

New York City in solidarity with railroad workers

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 9, 2022



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 Dore



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



Baltimore City escalates racist

attack on squeegee workers and Black youth

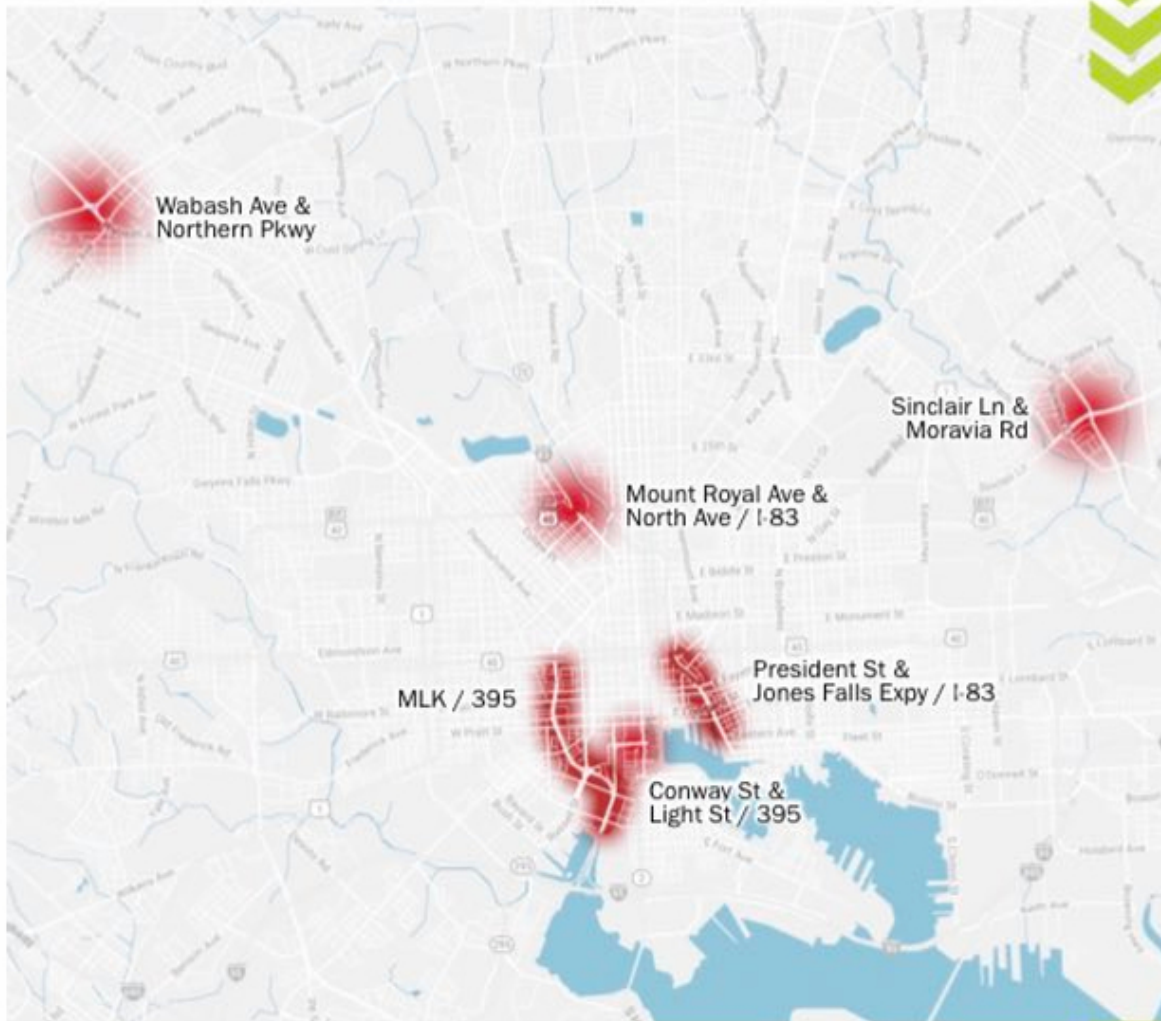
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Squeegee Map Disallowed Zones

AAME

The Collaborative selected six pilot zones to disallow panhandling and solicitation activity based on traffic data, accidents, 311/911 calls, reported incidents and community feedback.

These locations will be monitored by a quick response team to ensure no squeegeeing activity continues and to connect youth in these zones with services as quickly as possible. Our priority is safety for both youth and motorists.



Earlier this month, Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott's "Baltimore Squeegee

Collaborative” task force announced an [action plan](#). This plan claims to address the socioeconomic and cultural issues associated with the phenomenon of street laborers, usually in their teens or early 20s, known as “squeegee workers.” These workers aim to supplement their family’s income through cleaning the windshields of cars as they are stopped at intersections.

