

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Iran oil workers: 'Our lives don't matter to the bosses'

— PAGE 5

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 39 OCTOBER 23, 2023

UAW members strike is a fight for the entire working class

BY DAN FEIN

CHICAGO — Spirited chants of “UAW! UAW! UAW!” and “No deal? No wheels!” filled United Auto Workers Local 551’s Ford workers’ union hall here Oct. 7. Hundreds rallied to hear UAW President Shawn Fain and other speakers, part of the union’s strike against the Big Three auto companies.

Over 4,600 Local 551 members joined the strike Sept. 29 at Ford’s assembly plant here on the city’s South Side, and walked off the job the same day at GM’s Lansing Delta Township assembly plant in Michigan.

This brought the total to 25,000 workers on strike against Ford, General Motors and Stellantis at 43 factories, warehouses and distribution centers in 21 states. The strike began Sept. 15.

Delegations from several area unions joined the rally. They included other UAW locals, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Service Employees International Union, Teamsters, Chicago Teachers Union, Association

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Condemn Jew-hating pogrom! Defend Israel’s right to exist!



“The Holocaust shows why Israel has to be a refuge for Jews,” Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida, told press as 3,000 rallied at Miami’s Holocaust Memorial Oct. 10. “Fight to end Jew-hatred will take working-class struggle to take political power, socialist revolution.”

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — The Holocaust Memorial here was the site of an Oct. 10 rally of some 3,000 in solidarity with the Jews of Israel after the Nazi-style pogrom three days earlier.

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Biggest massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust

BY SETH GALINSKY

The murderous pogrom Oct. 7 by Hamas and its allies is a stark warning to all working people that Jew-hating slaughter and demagoguery are a permanent reality of the world imperialist order. These heinous acts and the bourgeois leaderships that carried them out — from Hamas itself, to Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and their command post in Tehran — are united around one aim: annihilation of the Jews.

Their Nazi-like operation was far and away the largest roundup and slaughter of Jews in a single day since the Holocaust during World War II. It is a sharp

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‘Protest US rulers’ economic war on the Cuban people’

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI — Thirty-five people joined a Miami Caravan action here Oct. 1, setting up a lively and highly visible vigil in the pouring rain at the Miami International Airport to demand an end to Washington’s embargo against Cuba and removal of Cuba from the U.S. government’s list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Participants included members of the Alianza Martiana, José Martí Cultural Association, Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba, Puentes de Amor, Socialist Workers Party and Venceremos Brigade.

Many drivers going by were pleased and gave thumbs up. Some opposed

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Fight to win workers power and socialism to end Jew-hatred

At an Oct. 10 rally in Miami to stand in solidarity with the Jews of Israel after the Nazi-style pogrom carried out by Hamas and its allies, Rachele Fruit, the 2024 Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida, presented the following statement to the press and other participants.

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

The Socialist Workers Party is part of the continuity in the fight against Jew-hatred that goes back to Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Socialists should never support any crime against humanity in the name of revolution.

In 2010 Fidel Castro asked journalist Jeffrey Goldberg to interview him, so he could respond to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who denied the Holocaust. Responding to a question from Goldberg, Fidel said he supported Israel’s right to exist “without a doubt.”

“I don’t think anyone has been more slandered than the Jews,” Fidel said.

Working people cannot rely on democratic imperialism to protect the Jews. Washington and London closed the door on Jewish immigration before, during and after the Second World War. That fact, and the betrayal of revolutionary opportunities by the Stalinists in Moscow and elsewhere, led to Hitler’s “Final Solution.”

That’s why Israel had to be and has to be a refuge for the Jews.

Those who call themselves “socialists,” and who champion Hamas and other terrorist proxies of Iran, will easily find themselves allied with future fascist forces.

Only the working classes of Israel, Palestine, Iran and the whole region can find a solution in their common interests. The same is true for workers in the United States.

Kaiser hospital workers demand: ‘Hire more staff! Raise our pay!’

