

Are there too many babies? The myth of overpopulation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Howls of impending doom and gloom spread through the liberal capitalist media after the United Nations announced the world population hit 8 billion in November.

Many self-appointed population "experts" have determined this means the planet has reached its maximum "carrying capacity." Any further growth will spread mounting hunger as the numbers of babies to feed grows while food supplies languish, especially given the unresolved climate control crisis. The worldwide population, they say, will rise beyond this threshold, to 10 billion over the next few decades.

This has spurred a new wave of neo-Malthusian terror of a world with too many people — especially in the semi-colonial world — and increasing misery.

The most populous regions are in Asia, with India and China both at 1.4 billion. By far the fastest pace of growth is in sub-Saharan Africa, with some of the biggest population increases in Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

Another problem connected with this population burst, liberal pundits say, is that there are too many "older people" living longer and demanding outsized resources for health, nutritional and other needs that increasingly can't be met.

The number of people aged 65 and over is now 783 million, and the "experts" say this will double over the next 20 years, compounding the crisis.

"Having more people on Earth puts more pressure on nature, as people compete with wildlife for water, food and space," argued CNN Nov. 15. "Policy-

makers can make a big difference by mandating a shift in consumption patterns," a veiled threat to ration food and services for those most in need.

It's useful to remember the last time neo-Malthusian social planners warned of disaster. From 1907 all the way to the 1970s, state-sanctioned forced sterilizations were widespread, with 33 states in the U.S. having eugenics boards empowered to order such procedures. In just the years 1947-48, an estimated 7% of Puerto Rican women were sterilized.

This round of population hysteria was answered in a 1960 pamphlet by Socialist Workers Party leader Joseph Hansen titled *Too Many Babies? The Myth of the Population Explosion*. Pathfinder Press is planning an expanded edition in 2023.

"A number of eminent dignitaries and scientific authorities have been seeking to arouse a lethargic public to a new menace — an enemy of formidable character, perhaps the most dangerous America has yet faced," Hansen says. "This enemy has already occupied the cribs, nurseries, and playgrounds of America."

Hansen points to the dire warnings that rapid population growth will soon outstrip food supplies. This is what Rev. Thomas Malthus argued over 220 years ago. He opined that the world's population was increasing "geometrically," but food production was only going up "arithmetically." Either slash population growth or face starvation, he and his echoers today demand.

'Food explosion'

But it didn't turn out that way, Hansen explains. Actually what happened

THE POPULATION BOMB THREATENS THE PEACE OF THE WORLD



SO WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

CAMPAGN TO CHECK THE POPULATION EXPLOSION



Above, American Philosophical Society

Proponents of Malthusian "overpopulation" hysteria over the decades. Left, 1967 ad in *New York Times* by Campaign to Check the Population Explosion. Above, pro-eugenics contest judged "human stock" at 1925 Kansas fair. Attacks on working people like these are being raised again today by liberal prophets of doom.

was a "food explosion." The impact of the industrial revolution and scientific advances greatly increased the productive capacity of farmland, despite the fact the number of farmers declined. A surplus of food was produced that could feed the world, but to the monopolies and their government enablers that controlled the production, processing and distribution of food, this wasn't their aim. They were driven "not to provide people with food, but to make money," Hansen says.

Hansen points to the arguments against Malthus' population theory made in 1844 by Frederick Engels, who

along with Karl Marx was a founder of the modern communist movement: "(1) Under capitalism the distribution of hunger in the population is not due to the abundance of the poor but to poor distribution of society's abundance. (2) Wealth can be increased without limit if society is so organized as to bring about the most effective combination of labor power and science."

To deal with this contradiction requires building a revolutionary-minded working-class movement that can organize to take political power and transform society's priorities and internationalist solidarity to meet human needs.

Special 'Militant' 'tax rebate' fund donations hit \$5,020

"Enclosed is a check for \$700 for the *Militant*. We appreciate the invitation made in the paper to contribute California Gov. Gavin Newsom's contemptuous bribe aimed at corralling some votes for the Democrats in the 2022 election." This note came from Jim Altenberg and Carole Lesnick in Oakland.

"No one can possibly believe that the meager check will cover for the monopoly-rigged gas prices California drivers have had to pay over the past year," their note continued. "We've endured high fuel prices for decades, even before the latest rationalization — 'climate change' — began ringing like an endless echo across the airwaves and in every newspaper. We look forward to the *Militant's* truthful and extensive coverage of the class struggle around the world."

Retired longshoreman Mike Downs from Los Angeles wrote with his contribution, "With all these strikes breaking out, workers need the *Militant* more than ever."

These contributions and others push the total received by the *Militant* to \$5,020. They will go toward offsetting the accelerating inflation-driven rise in printing and shipping costs the paper faces. The state of California has slowly been sending out these rebate checks to anyone who filed a 2020 state tax return. We encourage readers to join in sending them to the *Militant*.

— NORTON SANDLER

THE MILITANT

Solidarity among fighters in Puerto Rico, Cuba, U.S.

Six decades after Cuban toilers carried out the first socialist revolution in the Americas, Washington is still trying to crush this threat to imperialism. Solidarity between working people of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the U.S. are key part of fight to end U.S. embargo.



Frente Independentista Boricua
Milagros Rivera, left, Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico, at Oct. 29 protest in New York.

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Miners strike in Alabama

Continued from front page

Cecil Roberts was the featured speaker.

Hundreds of UMWA members have been on strike against Warrior Met Coal there, since April 1, 2021. They are determined to prevail in this long and hard-fought strike to defend their union and win an acceptable contract.

"Our picketing is pretty strong," McGhee said. Because the strike has gone on for so long, many strikers have had to get other full-time jobs, including at other UMWA-organized mines, to support their families.

McGhee has worked at the Warrior Met mines, formerly owned by Jim Walter Resources, for 17 years.

Many Warrior Met strikers are following closely the current fight by freight rail unions to win new national contracts that address the issues of safety, crew size, scheduling to allow for family life and other life-and-death questions.

"It's wrong for the Biden administration to be putting pressure on the rail unions," McGhee said. "I thought they were supposed to be for the workers. The issues facing the rail workers are very similar to what we're fighting for here at Warrior Met."

"We're able to have Thanksgiving this year thanks to our auxiliary," he said. The UMWA auxiliary, organized mainly by strikers' spouses, has been providing food, household supplies, diapers and other necessities to help strikers' families get by.

The miners have won solidarity from UMWA locals and retirees around the country, as well as from many other unions who have sent aid and contributions.