In reality, this plan simply escalates police crackdowns on the Black community and demonstrates that the Baltimore City government is firmly in the grip of local business owners and the investment banks behind them.

Scott’s plan comes after months of racist and repressive outcry from the business community in Baltimore since a Black teenage squeegee worker killed a 48-year-old white man, Timothy Reynolds, in self-defense.

The fatal shooting occurred when Reynolds exited his car, crossed nine lanes of traffic, and proceeded to swing a baseball bat wildly at a group of squeegee workers, all of whom were Black teenagers. Fearing for his life and that of his friends, one of the teens discharged a firearm and killed Reynolds.

Judge rejects plea deal

As Struggle-La Lucha has [previously reported](#), the prosecution of this 15-year-old Black teenager has continued since the teen was charged with first-degree murder in August. The teen’s indictment included seven other charges. He was charged as an adult on all counts, despite being 14 years old at the time of the alleged crimes.

The case took an unfortunate turn on Nov. 17, when a Baltimore City Juvenile Court judge rejected a plea deal that would have allowed the case to permanently move under the supervision of the juvenile justice system.

The teen’s persecution has not only played out in the courthouse, [but also in the media](#). Local television stations, radio programs and newspapers have depicted the

accused youth as a monster who represents the criminal and violent nature of the Black community.

This propaganda blitz had one clear goal: to whip up a racist panic and place pressure on the city government to enact harsher “law and order” policies.

As a part of this blitz, Timothy Reynolds’ family retained local reactionary attorney Thiru Vignarajah. When the plea deal was announced as a possibility, various members of the Reynolds family, with Vignarajah by their sides, spoke to the press to express their feelings of betrayal at the idea of a plea that would allow the teen to be prosecuted as a juvenile.

Without knowing the defendant, the Reynolds family nonetheless depicted the young squeegee worker as a monster and career criminal.

According to members of the defendant’s family present at the plea hearing, the Reynolds family repeated these lies in their victim impact statements before the judge. One individual went as far as to accuse the defendant of being a gang member. It was after this testimony, filled to the brim with racist tropes and stereotypes, that the judge issued his ruling that the 15-year-old be prosecuted as an adult.

Mayor, prosecutor make intentions clear

Mayor Scott’s proposed “squeegee action plan” is the exact product of the aforementioned prosecution and its corresponding media campaign. At the heart of the plan is a series of “panhandling” bans on intersections identified as squeegee worker hotspots.

Under Scott’s program, all “panhandling,” which includes squeegee work, will be prohibited at six major intersections/corridors throughout the city. This brazen plan comes on the heels of incoming Baltimore City State’s Attorney [Ivan Bates’](#)

[announcement](#) that he will pursue broader criminal action against squeegee workers.

Bates further asserted that he would press Scott to release restrictions that currently prevent police officers from approaching squeegee workers without a supervisor's approval.

The trial, the plan - it's all part of a deliberate Baltimore City policy effort to expel the Black community, and in particular Black youth, from the majority white gentrified areas and the downtown business corridor.

Nothing demonstrates the corner clearing plan's racist nature more than the fact that the banned corridors seem eerily similar to 1930s Baltimore city [redlining maps](#), which drove interest rates sky high for would-be Black homeowners.

Squeegee workers should not be met with prosecutions and character assassinations. The individuals who should face accountability are those who attack groups of teenagers on a street corner. Baltimore City and other cities like it don't need bans on panhandling. They need a genuine jobs program and an end to racist police terror.

Drop all the charges! Self-defense against racism is not murder! Community control of the police now!



As railroad workers fight for dignity and sick leave: Stop government strikebreaking!

written by Melinda Butterfield

December 9, 2022

Every worker has the right to withhold their labor. Concerted action and collective bargaining by workers are supposed to be protected by law.

That hasn't stopped President Biden from demanding on Nov. 28 that Congress stop over 100,000 railroad workers from striking.

The man in the White House said he was "reluctant to override the ratification procedures and the views of those who voted against the agreement." [Yet Biden insisted](#) that Congress enforce a tentative deal "without any modifications or delay."

The House of Representatives [promptly voted on Nov. 30](#) to impose an agreement by a vote of 290 to 137. The Senate agreed and Biden signed the bill forcing the

contract on railroad workers without their consent on Dec. 2. So much for the democratic right of railroad workers to vote on their contracts.

This is the thanks the labor movement gets for helping to stop the expected Republican landslide in the midterm elections. Forgotten were the volunteers dispatched from Black churches and union halls.