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — Over 75,000 Kaiser hospital workers carried out a three-day strike Oct. 4-6 in California, Oregon, Washington and Colorado. Kaiser workers in Virginia and the District of Columbia went out for one day. The cen-

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SWP tells truth about Hamas war on Jews, builds US labor struggles



Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from Georgia, told Militant Labor Forum in Atlanta Oct. 8 that middle-class left falsely portrays Hamas as a national liberation organization. In fact it is “a reactionary Islamist puppet of Tehran” that rules Palestinians in Gaza by thuggery.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

The Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. are campaigning to explain why Israel must be defended as a refuge for Jews and why the pogroms Hamas launched on Israeli citizens must be exposed and fought. On workers’ doorsteps, at demonstrations, picket lines and through SWP election

campaigns and Militant Labor Forums, party members are discussing why the fight by the working class to take power offers the only road forward.

“We make no concessions to Jew-hatred. This is a life and death question for the world working class,” Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, told participants at an Oct. 8 Militant Labor

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Movie depicts how US-backed terrorists blew up Cuban plane

BY BERNIE SENTER

"Cubana 455: Chronicles of October 6," a three-part documentary and epilogue written and directed by Enrique Berumen.

On Oct. 6, 1976, U.S.-backed enemies of Cuba's socialist revolution detonated two bombs on Cubana airlines Flight 455. All 73 on board were killed, including the youthful Cuban fencing team, 11 people from Guyana and five from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

IN REVIEW

The film explains how the bombing of Cubana 455 was one piece of a decades-long campaign of terrorism and sabotage orchestrated by the White House, the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency aimed at overturning the Cuban Revolution. It's a powerful documentary.

It presents footage from the first days after the victory by revolutionary forces led by Fidel Castro that conquered power in 1959. It shows mobilizations of the Cuban people that were key to defeating the U.S.-backed invasion by Cuban counterrevolutionaries at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, and in defending their deepening socialist revolution.

From the outset the revolution's leadership was marked by unstinting internationalism. By 1975, thousands of Cubans were volunteering to go to Angola at the request of the government there to join the fight to defend the country's independence from former colonial ruler Portugal and to repulse an invasion by

the U.S.-backed apartheid regime in South Africa. Successes in that struggle deepened Washington's hostility toward the revolution, Castro explained, in a speech days after the downing of the plane (excerpted on this page).

Moving interviews with family members of those killed in the bombing are woven throughout the film. The fencing team, teenagers for the most part, had achieved international success. Involvement in sports of all kinds, from baseball to boxing to track and field, had mushroomed in Cuba after the revolution.

You see the plane takeoff from Barbados on its way to Jamaica and then Havana. You hear the air traffic controller and pilot exchanges. Then one bomb goes off. The pilot radios back that they are trying to return to the airport. Pandemonium. The plane circles back, nearly out of control. A second bomb explodes. The plane plunges into the ocean.

Nine days later, a million Cubans turned out at Havana's Plaza of the Revolution to pay respects to the fallen and hear Castro explain why the Cuban people refused to be cowed by the atrocity.



Ismael Batista

At Colón Cemetery in Havana, Oct. 6, 2015, Cubans mark 39th anniversary of destruction of Cubana Flight 455, blown up by opponents of Cuba's socialist revolution, killing 73 people.

The film shows Silvio Rodríguez, a popular Cuban singer, performing. "May injustice tremble when those who have nothing to lose cry out. The valiant people of Fidel," Rodríguez sings.

A segment of the film contains interviews with counterrevolutionaries who masterminded scores of terror attacks against Cuba. Freddy Lugo and Hernán Ricardo were arrested hours after the bombing, convicted and spent 17 years

in prison. They planted the bombs when they boarded the flight in Venezuela, leaving the plane in Barbados. After their arrest in Trinidad and Tobago they admitted to being paid to carry out the bombing by Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, longtime leaders of Cuban counterrevolutionary forces.

