

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Iran protests mark anniversary of Zhina Amini death

— PAGE 9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 35 SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

CL in Canada: 'Drop charges against Freedom Convoy truckers'

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — “The frame-up trial of Tamara Lich and Chris Barber is the latest attack on the February 2022 Freedom Convoy protest in Ottawa by truckers and others opposed to vaccine mandates that barred truckers from making trips to and from the U.S.,” said a Communist League statement released Sept. 12. The trial is a major attack on democratic and political rights, on free speech and the right to protest.

“The unions and all defenders of democratic rights should demand an immediate end to the trial and the withdrawal of all charges against them and other participants in the protest.”

Lich said that the outcome of her trial will set a precedent for other convoy protesters awaiting trial. “That’s why I’m not going down without a fight,” she said.

Lich is a former leader of the Maverick Party, which backs autonomy for Western Canada. Barber is a truck driver in Saskatchewan who ran the CB Trucking company.

They were arrested and charged several days after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked the never-before-used

Continued on page 2

Labor Day actions highlight union struggles worldwide



Above, Militant/Mike Shur; inset, UAW Local 1853. Above, strikers from Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists march in New York City Labor Day Parade Sept. 9. Inset, UAW contingent at the Nashville, Tennessee, Labor Day march.

Thousands join Labor Day rallies, back union battles

BY JOHN STUDER

NEW YORK — Thousands joined the Labor Day Parade up Fifth Avenue here Sept. 9 in one of the liveliest actions by the union movement in years. The mood of union power was highlighted by the boisterous 1,000-strong

Continued on page 6

Autoworkers fight for big pay boost, end to two-tier

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO — The 150,000 members of the United Auto Workers at the Big Three auto companies — Ford, General Motors and Stellantis — voted by 97% to strike if their demands aren’t met by the bosses before their contract expires Sept. 14. The UAW is demanding an end to two-tier wages, a 40% hourly wage increase and restoration of cost-of-living clauses to compensate for inflation.

Other demands include higher pay for and restoration of medical benefits for retirees and a pension for all workers, which was cut in 2009 when the boss-

Continued on page 7

New Syria actions decry conditions, call for ouster of the Assad regime

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For the first time since the defeat of the mass popular uprising against the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria in 2011, sizable new protests against dire economic conditions and Assad’s dictatorial rule erupted in mid-August and have continued into September in the government-controlled southwestern province of Sweida. This is a center of the country’s Druze population.

The actions were initiated in response to the government slashing fuel subsidies, which more than doubled the cost of gasoline. This further accentuates the unlivable conditions working people have faced since military intervention by Moscow and

Continued on page 4

Working people in Ukraine fight to defend their independence

BY ROY LANDERSEN

At the heart of the courageous struggle by working people in Ukraine to defend their country against the invasion by Russian President Vladimir Putin is their centurieslong quest for national self-determination.

They won their independence as a result of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that overthrew the czarist prison house of nations. However, a counter-revolution led by Joseph Stalin meant subjugation to Moscow. Ukraine won its independence in 1991 again after the collapse of the Soviet Union, only to find its government increasingly dominated by political forces loyal to the Putin regime.

Working people rebelled in 2014, mounting the popular uprising known as the Maidan, ousting the hated Russian-dominated government of Viktor Yanukovich. They are not about to be subjugated again.

Moscow staged bogus local elections Sept. 8-10 in parts of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Luhansk and Crimea regions in eastern and southern Ukraine that it has seized and claims are part of Russia. Armed

Continued on page 5

50 years after US-backed coup in Chile, what are lessons for today?



AP Photo

Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro is greeted by El Teniente copper miners, Chile, Nov. 24, 1971.

BY SETH GALINSKY

On Sept. 11, 1973, Chilean Gen. Augusto Pinochet and the military brass backed by Washington overthrew the elected government of President Salvador Allende in blood, dealing a blow to working people that lasted decades. On the 50th anniversary of the coup, the lessons of that defeat are still being debated.

Allende died during the army’s attack on the Presidential Palace. He had won election just three years before with a plurality of 36% of the vote as the candidate of the Popular Unity, a coalition that included Allende’s Socialist Party, the Communist Party and two bourgeois parties — the Radical Party and United People’s

Continued on page 3

NYC Democrats move to refurbish Red Squad, attack political rights

BY TERRY EVANS

The New York City Police Department announced July 18 the appointment of Harvard graduate and long-time intelligence department operative Rebecca Weiner as deputy commissioner of the city’s notorious intelligence and counterterrorism unit — better known as its Red Squad. She now helps lead the 1,500 cop spy agency, which is larger than that of many countries.

Continued on page 9

Inside

- SWP: Protest Abbas’ defense of the Holocaust 9
- Prisoner hunger strike in Bahrain inspires protests 4
- Military coup in Gabon keeps power in Bongo family 4
- Cuba arrests group recruiting for Moscow’s war in Ukraine 5

'Drop Freedom Convoy charges'

Continued from front page

Emergencies Act against thousands of Ottawa protesters Feb. 14, 2022.

The arrests were followed by one of the most far-reaching acts of government repression in modern Canadian history. Over 3,000 police, using military-grade weapons, armored vehicles, elite sharpshooters, stun grenades and other weapons shut down the protest. Over 200 participants were arrested, trucks were seized and bank accounts of many frozen.

The Trudeau government fraudulently claimed the protest constituted a "public order emergency." The government's real aim was to criminalize a legitimate political protest challenging government policies.

"In the context of the deepening economic, social and political crisis of the capitalist system, the use of the Emergencies Act against the truckers was a calculated, precedent-setting preemptive blow against rising working-class resistance and the use of union power to defend workers' interests," said the Communist League.

At the time, the executive board of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union issued a statement condemning the government's use of the Emergencies Act, warning that "introducing the Emergencies Act sets a precedent that could be used against the labour movement when it holds protests in the future."

Emboldened after putting down the Freedom Convoy protesters, the capitalist rulers stepped up their attacks on the rights of working people and the unions. Last November, the Ontario government imposed Bill 28 against 55,000 Ontario education

support workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, declaring their planned strike illegal. The workers walked out in defiance of the law and forced the government to back down.

Eight months later, 7,400 workers in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union shut down the ports on Canada's West Coast. Employer associations across the country demanded the government impose back-to-work legislation.

Trudeau, who previously had said that "all options" were on the table to put an end to the longshore workers' fight, threatened to impose binding government arbitration.

Free speech is 'criminal activity'

Both Lich and Barber were released from jail under draconian bail conditions, effectively losing their right to presumption of innocence, with Lich spending a total of 49 days behind bars despite never being convicted of a criminal act. At her second bail hearing she was brought to court in shackles to give the appearance of her being a convicted criminal. An outraged Superior Court judge ordered the shackles be removed and that she be released.

The right to free speech was trampled when Lich was forbidden from using social media for any reason, contacting any of the other leaders of the convoy or participating in activity opposing vaccine mandates.

Barber was released on \$100,000 bail after agreeing to leave Ottawa, and never to take part in similar protests again. He was barred from communicating with other convoy leaders. Barber is effectively being held under



CBC/Evan Mitsui

After using armed cops, gov't Emergencies Act to crush "Freedom Convoy" protest in Ottawa, Canadian rulers have deepened assault on unions and political rights crucial for working class.

house arrest until the trial is completed.

Both are charged with mischief, intimidation, and obstructing police. Barber is also charged with counseling others to disobey a court order — a myriad of charges in hopes that at least one will stick.

In his opening statement to the court, Crown prosecutor Timothy Radcliffe cynically claimed the charges against Lich and Barber had nothing to do with their political views or their right to express them, but about their use of "unlawful means" to press Ottawa to change its COVID-19 mandate policies. He claimed the protest was "anything but peaceful."

Defense lawyers countered that during the three-week protest involving thousands of people not one violent incident took place. Efforts by the organizers to negotiate an agreement with police to reduce the disruptive impact of the action on Ottawa citizens were rebuffed. Police negotiators said they received orders not to give "one inch" in concessions to the convoy, but declined to say whether government officials gave the orders.

