There are around 3,000 workers in the plant."

"I've been here for two years and I'm making \$19.40 an hour," DJ Jenkins told us. "We got the call Thursday night we were going out. I'm glad we can represent our union brothers and sisters."

"People used to kill for these jobs. Not anymore," he said. "We're at work more than we're at home."

His sister, Maddie, also works in the plant, along with another brother and a cousin. "Of course, getting rid of the two-tier wages is important," she said. "But all the union demands are important. We need better hours. Overtime should be voluntary. Inflation is wild. You can make more working at Target today than the starting pay at Ford. And we need to get the COLA back.

"We're fighting for our rights here.

I realize now how important the union is. And the support we've received is great," she added.

DJ Jenkins said he attaches soft top brackets and has other tasks as cars go by, one a minute. "There's time-study people who watch the line, and if you don't look busy, they add another job."

We discussed some of the other labor battles going on, and other issues affecting working people around the world. I introduced them to my campaign as Socialist Workers Party candidate for county executive in Allegheny County in Pittsburgh. I showed them a *Militant* article about the protests in Iran. Maddie Jenkins said she was taking a class at Schoolcraft College where they had discussed the protests there for women's rights.

We also met Holly and Chris Jones, who were driving back to Chicago from vacation and stopped by the picket line to share solidarity. Chris is a member of UAW Local 588 at the Chicago Ford Stamping Plant. Holly is a member of the International Association of Machinists at United Airlines.

"I want to make sure we get rid of the two-tier wages. The new hires need to get a fair deal," Chris Jones said. "There are workers working side by side, one making \$8 an hour less than the other."

Washington seeks bloc with Vietnam in China conflict

Continued from front page

with Beijing, especially since Moscow's war on Ukraine.

Over the last five months, Biden has welcomed the Philippines' president to the White House for the first time in over a decade and hosted prime ministers and presidents from India, Japan and South Korea. For years the U.S. rulers have sought to contain Beijing's challenge to their decadeslong supremacy in the Pacific, Washington's biggest prize since it emerged as top dog at the end of the second imperialist world war.

The Vietnamese government used the meeting to confer "comprehensive strategic partnership" status on Washington, a designation it reserved for the rulers of China, Russia, India and South Korea until now, seeking to boost its own foothold as a manufacturing hub in the region. With economic growth in China slowing, and Moscow weakened and isolated, the Vietnamese government has sought deeper ties with rulers in the U.S., Australia, Japan and Singapore.

China remains Vietnam's main source of raw materials. But U.S.-Vietnam trade has ballooned in recent years as companies, including Apple, Nike and Intel, shifted manufacturing away from China. Workers' wages are lower in Vietnam.

Senior executives from Google, Intel, Boeing and other U.S. companies met with Vietnamese firms in Hanoi Sept.

11 to hammer out plans to deepen trade. Supply chains of semiconductors are the centerpiece of the discussions, along with access to minerals used to make computer components. Vietnam has the world's largest deposits after China.

Washington lifted its arms embargo of Vietnam in 2016 and has sold it two coast guard vessels. Hanoi has expressed interest in buying F-16 fighter jets. Moscow currently supplies 80% of Vietnam's armaments.

"The upgrading of the U.S.-Vietnam relationship carries huge significance given Washington's complicated history with Hanoi," CNN said Sept. 10. What it meant by "complicated" was the deployment of 8 million U.S. military personnel over two decades to try to crush the struggle of the Vietnamese people for self-determination and to reunify their country.

Millions in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were slaughtered as the U.S. rulers dropped more bombs than in all previous wars combined, before Washington went down to a historic defeat in 1975.

Just four years later, after capitalism was overturned in Vietnam, troops from the People's Republic of China invaded Vietnam, the bitter fruit of the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to deepen its collaboration with the U.S. imperialists at the time. Washington hadn't given up on finding a way to turn back the conquests of the Vietnamese Revolution.

The situation is markedly different

today. Vietnamese and U.S. leaders see common goals against Beijing's advances. In 2014 Beijing moved an oil rig into waters claimed by Vietnam. This August, Hanoi protested after Beijing conducted military drills and forbade other vessels from entering an area that includes the Paracel Islands, claimed by both Vietnam and Taiwan.