The documentary shows Posada, Bosch and others offering their pretexts
Continued on page 3

Fidel: 'We will build a homeland ever more revolutionary'

Nine days after the bombing of Cubana airlines Flight 455, a million Cubans converged on Revolution Square in Havana. Below are excerpts from the speech Fidel Castro gave on Oct. 15, 1976. In parts of the speech not included here, Castro describes the months of terror attacks carried out against Cuba preceding the destruction of Cubana Flight 455. The entire speech can be

read online at: <http://www.fidelcastro.cu/en/discursos/speech-memorial-service-victims-cubana-airlines-plane-destroyed-flight-october-6>

We might ask ourselves what is the purpose of these crimes? To destroy the Revolution? (Crowd exclamations of "No!") That is impossible. The revolution emerges more vigorous with every blow and aggression. It deepens, it becomes more aware, it becomes stronger. (Applause) To intimidate the people? (Exclamations of "No!") That is impossible. Faced with the cowardice and monstrosity of such crimes, the people are inflamed, and every man and woman becomes a fervent and heroic soldier prepared to die. (Applause)

The Revolution has taught us all the idea of human fraternity and solidarity. It has made us all the most profound brothers among whom the blood of one belongs to all and the

blood of all belongs to each of the others. (Applause) ...


Imperialism, capitalism, fascism, neocolonialism, racism, man's brutal exploitation of man in all its forms and manifestations, is approaching its end in humanity's history, and their maddened lackeys know it; that is why their reactions are ever more desperate, more hysterical, more cynical, more impotent. Only that can explain such repugnant and absurd crimes as the one in Barbados. ...

All our selfless compatriots sacrificed under cowardly circumstances that day, will live eternally in the memory, the affection and the admiration of the people! (Applause) A homeland ever more revolutionary, more worthy, more socialist and more internationalist (Applause) will be the grandiose monument our people will erect to their memory and that of all those who have died or will die for the Revolution! (Applause)

THE MILITANT

Back the fight by Aboriginal people in Australia

October referendum to let Australia's original inhabitants "advise" the government only aims to improve image of capitalist government. The 'Militant' explains that the fight for the liberation of Australia's indigenous people is an essential part of the working-class road to power.



AAP/Richard Wainwright
National protest in Perth, Australia, against Aboriginal deaths in custody April 2021.

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The Militant

Vol. 87/No. 39

Closing news date: October 12, 2023

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Vivian Sahner, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in June, one week in August, two weeks in December.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

SWP tells truth about Hamas war

Continued from front page

Forum in Atlanta. “The only answer is to build a revolutionary proletarian leadership here and around the world.”

SWP members presented that course in Times Square, in New York, the site of two demonstrations held simultaneously Oct. 8, one for defense of Israel’s right to exist and one a celebration of Hamas’ terror attack.

The *New York Jewish Week* reported that “some in attendance said they supported socialism but opposed Hamas’ attack on Israelis and had come to make sure their perspectives were represented.” It quoted Lea Sherman, SWP candidate for New Jersey’s General Assembly, saying, “Can we ever condone civilian targets? Never. Socialists are opposed to antisemitism and Jew-hatred. This has nothing to do with socialism.”

Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Philadelphia City Council, and party member Ved Dookhun went to Macungie, Pennsylvania, Oct. 11 to bring solidarity to striking UAW Local 773 members. The workers had walked out a day earlier, as part of a strike by 4,000 Mack Truck workers across the U.S.

Striker Julian Horner was interested in what the SWP members thought about the attack on Israel. “Israel has a right to exist as a place of refuge. Jew-hatred is on the rise,” Dookhun said. Horner agreed, “Defending all peoples national rights are important, anybody has a right to live somewhere without persecution.”

In West Chester, Ohio, SWP campaign supporters met Marie Scott, a retired nurse Oct. 11, while knocking on doors near the picket lines of UAW members striking the General Motors parts distribution center.

Scott invited the campaign supporters into her living room. “So what’s going on in Israel? It’s just horrible what I’ve seen so far,” she said. “Killing young people at a concert? It’s just senseless!

Why are they doing this?”

SWP member Anthony Dutrow explained that “Hamas has a stated goal of destroying the Jews. How they conduct themselves is barbaric. Jew-hatred is used by the capitalist class as it looks for a scapegoat to blame for the crisis its system creates. The ruling class stokes divisions among the working class.”

“I know what you’re talking about,” Scott said. She signed up for a *Militant* subscription.