The union had faced a serious challenge in July when, at the urging of the company, the National Labor Relations Board levied a \$13.3 million fine against it, saying the union had to pay for losses incurred by the company in the strike. This was a threat to the basic right to strike, and the UMWA refused to pay it. But in September, the NLRB slashed the fine to \$435,000 plus interest. "We are ready to pay that amount, put this behind us and negotiate a fair and reasonable contract with Warrior

Met Coal. Let's get this done," said Roberts.

The union also says a condition of reaching a settlement is protecting the jobs of 40 strikers the mine bosses say they will refuse to allow to return to work. Antwon McGhee is one of those targeted.

Warrior Met was formed in 2016 by the biggest creditors of the mines' previous owner, Jim Walter Resources. The new bosses forced major concessions in wages, benefits, and working conditions on the union, saying that was the price miners had to pay to keep the mines running. They promised miners the cuts would be restored later when profits returned. The union estimates this cost workers \$1.1 billion over the next five years. But in 2021, the company offered union members a measly \$1.50 an hour raise over the next five years, an offer the miners overwhelmingly rejected.

The company has been mining coal at both struck mines, using management personnel and scabs, including some union members who have crossed the picket line.

The union has been organizing solidarity rallies since shortly after the strike started. Now scheduled for every other week, the next rally will be held Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. at Local 2397's union hall.

Build solidarity with the UMWA strikers! Come to the Dec. 7 rally! Send checks made out to UMWA 2021 Strike Fund to UMWA Strike Fund, P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Send messages of support to UMWA District 20 at 21922 Hwy. 216, McCalla, AL 35111. Email umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net.

Defend Cuba-Puerto Rico solidarity mural in Harlem!



Militant/Seth Galinsky

NEW YORK — "No matter how many times the right wing defaces this mural, we will restore it," Marina Ortiz told a couple dozen people at a speak-out in front of the "Dos Alas" (two wings) mural here in the heart of East Harlem Nov. 19. The mural, which depicts Puerto Rican Nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos and Argentine-born Ernesto Che Guevara, a leader of Cuba's socialist revolution, was badly damaged by an attack in early November. Ortiz has been centrally involved in preserving the mural.

The mural highlights a stanza from a poem by Lola Rodríguez de Tió, "Cuba and Puerto Rico are two wings of the same bird," referring to their common struggle over centuries, first against Spanish- and then U.S.-colonial rule.

The event also celebrated the anniversary of the birthday of Lolita Lebrón, who spent 25 years in prison for an armed protest in the U.S. Congress in 1954 held to expose Washington's lie that Puerto Rico was not a U.S. colony.

Right-wing opponents of the Cuban Revolution have defaced the mural five times over the last year and a half, targeting the painting of Che Guevara.

The mural was painted in 1999 by artists from Ricanstruction Network and the Puerto Rico Collective, with participation of local residents. It is "one of 10 throughout Harlem to oppose gentrification and to make a stand about Puerto Rican history," Ortiz said. "It also recognizes the legacy of the Cuban Revolution and its importance all over the world."

Dozens of residents passing by were outraged at the attack on a historic work of art and landmark in the area. Many signed a petition protesting the defacement. Ortiz urged participants to bring others to visit the mural and to hold more events there, near the corner of East 105th Street and 3rd Avenue.

— SETH GALINSKY

Antifa assault is blow to fight for women's emancipation

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

NEW YORK — A peaceful demonstration by women's rights campaigners critical of gender ideology was attacked by antifa thugs and so-called trans activists here Nov. 14. Police arrested nine attackers after they surged against police barricades and hurled threats against the women.

The event was the last stop of a multicity "Let Women Speak" tour by Kellie-Jay Keen, a British women's advocate and founder of Standing for Women. She was unable to get to the podium as dozens of antifa members surrounded the stage. As others spoke about women's rights and the harmful impact of gender ideology imposed on children in many schools, an estimated 200 attackers screamed "Nazi scum," made lewd sexual gestures and attempted to spit on the women.

In a May 27 interview with Tucker Carlson, Keen said that she decided to speak out after universities, schools, health care and judicial systems started "making 'woman' only OK to say when you are talking about a man. He can be a woman, I can't, I have to be a 'cis-woman' or something else. ... You have no chance of having a real discussion if you can't define who a woman is."

She pointed to the incident last year at a spa in Los Angeles where women and children were joined by an unclothed male. When women complained, they were told that the spa had to abide by whatever a customer says they are. "Instead of denouncing the man for indecent exposure, we have to pretend he's a

brave woman who wanted to share space with a little girl," Keen said. "We need to fight for ourselves, without rights we have nothing."

Keen had canceled an Oct. 25 tour stop in Portland, Oregon, after threats of violence, including one by an antifa leader who organized a fundraiser to buy weapons. The police refused to offer her any protection.

The following day in Tacoma, Washington, a Let Women Speak rally of 30 was disrupted by over 200 thugs. Some wore brass knuckles and attempted to slam female speakers to the ground. "We peaceably assembled for our free speech and we were mobbed," Amy Sousa told the press. At least one woman had her fingers deliberately broken by an attacker.

There have been a series of similar attacks, and blows to constitutional rights, against women who defend the scientific fact that there are two distinct sexes, men and women. Without this, there is no way to chart a course toward women's emancipation.

In October, Cambridge University officials in the U.K. apologized for "distressing" students when they invited Helen Joyce, an Irish journalist and former editor at the *Economist*, to speak about her book, *Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality*. She maintains that biological sex is an immutable fact.

After the event, Professor Arif Ahmed wrote in the *Telegraph* about having to smuggle students into the meeting because they were afraid of ostracism for attending. "It's hard to convey the reality

and the extent of this fear, which stalks the halls of academia," he said. "I say contentious debate on things that matter is literally the whole point of a university education. If you can't do it here, where and when can you do it?"

On Oct. 30, Colombian writer Carolina Sanín posted comments on her website about the tension between feminism and transgenderism. After expressing support for the rights of transgender people, she said that "equating completely the identity of trans women with women who are born women erases the historical experience" of both groups.

It can reinforce gender stereotypes, she said. "Now girls feel that when they don't adjust completely to what is expected of a girl or adolescent women, it means they are actually males."

Five days later Almadía, a publisher that contracted the rights to publish two of Spanín's novels in Mexico, canceled plans for publication, pointing to her "questioning of identity politics."

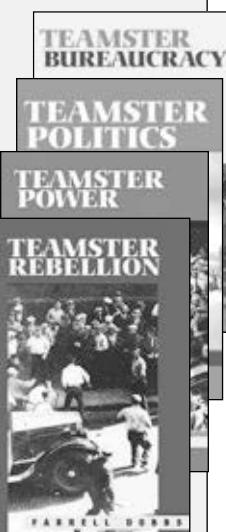
"These attacks on the constitutional right to free speech and free assembly are a deadly danger to the working class," Sara Lobman, who was the Socialist Workers Party's 2022 candidate for U.S. Senate in New York, told the *Militant*. "The poisonous anti-science 'identity politics' and 'cancel culture' violence do damage to the scientific knowledge and free debate of ideas that are essential for the emancipation of women. And for building the unity that our class needs in the face of increased attacks by the bosses on our living and job conditions."

