

New York City in solidarity with railroad workers

written by Struggle-La Lucha New York bureau
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Omowale Clay of the December 12th Movement opens the solidarity rally. Photo: Johnnie Stevens

Dec. 7 — Hundreds came to New York City's Grand Central Terminal to protest President Joe Biden's strikebreaking against 115,000 railroad workers. Many commuters were sympathetic and took leaflets.

Union members and their supporters marched through the vast Grand Central Terminal, which, because of cutbacks, doesn't have any intercity passenger trains anymore.

Airplane pilots from Southwest Airlines came to the rally in their uniforms. Airline unions are also included under the Railway Labor Act of 1926. Laborers, Electricians, Nurses, Teachers, Teamsters, and Transit Workers were among the other unions represented.

The rally was initiated by the December 12th Movement and co-sponsored by Teamsters Local 808, Amazon Labor Union, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Workers Assembly Against Racism, and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper.

Omowale Clay of the December 12th Movement opened the rally. He denounced President Biden and Congress for imposing an agreement on workers.

Chris Silvera, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 808, denounced the century-old Railway Labor Act that makes it virtually impossible for railroad and airline workers to strike. Every worker should have sick days, said Silvera, referring to one of the demands of railroad unions.

Charles Jenkins is president of the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) and an officer in Transport Workers Union Local 100. He reminded everyone of the 2005 transit workers' strike in New York City. Jenkins denounced New York State's Taylor Law which makes it illegal for government employees to strike.

A representative from the Amazon Labor Union spoke, as did members of the

Workers Assembly Against Racism and the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition.

Steve Millies, a retired Amtrak worker, spoke for Struggle-La Lucha newspaper. He said that Joe Biden represented the Du Pont dynasty and the Mastercard loan sharks as a U.S. senator from Delaware.

Millies pointed to a loss of 90% of all railroad jobs since 1947, with over 1.3 million jobs destroyed. Instead of getting jobs at the CSX yard in Hamlet, North Carolina, workers were hired instead at a chicken parts sweatshop where 25 were killed in a 1991 fire.



Steve Millies, a retired Amtrak worker, at Dec. 7 protest in New York. SLL photo: Bill Dores



Teamsters Local 808, Dec. 7, New York. SLL photo: Bill Dores



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