China's coast guard has stepped up enforcement of Beijing's territorial claims, repeatedly expelling Vietnamese fishing boats. Since 2014, 98 Vietnamese boats have been destroyed by Chinese vessels.

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from pathfinderpress.com

Rail workers union: 'All out to back the UAW'

Striking autoworkers taking on the bosses at the Big Three got a big boost from the SMART-TD union of rail conductors, brakemen and engineers, the largest rail union.

"What we can do, in addition to not crossing the picket lines to service industries if our safety is in jeopardy, is that we can support the efforts of UAW when we aren't on duty," Jeremy Ferguson, president of the SMART-Transportation Division, wrote to all the union's members Sept. 16. He said the UAW strike is "good news for the labor movement."

"It is my hope that as a union, we will do everything we can to show our solidarity with UAW in their time of need," Ferguson said. "Like all unions, their strike fund is not robust enough to pay their members the salaries they need to live off of indefinitely. If you are interested in helping, please do what you can to support their cause."

"Please get out and walk the line with our UAW brothers and sisters."

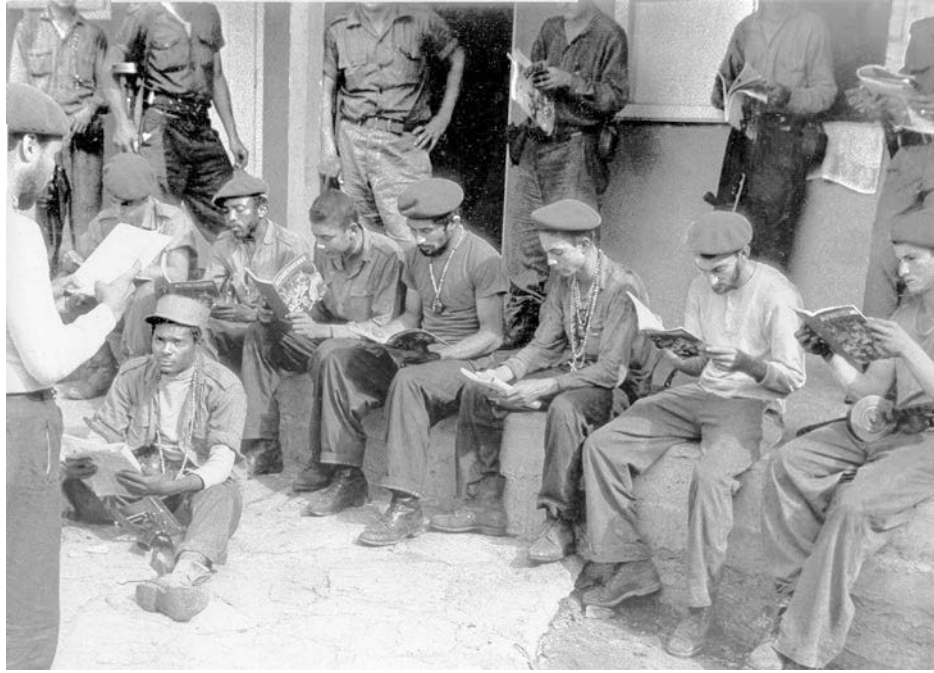
"Find a UAW demonstration, put on your SMART T-shirt, pick up some pizzas and let them know that we stand with them."

"UAW workers are in this fight for the long haul. Any reinforcement our union can provide them will go a long way toward their fight and the labor movement throughout this country."

— KATHIE FITZGERALD

How Cuba's revolution took hold in the Escambray mountains

From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution by Victor Dreke is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. As a high school student, Dreke joined Cuba's revolutionary movement, then became a Rebel Army combatant. After the 1959 triumph, as the socialist revolution deepened, Dreke served as a commander of the volunteer battalions that took the revolution into the Escambray mountains and defeated counterrevolutionary bands there. Later, he became Che Guevara's deputy in Cuba's internationalist mission in the Congo. For decades he served as a representative of the Cuban Revolution throughout Africa as well as a political leader at home. The excerpt is from "Lucha Contra Bandidos" in the Escambray." Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Granma

Volunteer militia members learn to read in Escambray mountains, 1961. Literacy campaign and land reform benefited peasants, building support for drive to defeat U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary bands. These steps were crucial in advancing Cuba's unfolding socialist revolution.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY VÍCTOR DREKE

In Cuba at the triumph of the revolution there were a half million illiterates, and there were another half million who were only semiliterate. That was the concrete situation. If one were to go to Pinar del Río or to the Escambray the situation was terrible. There was no electricity, no running water — what little water there was came from wells. There were no stores. There

were few radios, since you couldn't even receive radio signals throughout much of these mountainous areas. All this made the enemy's job easier.