By the end of the second week of the eight-week international campaign to sell 1,350 *Militant* subscriptions and 1,350 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders, 585 *Militant* subscriptions and 836 books were sold. Contributions toward the SWP annual party-building fund of \$140,000 are beginning to come in.

After visiting the picket line at the GM parts distribution center in Burton, Michigan, Oct. 2, SWP campaigners knocked on doors in the nearby town of Davison to discuss the importance of solidarity with the strike and present the party’s program.

Tony Lane and Salm Kolis met Kirby Blankenship, a member of the United Auto Workers at a nearby GM truck assembly plant. “We’ve been giving it up, little bit by little bit, and a little more,” Blankenship said. He was hired in 1991 as a carpenter, but his job has been combined with five others since then. Workers at his plant “were disappointed that we didn’t go out in the first round” of



Militant/Bill Arth

At striking hotel workers’ picket line near Los Angeles airport Oct. 7, Jeffrey Santos told Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, that he works as a banquet server on minimum wage “at five different hotels to get enough hours” to survive.

the UAW strike. “When they need us to walk, we’ll be there.”

Blankenship was interested in the *Militant*’s coverage of what workers face in other parts of the world, from Iran to Ukraine. Lane explained that Vladimir Putin doesn’t represent working people in Russia, and described the opposition to the war that exists among workers, in spite of government repression.

Blankenship signed up for a subscription to the *Militant* and got a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP lead-

ers Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

The *Militant* was welcomed at the Kaiser hospital workers’ picket line in San Leandro, California, Oct. 6. Striker Tinuoye Olasunkanmi, who works in Kaiser’s medical surgery department there, told SWP member Carole Lesnick that he had subscribed at the union’s Labor Day action. “All workers are agitating for the same cause in different forms,” he said. “The *Militant* says it right, loud and clear for people to hear.”

To join in campaigning, contact party branches listed on page 4.

US-backed terrorists bombed Cubana Flight 455

Continued from page 2

for the outrage with a coldblooded will to kill anyone connected to the revolution. You see the protection given them by every single U.S. administration, ensuring Posada Carriles and Bosch remained free for the rest of their lives.

The film ends with recent interviews with people in Havana. Some remember what happened on Oct. 6, 47 years ago, others

don’t. But many remember what Castro said at the Oct. 15 rally, “When an energetic and forceful people cry, injustice trembles.”

Making the film was a 20-year project, producer Enrique Berumen García, told the *Militant*. It began after a visit to Cuba in 2001. Berumen is a retired professor at California State University at Los Angeles. In 2017 “the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry gave me access to

their archives, which includes everything from Cuba’s revolutionary history and material they had on the Oct. 6 bombing,” he said.

Since its completion on July 26, 2022, Berumen has entered it in numerous film festivals. Thirteen have accepted the submission, but none, to date, in the U.S.

The film can be shown at community-based programs until the film festival circuit ends in April 2024. “Then I’m turning the film over to any TV station anywhere in the world that wants to show it,” he said.

I urge *Militant* readers to see it. Contact Enrique Berumen at docuCubana455@gmail.com to arrange a showing.

Campaign to expand reach of *Militant*, books, SWP fund Sept. 23 - November 21 (week two)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	50	28	50	18	\$9,500	\$1,055
Chicago	100	48	100	49	\$14,500	
Cincinnati	70	38	70	21	\$6,000	
Dallas-Ft. Worth	60	18	60	24	\$5,250	
Lincoln	15	5	15	5	\$500	\$250
Los Angeles	110	43	110	59	\$15,000	
Miami	45	17	45	11	\$5,500	
Minneapolis	70	22	70	14	\$5,500	
N. New Jersey	75	25	75	14	\$7,500	\$780
New York	100	41	125	48	\$20,500	\$440
Oakland	90	45	90	42	\$15,500	
Philadelphia	55	17	55	13	\$6,000	
Pittsburgh	50	28	50	13	\$6,250	\$1,005
Seattle	75	28	75	16	\$14,500	
Washington	50	24	50	9	\$4,500	
Other		40		370		
Total U.S.	1015	467	1040	726	\$136,500	\$3,530
Prisoners		40				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	10	45	21		
Manchester	30	12	30	18		
Total U.K.	75	22	75	39		
Canada	95	47	120	67		
Australia	30	9	30	4		
Total	1,215	585	1,265	836	\$136,500	\$3,530
SHOULD BE	1,350	338	1,350	338	\$140,000	\$35,000

Protest US embargo on Cuba!