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Attack on constitutional rights

Continued from front page

any meaningful course forward for working people.

This is the second special counsel investigation launched at Trump since he was elected in 2016, part of the Democrats' unending, multipronged assault on him, his family and political associates. Along with the middle-class left and Never-Trump Republicans, they are determined to make the attack on Trump the centerpiece of their 2024 presidential election campaign.

Like all prosecutors under capitalism, Smith won't start with investigating an actual crime, but with a target to try to bring down. He has the full gamut of state resources to cobble together "evidence" to accomplish that goal, including the rulers' political police, the FBI. Witch hunts like this are a deadly threat to the working class.

Biden's Justice Department had been in charge of looking for a way to charge Trump with something. But now Garland claims a so-called independent special counsel is needed so that the Justice Department doesn't look partisan, since the former president is running with Biden as his potential opponent.

In fact, invoking a special counsel with virtually unlimited powers is a step up in the Democrats' witch hunt. Federal law ensures such a special prosecutor is even harder to rein in than any probe by the attorney general himself.

The danger of such special counsels was addressed in 1988 by Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia in his dissenting opinion in a case that upheld the law authorizing appointment of independent counsels. Invoking an independent counsel against the president makes the occupant of that office and his associates appear "in all probability" as "crooks," Scalia wrote, opening them up to "massive and lengthy investigations." This, he showed, was a violation of executive powers designated to the president in the Constitution.

That's exactly what the last special counsel, Robert Mueller, did for nearly two years after he was appointed to go after Trump in 2017, on the false pretext he was "in collusion" with Moscow. At the inquiry's conclusion, neither Trump nor any U.S. citizen was charged with colluding with Moscow.

But Mueller's operations continuously fed Democrats' attacks on Trump and did lead to indicting more than 30 people, many connected to Trump, on unrelated matters. In violation of the Constitution's protection against unreasonable search and seizure, Mueller unleashed FBI raids

on the homes and offices of Trump's advisers. In every case the aim was to lean on them in an effort to get someone to finger Trump, as well as perpetuate the slander that the president and his associates were Kremlin agents.

For working people, the stakes involved in the conflict have nothing to do with the clashes riling the right and left of capitalist politics, but entail assaults on constitutional freedoms that are crucial for our struggles. This question is at the center of politics today.

Democrats lead assaults on freedoms

Trump-backed candidates in 2022 repelled more working people than they attracted in most races, especially when they campaigned on his widely discredited claim that the 2020 election was stolen. With Republicans unable to take advantage of the unpopularity of the Biden administration, more of them are now pushing for the party to repudiate Trump. Former Attorney General William Barr urged Trump to "stand aside" from the 2024 race, alleging the Justice Department "probably have the basis for legitimately indicting the president."

Many other Democratic Party efforts to turn Trump and his associates into criminals continue. Jesse Benton, a Republican campaign operative, was convicted Nov. 17 on charges of facilitating a contribution to Trump's 2016 campaign by Roman Vasilenko, a Russian businessman. Vasilenko gave Benton \$100,000 for a ticket to a fundraiser in order to get himself photographed with Trump. He also hoped to get his picture taken with Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey.

Since Republicans won a razor-thin



Armed FBI agents used drone and flash grenades to break into home of African People's Socialist Party leader Omali Yeshitela in St. Louis July 29, and seized laptops, files and more.

House majority, they plan to ape the actions of the Democrats and launch a series of partisan congressional probes to subpoena witnesses to go after the Biden administration. James Comer, incoming Republican chair of the House Oversight Committee, said he plans a raft of congressional inquiries, including digging into the business dealings of Biden's son, Hunter, to find out if the president "is compromised or swayed by foreign dollars."

None of the efforts of the capitalists' two main parties to use congressional hearings and criminal probes against their bourgeois political opponents is good for working people. Regardless of who is targeted, the methods deployed will inevitably be used to go after the labor movement and its vanguard. Free speech, freedom of association and many other conquests enshrined in the Constitution are essential for working people whenever we use our unions or

engage in political activity.

Closely tied to the Democrat-led assaults on constitutional freedoms is the rulers' efforts to refurbish the standing of the FBI. In the 1960s and '70s, efforts like the Socialist Workers Party's lawsuit against the FBI exposed the true character of the rulers' political police and its spying and disruption and weakened its credibility. The Democrats are trying to strengthen it in preparation for use against working-class battles to come.

It's useful to remember that just before the FBI raid on Mar-a-Lago, the spy outfit raided the offices of leaders of the African People's Socialist Party, a Black rights organization, in St. Petersburg, Florida, and St. Louis. Then it began harassing opponents in Puerto Rico of Washington's economic war against Cuba's socialist revolution.

Working people should oppose all these blows against constitutional rights.

Three more face prison in FBI frame-up in Michigan

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

In a blow to crucial constitutional rights, three more of the 14 men entrapped by FBI agents in an alleged 2020 "plot" to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for her imposition of vaccine mandates have been framed up and convicted and face up to 20 years in prison.

A Jackson County, Michigan, circuit court jury Oct. 26 found 28-year-old Joseph Morrison, 44-year-old Pete Musico and 23-year-old Paul Bellar guilty of firearm violations, providing support for terrorism and for belonging to an illegal gang.

Undercover FBI snitches were decisive in attempting to lead the kidnap plan into action, but failed. No attack was carried out by the group. In fact, FBI snitch Daniel Chappel at one point told his FBI handlers he was wasting his time as the group had no serious plan. He was told to try harder. Another FBI-run spy tried to provide the group with explosives.

At the trial, Circuit Court Judge Thomas Wilson cut across basic rights of the defendants, ruling defense attorneys could not introduce entrapment by the government as a defense. He also ruled jurors couldn't be told that two other defendants, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta, were acquitted at an earlier trial. They might think, the judge said, "Well, if they got off, why shouldn't these guys get off."

Prosecutors told the jurors that though the men were not accused of committing a terrorist act themselves,

their actions helped support a plot, which amounted to a crime.

Morrison and Musico, his father-in-law, were charged with firearms violations after allowing people to conduct target practice on their property. Prosecutors said Bellar provided ammunition, and thought up tactical maneuvers and codes, a charge the government put forward after Bellar's former landlord called the FBI and said he found a notebook with entries that looked to him like code words, such as "dogs got ticks."