Railroad workers have been under attack for decades. Employment has fallen from [1.5 million workers in 1947](#) to [just 147,000 today](#).

This 90% drop in employment was the reason that Warren Buffett told Bloomberg Businessweek that he had his Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate gobble up the BNSF railway.

BNSF has 32,000 miles of track in 28 states as well as British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada. Yet there are only 35,000 workers that make the system's trains operate from Chicago, Alabama and Texas to California and the Pacific Northwest.

It was the BNSF that imposed a harsh new attendance policy earlier this year. Workers will be punished for being absent no matter what the reason, including going to a doctor.

Railroad management imposed these rules during the COVID-19 pandemic that killed so many transportation workers. At least 156 [New York City area transit workers](#) died of the coronavirus.

As noted in a [statement from the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-International Brotherhood of Teamsters](#), "the railroad is not a place to work while you're sick. It's dangerous. It requires full concentration, situational awareness, and decision-making."

BNSF employees can be fired for taking off just five holidays during their entire decades-long career. People get sick on holidays, too.

Most transportation workers don't have Monday through Friday work weeks. Neither do millions of workers in hospitals, restaurants and other 24/7 workplaces.

Job cuts kill

Railroad tycoon Warren Buffett doesn't have to worry about sick days. His fortune has [ballooned to \\$109.2 billion](#) while over a million people in the U.S. have died from the coronavirus.

As Willie Adams, International President of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), pointed out, "Warren Buffett can afford to pay wages for railroad workers who get sick and need to stay home or see a doctor."

Under collective bargaining, BNSF's drastic change in attendance policy was supposed to be subject to negotiation, not imposed by management.

A union grievance - which on railroads is called a time card - would describe it as being "arbitrary and capricious." Yet the Trump-appointed [Federal Judge Mark Pittman ruled](#) that workers couldn't strike over this issue.

It's the labor movement that fights for safety on the job. Back in 1909, one in nine train workers were injured, while one in 205 were killed annually on U.S. railroads.

The response of the old Interstate Commerce Commission - abolished in 1996 in the name of deregulation - was to stop collecting these embarrassing statistics. ("The Economic History of the United States" by Ernest Bogart)

For decades the Association of American Railroads attacked safety rules, claiming workers were being coddled. The AAR bosses called these absolutely necessary

regulations “feather bedding.”

Crew sizes were cut in both the U.S. and Canada. An inevitable result was 47 people killed in the 2013 train wreck in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. A lone engineer was the only crew member on a long train of oil tank cars.

Shooting strikers

What made these job cuts more heartbreaking was that Black and women workers were finally being hired in many railroad jobs.

This took decades of struggle. Charles Hamilton Houston, who mentored Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, repeatedly went to the U.S. Supreme Court to fight discrimination on the railroads.

Philip Randolph, the leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, helped organize the great 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech there.

One of the March on Washington’s ten demands was a \$2 per hour minimum wage. [That’s worth \\$19.41](#) per hour today.

Biden’s attack on rail labor comes a century after railroaders employed in shops and roundhouses revolted against a 12% wage cut. Nearly 400,000 workers walked off the job on July 1, 1922.

President Warren G. Harding and his thoroughly corrupt administration smashed the strike. At least 10 workers were killed by the National Guard and private detectives across the country.

Striking railroad workers were shot down in 1877 by troops sent by President Rutherford B. Hayes. He betrayed Black people by letting the Reconstruction

governments be overthrown by the Ku Klux Klan.

Jay Gould broke the 1886 strike on the Missouri Pacific, now part of the Union Pacific. The rail tycoon declared he could hire one half of the working class to shoot the other half.

Railroad strikers, led by the future socialist leader Eugene V. Debs, were killed by General Nelson Miles in 1894. This war criminal had Geronimo captured and later seized Puerto Rico as a U.S. colony in 1898.

In 1991, George H.W. Bush was woken in the White House to sign a bill ordering railroad employees back to work.

Fighting for all workers

Today railroad workers are again fighting for justice. Their simple demand for more sick days is being denied. So is their right to spend more time with their families.

Billionaires and banksters are lined up against railroad workers. One of the most hypocritical claims of the wealthy and powerful is that a rail strike will endanger clean water by disrupting shipments of chemicals to purify it.

This is the same ruling class that poisoned the children of Flint, Michigan, with dirty water. U.S. sanctions preventing the shipment of chlorine to treat water and sewage helped [kill 500,000 children in Iraq](#).

Just six railroad monopolies control 90% of railroad mileage in Canada and the United States. These criminals abandoned at least 50,000 miles of railroad.

Using the speed-up system called "Precision Scheduled Railroading," [another 61,000 railroad jobs](#) have been eliminated since January 2015.