From the time of the revolutionary war, nearly all these individuals I've talked about — who would eventually become counterrevolutionaries — were concentrated in the Escambray. They worked on some peasants and managed to recruit a few. At the same time, they also committed abuses in the areas where they functioned. They murdered peasants, they raped peasant women. They burned down schools and homes. So the peasants were terrorized; they were deathly afraid of the counterrevolutionaries. Some peasants joined them consciously, of course, but others joined out of fear. This is how the counterrevolutionary movement was built. ...

One of those in charge of the agrarian reform there, for example, was the counterrevolutionary Evelio Duque. ... Duque headed up INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform] in Sancti Spíritus, and he removed the compañeros who were revolutionaries from the agrarian reform and its leadership. He removed people like Commander Julio Castillo, a revolutionary who was highly regarded in Sancti Spíritus. Then Duque recruited others who, like himself, weren't revolutionaries.

What did Duque do? He committed a series of injustices. He expropriated land

that shouldn't have been taken. Or else he extorted money in exchange for not expropriating someone's land.

So the agrarian reform wasn't implemented as the commander in chief [Fidel Castro] and the revolutionary leadership had laid out in the Agrarian Reform Law. Nor as Che [Guevara] and the compañeros of the [Revolutionary] Directorate had done during the war. ...

The conscious revolutionaries at that time were not yet Marxists or Leninists — and I'm not just speaking about myself — but at least we wanted a revolution. We wanted to prevent the bourgeoisie from returning to power. We wanted the poor to be in charge. We wanted racial equality. That's what we were then.

But the fact is we gave the Escambray to the bandits as a gift during the first stage. That has to be said.

When the first clean-up operation began in 1960, when the army arrived, when Fidel arrived, the peasants responded, and entire battalions of peasant militias from the Escambray were formed. The peasants asked for weapons and they defended the Escambray. So what the enemy thought was going to be a den of thieves was, by determined revolutionary combat, turned into a bulwark of the revolution. ...

The first clean-up operation in the Escambray ran from the end of 1960 through the first months of 1961. But

we had to withdraw our troops with a few bands still remaining. And then in April came Playa Girón.

We withdrew our troops early on in 1961 because they had already been mobilized for months. They were workers and peasants who had voluntarily left their workplaces and were absent from their jobs. Since they were taking part in the clean-up operation, they weren't producing. It's important to remember that the enemy used the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray to try to drain the resources of the fledgling revolution, which was fighting to resolve the country's economic problems.

Most militia volunteers weren't getting paid anything. For those who had jobs, their factories and workplaces continued to pay their wages to their families. ...

These bandits were dependent on imperialism. We can't look at the bandits in isolation, on their own, as just some group of crazies who took up arms. No, no, no. This was organized. They were being organized as a fifth column to back an invasion by the United States. An important mission was assigned to these bandits by Washington.

At the time of the first clean-up, the mission for which the bandits were being prepared was to attack and seize the main towns when the invasion came — Trinidad and all those little towns there — and to take the highways. In addition, within the cities it was expected that organized counterrevolutionaries would take up arms when the moment came.

In other words, all this was being directed by imperialism.

What happened?

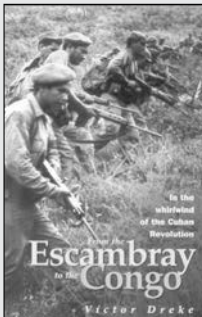
The commander in chief, Fidel, led the process of eliminating the bands prior to Girón. The murder and harassment of peasants had to be stopped. What's more, we knew an attack was coming. There had already been various types of sabotage actions by the bandits in different regions. For example, near Trinidad they blew up fuel tanks.

We made the effort to rapidly clean up the Escambray, so we wouldn't face a fifth column already armed and trained.

When the landing came at Girón, very few of the bandits remained. They were in flight. They were in hiding. They controlled nothing. This was part of defeating the U.S. invasion plan. The invaders were left without a rear guard.

