



# SOCIALIST PARTY OF MICHIGAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## February 2023

## Workers of Michigan Unite!

Hello Michigan socialists!

This has been an intense month for residents of our state and we wish to extend our deepest condolences and solidarity to Michigan State University and the people of East Lansing reeling from a mass shooting earlier this month. We've linked to an article [here](#)\* with information about how to provide direct financial assistance to some of the impacted students.

Foremost, these individuals need assistance with their medical and living expenses after the shooting. It is a tragic and preventable element of American life that our capitalist culture fosters the type of extreme alienation, resentment, and nihilism that breeds mass shooters- even moreso that the victims of such violence have to rely on the profit driven healthcare system in the U.S., saddling them with tremendous medical debt in the aftermath.

. \*<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/donations-michigan-state-shooting-victims-191126999.html>

### **Black History Under Attack**

Black History month in 2023 began with attacks from reactionaries like Florida governor Ron DeSantis who seems to be staking much of his political future on his attempts to force educators to teach a "Disneyland" version of American history that reinforces fascist mythmaking over harsh truths.

While Florida is far away from the mitten the recent moves by the College Board to strip their AP African-American History curriculum of authors that DeSantis and his ilk deem objectionable, which has in practice meant any historian or author that has anything negative to say about the U.S. and its history, will have national consequences.

As we commented on last month, Michigan has its own municipal and county officials that are on board with this agenda ( e.g., Ottawa County). With the election of Kristina Karamo to Michigan GOP Chair, a QAnon devotee and peddler of similar anti-education rhetoric, we will need to be vigilant moving forward. We must also prepare parallel structures to educate the students and workers of Michigan about real history- and especially working class history- as these attacks escalate.

We encourage Socialists to think about how they can create these grassroots education alternatives in their community, and provide access to those "harsh truths" moving forward. In that spirit, Haymarket Books are offering some free and discounted books and e-books linked [here](#).\*

\*<https://www.haymarketbooks.org/blogs/480-defend-black-history-defend-black-lives>

# Capitalism Derailed- The True Culprits of the Disaster in East Palestine, Ohio

Several weeks ago a large train loaded with toxic chemicals derailed near the town of East Palestine, Ohio. Residents have been complaining of noxious smells, headaches, dizziness, and have expressed deep concerns about their safety and the long-term impacts on the environment.

The media has largely presented this along the familiar partisan lines- Trump has opportunistically taken advantage of the disaster by visiting East Palestine and feigning compassion for local residents despite his direct culpability in reeling back regulation that would have required more sophisticated brakes on trains carrying hazardous materials.

At the same time, the Biden administration- while pointing correctly at Trump's deregulation- are directly responsible for not improving safety on the rails. Indeed it was only two short months ago that Biden instructed congress to quash a potential strike of rail workers- workers organizing around the very staffing and safety issues that lead to the disaster in Ohio. Rather than this incident being a wake-up call, they are doubling down on their defense of the rail barons by standing up for Norfolk Southern in a supreme court case that could allow corporations to restrict where people, including the victims of the disaster in East Palestine, can file lawsuits against them.

Michiganders understand deeply the malfeasance of the corporate state and the posturing of their representatives. Flint was the result of austerity measures enacted to reduce costs- and true accountability and recompense for Flint residents poisoned by lead pipes remains to be seen. One of the largest inland oil spills in history occurred on the Kalamazoo river and Enbridge, the oil company responsible, only performed proper clean up after intense public pressure forced their hand. They are still in the courts defending their "right" to maintain an oil pipeline in the Mackinaw Straights, an ecological ticking time bomb.

While politicians point fingers at each other, they are all the guilty party. Donations from corporations like Norfolk Southern and Enbridge to politicians in both parties have borne the fruit of deregulation and insulated them from consequences.

It has bought them a monopoly where their representatives in both parties will ignore safety for their bottom line and quash the rights of workers to fix the problems they have created.

This is the result of the Capitalist system- and what happens with the pursuit of profit at all costs. Decades of disinvestment in safety and infrastructure and over-exploited workers have caused things to go completely off the rails.

For more on the Ohio rail disaster, check out this detailed [article from Cincinnati Socialists](https://www.cincysocialists.net/blog/6jrz5lik3285c5hdzwrwxwug6e3qy0).\*

<https://www.cincysocialists.net/blog/6jrz5lik3285c5hdzwrwxwug6e3qy0>

## Radical Reading Recommendations

Leftvoice.org recently published an article on a gentrification scheme in Detroit that would allocate nearly \$800 million dollars in public funds to the development of luxury high-rise apartments, hotels, and office space that could otherwise be used for the working people of Detroit for communal resources and affordable housing. Check out the article [here](#).\*

<https://www.leftvoice.org/massive-looting-of-public-resources-at-stake-in-detroit-redevelopment-scheme/>

For a deeper examination into the assault on Black History we encourage you to check out this roundtable discussion from Democracy Now!

It covers many important topics- from the ironic erasure of the origins of Black History studies, to the financial motivations of College Board and other educational institutions in ceding to reactionary demands, to reflections on book bans from the authors themselves.

You can find this piece, where you can read or watch the discussion, [here](#).\*

[https://www.democracynow.org/2023/2/3/crt\\_black\\_studies\\_roundtable](https://www.democracynow.org/2023/2/3/crt_black_studies_roundtable)

*Eva Alvarez*, a beloved immigrants rights organizer in SW Michigan, was tragically killed in a car accident during the last weekend of February.

Eva dedicated her life to challenging our unjust immigration system. Among many accomplishments she advocated for undocumented workers in detention, pushed for "Driver's Licenses for All" in Michigan, and for accessible County ID's in Kalamazoo County. Eva was prolific and dedicated and will be missed. Donations can be made to the family [here](#).\*

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/funds-for-the-family-of-eva-alvarez>