In Trudeau's testimony to Public Order Emergency Commission hearings held in November 2022, he made it clear that the government considers such protests illegitimate. "It wasn't that [protesters] just wanted to be heard. They wanted us to change public health policy," he said.

Since when is that illegal? The objec-

tive of most demonstrations is to pressure capitalist governments to change policies protesters consider harmful. The prosecution calls this "intimidation" of government, one of the charges Lich and Barber face.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland justified Trudeau's invoking the Emergencies Act, telling the commission the protest was "profoundly jeopardizing" the capitalist economy. This language could be used against any strike, reinforcing Ontario Public Service Employees Union's warning about the potential use of the Emergencies Act against striking workers.

Justice Heather Perkins-McVey is presiding over the trial, and, in the absence of a jury, will rule on whether Lich and Barber are guilty.

Trials of other protesters are to come.

The Communist League is urging unions and other groups to join in protesting the attack on political rights.

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THE MILITANT

Workers debate course forward at DC march

Some 5,000 people, including many trade unionists, marched Aug. 26 to commemorate the 1963 civil rights March on Washington. SWP campaigners at rally explained centrality of the fight for constitutional rights today, and crucial need for solidarity with labor battles.



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Róger Calero, SWP candidate from New York, discusses with marchers at DC event.

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SWP campaign builds union fights, points road forward

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

At labor day events across the country and other union actions, Socialist Workers Party candidates and supporters are getting a welcome response as they bring solidarity and introduce the party's program to advance the interests of the working class.

The SWP campaign in Northern California organized supporters to join the Labor Day protest in Oakland, led by more than 1,000 health care workers, members of the SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West. They're fighting for a better contract with Kaiser Permanente.

Dulce Norberto-Pina, a medical assistant at Kaiser in Modesto, California, said she liked a union placard that read, "I can't afford to live where I work."

She told SWP member Andrea Morell that because rents were so high in Modesto until recently her commute was up to three hours. They discussed how unions could be strengthened and the potential for workers to make revolutionary change. Norberto-Pina got *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes and a subscription to the *Militant*. Over the course of the march and rally, 10 par-

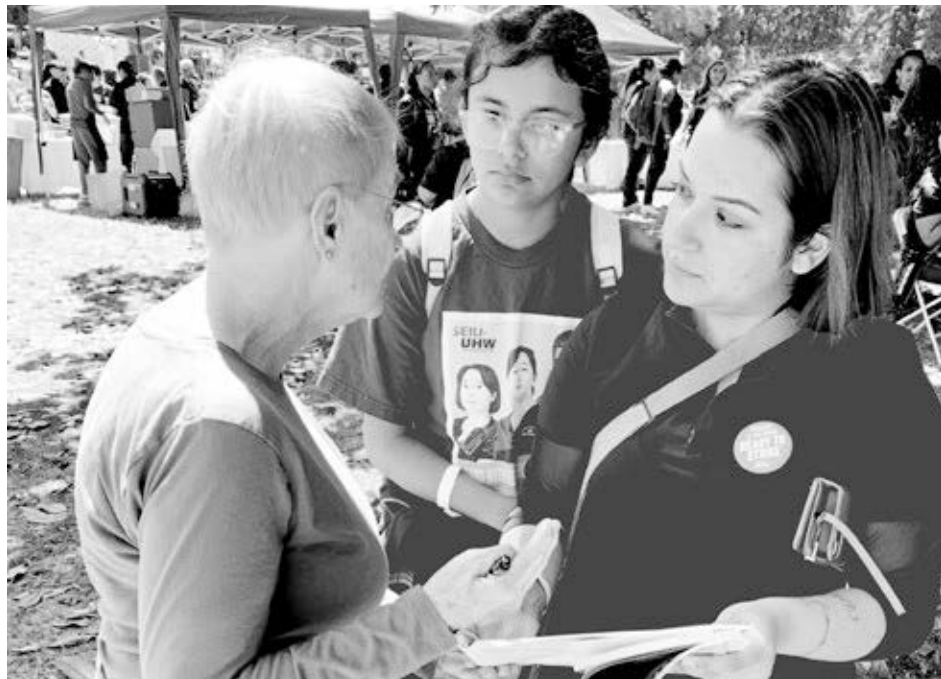
ticipants subscribed.

SWP campaigners are organizing a three-day effort Sept. 22-24 to help put Laura Garza, the party's candidate for U.S. Senate in California, on the ballot. They'll collect signatures in Oakland, San Leandro and the Salinas Valley. Garza will be the keynote speaker at a campaign forum in Oakland Sept. 22, along with Margaret Trowe, the party's candidate for Congress in District 12. A Sunday afternoon barbecue will cap the weekend's activity.

In Kokomo, Indiana, SWP members John Hawkins and Dean Hazlewood struck up a discussion with two auto-workers at a diner Sept. 30.

Dale Durham told them the heat at the Stellantis casting plant where he works reaches 105 degrees. As a result "safety and quality are gone the last two to three hours of the shift." Durham added he thought the recent contract signed by Teamsters at UPS was "a victory, in dollars and cents gained." Where he works, "the two tiers has to go away because it splits workers. They split us apart any way they can think of."

During a wide-ranging discussion, the SWP campaigners said working people needed to build a movement to lead millions in a revolutionary



Militant/Joel Britton

Medical assistant Dulce Norberto-Pina, right, and her daughter, Maritza, center, talk with SWP member Andrea Morell at Labor Day protest in Oakland, California. Norberto-Pina said she related to the union sign, "I can't afford to live where I work."

struggle for workers power. Durham wasn't convinced. The government, he said, needed "to treat the country as a business." Both he and his friend got copies of the *Militant*.

At a Sept. 9 Labor Day march of 300 in Nashville, Tennessee, SWP campaigners spoke with Aleah Gillen, a worker at the General Motors plant in Spring Hill and a member of the United Auto Workers. She told them, "We're ready to strike if we have to," because "what the company is offering is just insulting." Gillen got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of the *Low Point*

of *Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

Along with autoworkers, the event included a contingent of strikers in the Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Four *Militant* subscriptions and 18 copies of the paper were sold along with 11 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries.

To join in campaigning with SWP candidates, contact campaign offices listed on page 8.

50 years after U.S.-backed coup in Chile, what are lessons for today?

Continued from front page
Action Movement.

Thousands of documents released over the last 20 years—including two just released Aug. 25 by the CIA—expose Washington's role, first in trying to block Allende's election, then in the coup that brought Pinochet to power and the bloody repression that followed.

In late 1971, Cuban President Fidel Castro toured Chile at Allende's invitation, discussing the experiences of Cuba's socialist revolution with the president and meeting with workers, peasants and students. Castro warned of the dangers already brewing and the need to prepare politically to defeat them.

The year before Castro's visit, working people had poured into the streets to celebrate when it became clear that Allende was going to win the election, reflecting a broad radicalization of workers and farmers there.

The election of Allende "was like a door slightly ajar," Castro told union leaders in Santiago Nov. 23, 1971, "an opening." But already, he said, the reactionaries had begun "to conspire, to work out macabre plans."

The Popular Unity government implemented significant reforms. This included nationalizing foreign copper, iron, nitrate and coal mining companies and passing an initial land reform law. Some peasants went farther, seizing more land.

Workers received a significant wage increase. Children were given a half quart of milk a day. Millions of inexpensive books were published and sold at newspaper kiosks. Thousands of political prisoners were released. And Allende established

diplomatic relations and trade with Cuba and spoke out against the U.S. rulers' war on Vietnam.

Capitalist sabotage

Chile's capitalist class began to sabotage production, and workers responded, occupying factories and organizing to produce without the bosses. They set up cordones industriales (industrial councils), which began fighting for workers control of production and distribution of goods.