All three were charged with belonging to an "illegal gang," the Wolverine Watchmen, a group prosecutors said was a "criminal enterprise" that met and talked about such things as attacking politicians and police officers. Kareem Johnson, a lawyer for Musico, said his client's actions were speech protected by the First and Second Amendments and that he believed Musico was being punished for his political beliefs. "In this country, you are allowed to talk the talk," he told the jury, "but you only get convicted if you walk the walk."

At the trial the FBI introduced dozens of cherry-picked social media posts made by the three, posts the defense explained were presented out of context and out of order. The three will be sentenced in December.

Five more men, William and Michael Null, Brian Higgins, Shawn Fix and Eric Molitor are facing similar frame-up charges in Michigan's Antrim County court.

When Harris and Caserta were found not guilty in April, the jury deadlocked on charges against Adam Fox and Barry Croft. The government put them on trial in August for a second time on the same charges, a violation of the Fifth Amendment that prohibits the government from prosecuting or punishing someone multiple times for the same incident.

This time they were convicted of "conspiracy," a charged used by the government when they want to nail someone but have no evidence that they actually did anything illegal. They face up to life in prison and will also be sentenced in December.

Two others of those entrapped by the FBI, Kabeb Franks and Ty Garbin, were pressured into plea bargaining as guilty and testifying for the prosecution. In return, Garbin's sentence was reduced to 30 months in October and prosecutors are recommending the same for Franks.

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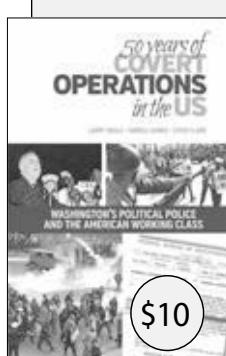
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

University of California strikers picket, win widespread support

LOS ANGELES — Chanting “What’s disgusting? Union busting! What’s outrageous? Poverty wages,” hundreds of striking University of California at Los Angeles teaching assistants and other workers and their supporters picketed across the campus here Nov. 17.

Nearly 48,000 University of California researchers, teaching assistants, graders and others went on strike Nov. 14 in a fight for higher wages, benefits and better working conditions. They are members of the United Auto Workers and do more than half the research and teaching at the 10 state universities.

Several students who joined the striking workers on the picket lines, and others walking to class, told the *Militant* they support the strike, as do many of their professors.

Though their contracts bar “sympathy strikes,” Katie Rodger, president of the UC-American Federation of Teachers, said they encourage the 6,000 lecturers and librarians to support striking workers whenever they can.

“We are getting support from union construction workers, sheet metal workers and Teamster delivery drivers. They tell us as long as the pickets are going they will respect them,” said Enrique Olivares Pesante, head shop steward for UAW Local 2865, which represents strikers at UCLA.

Strikers at UC Berkeley held a meeting Nov. 16 with construction workers, members of the International Union of Operating Engineers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the Laborers’ International Union, who agreed not to work during the strike.

City bus drivers, members of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail Transportation Workers Local 0023, are honoring picket lines at the entrances to the UC Santa Cruz campus. “An attack against one is an attack against all,” union General Chairman James Sandoval told the *Militant*.

“I am paid \$2,100 a month in wages and pay \$1,600 a month in rent,” said Asdarsh Chunkath, a striking teaching

assistant originally from India. “They say you are working 20 hours a week but you end up working 30-40 hours, prepping for classes, giving feedback to students, grading papers.”

“We love teaching but we deserve a living wage,” he said. “People are married and can’t even think about having a family. With this strike we have a sense of hope.”

The union is demanding a base salary of \$54,000 for all graduate student workers, as well as child care subsidies, enhanced health care for dependents, longer family leave and public transit passes.

— Deborah Liatos

IAM members strike for higher wages, better work schedules

AMHERST, Ohio — Members of International Association of Machinists Local 1802 went on strike here against Nordson Industrial Coatings Systems Nov. 14 after soundly rejecting the company’s “last, best and final” offer. Their previous contract expired the day before. Over 130 workers are on strike. For the majority it’s the first time they’ve ever been on a picket line. Nordson Corporation employs over 7,500 workers worldwide. “We’re ready to sit down and talk. My members will stay one day longer than they will,” Local President Ron Adkins, who works as an electrician, told Channel 5 News.

In cold, bitter weather the strikers picket at every entrance to the plant, huddled around burn barrels. “We are fighting for the benefits we deserve,” Teresa Colon told the *Militant*. Fellow striker Rafi Ortero said, “We need better wages with the cost of living so high right now. We also need a decent health care plan.”

At another picket site, 25-year-old Elias Rodriguez, who has worked as a material handler for a year, said, “It was a big decision to come out here right before the holidays. We were fed up with the way we were being treated by management on all levels. This strike has really brought us together. I am proud to be part of a union.”

At all the picket sites strikers pointed to boxes of pizza that members of



Militant/Beverly Bernardo

Thousands of teaching assistants, graders and others rally at University of California at Berkeley Nov. 14, first day of statewide university workers’ strike for higher wages, benefits.

the National Air Traffic Controllers Association union from the nearby Federal Aviation Agency’s Oberlin center had brought by in solidarity. Supporters, retirees and representatives from other unions around the area have also brought hot coffee, donuts, hand warmers and much more to offer encouragement.

A statement issued by the union the day the strike began explained one key issue is the bosses’ demand to continue mandatory overtime, with workers required to work a minimum of 32 Saturdays a year, and pressured to work Sundays as well.

“We’re just looking for a work-life balance with overtime and being able to spend time with our families,” Adkins said.

The company has brought in scabs to work in the machine shop, and sent salaried workers onto the factory floor. Negotiations continue.

Messages of solidarity and contributions can be sent to IAM Local 1802, 4557 Blush Court, Lorain, Ohio, 44053.

— Linda Joyce

Biscuit factory workers in Britain strike for wage raises

LIVERPOOL, England — Some 700 workers at Jacob’s Cream Crackers plant here walked out on

an indefinite strike Nov. 14 in a fight for higher wages. The factory is one of several in the country owned by Pladis, which its website says is “one of the world’s leading snacking companies.” GMB union members began striking one shift per week in September, as well as refusing overtime or to act as trainers.

The union demands an 8.5% raise in a one-year deal. The bosses offered less, over two years, then threatened to withdraw that offer unless workers stopped the strikes. They also moved some production to Portugal.

“You’ve got to take into account the cost-of-living crisis,” striker Margie Baines told the *Militant*. Inflation is currently running at 14.2%, with food prices at 16.2%, a 45-year high.

“People are angry at the employer for not giving a decent pay increase but also because of the conditions that they are working in,” Paul Holleran, health and safety officer for the GMB union, told the *Liverpool Echo*.