Continued from front page the action. One heckler yelled and took photos of the protesters the entire time we were there.

Similar protests are scheduled in New York Oct. 28 and in other cities.

Twenty-six people attended a successful program opposing U.S. attacks on Cuba at Barry University Sept. 25. Sponsored by the newly formed Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba and the Campus Democrats, the program featured Medea Benjamin from Code Pink by Zoom, recorded remarks by Carlos Lazo from Puentes de Amor, and faculty member Lance Hotchkiss, a member of the Miami Coalition.

Laura Anderson, a railroad conductor and member of SMART-TD union,

spoke about the opportunities today to win working people to this fight. “In Cuba, they were able to build a society based on human solidarity because the workers and farmers made a revolution,” she said. Anderson, also the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, invited members of the audience to join her in a solidarity visit to a striking United Auto Workers picket line in Orlando.

— CALENDAR —

UNITED KINGDOM Meetings in London and Manchester

Maurice Bishop and the Grenadian Revolution. On the 40th Anniversary of the Coard Coup and U.S. Invasion. Speakers: Bárbara Montalvo, Cuban ambassador to the U.K.; Matthew Lord, People’s Militia during the Grenada Revolution; Jonathan Silberman, Communist League.
Manchester: Sat., Oct. 28, 2 p.m. *Cross St. Chapel, 29 Cross St., M2 1NL. Tel: 07931-571503.*
London: Sat., Nov. 18, 3 p.m. *Osmani Centre, 58 Underwood Road, E1 5AW. Tel: 07930-570667. Both meetings organized by Pathfinder Books.*

— MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles
Maurice Bishop, Fidel Castro and Lessons from the 1979-83 Grenada Revolution. Speaker: Betsy Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Oct. 22, 5 p.m. Donation \$10. *Mercado la Paloma, 3655 S. Grand Ave. Tel: (323) 643-4968.*

NEW YORK CITY

Maurice Bishop and the Grenada Revolution, 40 Years Later: An Example and Lessons for Workers Everywhere. Speakers: Terry Marryshow, Maurice Bishop October 19 Martyrs Foundation, Grenada-Cuba Friendship Association; Steve Clark, Socialist Workers Party National Committee, editor, *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution and Its Overthrow, 1979-1983.* Sun., Oct. 29. Reception, 3 p.m.; program, 4 p.m. Donation: \$10. Sponsored by Militant Labor Forum in New York and in Northern New Jersey. 307 West 36th St., 13th floor. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.

Lenin opposed Russian domination of Ukraine, Soviet republics

One of the October Books of the Month is the Spanish edition of Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings 1922-23. It describes the last political battle by V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the Bolshevik-led 1917 socialist revolution in Russia. He defended its proletarian internationalist course, including the right to self-determination of oppressed peoples from the czarist prison house of nations. After Lenin's death, a counter-revolution led by Joseph Stalin took hold, reasserting Moscow's control and overturning Lenin's communist course. The introduction, excerpted here, is by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, and Steve Clark, managing editor of Pathfinder Press. The SWP's support for the battle to defend Ukrainian independence from Moscow's invasion is in continuity with Lenin's stance. Copyright © 2010 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Humbert-Droz Archives
V.I. Lenin, center, addresses Second Congress of Communist International, Petrograd, Russia, July 1920. It adopted resolution by Lenin to promote fight against national oppression.

power some five years earlier. That victory had opened the door to the first socialist revolution and ushered in a new historical era with prospects for proletarian-led popular revolution not only in Europe but across Asia and beyond. ...

It was a political fight over the class trajectory of the Soviet republic and Communist Party. ...

The Bolshevik-led government sought from the outset to establish a union of proletarian Russia and the oppressed peoples long encased within the old tsarist prison house of nations across Europe and Asia. But that goal could only be achieved by the *voluntary* action of those peoples, whose unconditional right to national self-determination was recognized by the new government.