Still, in a May 21, 1971, speech to the Chilean Congress, Allende said, "History will permit us to break with the past and construct a new model of society" through elections. The new

government's actions would recognize "legality" and "certain limits," a euphemism for subordinating the struggles of workers and peasants to maintaining capitalism.

Allende said his long-term goal was to "bring about the economic and social transformation of Chile, to open up the road to socialism."

But despite all the radical rhetoric, Allende's coalition was a class-collaborationist popular front, which sought reforms, not to wrest political power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

While Allende, the Communist Party and others in his coalition were sowing illusions that the Armed Forces and the Carabineros, the national police, had a "patriotic conscience" and would not attack the people, U.S. imperialism and the Chilean capitalist class were preparing for battle.

At a White House meeting with presidential adviser Henry Kissinger, CIA Director Richard Helms and Attorney General John Mitchell on Sept. 15, 1970, a week after Allende won the election, President Richard Nixon ordered them to do whatever it took to "make the economy scream" to get rid of Allende.

Washington began an economic war on Allende's Chile, cutting all U.S. aid, except for the military and financing opponents of the Popular Unity government. That included underwriting a 26-day bosses' "strike" by truck owners that paralyzed the economy in fall 1972.

During his 1971 trip, Castro warned repeatedly about what was unfolding and the need to organize working people in their millions to advance the revolution forward, as they had done in Cuba.

At a farewell rally of thousands in Santiago Dec. 2, 1971, Castro said, fas-

cist forces "are trying to make headway and gain ground among the middle layers and take the streets. They are trying to demoralize the revolutionaries. ... The success or the failure of this unusual process will depend on the ideological battle and the mass struggle."

"Who will learn more and sooner?" he asked the crowd. "The exploiters or the exploited? ... The people or the enemies of the people?"

At that rally, and in private discussions with Allende, Castro explained the need to organize working people in their millions. "I have said that there is no case in history," he told the crowd, "in which the reactionaries, the exploiters, the privileged members of a social system, resign themselves peacefully to changes."

He explained what making a socialist revolution meant for the consciousness and capacity of Cuban toilers to resist all attacks. In revolutionary Cuba, "it would take two hours for us to get together 10 times as many people as there are here now. And I also say that we can mobilize 600,000 men in arms within 24 hours!"

The Popular Unity leaders brushed aside Castro's warnings. While U.S. imperialism and the local capitalist class systematically prepared to overthrow the government, Allende held the masses back.

Working people paid a heavy price. Some 3,100 people were murdered or disappeared in the course of the coup and the following 17 years of Pinochet's rule. Another 9,800 survived torture.

The words of Castro more than 50 years ago still ring true. Working people, he said, "need to keep the enemy from taking the initiative."

"Apply the laws of history; apply the wise principles of Marxism. Do it intelligently and creatively, and you'll see, you'll win."



Speeches by Fidel Castro during his 1971 visit to Chile, along with 1973 speech he gave in Cuba after the overthrow of Salvador Allende by U.S.-backed coup.

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Syria actions call to oust Assad

Continued from front page

Tehran enabled the Assad regime to retake swathes of the country and restabilize its rule.

At least 300,000 civilians were killed and half of Syria's prewar population of 23 million has been displaced. About 90% of Syrians now live in poverty, according to the United Nations.

"Our demands are firstly political," said an unnamed young woman in a video from one of the recent protests in Sweida. "We want dignity and we want freedom."

Over the last three months the Syrian pound lost 80% of its value, hitting working people particularly hard. While the government doubled state salaries to about \$13 a month, a monthly food basket in June cost at least \$81, according to the U.N. World Food Program.

Amid rampant inflation, some have taken to using backpacks instead of wallets to carry the wads of cash needed to make simple everyday purchases. "If I buy (my son) two containers of milk, I'd have spent my entire month's salary," Damascus resident Ghaswan al-Wadi told The Associated Press Aug. 29.

During the past decade of conflict between Assad and opposition forces, Syria's Druze population for the most part stood aside, but this time they're at the center of the actions. Solidarity protests have taken place in other cities, including Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Tartus and Azaz.

"These are the largest protests that have taken place in Sweida," Rayan Maarouf, editor of the local Suwayda24 news website, told AP. "At one point

most people were neutral or unsure, but now they don't believe their lives can improve without political change."

While the government deployed its police force in an effort to prevent demonstrations in Damascus, it has so far held off from moving against the Druze-led protests.

According to the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, about 4,000 protesters attended demonstrations Aug. 25. And demonstrations continued on a daily basis. On Sept. 4, hundreds smashed the statue of Assad's late father and predecessor, Hafez al-Assad, reported *Asharq Al-Awsat*. The date marked the eighth anniversary of the assassination of cleric Sheik Wahid Balous, a prominent critic of Assad. He had called on the youth in Sweida to refuse to serve in the military.

On Sept. 9 thousands gathered in Sweida's al-Karama square, chanting, "Listen Bashar, Syrian people will not kneel!" and "Down with the dictator's rule." Some people from rural areas of the province are paying as much as a quarter of their income to get to the large protests in the city, an unnamed activist from Suwayda24 told Rudaw.

Across the province, local branches of the Baath party, whose officials hold top government posts, were closed by protesters. In some places office doors were welded shut and anti-government slogans were spray-painted on the walls, reported Daily Sabah.

The city of Sweida, with the same name as the province, is populated by more than 100,000 people. Protests have included strikes by public transportation workers.

Prisoner hunger strike in Bahrain inspires protests



Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy

Since Aug. 7, more than 800 prisoners in Bahrain have been conducting that country's largest-ever hunger strike, protesting intolerable conditions, including systematic mistreatment, medical neglect and limited visitation.

Their actions have inspired street protests led by prisoners' families, above, calling for release of their relatives and for King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, who has ruled Bahrain since 2002, to step down. In recent years such protests have been rare given the government's clampdown on political dissent.

Many of the hunger strikers have been imprisoned since taking part in the mass popular uprising that erupted throughout Bahrain in 2011, inspired by revolts elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa. That year, over 100,000 people gathered across the country to demand an end to discrimination against the majority Shiite population, freedom for political prisoners and the replacement of the Sunni monarchy with an elected government. The rulers were only able to suppress the protests with assistance from military forces provided by the rulers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The protests today are demanding prisoners get more time out of their cells — currently limited to one hour per day — as well as proper medical care and the right to hold prayers in dedicated spaces.

Bahrain, an island state of 1.6 million people just off the coasts of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, is where the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet is based. The U.S. rulers have been staunch allies of the monarchy there.

The prison hunger strike combined with the street protests have helped generate new openings to defend and advance the fight for political freedoms.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Hear the Socialist Workers Party Candidates. Speakers: Laura Garza, member of SMART-TD rail union, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from California; Maggie Trowe, member of BCTGM union, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in District 12. Fri., Sept. 22. Refreshments, 6 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

TEXAS

Fort Worth

"Cubana 455" Documentary, Based on Recently Declassified Documents on Bombing of Cuban Civilian Airliner Off Coast of Barbados, Oct. 6, 1976. Speaker: Alex Huinil, Socialist Workers Party, followed by film. Sat., Sept. 23, 4:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 108 Gramercy Center. Tel.: (817) 899-6720.

Military coup in Gabon keeps power in Bongo family

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Minutes after Ali Bongo Ondimba was reelected to a third term as president of Gabon Aug. 30, a coup led by Brice Clothaire Oligui Nguema, head of the country's central security forces, overthrew the government.

Ali Bongo became president in 2009 following the death of his father, Omar Bongo Ondimba, who became president in 1967 with the backing of the French rulers, the former colonial power. The family is one of the richest in Africa, growing enormously wealthy in office by offering French companies favorable trade terms. Coup leader Nguema is Bongo's cousin.

Hoping for change, crowds celebrated the coup in the streets of Libreville, the capital, and in Port-Gentil, the two largest cities. "Today we can only be happy," John Nze, a resident of Libreville, told

The Associated Press. "The country's past situation handicapped everyone. There were no jobs."