September
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Democrats attack political rights

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The stakes for working people and our unions are high. Key constitutional freedoms, including the right to free speech, are under attack. Trump, a leading candidate for one of the U.S. rulers' two main capitalist parties, is currently facing 91 felony charges. If they can frame up one of their own, the rulers will be more than ready to use such methods against working people, as they have done repeatedly in the past.

Fearing the charges will be thrown out or that Trump will be acquitted, liberals and some Never-Trump Republicans are now suing to have state authorities ban Trump from running. They're pinning their hopes on section 3 of the 14th Amendment, adopted after the Civil War. It was intended to disqualify former Confederate combatants from holding office because they engaged in "insurrection or rebellion" or had "given aid or comfort to the enemies" of the U.S.

Lawsuits have been filed in Colorado, Minnesota, New Hampshire and Wisconsin demanding state authorities unilaterally disqualify Trump from running. Similar cases are being prepared in at least eight other states.

Targeting political rights

Rep. Adam Schiff told MSNBC Sept. 3 the disqualification clause "doesn't require that you be convicted of insurrection." He claims "it fits Donald Trump to a T." But this flies in the face of constitutional protections against anyone being found guilty and punished without access to a court of law to defend themselves. And the fact that the Democrats' 2021 impeachment of Trump — claiming he had incited an insurrection — was thrown out by the Senate doesn't bother Schiff.

Politicians in Colorado who demand Trump's name be removed from the ballot claim he orchestrated a mob of "neo-Confederates and neo-Nazis" to "violently storm and seize the United States Capitol, a feat even the Confederacy never achieved during the Civil War."

The melee on Jan. 6, 2021, was nothing like an insurrection, much less the Civil War. There are no "neo-Confederates" today seeking to restart the Civil War and reimpose slavery.

The last time Congress used the 14th

Amendment's section 3 to toss out the result of an election was to unseat Wisconsin Socialist Party candidate Victor Berger in 1918. Berger ran and was elected to the House of Representatives while under indictment for violating the Espionage Act. This was passed by the legislature to silence opponents of U.S. entry into the first imperialist world war.

Berger was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. While out on appeal, he went to Washington to take his seat. United in defense of the Espionage Act and its blanket denial of free speech, Democrats and Republicans voted 309-1 against seating him. Berger was re-elected the following year in a special election called to replace him, but the House refused him again.

Many of the most dangerous and contemptible laws that attack basic constitutional freedoms were passed by the U.S. rulers and their two parties in the shadow of the war and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. This includes the 1918 frame-up and imprisonment of Socialist Party presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs under the Espionage Act.

Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, part of President Woodrow Wilson's Democratic Party administration, set up raids on the homes and headquarters of communists and militant workers in 33 cities in 1919 and 1920, leading to the imprisonment and firing of thousands and the deportation of many foreign-



Boston cops seize socialist literature during 1919-20 Palmer Raids. Inset, Victor Berger's 1918 Socialist Party election campaign. Congress voted 309-1 to bar him from office after he won.

born workers. These blows to political rights were aimed at instilling fear and curbing militancy across the labor movement and growing interest among working people in the inspiring example of the socialist revolution in Russia.

The gamut of laws targeting Trump today have always been used first and foremost against workers, especially those opposed to the rulers' wars and those attracted to fighting to replace capitalist exploitation with something better. And, no matter who is targeted today, these laws will be turned against working people tomorrow.

"Every constitutional protection that allows workers to debate a road forward

and to organize to defend ourselves from attacks by the bosses and their government must be safeguarded," Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida, told the *Militant*. "Workers use these freedoms whenever we resist bosses' assaults, like striking. United Auto Workers are doing today. And they are crucial to organizing opposition to the threat of new wars and actions against Washington's embargo of Cuba.

"That's why we speak out against the witch hunt against Trump today. To protect our rights, we say, drop the charges against Trump! Defend constitutional freedoms!"

Protests mark one year since death of Zhina Amini

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In Amini's hometown of Saqqez, the regime stationed troops, snipers and armed vehicles. Government forces released water from a dam, flooding stream beds around the cemetery where she is buried to prevent people from getting to her graveside for the ceremony that her parents had announced. Her father was placed under house arrest.