Meanwhile, these rail outfits [paid \\$196 billion in dividends](#) and stock buy-backs over

the last 10 years. That's far more than the \$136 billion that railroads spent on new equipment and maintaining the right-of-way.

All workers have the right to strike. If union members need to strike, every poor and working person should support it.

Such a struggle will inspire millions like the Black Lives Matter movement did.

The writer is a retired Amtrak worker and a member of the American Train Dispatchers Association and Transportation Communications Union.



Dockworkers fight for a decent contract

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Early in the morning on Nov. 2, dockworkers, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Locals 10, 34, and 91, walked off the job in a one-day work stoppage, closing down the Port of Oakland. It was reported on KTVU Fox

News that it will take a week to recover from the one-day work stoppage.

Keith Shanklin, past president of ILWU Local 34, said, “We’ve been trying since July 1 to negotiate a contract with the PMA. We’ve been faithfully working, even through the pandemic, without any stoppage.” The workers are angry that the Pacific Maritime Association, representing the port’s cargo ship carriers and terminal operators, is prolonging ill-faith contract negotiations with ILWU.

The militant “point of production” action occurred at the Port of Oakland. Dockworkers say that if all the ILWU locals on the West Coast were to call a strike, they would have the powerful leverage they need to settle contract negotiations with PMA.

PMA is under additional seasonal pressure to unload the holiday merchandise currently in the port and still at sea. At the same time, a possible nationwide rail strike that was thought to have been settled looms again after two major unions rejected that contract proposal.

KTVU Fox News reported that a “West Coast port closure and a national rail strike would quickly return the entire U.S. to the bad old days of the supply chain crisis, perhaps even worse.”

Keith Shanklin served as president of Local 34 during the pandemic. He and past president Trent Willis of Local 10 demonstrated strong leadership during the pandemic. Keith Shanklin, ‘Shank,’ also served as the secretary-treasurer of the Million Worker March.



Kroger-Albertsons merger means layoffs, higher food prices

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A proposed deal between two of the biggest grocery chains in the U.S. — Kroger and Albertsons — has many thousands of workers worried about losing their jobs. It also raises the possibility of more food deserts and worsening food prices.

Grocery prices have already risen by nearly 12% in the latest capitalist inflation crisis. If the deal goes through, the new corporation will control 20% of the U.S. grocery market with 5,000 stores in the 48 contiguous states.

Corporate mergers are always followed by a period of consolidation of assets. That means closures of some stores and layoffs. Both Kroger and Albertsons have a history of disregarding workers' rights and turning their backs on the communities that have brought them billions of dollars.

Under the agreement, Kroger would buy Albertsons for nearly \$25 billion. It isn't by

any stretch the largest dollar amount among corporate mergers. Others, among banks, telecommunications companies, and energy giants like Exxon Mobil, have been worth over 10 times that much.

It is the latest in a trend of retail mergers over the last 30 years. The emergence of big high-tech, warehouse-based corporations, Amazon, Walmart, and Costco, has set the wave of consolidations. By shrinking the workforce, they've taken over most grocery sales in the U.S.

In addition to combining with Albertsons, Kroger is looking to mimic the Amazon model by building giant high-tech warehouses at a dozen or more locations. This technology-based war among the retail giants is what underlies the proposed merger. At the same time, it has led to a heightened workers' struggle, including an energetic unionization campaign by tens of thousands of Amazon warehouse workers.

A consolidation deal in 2014 between Albertsons and Safeway illustrates how mergers wipe out jobs and how ineffective regulations have become. The Federal Trade Commission approved the deal with the condition that Albertsons sell 168 of their stores to a much smaller grocery chain, Haggen. Haggen only owned 18 stores at the time, and buying 168 more was a highly leveraged deal.

The obligation to sell to Haggen was supposed to ensure competition, but undercapitalized Haggen's failure was a foregone conclusion. Albertsons launched a competitive war against Haggen, forcing it into bankruptcy in just over a year. No federal regulator had the power to do anything about it.

Food Chain Workers Alliance

As corporations grow and control more of their market, capitalist regulations become proportionately weaker. Suzanne Adely, Co-Director of the Food Chain

Workers Alliance, spoke with SLL about the merger and what capitalist consolidation can mean for workers, using the example of the meat and poultry industry.

“The industry is controlled by only a few big corporations. During COVID, the leverage they have meant that there was no transparency over health and safety. This led to a terrible number of Covid infections. It also means they have more control over the supply chain. For example, if they are a supplier for a government contract, maybe for school lunches, they can be chosen for their cheapest bid without regard for their health and safety record. Their sheer size diminishes transparency and lets them avoid any accountability.”