Gabon has one of the highest incomes per capita in Africa, with oil revenues of \$6 billion in 2020 alone. And while education and health care levels are also higher, the reality is that more than a third of the country's 2.3 million people live below the poverty line, many without regular access to electricity and other basic services. Unemployment for young workers — in a country where the median age is 21 — is almost 40%.

Gabon is almost 90% forest. The policies pursued by the Bongo family included using the forests to sell "carbon credits" to industrialized countries and oil companies. In forest communities farmers complain about the lack of roads that make transportation of crops almost impossible. The growing numbers of elephants in rural areas — a direct result of Bongo's policies that prohibit ivory poaching — are eating their way through the fields. "Let the elephants vote for him" was a slogan of Bongo's critics during the 2016 election. Most of the country's food is imported.

The coup was the eighth across West and Central Africa since 2020 — all in former French colonies — and came five weeks after the government in Niger, 1,200 miles to the north, was toppled.

Each coup reflects tensions within the countries' ruling classes over control of wealth and resources, amid jockeying for international allies to back up their regimes. To different degrees, all of the new military leaders claim their actions are aimed at the French rulers' interfer-

ence, taking advantage of deep hostility among millions to the imperialists' plunder of the region. Following coups in Mali and Burkina Faso, French troops were kicked out of those countries by their new military rulers. French President Emmanuel Macron has rejected demands by Niger's new government that they leave.

In contrast to countries across the Sahel, where French troops have been deployed to fight Islamist groups, Gabon has seen less military conflict. Some 350 French troops have been stationed in Gabon to train its military forces.

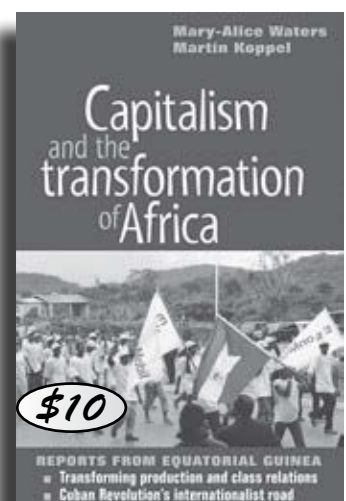
The 55-member nations of the African Union suspended Gabon's membership on Aug. 31, condemning the military takeover.

Hours after Gabon's coup, the president of neighboring Cameroon, Paul Biya, shuffled his military leadership. Rwandan President Paul Kagame has "accepted the resignation" of a dozen generals and 80 other senior military officers.

Recommended reading



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Defend Ukraine independence

Continued from front page

guards often stood over the voting. To give a fig leaf of credibility to the sham, a small selection of Russian opposition parties were permitted to run. Moscow announced that the candidates of Putin's United Russia party were "elected."

What took place "has nothing to do with normal elections," Baska, a resident of Melitopol, told CNN. She has refused to leave the Moscow-ruled city, but says she thinks Putin intends "a complete replacement of the local population [by Russians]." Many residents in occupied regions have fled or been forced to use Russian passports.

The fake vote was timed to coincide with Russian regional and municipal elections. In Moscow, an ally of Putin was elected mayor, but only 10% of voters participated. Many who went to vote online found the message, "You have already voted."

At the same time, Kyiv's counter-offensive is making slow but steady progress, liberating towns in the south and areas around Bakhmut in the east. Ukrainian forces captured the Boyko Towers, four important oil and gas production platforms in the Black Sea, Sept. 11.

The consequences of the first full-scale land war in Europe since World War II continues to sharpen tensions worldwide, pushing capitalist rulers everywhere to search for new allies and weaponry to defend their national interests.

Putin met Kim Jong Un, the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in Russia's Far East Sept. 13. Pyongyang is offering ammunition stockpiles that Moscow desperately needs to continue its brutal bombardment of Ukrainian cities. Russian food and fuel supplies could ease shortages in North Korea.

At the same time that Kim is strengthening relations with Putin, the South Korean government has bolstered its military ties with Kyiv, Tokyo and Washington. The Korean Peninsula was divided against the wishes of the Korean people by the U.S. rulers after World War II.

Washington has threatened to tighten its sanctions against the DPRK if Putin's deal with Kim goes ahead. U.S.-led sanctions against both North Korea and Russia fall hardest on working people.

This week the U.S. military began joint military exercises in Armenia with its armed forces. Earlier this year the government there refused to allow Moscow — its ally for decades — to hold military exercises on their soil.

Ukraine music and art flourish

Ever since Putin's war began, hundreds of prominent filmmakers, writers and musicians have fled Russia. The contrast with Ukraine couldn't be sharper, where the defense of national sovereignty is being waged with the enthusiastic participation of the country's artists.

A surge of creativity in Ukraine has generated hundreds of songs, ranging "from folk-patriotic to the most fashionable" modern genres, Russian music critic Artemy Troitsky told Open Democracy. "A just war inspires creative people, while a vile, dirty, predatory one inspires a depressing feeling," he said.

Many well-known Russian musicians have spoken out against Mos-

cow's invasion. Blacklisted by Kremlin authorities, their concerts were banned in the Russian Federation. Unwilling to stay silent, many moved abroad.

Yuri Shevchuk of DDT, one of Russia's most popular rock bands, has refused to leave the country.

"I have always been against wars, in any country and at any time," he wrote. "I opposed the wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Abkhazia, Georgia, Ossetia, Karabakh and Iraq. I am also against the ongoing eight-year war in Donbas and the current military operation in Ukraine."

Since Shevchuk's statement was published in 2022, DDT's performances have been banned.

Many Russians turn their backs on Putin's efforts to drum up support for the war. "The Witness," the first full-length movie glorifying Moscow's invasion, is playing to empty theaters. Other state-backed propaganda movies about Putin's seizure of Crimea in 2014 have been similar box-office flops. Some older Russians, limited to

Cuba arrests group recruiting for Moscow's war in Ukraine

BY JANET POST

Col. César Rodríguez of Cuba's Ministry of the Interior announced Sept. 7 the arrest of 17 people who were part of a secret network recruiting young men on the island to join Moscow's forces in their war on Ukraine.

Cuba's Foreign Ministry said it had uncovered the operation Sept. 4.

"The Ministry of the Interior ... is working on the neutralization and dismantling of a human trafficking network that operates from Russia to incorporate Cuban citizens living there, and even some from Cuba, into the military forces participating in war operations in Ukraine," the Foreign Ministry said. "Cuba is not part of the war in Ukraine."

The Cuban Revolution has a long record of support for national self-determination worldwide.

The Foreign Ministry pointed out that "Cuba's enemies are promoting distorted information that seeks to tarnish the country's image and present it



Reuters
Russian police arrest Elena Osipova, "the conscience of St. Petersburg," in that city, March 2, 2022. Kremlin's repression has suppressed but not prevented widespread anti-war sentiments.

government-controlled media, tend to go along with Putin's war. But others are speaking out. Over 200 pensioners across the country have been convicted for opposing the invasion.

"Russia's tragedy cannot be com-

pared with Ukraine's, whose fertile lands, its people, its cities, are all being destroyed," 69-year-old Elena Ivanova from Novosibirsk told Verstka Media. "The most important thing is that the war ends."

as an accomplice to these actions that we firmly reject."

Mouthpieces for the U.S. rulers and their decadeslong economic war against the Cuban Revolution lost no time slandering the country's government. The Sept. 12 New York Sun claimed "Cuba, Faced With Economic Crisis, 'Rents' Soldiers to Russia for Ukraine War."

"Cuba has a firm and clear historical position against mercenarism," the country's Foreign Ministry said, pointing out "it plays an active role in the United Nations in rejection of the aforementioned practice, being the author of several of the initiatives approved in that forum."

Rodríguez said that recruiters were targeting Cubans interested in military activity, focusing on those "with anti-social behavior and criminal records."