The unions at Pladis factories in London and Manchester have accepted the two-year deal, with an additional one-off 500 pound bonus (\$590). Strikers on the picket line said workers at the plant in Carlisle have rejected the deal and are preparing to strike.

“We weren’t getting anywhere” with the shift strikes, Shirley Turner, with 34 years at the factory, said. “So a mass meeting voted unanimously for an all-out strike.”

A contributing factor in that decision was bosses firing three workers in an attempt to intimidate the unionists. Two were dismissed for gross misconduct after bosses got hold of a video on social media of them singing a song about a worker who was a strikebreaker while they were on a private trip outside of work time. A third worker was sacked after she reacted to management provocatively questioning her “attitude.”

Passing car, van and bus drivers toot their horns constantly, expressing support. “Since round-the-clock picketing started we’ve managed to stop all lorries crossing the picket line,” said GMB union official Lisa Ryan. Solidarity delegations by other union members have helped keep spirits high.

A delegation of over 25 Unite union dockworkers at Peel Ports, fresh from winning their own labor dispute, came to give their backing. Their fight won pay hikes from 14% to over 18%, depending on job grades. They got support from unions from other ports in the U.K., across Europe and worldwide.

— Anne Howie

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

THE MILITANT

Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

December 8, 1997

U.S. hands off Iraq! Lift the embargo and get all the “inspectors” out of the country! End the U-2 spy flights and the “no-fly” zones that violate the country’s sovereign air space! That’s what anyone opposed to the imperial use of Washington’s economic and military might to subjugate oppressed nations needs to demand.

The U.S. government broke its teeth during the 1990-91 war against Iraq. It was unable to overthrow the regime in Baghdad and replace it with a protectorate in order to increase its domination in the region and its control over Iraqi oil.

Weakened on a number of fronts, the Clinton administration is in fact more likely to lash out and unleash its weaponry. That is exactly what war secretary William Cohen is hammering on when he demands the “right” for U.S. agents to go anywhere they please on Iraqi soil.

December 8, 1972

The latest issue of the Ukrainian Herald, the underground publication of the Ukrainian oppositional movement, began to circulate early in September.

Items reported include the trial of three schoolboys where the children tore up portraits of prominent party and government officials. Two of the boys were from the eighth grade; one from the seventh. An eighth-grader explained his actions at the trial as a protest against Russification and Great-Russian chauvinism.

As the bureaucrats have sat on podiums listening to themselves lie about the “definitive resolution of the nationalities question in the USSR,” the Soviet secret police has been carrying out the most sweeping campaign of repression since Stalin’s death, directed against those forces in Ukraine who stand by the original conception of a real and equal federation of republics.

December 8, 1947

TOLEDO, Nov. 26 — A four-day strike has brought a smashing victory to AFL dairy workers here. The final settlement provides for wage adjustments based upon a cost-of-living index to be made every three months, in addition to a 15 cents an hour increase effective immediately.

The brief strike was marked by an attempt by the dairy owners to create a critical situation on a city-wide basis. Only the workers in one dairy actually went on strike. The other six Toledo dairies thereupon immediately locked out their workers, thereby creating a serious milk shortage. Undoubtedly they hoped to provoke a crisis and invite the Taft-Hartley NLRB into the picture.

However, the strikers rejected successive company offers and finally won 15 cents plus the important cost-of-living adjustment provision. The dairy workers have pointed out the correct road to all labor.

Rail strike deadline Dec. 9

Continued from front page

This is the result of years of abuse by the rail bosses, for whom the drive for profits means workers have to suffer on-call schedules, ever smaller crews doing more and more work, dangerous working conditions, draconian absentee policies and lack of paid sick leave.

They also face the notoriously anti-labor Railway Labor Act. Passed in 1926 to weaken rail workers, it wraps rail union negotiations in a labyrinth of federal government restrictions, including handing Congress the ability to halt any rail strike and impose a settlement workers have already voted down.

This makes a growing number of rail workers interested in the current battle by school workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, in Ontario. On Nov. 4 they defied the government and went on strike despite a draconian anti-strike bill passed a day earlier that barred them from striking, mandated crippling fines on every single worker as well as their union if they went ahead and set up picket lines and imposed the bosses' contract offer on them.

Two rail union workers here, SMART-TD conductor Lance Anton and Jakob Forsgren, a welder, track repair worker and chair of local Lodge 1320 of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, told the *Militant* Nov. 19 they've started collecting signatures from their union brothers and sisters to send a message of solidarity to CUPE after hearing about their strike and ongoing solidarity actions with their continuing fight.

Their message reads:

"We are United States railroad workers in operating and rail craft unions that work on the railroad in and near Lincoln, Nebraska. The undersigned are sending our solidarity and admiration to education and other workers in your fight against Canada's anti-labor laws, fighting for a livable wage, and funding for schools. We need to emulate your struggle here as we are fighting the railroad employers and federal government that use the anti-labor Railway Labor Act to tie our unions up in red tape against going on strike to get a contract that gives workers and our families a qual-

ity of life that includes a livable wage and safe working conditions."

They hope their effort will bring to the attention of fellow rail workers that when the bosses and their government tell workers they can't do something, it's simply not true. When the government in Ontario told school workers they couldn't strike, they did so anyway. After just two days the government agreed to rescind the law, drop all threatened fines and restart negotiations.

This shows that what workers can or can't do reflects the class relationship of forces, not what some law says. After all, it's just a piece of paper.

Fight against gov't strikebreaking

In 1947 the U.S. government passed the Taft-Hartley Act in the midst of the postwar strike wave. This bill, called the "slave labor bill" by unionists, was used over the next 12 months by "friend of labor" President Harry Truman against workers on the West Coast docks, on the railroads, packinghouses and others. The law authorized the president to obtain court injunctions declaring strikes illegal and ordering "cooling off" periods.

But many unionists reacted like the school workers in Canada. When the bill was passed, some 212,000 outraged coal miners walked out of the pits across the country. "Let the Senators dig the coal," was their battle cry and they won a 44-cent hourly wage increase.

Workers in both the U.S. and Canada have faced years of anti-labor laws that target our unions and our right to strike. According to the Canadian Foundation of Labour Rights, the federal government in Ottawa and provincial governments across Canada passed 230 pieces of legislation since 1982 that have restricted, suspended or denied collective bargaining rights for Canadian workers.