The Soviet congress in January 1918 established the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) "leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own authoritative congress of soviets whether they wish to participate in the federal government ... and on what terms."

By late 1922, twenty-one autonomous republics and regions had been established within the RSFSR itself, and the revolutionary government was collaborating with soviet republics in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia, Georgia,

and Ukraine to form what in December 1922 would become the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Lenin, however, objected to Stalin's initial draft of a Central Committee resolution, which negated the Bolsheviks' long-standing proletarian internationalism by calling for "entry" of these other republics into the *Russian* federation.

"We consider ourselves, the Ukrainian SSR, and others equal," Lenin wrote in a September 1922 letter to the party's Political Bureau, and "enter with them on an equal basis into a new union, a new federation, the Union of the Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia."

In a note to the Political Bureau the following day, Stalin acquiesced to an amended form of this proposal and several other of "Comrade Lenin's un-

important amendments," as he called them. Stalin's note dismissively referred to Lenin's uncompromising opposition to Great Russian chauvinism as the "national liberalism of Comrade Lenin."

Two months later Lenin was outraged to discover that Central Committee member Grigory Ordzhonikidze, in the presence of another CC member, Aleksey Rykov, had physically struck a Communist from Georgia during a dispute over national rights. In Lenin's late December letter to the upcoming party congress, he wrote that the Bolsheviks' support for the right of national self-determination "will be a mere scrap of paper" if the party is "unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a scoundrel and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is."

And Lenin concluded: "That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view." ...

None of these political challenges could be addressed, Lenin insisted, without substantially increasing the weight of politically tested workers and peasants in leading bodies of the party and state.

During the civil war, Lenin pointed out, "We concentrated our best party forces in the Red Army, we mobilized the best of our workers, we looked for new forces at the deepest roots of our dictatorship." Vast numbers of those selfless cadres had been killed in combat or felled by disease. Now it was time to renew this effort under the current conditions facing the Soviet republic.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

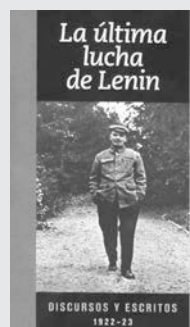
BY JACK BARNES AND STEVE CLARK

Between late September 1922 and early March 1923, the final months of his active life, Vladimir Lenin led a political battle within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At stake was nothing less than whether the party would continue advancing along the political course that had brought the Bolshevik-led workers and peasants of the former tsarist empire to

October BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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On combating great-power chauvinism

Memo To The Political Bureau [of All-Russian Communist Party, formerly the Bolshevik Party]

October 6, 1922

I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism. I shall eat it with all my healthy teeth as soon as I get rid of this accursed bad tooth. It must be *absolutely* insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be *presided* over in turn by a Russian,

Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.
Absolutely!

Yours,
Lenin

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Life expectancy continues to fall, workers face health crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Declining life expectancy in the U.S. — now at its lowest point in over 25 years — is a product of the deepening social and moral crisis of capitalism today. Working people find themselves unable to afford decent medical treatment as prices soar in a “health” system that, like everything else under capitalism, is run as a business to maximize profits for hospital, pharmaceutical and insurance bosses, rather than to prevent disease and provide treatment to those in need.

In today’s crisis conditions, there has been a marked increase in the number of deaths from drugs and suicide. Opioid overdoses took the lives of over 109,600 people in 2022. At the same time, chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease, liver ailments, kidney disease and diabetes — diseases that new drugs and treatments can increasingly treat successfully if diagnosed early enough — are killing more and more working people between the ages of 35 and 64 each year.

This class-divided reality has been expanding over decades. As bosses shuttered mines, factories and mills in cities and towns across the Midwest, Appalachia and elsewhere, workers lost not only their jobs but health coverage for themselves and their families.

Early deaths from chronic illnesses mean more than twice as many years are lost among people younger than 65 than from all overdoses, homicides, suicides and car accidents combined today, the *Washington Post* reported Oct. 3.

Life expectancy in the U.S. has dropped to 76 years. For Blacks it’s 71; for Native Americans, 65. In Ohio, for example, 20% of workers will die before they turn 65.