The Moscow Times reported that a Facebook group, Cubans in Moscow, advertised a one-year contract with the Russian army, offering Russian citi-

zenship to recruits and their families.

News outlets from the Ryazan region in central Russia reported that "several Cubans" have signed contracts to fight, after they were promised a one-time payment of \$2,433 from the Russian federal budget, \$2,500 from Ryazan's regional budget and a monthly salary of \$2,545.

Two 19-year-old Cubans, Andorf Antonio Velázquez García from Havana, and Alex Rolando Vega Díaz from Santa Clara, told the *Miami Herald* they signed up for construction work in Russia and ended up in a military training unit in Ryazan. They were dispatched to a trench in Ukraine, but sent back to Ryazan when they got sick.

"What is happening in Ukraine is ugly. It is hard to see people with their heads open before you, to see how people get killed," Vega Díaz said.

"From my heart, I tell all Cubans who plan to come here not to come. It is crazy here," he said.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 28, 1998

Working-class fighters should throw their support behind the Dec. 10 national day of protests to demand the release of 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails.

The Puerto Rican patriots were given maximum sentences — up to 105 years. Their imprisonment has been marked by physical abuse, denial of medical treatment, restricting physical contact with relatives, and frequent transfers — making visits by family members almost impossible. Many have served years in solitary confinement.

Oscar López Rivera spent the last 12 years in solitary confinement. His recent transfer to the general prison population was a victory in the campaign to free all 15 independentistas.

Working people in the United States can never be free as long as their brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico remain chained by Yankee domination.



September 28, 1973

On a cross-country trip today you might pass, or be passed by, one of more than 22,000 women truck drivers. The number of women truckers is growing so fast that a National Women's Trucking Association has been formed, and truck stops have to expand their facilities to accommodate women drivers.

There would probably be a lot more women drivers, but executives of trucking firms are still reluctant to accept women. Their excuse is usually that the work is "too hard" for women, which the women drivers are proving a lie.

Why are women in increasing numbers taking to the road? Many couples, both married and unmarried, have teamed up on the road for companionship, to travel, and boost their income. Other women have become truck drivers because the pay is much better than what they'd earn as secretaries, teachers or waitresses.



September 27, 1948

RICHMOND, Calif., Sept. 15 — In a pitched battle against tear gas-hurling police and in defiance of a court injunction, some 3,000 massed pickets and sympathizers of the CIO Oil Workers Union yesterday called a halt to finckherding and picket line-crashing in this oil workers' town just across the bay from San Francisco.

They turned back a motor caravan of finks that tried to enter the Standard Oil Refinery here under escort of 150 steel-helmeted police. For more than an hour, the striking workers and their supporters, led by experienced war veterans and battling from behind barricades, fought off the tear-gas assaults of the heavily armed cops.

One hour and ten minutes after its erection, its purpose fulfilled, the pickets allowed the barrier to be torn down and held a victory meeting on the spot, right outside their union hall.

Labor Day actions highlight union struggles worldwide

Continued from front page

contingent of striking members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Writers Guild of America. The two entertainment unions have been on the picket lines for months across the country.

Even though the industry and media promotes stars with a glamorous lifestyle, “we’re workers,” SAG-AFTRA member Christine Bruno, riding a motorized wheelchair, told the press. “We deserve a fair wage. We deserve protections.”

Many work two or more jobs to get by and conditions are getting harder. As streaming and “artificial intelligence” production expands, workers face new threats to their livelihood. “We absolutely do not deserve for our images and our likenesses to be used in perpetuity without fair compensation,” Bruno said.

Similar actions took place across the country as workers increasingly face moves by the bosses to put the deepening crisis of their capitalist system of production and trade on their backs. Battles over jobs, wages, safety and working conditions, unlivable schedules, and forced overtime are more common.

Below are a few of the reports the *Militant* received this week.

Wabtec strikers reach agreement, join Erie Labor Day Parade

ERIE, Pa. — Over 1,400 members of Locals 506 and 618 of the United Electrical workers union returned to work Sept. 5 at Wabtec’s plant here after 70 days on strike.

“This contract represents a substantial improvement over what Wabtec had on the table in June,” Local 506 President Scott Slawson told the media. “As a result of the action taken by our members, we made both economic and non-economic gains.”

“I was proud of the stand the membership took to make the gains that were necessary,” Slawson told the *Militant* by phone. The strike was marked “by the solidarity among the members, and the solidarity received from unions across the U.S. and overseas.”

Workers won yearly wage increases of 3% and higher over a four-year con-



Hundreds of flight attendants picket American Airlines at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport Aug. 30. Without pay raise since December 2019, unionists say they’re ready to strike.

tract, a \$1,500 lump-sum payment, a cost-of-living clause to blunt inflation, and improvements in the grievance process to defend workers from company attack.

At the same time, the bosses succeeded in keeping a 10-year-long progression before new hires reach the same wages as long-time employees. The union did get the transition to equal out yearly over the 10 years. Before the strike, so-called legacy workers got \$32.67 an hour while new hires started at \$21.47.

The spirit of UE members coming out of the strike was on display at the Labor Day action, where boisterous UE marchers were the concluding contingent in the parade.

At the march, Steven Carpenter of Ironworkers Local 851 told the *Militant* that when the Erie Strayer plant was on strike here in 2021, the UE locals “came down every week to support us. So, we came every week to support their strike. We just need to stick together.”

—Tony Lane

American Airlines flight attendants: ‘We are ready!’

DFW AIRPORT, Texas — “We are ready!” “American Airlines, are you paying attention today? We will strike!” yelled hundreds of Association of Professional Flight Attendants members as they marched outside Terminal D of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport here Aug. 30.

“This is what corporate greed looks like today at American Airlines. Does anyone feel you are part of this team?” Julie Hedrick, president of APFA, told the crowd. “No!” everyone yelled. She replied, “No, they are part of the corporate greed team.” Hedrick announced that some 26,000 union members across the country had voted 99.4% to authorize a strike. Similar protests were held at airports in Charlotte, North Carolina; Washington, D.C.; New York; Orlando and Miami, Florida; Las Vegas; Philadelphia; and Chicago.

The APFA has been in negotiations with American Airlines for a new contract since 2018. Their demands include higher pay, automatic cost-of-living wage protection, compensation for time spent boarding passengers, and an improved retirement plan.

Members of the Service Employees International Union and the Communications Workers of America, who represent airport workers, joined the

picket in solidarity. “I’m here to support my daughter who is a flight attendant,” Juan Cedillo told the *Militant*. “Her rent is over \$3,000 a month and she pays groceries, gas, insurance. I was a union member for over 40 years in Local 226 where I was a bellman at a Las Vegas hotel. We need the unions today more than ever.”

“We have waited too long. It is time American comes to the table,” Hedrick told the *Militant*. “The contract expired in December 2019 and we haven’t had a pay raise in over four years. American is making record profits.”

—Alyson Kennedy

Striking New Jersey nurses rally for safe staffing, higher wages

MAPLEWOOD, N.J. — “What’s disgusting? Union busting!” chanted 180 striking nurses and supporters as they rallied and marched here Sept. 9. The nurses, members of United Steelworkers Local 4-200, struck Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick to fight for safer staff-patient ratios.

“To deliver proper care, the number of nurses we have is not enough,” Anna Boada, an intensive care unit nurse, told the *Militant*. “Each ICU nurse is supposed to be responsible for two patients, but they push you to look after three. What if the patient has multiple medical devices you have to monitor?”

“No nurse wants to admit they can’t take care of their patients,” Ryan Siegel, an 18-year veteran at Robert Wood Johnson, told rally participants at the Maplewood Memorial Park rally. “Yes, nurses will do their best, but no one should be forced to try and make an impossible situation work. They’re trying to bust our union. The hospital wants nurses feeling hopeless, confused and divided. But we will not be broken.”