Corporate mergers must be approved by one of the capitalist government’s federal regulators. But the anti-trust system in the U.S. is weak by design. As a result, only rarely have similar mergers been blocked.

Capitalist competition leads to mergers. As a result, fewer and fewer corporations control larger market shares as time goes by under capitalism. This trend is part of the DNA of the capitalist economy and is explained by classical Marxism.

In the 19th century, most economists thought that the competitive era of capitalism was permanent. But Karl Marx recognized the inevitability of the concentration of capital and market share into the hands of fewer and larger corporations. In “Capital” he wrote, “The battle of competition is fought by the cheapening of commodities. The cheapness of commodities depends ... on the productiveness of labor, and this again on the scale of production. Therefore, the larger capitals beat the smaller.”

Some Democratic politicians have spoken out against the merger, including Senators Bernie Sanders, Amy Klobuchar and Elizabeth Warren. Their position against it may help to secure their base as the Democratic Party worries about the midterm

elections. But corporate power rolls over liberal politicians all the time.

The only real challenge to corporate power is that of workers and the community. In 2019 Kroger closed five supermarkets in Los Angeles. The United Food and Commercial Workers union was joined by the LA chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, and a number of community organizations based in South LA in a fierce struggle to save workers' jobs and prevent another food desert in the Black community. This union and community alliance, along with the amazing union drive being conducted by Amazon workers, are examples of how to challenge capitalist corporations' attempts to maximize their profits and beat down the working class.

When we fight, we win!



Railroad workers have had enough

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President Biden announced a tentative agreement on Sept. 15 between the railroad

monopolies and unions representing 115,000 railroad workers. It still has to be voted upon by union members.

The terms may include a 24% increase in wages over four years and a retroactive pay package. Railroad bosses are notorious for agreeing to new contracts years after the old one expired.

A big issue is not being penalized for taking off work to see a doctor. None of these items have been officially disclosed. Everything had to be clawed out of the railroad outfits.

Railroad workers have been [under attack for decades](#). While there were two million workers employed on U.S. railroads in 1920, their number is now less than 150,000.

The capitalist economy would still grind to a halt without their labor. Wheat, corn, lumber, steel, cars, chemicals and coal are shipped by rail. So are many other items.

The elimination of almost all passenger trains outside of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor may lessen the railroad industry's visibility. Deindustrialization, especially the closing of many steel mills, has cost thousands of railroad jobs.

Yet globalization depends on freight trains carrying double-stacked containers from seaports to their destination. The seven big U.S. and Canadian "class 1" railroads hauled in [\\$27 billion of net income](#) last year.

That's more than [twice as much](#) what these railroads paid in wages. Meanwhile, CSX CEO James Foote [raked in \\$20 million](#).

These vast profits don't prevent rail bosses from turning the screws even tighter on workers. Earlier this year BNSF arbitrarily imposed a new attendance policy without any consultation with unions.

Workers are being threatened with being fired for going to a doctor or even a hospital visit. Forget about taking your child to the clinic.

BNSF is completely owned by the Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate, whose CEO Warren Buffett has a [\\$94.6 billion fortune](#).

Most transportation workers don't have Monday through Friday work weeks. Neither do millions of workers in hospitals, restaurants and other 24/7 workplaces.

Many freight engineers and conductors are on call with no set work schedule. They may be forced, along with other railroaders, to be away from their families for a week or more.

Yet their justified demand for more sick days, even if unpaid, was fought by railroad companies.

Railroad lobby lies

The Association of American Railroads has for decades been spreading lies about railroad workers. The AAR called safety rules "featherbedding." Train crews were slashed.

Railroad companies want to operate lengthy freight trains with just one worker. Or none at all, with the trains operated by remote control.

The tragic result of these cutbacks was the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster in Quebec, where 47 people were killed in 2013. This runaway train had just a one-person crew.

Railroad capitalists aren't satisfied with getting rid of 1.3 million jobs over the last 75 years and tearing up 100,000 miles of track. They got rid of most passenger trains before dumping them on Amtrak.

These money bags have a new scheme misleadingly called "precision scheduled

railroading.” It [destroyed 45,000 railroad jobs](#) in the last six years, a 29% cut in employees.

Surface Transportation Board Chair [Martin Oberman said](#) that the class 1 outfits have “cut labor below the bone... In order to make up for the shortage of labor, they are overworking and abusing the workforces they have.”

Trains have increased in length to as much as two miles or more. Railroad yards have been abandoned or downsized. Even the big capitalists who are railroad shippers are angry at the decline in service.

[According to the Surface Transportation Board](#), the class 1 outfits paid out \$196 billion in dividends and stock buy-backs over the last 10 years. That’s far more than the \$136 billion that railroads spent on new equipment and maintaining the right-of-way.