Rail unions prepare for a strike

After SMART-TD announced its contract vote, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees issued a statement Nov. 21. "Over 55% of Railroad Workers made it very clear that the tentative national agreements are not satisfactory settlements for the workforce. The most common sticking

Book fair in Iraqi Kurdistan reflects regional struggles



Militant/Ögmundur Jónsson

SULAYMANIYAH, Kurdistan Region, Iraq — Since Nov. 17, thousands have flocked to the Sulaymaniyah International Book Fair, which is being held here for the fourth time. It features books on language, history, politics, science and religion, as well as novels, poetry and children's books.

Many booths feature books written in or translated into Kurdish, registering historic advances in the struggle of the Kurdish people for national self-determination. Some 30 million Kurds in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey make up the largest nation in the world without their own country. Amid the upheavals caused by U.S.-led military assaults since 1990, Kurds have established an autonomous region and government in northeast Iraq.

Publishers from across the Middle East have brought books in Arabic and Farsi. Books in English are in high demand.

Pathfinder Books in London has taken part in book fairs in the Kurdistan region's capital, Erbil, in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Pathfinder is participating for the first time in the Sulaymaniyah fair this year. More than 500 books by leaders of the communist movement have been sold midway through the 10-day event.

Many people seek out the stand for books addressing world capitalism's growing disorder. These include top sellers *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by U.S. Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes; *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and SWP leaders George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters; *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels; *The Jewish Question: a Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon; and books on women's emancipation and other aspects of working-class politics and struggle. Some visitors know Pathfinder from previous book fairs in Erbil.

The mass protests in Iran against the repressive cleric-dominated capitalist regime shape discussions here. From the start, the Kurdistan region of Iran, which borders that of Iraq, has been a center of the protests, and the Iranian government has launched a brutal crackdown there.

"The savagery of the Iranian regime is unbelievable, especially in Kurdistan and Baluchistan," Robin Ali, a teacher, told the *Militant*. People in Iraqi Kurdistan "are not fully aware of the revolution taking place in Iran. We need to free our minds here. There is hope, if we learn from Kurds in Iran!"

— ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

point... has been the lack of quality-of-life improvements," especially for the BMWE, "paid sick leave."

But, the union says, "the railroads have made it clear that they will neither engage in any meaningful discussions nor accept any sort of proposal regarding such."

"It is our belief that railroad management simply seeks to punish their employees for attempting to exercise their democratic rights to reject a tentative agreement and engage in collective action to gain paid sick time off," the BMWE, which organizes 23,000 rail workers, said. "They do not want this campaign to succeed because it would prove that solidarity works."

We are all allies in the fight against the bosses, the capitalist system and their government.

Congress is now on a Thanksgiving holiday break through Nov. 29. Members of the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee have indicated they are "prepared once again to bring this matter to the floor" to push legislation that would force the rail unions to accept a contract in the interest of the rail bosses.

Bosses of all stripes — industry associations, agribusiness, shippers and others — are calling for the Biden administration and Congress to act. Now is the time for members of the rail unions to reach out to fellow workers and their unions, and to the

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Ontario school workers debate vote on gov't contract offer

Continued from front page
bers to have the vote" and then decide whether to strike.

Backed by a mobilized labor movement, the Canadian Union of Public Employees had mounted a two-day strike at the beginning of November in defiance of Bill 28, anti-labor legislation adopted by the Conservative Party government of Premier Doug Ford that outlawed their right to strike. It also levied draconian fines on both individual workers and their union if they did so anyway and imposed contract terms that didn't come close to the workers' wage demands. The workers were fighting to deal with the impact of inflation, years of declining wages, and for increased staffing and services to students.

Under pressure from the powerful labor mobilization, the provincial government was forced to repeal Bill 28, one of the most onerous pieces of anti-labor legislation in Canada in decades. Actions included a series of solidarity demonstrations around the province of thousands of workers organized with the support of the Ontario Federation of Labor, and the threat of a province-wide strike.

While agreeing to return to work while negotiations were taking place, the union continued to mobilize and gain more support. It organized "Solidarity Saturday" rallies each weekend in over a dozen cities across the province.

The CUPE education workers are the first union in Canada to defy government anti-strike legislation in over two decades. The mobilization of union solidarity forced the government to back down from the two-tier poverty wages it had tried to impose under Bill 28. Half the education workers are forced to do a second job to make ends meet.

The government proposal being voted on is based on a \$1 an hour across-the-board wage increase for all the workers each year of a four-year contract. That means that the lowest-paid workers would receive the highest percentage increase — about 4%



parents school is the only refuge for their children. Without proper support, children with special needs are not able to access the curriculum and their safety is at risk," she said. "The value of these workers is priceless."

Al Denis, head caretaker at General Crerar Public School in Scarborough, told the *Militant*, "I've done this job for 20-plus years. We used to have two or three caretakers full time during the day to keep buildings clean and safe. Now I'm the only one working during the day and I can't keep up with everything. I'm voting no!"

Vicky Mercier, a teacher at General Crerar, said that most CUPE workers she spoke to "said that while a dollar an hour is not enough, they're not sure how to vote; they need more time to think about it. It's a huge discussion and the outcome of the vote is far from clear."

The vote on the tentative agreement will take place Nov. 24-27.

Vicky Mercier, a Toronto teacher and member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto union, contributed to this article.

Toronto forum discusses class battles in North America



TORONTO — "A lot of anger has been building in the working class as bosses and capitalist governments deepen their attacks on our wages and working conditions across North America and worldwide. We will see more labor actions like the important battle by the CUPE education workers," Vicky Mercier, a teacher at General Crerar Public School and member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto union, above, told a special Militant Labor Forum here Nov. 19.

"As that happens more and more workers will begin to use the power of our unions to fight to change the kind of society we live in," she said. "Growing numbers will see the need to build a labor party based on our unions that can fight to take the power out of the hands of the capitalist class and put it in the hands of workers and farmers who make up the overwhelming majority of people in Canada."

Mercier, speaking above, shared the platform with Philippe Tessier, right, a Canadian National Railway conductor and member of the Teamsters union, who spoke for the Communist League executive committee; and meeting chairperson David Olson. Some 20 people participated in the event, including in a lively discussion period.

"The Canadian and U.S. working-class movements have had an intertwined history since their inception," Tessier said. He noted that 115,000 rail workers in the U.S. are in a battle today against both the rail bosses and President Joseph Biden and the government in Washington. "They have been watching closely what has been happening here, learning what can be done in meeting government and boss attacks and understanding the real strength of the unions in our struggles. We need to follow and support their fight in the same way."

"At work, we've been saying, 'don't grieve, take action,'" Mercier said. "The most important thing is to be on the picket lines to support the strikers."

"The defeat of Bill 28 changes everything," Communist League leader Steve Penner said. "No law breaks a strike. It's only a piece of paper. Once workers realize that such laws can be defeated, others will decide to take the same class-struggle road. It's only possible to build a labor party when workers are mobilized to fight."