“We don’t want ‘recommendations’ on staff levels,” Siegel said. “We want enforceable and safe staffing, to increase the chance that our patients survive. Our demands are reasonable and attainable.” Other issues in the strike include higher wages, improved retirement benefits and a cap on health care costs.

Pediatrics nurse Jenny Torres was part of an earlier strike there in 2006. On Sept. 1, the hospital “has taken away our health insurance coverage,” she said, hoping to break strikers’ resolve.

Local 4-200 President Judy Danella welcomed a delegation of nurses from Clara Maas Medical Center in Bel-

leville to the rally.

“It took over eight months but we’ve just unionized,” Tania Howard, an ICU nurse from Clara Maas, told the *Militant*, adding they’re now members of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. “We’re fighting for our first contract and we’re here to show our support.”

—Terry Evans

Calif. health care workers rally for safe staffing, higher pay

OAKLAND, Calif. — Unions representing 85,000 health care workers in seven states and the District of Columbia are in a contract fight with giant HMO Kaiser Permanente. They are demanding Kaiser hire more workers.

More than 1,000 people joined a protest outside the Kaiser hospital here on Labor Day Sept. 4. Nam Nguyen, a health and wellness counselor at Kaiser, told the *Militant* that workers leaving and not being replaced has left staff vacancies up to 33%. Respiratory therapist Erica Chinchilla described the excruciating decisions she has had to make in deciding what patients struggling to breathe to prioritize when she can’t possibly treat them all.

The contract negotiated in 2019 by a national coalition of Kaiser Permanente unions expires Sept. 30. The coalition, which includes more than a dozen local unions, has announced that over the next few weeks union members will be voting on whether to authorize a strike.

Union demands for higher wages are linked to the staffing issue. “There is turnover because you can’t make it on the wages, especially single mothers,” Nguyen said. “That’s why the union is demanding that no worker make less than a minimum of \$25 an hour.”

Bargaining committee member Kay Grover, a licensed vocational nurse at Kaiser in Sacramento, said the bosses are demanding the union give up the right to strike in solidarity with Kaiser workers in other unions when they go on strike. “It’s divide and rule,” she said. “We have to stand up to this.”

—Betsey Stone

Ohio school bus drivers strike against boss surveillance

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP, Ohio — School bus drivers, members of Teamsters Local 100, won a victory in a one-week strike here that ended Sept. 8. Some 300 school bus drivers and aides



Members of United Auto Workers Local 551 rally in their union hall in Chicago Sept. 8. If no agreement is reached by Sept. 14, 150,000 autoworkers at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis voted 97% to strike.

for the Lakota Local School District north of Cincinnati walked out Sept. 1 against Petermann Transportation, the company the district contracts with. Lakota has 17,400 students in 23 schools.

“They call us part time, but it’s a long day working split shifts of 6 a.m. to 9:30, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30, and 1:45 to 5,” Kim Marguerat, a driver for 21 years, told the *Militant* while picketing on the first day of the strike outside the district office here. “And we only get paid for eight hours. We’re standing up to big corporations that just want to put their thumb on us.” The union’s lively picket lines drew more than 100 each day of the strike.

A major issue was the company’s demand to use surveillance cameras to spy on drivers, which can lead to discipline and penalties up to termination. “We’re not trying to hide anything,” Jodie Gabbard, a driver and union steward, told the *Militant*. “but we’re not robots, we’re human.” She explained that with the company’s original contract proposal drivers could have been fired for taking one hand off the steering wheel for just a second, or even taking a drink of water.

Teamsters Local 100 President Bill Davis told the media that the contract, voted up by 86% of the membership, allowed the company to use bus video for discipline only in cases of serious issues like fighting or alcohol and drug use.

—Betsey Farley

Metro grocery workers assess gain in Toronto strike

TORONTO — The strike by 3,700 members of Unifor Local 414 at 27 Metro grocery stores here ended when a majority of the workers voted to accept a new contract Aug. 31. They went on strike July 29 after rejecting a proposed agreement between the bosses and the union negotiating committee. The workers wanted to regain the \$2 an hour raise they had won during the COVID-19 pandemic that bosses have since taken away, and to win further raises to deal with rising inflation.

In the five-year contract both full-time and long-term part-time workers will get a 4.50 Canadian dollar raise per hour (\$3.30), including CA\$1.50 immediately and CA\$0 cents more in January. Part timers will get CA\$3.20 per hour overall, CA\$1.50 immediately. The key difference from the offer workers rejected is that full-time and long-term part-time workers won a CA\$2 increase by January.

Before the new agreement average wages for full-time employees was



SEIU health care workers lead rally at Oakland, California, Labor Day Sept. 4. More than 1,000 people turned out to support their fight for staff increases and higher wages.

CA\$22.60 an hour and for part time CA\$16.62. Part timers are over 70% of the workforce.

“The strike was overall a good experience. We let the company know we’re not easily pushed around,” said Sheldon Scantlebury, a 10-year-long Metro worker. “I do feel that people in the store who didn’t usually converse got a lot closer.”

Union members had mixed feelings about the result. “We could have gotten better,” Cadillera, who had been a union leader in a garment factory in the Philippines before coming to Canada, said. “I didn’t like a five-year contract.”

Cathy Wood, a part timer in the meat department at the Lloyd-Manor store, said, “For some the wages in the contract are OK, but not for a family with two kids.” Mary Leonard said, “We got more than in the previous contract offer. Sick days for part timers is new.”

The strikers won wide solidarity. To show support, some 50 Jewish members from the Darchei Noam Congregation joined the pickets line Aug. 15 at the Lawrence and Bathurst Street store, which sells a lot of kosher food.

—Joe Young

U.K. rail workers rally against employer attacks

LONDON — Hundreds of rail union members and their supporters marched and rallied here Aug. 30, protesting the rail bosses’ closure of 1,000 ticket of-

Autoworkers fight for big pay boost, end to two-tier

Continued from front page

Johnson said at a Sept. 8 strike preparation rally. “When my father worked here, he could buy a house and car and pay for everything. Now you can’t.”

Another issue looming over negotiations is what will happen to jobs in the switch over to electric vehicle production, which takes fewer workers.

The bosses insist they need to plow the admittedly high profits they’ve been making into stepped-up retooling to make this shift. They claim they’ll face increasing pressure from competitors if they don’t do so. If the union doesn’t back off, bosses threaten to move new plants to the South, where the labor movement has been weaker.

So far the companies have refused to offer anything near what the workers are demanding. Last week, Stellantis, Ford and General Motors all put forward counterproposals to the UAW. Stellantis offered a 14.5% wage increase over four years. “That doesn’t make up for inflation,” the

union responded, “let alone make up for past losses, and leaves workers even further behind.”

Ford demanded the union accept a 9% wage increase, and General Motors offered 10%, over four years.

All three companies insist they have to keep the divisive tiers. They rejected union demands to reestablish cost-of-living protection and to increase pay for retirees and reestablish retirees’ health care.

“I’ve worked for Ford for 17 years,” Eddie Jakes, a team lead in the paint department at the company’s Chicago plant, said. “Back in 2008-09 we gave Ford concessions. Now it’s time to pay us back. That blank check has come due.”

This labor battle is in the interest of all working people! Join in the fight and build solidarity!

Ned Measel from Cincinnati contributed to this article.

ices across the country, eliminating over 2,000 jobs. The rally was called by the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union, and General Secretary Mick Lynch was the main speaker. Joining Lynch was Mick Whelan, general secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen.

Over the next two days, both the RMT and the locomotive engineers’ union struck nationwide — each for 24 hours — in a long-running fight for better pay and conditions.

“This is about much more than selling tickets,” Martin McNulty, a train conductor and RMT union representative for the Liverpool branch, said. “It’s about the jobs of workers in hundreds of ticket offices and the help and human contact given — not only to disabled persons, but to provide safety for women and others alone late at night on empty platforms. The bosses are all about the money. If you don’t fight, you always lose.”

McNulty came as part of a contingent of 50 other union members from Merseyside in England’s northwest. Over 100 Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers members from the region joined the march, including rail workers from Wigan and Manchester.