For almost two centuries the government has lavished subsidies upon the railroads. The latest example is the \$14 billion the feds spent on positive train control, a safety system that was decades overdue.

The most notorious of these handouts were the vast land grants stolen from Indigenous nations. Custer had it coming and he died for the Northern Pacific railroad, now part of BNSF.

Thousands of miles of track were laid by enslaved Africans, both before and after the Civil War. The “steel-driving man” John Henry was a prisoner who was worked to death building the Chesapeake and Ohio railway, now part of CSX.

Warren Buffett needs to pay reparations.

Shooting down workers

Striking railroad workers were shot down in 1877 by troops sent by President Rutherford B. Hayes. He betrayed Black people by letting the Reconstruction governments be overthrown by the Ku Klux Klan.

Jay Gould broke the 1886 strike on the Missouri Pacific, now part of the Union Pacific. The rail tycoon declared he could hire one half of the working class to shoot the other half.

General Miles shot down railroad strikers in Chicago in 1894. This war criminal had Geronimo captured and later seized Puerto Rico as a U.S. colony in 1898.

The current negotiations happened a century after railroad workers employed in shops and roundhouses revolted against a 12% wage cut. Nearly 400,000 workers walked off the job on July 1, 1922.

President Warren G. Harding and his thoroughly corrupt administration smashed the strike. At least 10 workers were killed by the National Guard and private detectives across the country.

In 1991, George H.W. Bush was woken in the White House to sign a bill ordering railroad employees back to work. The current negotiations were also met by threats of government intervention.

After years of the big business media claiming the workers and their unions don't matter, the White House had to get involved.

Joe Biden may be smiling, but he wouldn't have tolerated a strike, either. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi had legislation ready to crush it.

All workers have the right to strike. If union members vote to reject the proposed agreement and need to strike, every poor and working person should support it.

A coast-to-coast strike will inspire millions like the Black Lives Matter movement did.

The writer is a retired Amtrak worker and a member of the American Train Dispatchers Association and Transportation Communications Union.



The great revolutionary Saladin Muhammad joins the ancestors

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 9, 2022



Greetings Comrades,

And thank you for your patience and support today. It is with great sadness and profound loss that we announce the passing of our exemplary revolutionary warrior and leader, Comrade Brother Saladin Muhammad. Saladin passed this morning after a long battle with illness. His wife, Naeema, and son Muhammed were with him as he transitioned. He fought until the end. They described him as being at peace.

Brother Saladin leaves an outstanding legacy of revolutionary commitment, leadership, consciousness, and direct organizing of our people's struggle for liberation. He was a commander-in-chief of revolutionary forces throughout the Black Liberation Movement and a staunch fighter for the Black Working Class. He worked tirelessly and with phenomenal energy to organize, guide, and lead our people's fights and battles against oppression. He was an internationalist, upholding the worldwide struggle against capitalism and imperialism. His intellect, insight, and analysis were outstanding in the theory and practice of organizing class and revolutionary struggle and the tactics and strategy of social transformation, national liberation, and socialism for the African American people.

Saladin's unmatched organizing skills led to the formation of the Black Workers for

Justice, UE Local 150, and the Southern Workers Assembly, just to recognize only a few of his impactful accomplishments. And these organizational formations of the Black working class were built in the context of North Carolina, a state widely recognized for its anti-unionism and racist history, and in the U.S. South where the lack of a strong, progressive labor movement in the southeast region has been the Achilles heel of the US national labor movement. The struggle to build a “new trade unionism” in the US South must continue.

His leadership and guidance, upon which thousands around the country and the world relied, are irreplaceable and will be sorely missed by all of us. Saladin was active in the struggles for justice and liberation for more than 50 years.

Saladin Muhammad, PRESENTE!!!

The Executive Committee,

Black Workers for Justice



Support squeegee workers: Self-defense against racism is not murder

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 9, 2022



On August 2, a Baltimore City grand jury issued an eight-charge indictment, including first-degree murder, against a 15-year-old squeegee worker accused of killing a white motorist in downtown Baltimore. The shooting occurred after a 48-year-old white man, Timothy Reynolds, parked his car and approached a group of squeegee workers, most of whom were teenage Black men. Mr. Reynolds swung his bat at the group of teenagers, after which, one of the workers shot him in self-defense.

From the moment the shot was fired, local media, politicians and police painted this young worker as a murderer. Baltimore City State's Attorney, Marilyn Mosby, followed up this fervor by taking a first-degree murder charge to the grand jury. For now, this move ensures that the squeegee worker will be prosecuted as an adult, even though he was only 14 at the time of the alleged incident.

