

The Organizer

Newsletter of the Socialist Party USA National Office

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Statement Drafted by the SPUSA Labor Working Group and passed by the National Executive Committee Dec 5, 2022

The Socialist Party stands in solidarity with the railway workers in their fight for better working conditions.

The railroad industry is a multi-billion dollar industry structured as a non-competitive oligopoly dominated by seven rail carriers that has doubled its profit margins during the pandemic, has engaged in buybacks, and is essentially forcing its workers to be on call at a moments notice, regardless if they are sick or injured. CEOs of five of the largest railroad conglomerates have profited immensely in a time where workers experience deterioration in working conditions, as the billionaire bosses of the five largest railroad conglomerates have paid themselves \$200 million over the last three years.

On September 15th, 2021, a tentative agreement had been struck between the railroad workers and the corporate bosses. The Maintenance of Way Union (BMWU), Sheet Metal and Rail Union. (SMART-TD), Signalment (BRS), and Boilermakers union (IBB) have rejected the tentative agreement. President Biden has recently asked Congress to preemptively deny them the right to legally strike, which is an example of the current state imposing their will against the working class, all for the capitalist economy. On Friday, December 2nd, 2022 with passage from both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, President Joe

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Starbuck Workers Solidarity

Socialist Party members have joined the picket lines of Starbucks Workers Actions in November and December.

Fayetteville, AR



In Fayetteville Arkansas, Local SP Organizer William Cichy joined the Starbucks picket on December 16th where the workers Workers of that

location were out on strike. The Fayetteville location is one of two unionized Starbucks in Arkansas.

Montclair, NJ

Northern NJ Local members and activists joined the November and December Starbucks Actions in Montclair NJ. Montclair is one of four Starbucks



where workers voted to unionize.

We encourage all members to support and help build solidarity with the Starbucks Works United in your local areas and to get involved in the Party's Labor Working Group. Email us at natsec@socialistparty-usa.org to join the working group and we'll connect you.

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Solidarity continued.....

Biden signed the railroad bill into law, quashing a strike. An additional bill to provide up to seven days of paid sick leave for workers likewise failed to pass the Senate.

Both the Democratic Party and Republican Party serve the interests of the capitalist class, as they represent the interests of proprietors at the workers' expense. President Biden's strike breaking in railroads is a primary example on how he and his administration, from Labor Secretary Marty Walsh to Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, sided with the billionaire railroad bosses in order to protect the economy in the event of a strike. The electoral strategy of the Democratic Socialists of America also comes under question, as the self-proclaimed "socialists," such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Cori Bush both voted to avert the rail strike. The votes from the DSA members are in stark contrast with the statement of solidarity with the rail workers that the DSA released on November 30th. Pseudo-socialist members of Congress merely serve to perpetuate the illusion that the Democratic Party can be a vehicle for social change.

The 24% wage increase over five years provides a 4.8% annual increase, but is insufficient to cover the rise in inflation, railroad workers have stated clearly and consistently that this fight is just not about financial compensation, but about fighting for the right to have a life outside of work. Hugh Sawyer, treasurer of Railroad Workers United, a caucus of rank-and-file union activists involved in this labor dispute, wrote this in a press release on November 29th, "Joe Biden blew it. He had the opportunity to prove his labor-friendly pedigree to millions of workers by simply asking Congress for legislation to end the threat of a national strike on terms more favorable to workers. Sadly, he could not bring himself to advocate for a lousy handful of sick days. The Democrats and Republicans are both pawns of big business and corporations."

Regardless of who is President of the United States, and regardless of their political affiliation, they are still in the pockets of the business class, albeit of different factions. President Biden has shown his true colors; he stands with the corporate bosses over union workers by breaking the possibility of a strike, despite his claims as being the "most pro-union President ever."

Railroads are an integral part of an effective plan to combat climate change. The Socialist Party is in full support of infrastructural expansion that allows for the vast increase of usage of passenger travel via trains and buses. Freight needs to be moved by trains and not automobiles as we look to the future. It is apparent that the railway oligarchy has reduced their workforce, which has consequently created unsafe working conditions and forced overtime. The Socialist Party supports a publicly owned railroad system, with funds allocated into modernization and to build high speed railroad links, all with the heavy subsidization of passenger fares all funded by heavily taxing the rich and reallocating funds from the defense budget.

The Socialist Party stands in solidarity with the railroad workers as they fight for a contract that meets their demands. We stand in strong support of the Railroad Workers United and their following demands as they urge Congress and the President to support working people:

- Public ownership of the railroads: To deal with the current supply chain crisis, Congress must take control of the rail infrastructure as is done the world over and operate it under public interest.
- Universal Paid Family and Sick Leave: The United States is the only developed country that does not guarantee paid leave. Our members of congress have the privilege of enjoying paid family and sick leave which must be expanded to include all working people.
- Pass the PRO Act and Fund the NLRB: Congress must step up and ensure that the right to organize for working people is protected through the passage of the PRO Act and also ensure that the NLRB is properly funded to accommodate the sharp increase in unionization.

The Socialist Party also strongly supports the workers in exercising their right to strike, which is a formidable and potent weapon needed to win the working conditions and compensation that the railroad workers deserve.

Working class people can no longer afford to be exploited by this capitalist beast of a two-party system. We need to build a political party independent of the two-party system that is rooted in a militant working-class. Such a party would need to be based on a program that seeks to complete the transformation of the existing system into a socialist society.

Renew your membership on-line at:

SocialistPartyUsa.net/renew-your-membership

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