But in a sign of the regime's weakness, a strike called by a coalition of Kurdish groups shut down businesses in at least 18 cities in the Kurdish region and in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchistan, home to the Baluch people, another mostly Sunni oppressed nationality. Government forces opened fire in the Kurdish cities of Kermanshah and

Mahabad, injuring several protesters.

The day before, thousands demonstrated in Zahedan, as they have almost every week for nearly a year. "An attack on Kurdistan is an attack on Baluchistan," read signs at the protest. Another popular slogan was "Kurds, Baluch, Azerbaijani, Turkish Equality," referring to various oppressed minorities.

Decreased religious, ethnic prejudice

"The biggest sign of the awakening of the Iranian nation is that ethnic and religious prejudices have greatly decreased," Sunni cleric Abdul-Hamid told protesters before the march began. Iranians "respect each other's language and dress and everyone has compassion for each other."

"Shias and Sunnis, Muslims and non-Muslims, everyone respects each other," he added. Week after week Abdul-Hamid has called on the regime to free all the political prisoners and to stop attacking the protests. "The Iranian nation," he said "wants justice and freedom."

During the four months of protests following the death of Amini, some 500 protesters were killed by the regime's thugs and hundreds were injured. In the largest single massacre, several dozen were killed or wounded outside the mosque in Zahedan Sept. 30, 2022, when police snipers opened fire. Defenders of Baluch rights have called for a strike on Sept. 30, the anniversary of Bloody Friday.

Weekly Sunday, Monday and Tuesday protests by retirees demanding an increase in social security benefits to match double-digit inflation took place as usual across the country.

A shift in attitudes marked by the protests during the last year is continuing to widen fractures inside the regime.

A recent article in *Javan*, one of the newspapers run by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, noted that the actions of the "Guidance Patrol" — the official name of the "morality police" — have backfired.

The patrol is supposed to "guide" women to wear a headscarf that covers all their hair and dress modestly. But the image people now have "is that the police are violent," *Javan* complains, and that they "grab girls and throw them in the van."

Despite the regime's efforts, growing number of people believe that how women dress is an individual choice. A recently circulated video shows two women riding a motorcycle together in Tehran, even though women are not allowed to get motorcycle driver's licenses. One is wearing a hijab. The other woman's hair blows freely in the wind.

Jury acquits Michigan defendants entrapped by FBI

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

In an important victory for constitutional rights, a jury in Bellaire, Michigan, acquitted three men Sept. 15 who had been accused of conspiring to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020. It was the final court proceeding in a three-year frame-up and entrapment effort by the FBI and federal prosecutors that left nine men in prison and two others acquitted.

Michael and William Null, twin brothers, and Eric Molitor were found not guilty of all charges.

The government's charges centered around a 2020 trip by a dozen men, a third of them government informants or undercover FBI agents, who carried out surveillance of the landscape around Whitmer's vacation cottage. No one was harmed, no property was damaged, no future attack organized. Prosecutors claimed the plot was a conspiracy organized by right-wing militia members and others opposed

to restrictive COVID-19 mandates.

All of the prosecutions were based on the testimony of undercover FBI agents and informers, who had pushed for the loose group to take action. "Anything that has to do with three-letter government, I'm suspicious," one prospective juror told the judge, referring to the FBI and other government spy outfits. "I've had friends and family devastated by those agencies."

FBI Special Agent Henrik Impola testified for hours during the trial, detailing how the agency infiltrated various meetings and activities that sometimes involved the defendants.

"Undercover Dan," a paid informant who spent months operating inside the group, was the second operative to testify on behalf of the state. "Dan glued it all together," Molitor, who took the stand in his defense, testified. He was the one "actually bringing people together and setting things up." Dan was the ringleader, he told the jury.

The FBI claims it spends an average of \$42 million annually for so-called Confidential Human Sources. They had so many at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, they had to do an audit later to figure out how many, Steven D'Antuono, formerly in charge of the FBI's Washington field office, told a House Judiciary Committee.

The use of informants — and fabricated evidence and misrepresented information from them — has come up at the trials of hundreds of those accused of actions on Jan. 6.

"It's all politics," defense attorney William Barnett told the jury in his opening statement, pointing to the lack of evidence of any actual crime. "There's something going on here. I don't know what's going on. But it looks like weaponization of the government."

After the trial Barnett told the press, "They went after three people's lives and destroyed them for three years. I'm just lost for words."