The prosecution of this young Black worker is another step in a long line of attempts by the local corrupt Democratic Party and its business allies to criminalize Blackness and push the Black community out of commercial areas in the city. The Democratic nominee for Baltimore state's attorney, Ivan Bates, announced a plan to "clear the corners" of squeegee workers. At the core of Bates' plan would be lifting the restriction on individual officers that currently prevents them from citing or arresting squeegee workers without consulting a supervisor first.

Essentially, Bates' plan is to harass and intimidate these majority-young, majority-Black workers out of their jobs, using the city's brutal and racist police force to accomplish this task. In the recent Democratic primary election, Bates defeated two-term incumbent, Marilyn Mosby. Mosby is known for her decision to prosecute the cops who murdered Freddy Gray and to cease prosecutions of drug addicts and sex workers. Her successor brings a more traditional right-wing "law and order" pedigree to the office. Bates was elected with significant support from local restaurant owners and police unions.

Whether it is Marilyn Mosby or Ivan Bates, this squeegee worker will be prosecuted for a murder he did not commit. Whoever fired at Timothy Reynolds that day, did so in self-defense after being charged by a white man nearly three times their age swinging a baseball bat.

In this city and this country, the police can murder with impunity and rarely face accountability. Their murders are called protecting and serving. Young white killers and rapists like Kyle Rittenhouse and Brock Turner walk away from their horrific crimes relatively unscathed. If a Black 14-year-old defends themselves, that's called murder and they're threatened with life in prison.

For some perspective, George Zimmerman, the Florida racist who followed and murdered 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in cold blood, was never indicted on charges of first-degree murder. A grown man can hunt and murder a Black teenager, but a Black teenager can't defend themselves and their friends against a grown racist swinging a bat. That's the real American justice system.

The real criminals are the people roaming the streets wearing badges and their fascist allies, not Black teenagers trying to help feed their siblings. End the criminalization of Black life! Down with racist police terror! We need government that fights for the people, not restaurateurs and investment banks!



CNH workers are fighting a giant

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 9, 2022

Since May 2, some 1,100 workers have been on strike against CNH Industrial in Racine, Wisconsin, and Burlington, Iowa. These members of the United Auto Workers are up against Italy's richest family, the Agnellis who control Fiat.

With sales last year of \$31 billion, CNH had profits of \$1.1 billion. But instead of genuine bargaining, the CEO of CNH, Scott Wine, has offered wage increases that are below the rate of inflation.

That's demanding a wage cut from the UAW members while Wine pulls down a \$9.2 million yearly salary. He also got a \$22 million signing bonus.

The letters CNH stand for "Case" and "New Holland." Both J.I. Case, based in Racine, and New Holland, which started out in New Holland, Pennsylvania, were some of the best-known makers of construction and farm equipment.

Corporate wheeling and dealing—which at times included J.I. Case being owned by Tenneco and Ford buying New Holland—finally resulted in CNH Industrial being

formed in 2012. With headquarters in Britain, the Agnelli-controlled outfit has 67 factories around the world.

All this financial skullduggery hasn't been any good for workers. Case's now closed lakefront plant in Racine used to employ more than 3,000 workers. Its current plant in Mount Pleasant, near Racine, employs around 500.

While the ownership has changed, being anti-labor is part of CNH's DNA. J.I. Case President Leon Clausen tried to break UAW Local 180 during a 444-day strike that lasted from December 1945 until March 1947.

[Clausen said](#) that "when these men have been out long enough and their families get hungry enough, the strike will end." Seventy-five years later, CNH CEO Wine has [hired strikebreakers](#) to steal the jobs of the women and men on the picket lines.

But the strikers belonging to Local 807 in Burlington and Local 180 in Racine refuse to surrender despite having their medical and dental health insurance cut off.

CNH is also fighting workers at its tractor plant in Basildon, Britain. The British union Unite has a series of [one-day strikes](#) lasting until August to force the company to negotiate.

This writer remembers the president of UAW Local 180 writing a check to bail out strikers during the 1977 Racine teachers' strike. That's the solidarity that the CNH strikers need today.

Both Locals 180 and 807 are collecting nonperishable food and personal items for the strikers and their families. Checks and gift cards can be mailed to the following addresses:

UAW Local 180
3323 Kearney Ave.

Racine, WI 53403

(Please write checks to "UAW Local 180")

UAW Local 807

P.O. Box 1094

Burlington, Iowa 52601

(Please write checks to "UAW Local 807")

Victory to the workers!

The writer is a retired member of the American Train Dispatchers Association.