Others described the significance of the widespread support for the Canadian Union of Public Employees fight from unions in Ontario, Quebec and across Canada.

— KATY LEROUGETEL

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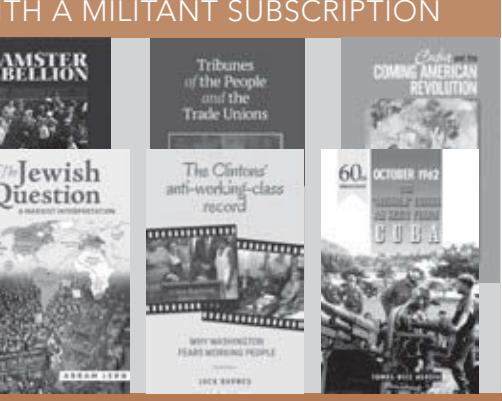
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'Solidarity, internationalism at heart of Cuba's revolution'

Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa by *Enrique Ubieta* is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Ubieta has written about the work of Cuba's internationalist doctors and nurses in some of the remote areas of Central and Latin America. Here he tells how Cuba's revolutionary government responded to the call for help after the 2014 outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in West Africa by sending 256 medical volunteers. Their courageous and hands-on help for thousands stood out and by 2015 the epidemic had been largely eliminated. The excerpt is from the preface. Copyright © 2019 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Cuban Medical Brigade in Guinea

Cuban doctors and some patients at Coyah center in Guinea, Jan. 19, 2015. After 12,000 volunteered, Cuba chose the 256 medical personnel to go to West Africa to fight Ebola.

tries, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, issued international calls for help in combating the largest epidemic on record of the deadly Ebola virus. In contrast to the meager and callously self-serving response of capitalist powers, especially the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, Cuba's revolutionary socialist government acted rapidly.

Within three days of a call to Cuban president Raúl Castro from Ban Ki-moon, secretary-general of the United Nations, more than 12,000 Cuban medical professionals had volunteered, many with experience responding to epidemics and disasters from Haiti to Pakistan to Central America. Of those volunteers, 256 Cuban doctors, nurses, and health care technicians were selected and trained for the mission.

Eight months later, when the last member of the Cuban medical brigade returned home in May 2015, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa had been virtually eradicated.

Ubieta's firsthand reporting of this fight [is] told largely through accounts by the Cuban participants themselves. . . .

The volunteers were given intensive training in handling the highly lethal Ebola virus at Cuba's world-famous Pedro Kourí Institute of Tropical Medicine. The first teams were on their way to the crisis areas in a matter of weeks.

The small island nation of Cuba provided what was most needed and what

no other country even tried to deliver: hundreds of doctors, nurses, technicians, and public health specialists *on the ground, caring for thousands of desperately ill human beings and their families and communities traumatized by the killer disease.*

For the Cuban people and their communist leadership, such a response was nothing new. It was simply one more example of the political course that began with the January 1959 triumph of a revolution that brought to power a government representing working people. A government of, by, and for the humble, as they often describe it. That course — at home and abroad — is one of solidarity, not charity. From Asia and Africa, to Latin America and the Caribbean, they have shared in the hardships and struggles of others seeking national sovereignty and independence.

To give but one example, in the very first years of the revolutionary transformation of Cuba, the new government sent not only weapons but also doctors to aid the embattled National Liberation Front of Algeria fighting for independence from France. And on the ships returning to the island, Cubans brought war orphans and wounded combatants for medical care and education.

Sending doctors to Algeria in the early 1960s "was like a beggar offering his help," said Cuba's then Minister of Public Health José Ramón Machado Ventura some thirty years later. "But we knew

the Algerian people needed it even more than we did and that they deserved it." No words better capture the internationalism of the Cuban Revolution. . . .

Red Zone also provides a compelling refutation of the US government's slanders against Cuba's internationalist medical cooperation.

Precisely because the example of this cooperation is so powerful and so welcomed by working people around the world, Washington has intensified efforts to peddle the lie that Cuban doctors, nurses, and medical technicians who volunteer for these missions are victims of "exploitative and coercive labor practices," "human tracking," even "modern slavery!" . . .

Washington's slanderous campaign is simply another front in the six-decade-long economic war by US Democratic and Republican administrations alike aimed at isolating and economically strangling the Cuban people. . . .

Fidel Castro, historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, [said] at the opening of the Ebola mission in October 2014: "The medical personnel who will go anywhere to save lives, even at risk of losing their own, are the greatest example of solidarity a human being can offer, above all because they aren't motivated by material interest."

The discipline, courage, sense of humor, and joy of these Cuban volunteers comes through time and again in these pages. The political course and moral values their actions embody are an expression of the social relations only a truly socialist revolution can produce. They register the economic, social, and political conquests working people in Cuba have made since they freed their country from US imperialist domination and took power out of the hands of domestic and foreign capitalists and plantation landowners.

Many have asked, "Why did no other country in the world respond to the Ebola epidemic the way Cuba did? Can't Cuba's medical system and internationalist missions be emulated by other countries?" The answer is no secret. Cuba's proletarian internationalism is the product of a socialist revolution. It cannot be grafted onto other nations, nor reproduced by men and women who have not been transformed by a similar revolutionary class struggle.

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Fight against Moscow's war

Continued from front page

aims. It toppled Yanukovych. This working-class movement has marked the battle for Ukrainian sovereignty ever since.

"Our future is only possible if we remember the past," said Tamara Shvets at a Nov. 21 memorial service in Kyiv. Her husband, Viktor, was killed by Yanukovych's forces after he went to "protect the young people" in the Maidan in 2014.

Attacks on infrastructure

The Kremlin recently carried out some of its heaviest missile strikes against Ukraine's infrastructure, crippling almost half of the country's power grid. Millions have been left without electricity as the winter freeze approaches.

Forced out of Kherson, where they destroyed power and water facilities, Moscow's troops are now shelling the city. The Ukrainian government urged civilians there to spend the winter elsewhere.

After compelling the Russian army to retreat from the sole regional capital it had captured, Ukrainian troops entered Kherson Nov. 11. They also launched an offensive to try to regain control of the strategic Kinburn Spit to the southwest of the city. Moscow's occupation of that land cuts off Ukrainian access to the Black Sea port city of Mykolaiv.

Throughout Moscow's eight-month occupation of Kherson an underground resistance by Ukrainians who stayed in the city disrupted Putin's attempt to incorporate it into Russia and helped prepare for Kyiv's forces to retake it.

They sabotaged rail lines and identified military targets for Ukrainian forces to bomb. Local residents hid arms caches for possible street fighting.