Among them was Anne Howie, a member of the Manchester South RMT branch, along with branch Chair Conor Price. Howie was dismissed from her

job as a train dispatcher at Manchester Piccadilly station on charges of making a safety violation. Employed by Carlisle Support Services, a contract company, she dispatches trains for TransPennine Express, one of the train-operating companies involved in the fight over pay, conditions and ticket office closures. The union is fighting to have her dismissal reversed.

“An injury to one is an injury to all,” says a flyer issued by her union branch. The union’s petition demanding her immediate reinstatement has been signed by over 1,000 union members, from Manchester and around the country.

The union won a similar fight last year, when fellow Carlisle dispatcher Pete Clifford won reinstatement.

—Jonathan Silberman

Spirited Toronto Labour Day largest one in Canada

TORONTO — Over 20,000 participants marched in the Toronto and York Region Labour Day Parade here Sept. 4, led by a contingent of Canadian Media Guild workers on strike at the TVO television network. They’re fighting for better wages and against boss demands for divisive two-tier benefits.

Metro grocery store workers, who recently won a new contract with gains in wages and benefits in the greater Toronto area, marched in the Unifor union contingent.

This 151st annual Toronto march was this year’s largest union-organized Labour Day action across Canada. It filled the streets with actors and film industry technicians, school workers, teachers, public sector workers, and sizable contingents of construction and skilled-trades workers. It was colorful, loud and reflected the spirit that workers here have shown in resisting the sharp rise in the cost of living and ever-worsening working conditions.

Actors and writers across Canada who work on U.S. company productions — the majority here — are largely shut down by the Screen Actors Guild and Writers Guild strikes there. Still, leaders of the corresponding Canadian unions told the Canadian Broadcasting Company they support their fellow unions on strike and face the same issues. Their contracts come up over the next year.

—Lynda Little

Lessons from the Teamster battles of the 1930s

4 books by Farrell Dobbs

“The principal lesson of the Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome.”

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With proper leadership, the working class can overcome

Teamster Bureaucracy by Farrell Dobbs is one of the Books of the Month for September. The last of his four volumes on the Teamsters, it covers the political campaign to organize working-class resistance to the bosses' attacks and the U.S. rulers' imperialist aims going into World War II. The Roosevelt administration used its political police, the FBI, and its courts to try to smash union power and silence anti-war militants. It framed up and imprisoned 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and Minneapolis Teamsters for advocating socialism and campaigning in the unions against the war. Dobbs, a central leader of the Teamster battles, was one of those jailed. He later became SWP national secretary. The excerpt is from "Afterword." Copyright © 2018 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Farrell Dobbs, left, editor of *Militant*, reading 1945 issue as it came off the press. He emerged from Teamster ranks as a central organizer of union battles that transformed union movement during 1930s and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. He was among those sentenced to prison in 1941, above, for their campaign to win union opposition to U.S. rulers' imperialist war aims. Washington used FBI, Smith "gag" Act, attacks on constitutional rights and imprisonment to try to silence anti-war militants.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

The relevant elements of the class-struggle program needed by the trade unions should be introduced realistically on a transitional basis. In that way the unfolding labor radicalization can be guided from its present stage toward higher forms of development along the following lines:

Proposals for immediate action should center on problems involving the workers' urgent material needs and

the defense of their democratic rights. It is also important that the fight around those issues be attuned to the existing levels of consciousness in the union membership. Then, as significant forces are set into motion through that approach, several things take place. Rank-and-file militancy rises. Increasingly sharp clashes with the bosses result, during which the workers begin to shed class-collaborationist illusions and acquire class-struggle concepts. Lessons thus learned during industrial conflicts can prepare the union ranks for an advance toward action on a political plane. In short, a foundation is laid from which to initiate transformation of the trade unions themselves into instruments capable of developing far-reaching revolutionary perspectives.

As the transitional process from where they are to where they should be continues, the workers' attention can be focused on broad questions which go far beyond day-to-day issues on the job. They will learn in that way to generalize their thinking in class terms, and the development of a conscious anticapitalist outlook will follow.

If, during the course of their experiences in struggle, the labor militants are helped to analyze the causes of the social and economic ills facing them; if they are aided in perceiving the essence of an outlived capitalism — they will learn that the existing problems are not incidental and episodic at all,

but the consequence of a deep structural crisis of the system. They will then see why governmental control must be taken away from the capitalists by labor and its allies.

Basic to such a rise in the workers' class consciousness is understanding that a fundamental change must take place in the role of the trade unions, which constitute the existing form of mass organization among the workers in this country. These broad instruments of struggle must be turned away from reliance upon so-called friends among the capitalist politicians. They must break off the self-defeating collaboration with the bosses' government, that has been imposed by bureaucratic misleaders. The unions must be transformed into mechanisms for independent and militant action by the workers all along the line. Restrictions on the right to strike must be vigorously opposed and freedom to exercise that right firmly asserted. Internal union democracy must be established so that all questions can be decided on the basis of majority rule. Then, and only then, will organized labor manage to bring its full weight to bear in confrontations with the employers at the industrial level.

Whenever conflicts of significant magnitude erupt within industry today, the government intervenes on the employers' side; and this interference is bound to intensify as capitalist decay gets worse. From this it follows that

trade union action alone will prove less and less capable of resolving the workers' problems, even on a limited basis. Objectively, industrial conflicts will assume more and more a political character, and even the most powerfully organized workers will be faced with an increasingly urgent need to act on the new and higher plane of politics.

Therefore, efforts to build an effective left wing in the trade unions will run into insurmountable obstacles unless the workers move toward resolving the problem of political action. A vigorous campaign must be conducted to break the labor movement from subordination to capitalist politics and to launch an independent labor political organization. This campaign will have to focus initially on educational propaganda for a change in labor's political course, but it should not be conducted in an abstract, routine manner. Ample opportunity will be found to concretize the propaganda by drawing the lessons of setbacks caused by the misuse of labor's inherent political strength. This can lay the basis for an advance, as soon as it becomes realistic, to an agitational campaign designed to convince the ranks of the urgency of forming a labor party.

In the process of creating their own mass party, based upon and controlled by the trade unions, the organized workers can draw unorganized, unemployed, and undocumented sections of their class into a broad political alliance. Labor will then be in a position to act both in a more unified manner and through advanced forms of struggle.

The workers will learn to generalize their needs, as a class, and to address their demands on a political basis to the capitalists, as a class. ...

As Leon Trotsky insisted in discussions during the 1930s, the American workers must learn to act politically and to think socially if they are to attain the class consciousness and solidarity needed to defeat the exploiters. This is the opposite of the narrow class-collaborationist course pursued by the labor bureaucracy. ...

As the Teamster story demonstrates, the principal lesson for labor militants to derive from the Minneapolis experience is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome; but that, with proper leadership, they can overcome.

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BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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— SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT —

Protest Abbas' defense of the Holocaust

Statement by Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City Council, Sept. 13.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Aug. 24 statement defending the Holocaust should be condemned by the labor movement and all those opposed to exploitation and oppression.

Abbas repeats antisemitic garbage, claiming 6 million Jews were slaughtered by the Nazis not because of Jew-hatred, but because of their role in "usury and money." He says European Jews could not have been victims of antisemitism because they're not really Semites!

Between 1933 and today, the population of the world has increased 350%, but the Jewish population is still below what it was in 1933. Some two-thirds of all Jews were killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Abbas' words are grist to the mill of the reactionary rulers of Iran whose stated aim is to wipe out the state of Israel, home to nearly half the world's Jews. Tehran's course toward acquiring nuclear weapons endangers all those throughout the region and beyond.

Over 200 Palestinian figures signed a letter Sept.

10 condemning Abbas' attempt to "justify anti-Semitism," and "Nazi crimes against humanity."