Juneteenth and ILWU: All workers win when slavery ends!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 9, 2022

Holding signs and chanting "Black Lives Matter, honor Juneteenth as a workers'

holiday!", the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and several other organizations rallied at the waterfront in Seattle on Monday, June 20, the first workday after the June 19 commemoration.

Gabriel Prawl, a leader of the ILWU West Coast Juneteenth Commemoration, spoke at the rally. He is past president of ILWU Local 52 and president of the Seattle chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

Prawl used the occasion to talk about the significance of the day:

"We get together on the 4th of July to celebrate liberation from British rule. But that was not the case for Black people. Sadly, they were not even recognized as humans in 1776 when this country declared its independence. Freedom was far from an equally applied standard for everyone.

"Now after over 150 years, African Americans have a good reason to celebrate. Juneteenth is a yearly celebration of the liberation of enslaved Black people. Juneteenth is short for June 19th and a commemoration of the day in 1865 when General Gordon Granger led Union troops into the city of Galveston, Texas, to assume control of the state and free the enslaved Black people.

"Look around you, this is what the Union troops looked like.

"The big question here is, why should labor fight white supremacy? The answer is, because it's in our class interest. To not do so allows the ruling class and others to divide us, the working class, by race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion and so forth."

Prawl asked: "Can you have capitalism without racism? Africans were truthfully the bloody foundation of capitalism. The major commodities in the world were cotton, sugar and tobacco. This was the foundation of capitalism. It's perpetuated and exemplified through racism, exploitation and white privilege."

ILWU won by fighting racism

Prawl told the story of the 1934 West Coast maritime strike, when the union won by fighting racism on the docks.

Union workers were engaged in collective bargaining, making coastwide demands to end working around the clock. They called for a six-hour work day.

The most revolutionary demand of all, said Prawl, was for the right for workers to control the hiring hall. “Before this we had what was called the shape-up,” he said.

When the workers walked off the job, the bosses employed racist hiring practices to break the strike and continue to generate profits. They used Black workers, who were denied jobs and union membership, to cross the picket line.

Labor leader Harry Bridges understood that the problem was racism. He reached out to Black labor leaders like C.L. Dellums, vice president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, organized by A. Philip Randolph.

Bridges appealed to Black religious leaders to be allowed to speak in their churches, where he promised that if the workers held back their labor in solidarity with the strikers, Black workers would be welcomed into the union when they won. Bridges kept his promise.

The unity of Black and white workers was the key to the strike’s success. It became the guiding principle of the union.

Bridges stated that if only two longshore workers were left, one would be Black and the other would be white. The ILWU constitution opposes racism and all other forms of discrimination.

In 1943, Paul Robeson became an honorary member of the ILWU. In 1967, six

months before he was assassinated, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became an honorary member of ILWU Local 10.

The ILWU became one of the most socially conscious unions in the labor movement. It shut down all 29 ports on the West Coast after Dr. King was assassinated.

“I will never forget what happened in 2020 when the world witnessed the execution of George Floyd, the execution of Breonna Taylor and many other unarmed Black workers and community members,” Prawl said.

On June 9, 2020, the day of George Floyd’s funeral, the International Longshoremen’s Association, the Teamsters and the ILWU put down their tools for 8 minutes and 56 seconds to honor George Floyd.

“After that a meeting was called. All ILWU local presidents in all 29 ports on the West Coast and two in Canada were present, including myself,” Prawl said. “During the discussion there was a vote for all ILWU locals to take their monthly stop-work on Juneteenth 2020 to commemorate the end of slavery in America. This led to a strike against white supremacy, demonstrating the power of the working class.

“Juneteen 2022 fell on a Sunday. A press release dated June 14 stated that the ILWU, a proudly diverse union, honors the Juneteenth federal holiday and end of slavery in U.S. Some ILWU locals are opting to schedule their contractually allowed stop-work meeting to observe the federal holiday on Monday, June 20,” Prawl said.

At the rally on June 20, Prawl closed his speech with a quote from A. Philip Randolph, who said: “Freedom is never granted. It is won. Justice is never given. It is extracted.”

“Civil rights, labor rights, same fight. When I say workers, you say power! When I say union, you say power!” Prawl concluded.

On Juneteenth Gabriel Prawl said: This history is in the book

'Mobilizing in Our Own Name, Million Worker March'

by Clarence Thomas, retired secretary treasurer of ILWU local 10.

"The closer rank and file workers get to the public the more support the public will give to organized labor. Such close communication will make it apparent to those outside our ranks of labor that a community of interests lies between them. Every effort to split the ranks ranks of labor and to split the public, the majority of whom are workers themselves, to keep workers from their organized brothers and sisters must fail."

www.MillionWorkerMarch