Setbacks reinforce isolation

Moscow faces greater international isolation as a result of its brutal invasion, the largest land war in Europe since 1945. Putin chose not to attend the Nov. 15-16 Group of 20 summit of the world's main capitalist powers, held in Bali, Indonesia.

Host Indonesian President Joko Widodo said talks to reach a draft agreement between the rival powers at the meeting floundered over their conflicting responses to Moscow's war. Washington and its imperialist allies are applying sanctions against Russia, which hit working people there hard and put obstacles in the way of forging solidarity between toilers in Ukraine and Russia. Other capitalist governments, from China and India to Saudi Arabia and South Africa, have kept links with Moscow.

Government officials at the meeting eventually signed a declaration, stating, "Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine," and lamenting its impact on the world capitalist economy. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei

Lavrov left before the communique was adopted. Both the Chinese and Indian governments took their distance from Putin, by adding their names to it.

Kyiv pressured by Biden, IMF

Biden is trying to hold in line U.S. allies among capitalist powers in Europe in the sanctioning of Russia, at the same time that his administration pressures the Ukrainian government to seek talks with the Kremlin and urges it to be ready to cede some of the territory seized by the invaders.

As Kyiv's wartime debt has grown, the Ukrainian government is coming under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to carry out privatization of state enterprises and more cuts to social spending. Already 40% of workers have lost their jobs, wages have been slashed and inflation is soaring. Bosses are taking advantage of the government's wartime ban on strikes and its curbs on union rights to make further assaults on wages, safety and other conditions.

The Ukrainian parliament passed a law Nov. 4 to enable the confiscation of large amounts of property from the trade union movement, including its Trade Unions House in central Kyiv, which had been largely gutted in an arson attack by Yanukovych regime supporters during the Maidan rebellion.



Oleg Shumei performs "Maidan" and other songs at Nov. 21 Maidan Reminiscences event in Lviv, Ukraine, on ninth anniversary of onset of popular uprising that overthrew pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovych. Dignity and Freedom Day was celebrated all across Ukraine.

Both Putin's decision to draft 300,000 people into the army, largely workers and members of Russia's oppressed nationalities, and Moscow's retreat from Kherson have led to a further decline in support for his war.

"They are lying on television," Irina Sokolova's conscripted husband told her when he phoned from the front in Ukraine. "He had no idea how terrible it would be there," she told the *Washington Post*, as commanders abandoned the draftees whose ranks were

being decimated by shellfire.

Dozens of soldiers' spouses and other relatives are making public statements condemning conditions faced by new conscripts.

Kyiv is trying to convince soldiers from Russia that they will be safe if they surrender. It has set up a hotline and a Telegram channel called "I want to live." Since mid-September it has received more than 3,500 appeals for help, from draftees or their wives.

Protests, strikes spread across Iran despite gov't attacks

Continued from front page

ity." The Kurdish, Azerbaijani and Baluch oppressed minorities in Iran have been special targets of Tehran's repression.

Over 400 people have been killed since the start of the protests over two months ago. Hundreds have been blinded by rubber bullets and pellets fired by the regime's agents. The government claims 50 of its security forces have been killed.

Protests began after the Sept. 16 death of a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini, who died three days after she was arrested by the hated "morality" police for violating the rulers' oppressive dress code. But the Shiite-based bourgeois clerical regime charges the actions are orchestrated by U.S. and Israeli operatives, as well as Iranian Kurdish groups exiled in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Iranian regime's latest missile and drone attacks into Iraq Nov. 21 hit their bases and an adjacent refugee camp. The airstrikes were condemned by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The regime 'feels us'

At the funeral of his son on Nov. 17 in Bukan, Iran, the father of Mohammed Hassanzadeh was cheered by the crowd when he praised the role played by women in the protests. From now on when a man shows courage, he said, "we should say you are very feminine because the courage of women is greater than that of men."

In Javanrud, a Kurdish town of some 62,000 people, thousands took to the streets to confront a government assault. Despite being fired upon, protesters kept advancing toward the regime's thugs.

"They say we have weapons, but we are only armed with stones and empty hands," says one youth in Mahabad, a

center of many of the clashes, in a quote posted with a video Nov. 29. "We have nothing else, but they still fear us."

Etemad (Trust) newspaper in Iran, which supports the "reformist" wing of the capitalist regime, quoted Jalal Mahmoodzadeh, Mahabad's Member of Parliament, saying that if the troops keep shooting protesters, it will "continue the crisis and increase people's anger."

'Equality for Azeris, Baluch, Kurds'

Students at Tehran University held a solidarity action Nov. 22. They poured red dye into a fountain to symbolize the bloodshed from government attacks. They chanted "Equality for Azeris, Baluch, Kurds"; "Students, teachers, workers, unite, unite"; and "Release the political prisoners."

Dozens of student leaders, union activists, university professors, and public school teachers have been arrested over the last several weeks as well.

The pro-government Iranian Labour News Agency reports widespread complaints by workers about not being paid on time, the high rate of on-the-job injuries, and the growth in the number of temporary workers who get paid the minimum wage or less and have few protections. As it intensifies its repression, the government is also offering a carrot to workers to encourage them and their unions to refrain from joining protests.

State-financed charities increased the monthly allowance they give to some impoverished families by 30%. Government workers have been given wage increases above the official inflation rate of 42.9%.

Disabled veterans are getting a 25% increase and officials promise special attention to veterans who have been unable to get permanent jobs. Deep-seated anger among

working people of all nationalities exists towards the human and financial costs of the regimes decadeslong drive to extend its power through military adventures in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and beyond.

So far, government concessions have been too little, too late. Hundreds of workers at the Cruise auto plant went on strike Nov. 19 demanding higher wages. That same day workers at the Darugar factory — which manufactures dishwashing liquid and cosmetics — protested. They say the company owes four months of wages and six months of insurance premiums, despite imposing speedup by laying off workers, while keeping production targets the same.

On Nov. 21 strikes began by autoworkers at the Bahman Motor Company in Tehran and "contract" oil workers in Masjid-i Sulaiman, in the predominantly Arab Khuzestan province. Workers at one or two gas complexes in south Pars also struck, saying they had been shorted on their paychecks.

Drivers and other workers at the Tehran airport terminal and other freight companies went on strike the same day, chanting, "Don't be afraid, we're all in this together" and "Down with the dictatorship."

The depth of the support for the protests by working people both in Iran and internationally came through during the World Cup soccer tournament in Qatar. To the applause and cheers of fans at the stadium the Iranian team refused to sing along when Iran's national anthem was played.

Before the game team captain Ehsan Hajisafi sent a message back home to families who have lost relatives to the regime's assaults. "They should know that we are with them, we support them and we sympathize with them."

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