Today, antisemitism among working people is less than ever. But amid a deep world capitalist crisis, violence against Jews is on the rise. Any political party aspiring to speak and act in the interests of the working class must condemn all expressions of Jew-hatred.

The Socialist Workers Party calls for recognition of both an independent Palestinian state and of Israel's right to exist. This must include the right of Jews the world over to seek refuge in Israel.

As the capitalist crisis and rising threats of new wars mark today's epoch, the bosses are driven to wage greater assaults on labor. History shows they inevitably turn to fascist forces who blame Jews for the social crisis to divide and attack the working-class movement. This, including the horrors of the Holocaust, is the lesson of the rise of Hitler.

Fighting antisemitism is integral to the working-class line of march toward the conquest of power and to building a party that can lead that revolutionary struggle. Only the elimination of capitalism can open the door to ending Jew-hatred once and for all.

NYC Democrats move to refurbish Red Squad

Continued from front page

She's the first woman to hold this post. This step, along with Weiner's claims that this unit will be playing an entirely new, more "woke" and open role, is aimed at refurbishing the cops' image. The long-term goal is to enable the police to step up spying and disruption operations aimed at working people with less interference.

Weiner appealed to all New Yorkers to help. "Document anything you see and send it to us. Never hesitate to reach out," she said in June.

This goes hand in hand with the Joseph Biden administration's efforts to whitewash the true function of the FBI, the capitalist rulers' main national political police, and portray it as a liberal partner of the Democratic Party. This includes its drive to paint supporters of former President Donald Trump as "neo-fascists" and "white supremacists," and to stop him from running for president in 2024 at all costs.

Under various names, the Red Squad has used informants, surveillance and harassment to target political organizations, unions and struggles of working people for more than a century.

Weiner says intelligence unit leaders "have an expansive view of our jurisdiction." Agents operate throughout this city and in 14 cities worldwide.

An interview she gave to Christopher Costa, executive director of the Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., gives an idea of her disregard for constitutional rights.

"One days stickering or flyering could be another day's actual crime," Weiner told Costa. She says there is a "huge uptick in disinformation," a term used widely by liberals as justification for silencing opponents' political views. "Disinformation is so crippling," Weiner complains, because it compounds "widespread distrust of our institutions and government."

Weiner insists her agents' operations are essential to combat "Russian disinformation," the ruse that was used by the FBI to spy on Trump's 2016 campaign. Claiming this is a mission to protect people from racists, she says NYPD spies are laser-focused on confronting an "uptick in white supremacy." The threat is different from the past, Weiner says. Today it comes from right-wing extremism. The NYPD needs to know "what conspiracy theories are you consuming and who else might be consuming them."

Red Squad spying, disruption

Weiner's efforts to transform the spy agency's status, alongside that of the FBI, are crucial for the capitalist rulers today. Over the last 50 years, the true extent of FBI and NYPD spying and harassment against unionists, opponents of Washington's wars, fighters for Black rights, the Socialist Workers Party and other opponents of the U.S. rulers' anti-working-class operations has been revealed — and is widely hated.

Since 1904, the NYPD has run a spy outfit. For much

of its existence it's been known as the Red Squad for its targeting of communists and union militants.

NYPD intelligence agents have been forced to admit they targeted Occupy Wall Street demonstrators and conducted mass surveillance of protesters outside the 2004 Republican National Convention.

They used the 2001 assault on the World Trade Center to launch a widespread effort to place informants in Muslim Student Associations in the city's colleges. In collaboration with the CIA, they operated secret programs to spy on Muslims where they ate, shopped and worshipped around the city.

In 2019 the New York City government posted videotapes the Red Squad secretly took between 1960 and 1980. Among the targets filmed were the Socialist Workers Party, Malcolm X, the Communist Party, supporters of independence for Puerto Rico, opponents of the U.S. war in Vietnam, Irish Republican supporters and a number of unions.

The Red Squad hung onto these films, along with spy files on more than a million people and organizations, because of a 1986 court ruling called the Handschu decision. That ruling settled a class-action lawsuit brought in 1971 by victims of NYPD spying.

The settlement — backed by the New York Civil Liberties Union — was a blow to the fight to defend constitutional protections against cop interference. It provided the NYPD with a broad loophole to continue spying. The ruling says cops can spy on any group that they claim is "engaged in, about to engage in or has threatened to engage in conduct which constitutes a crime." Two of the three-person board members set up to monitor NYPD surveillance programs are cops!

The Socialist Workers Party and a few other opponents of the political police challenged the ruling. But it was upheld and the cops have used it as the basis for intelligence operations ever since.

It stands in sharp contrast to Judge Thomas Griesa's federal ruling won by the SWP in its 1973 lawsuit against decades of FBI spying, harassment and disruption. In 1986 Griesa ruled the FBI's use of informants was unconstitutional, as well as its burglaries of SWP offices and disruption of party members' activities. Overruling an appeal by the Justice Department, Griesa said the FBI was barred from using any of the files its spying had generated.

The capitalist system is organized to defend the profit-driven rule of a handful of big capitalist families against tens of millions of workers and others who produce all the wealth.

Spying on and targeting working people is crucial to their continued rule. This becomes even more important today, as the impact of the capitalist crisis and threat of new wars grow. The rulers' response is to go after unions and try to stifle any attempt by workers to organize independently of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Iran protests mark Zhina Amini death

BY SETH GALINSKY

Just 10 days before the anniversary of the Sept. 16, 2022, death of the young Kurdish woman, Zhina Amini, at the hands of the hated "morality" police, the regime arrested her uncle, Safa Aeli, in her hometown of Saqez. Amini died when visiting Tehran.

The regime's intelligence police also called in Zhina's father, Amjad Amini, Sept. 11 to demand he cancel a planned memorial. He and his wife, Mozghan Eftekhari, announced Sept. 8 they will hold a "traditional and religious ceremony" to honor their daughter. They called on those who join them to "refrain from any violent actions." Thousands turned out last year in Saqez when she was buried in the first mass protest against her death.

The regime's thugs killed some 500 people over the next four months of protests across the country.

Hoping to prevent a new wave of protests, the bourgeois clerical regime pushed back the start of the school year by one week so it didn't coincide with the anniversary, closed down some student groups, and fired a number of teachers who had backed the protests.

Through the protests working people in Iran have gained more self-confidence. Retirees have been holding weekly nationwide protests. Every week there are new labor actions and strikes by workers demanding unpaid wages, safety on the job, and wage increases to keep up with inflation.

On Sept. 12 the regime released Ismail Abdi, a leader of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Unions in Tehran, after two years in prison. But on the same day Mohammad Sadegh Fahimi, a leader of the union in Yazd, was arrested after participating in a protest by retirees there.

In Sistan-Baluchistan province, Sunni cleric Maulana Abdul-Hamid continues to speak out demanding equal rights for all regardless of their religious beliefs or nationality, for women's rights, and for freedom for all political prisoners. Baluchis, who are mostly Sunni Muslim, are an oppressed nationality.

In his sermon before thousands marched in the city of Zahedan Aug. 26, Abdul-Hamid noted that officials complain the birthrate is declining. But they do nothing to solve the economic problems that prevent young people from starting families. Trade unions, "retirees, teachers and workers are shouting that their tables are empty," he said.

In one of his strongest statements against the Shiite-based regime's counterrevolutionary military adventures abroad, Abdul-Hamid asked, "When the Iranian nation is in need, why should its money be spent in other countries, especially for wars? War burns and destroys."

Abdul-Hamid said that it was different in the 1980s when "war was imposed on us," referring to the invasion of Iran by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein with Washington's backing. Then people fought "alongside the government." But that's not true today, he said, alluding to Tehran's increasingly unpopular interventions in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

In a statement calling for renewed protests, the Free Union of Iranian Workers said demonstrations after the death of Amini had "irreversibly weakened the government's position" and "opened a new chapter in the ... struggles of the Iranian people."

Protests are being organized worldwide Sept. 16.

Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

In *New International* no. 7

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