While life expectancy in other imperialist countries rebounded after

the COVID-19 epidemic to an average of 82.4 years in 2021, in the U.S. it continues to fall.

And U.S. life expectancy contrasts sharply with that of Cuba (79.2 in 2023), which has far less resources than the U.S. and faces a brutal economic war from Washington. The difference is that Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement led workers and peasants there to overthrow the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship and take power into their own hands.

In 1900, life expectancy at birth in the U.S. was 47 years. With gains made in medicine and technology to treat infectious diseases, life expectancy continued to rise in the 20th century, coming close to 80. But this is now unraveling.

“Americans are dying and suffering at rates that are demonstrably unnecessary,” the National Academy of Sciences said in 2013.

Small town, rural areas hardest hit

Working people in small towns and rural regions throughout the country, where some 60 million people live, are being hit the hardest. Since 2005, nearly 200 rural hospitals in the U.S. have shut down. The reason? Because the bosses don’t make enough profit off them.

More than 600 rural U.S. hospitals — over 30% of the country’s rural hospitals — are threatening to close, half of them making plans to do so immediately. Those that survive are eliminating maternity wards and other coverage that return less income, to try and keep afloat.

This means that working people living in these areas have much greater difficulty getting care. They have to travel greater distances to get to hospitals and clinics, something that can make the difference between life or death.

“Forty years ago, small towns and rural regions were healthier for adults

Iran oil workers: ‘Our lives don’t matter to bosses’



radiozamaneh.com

Oil refinery workers in five provinces of Iran and on five oil-drilling platforms in the Persian Gulf are protesting over wages, pensions and safety conditions. The protests include both “permanent” refinery and drilling-platform workers — who are among the better-paid workers in Iran — as well as contract workers, who are paid less with fewer benefits. Like other working people in Iran, all have been hard hit by an official inflation rate of 40% a year.

Workers on the oil-drilling platforms began protesting Sept. 25 over a cap imposed on wage and pension increases. They posted photos of groups of dozens of workers holding signs saying “wage ceilings are cruel.”

Their anger at treatment by the oil bosses increased after two workers died from a fire at a Bandar Abbas refinery the same week. The fire “has not caused a disruption in the production of gasoline and other petroleum products,” one oil worker posted online. The bosses “are only thinking about their gasoline production. People’s lives have no value.” The drilling-platform workers announced they will continue weekly protests until their demands are met.

The next week contract oil workers in at least five cities presented a petition to management calling for more workers to be made permanent, for closing the wage gap between contract and permanent workers, and for “bonuses” to cover school expenses for their children. Above, action in Abadan.

Then the Abadan Petrochemical bosses declared bankruptcy. Workers stopped work Oct. 4 to protest six months of not being paid.

In April and May, thousands of oil project contract workers — who build and repair oil installations — had gone on strike. They were demanding higher wages, better food and water, and a more humane work cycle of 20 days on and 10 days off instead of a grueling 24 days in a row with just six days off, and an end to the contract system.

— SETH GALINSKY

in the prime of life. The reverse is now true,” the *Post* wrote. “Before the pandemic, adults 35 to 64 in the most rural areas were 45 percent more

likely to die each year than people in the largest urban centers.”

Hospitals that serve working people are sorely neglected. Hundreds of children die or are left severely injured each year because hospital emergency rooms aren’t prepared to treat them. “Only about 14% of emergency departments nationwide have been certified as ready to treat kids,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported Oct. 1.

The fact is, one in 25 U.S. 5-year-olds today will not make it to their 40th birthday.

UK rail workers fight for pay, win fired worker’s job back

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England — Workers employed by contractors for rail companies around the country are finding ways to fight for equal pay, improved conditions and union rights.

This occurs as workers at rail companies, members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, have taken 33 days of strike action over the last 15 months. Over the same period, train drivers organized by the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen have taken 12 days of action. Bosses are refusing to offer higher pay unless workers accept job cuts and worse conditions.

Over 100 on-board catering workers organized by the RMT across the north of England and Scotland are preparing for a seventh day of strike action Oct. 13. Employed by contractor Rail Gourmet, they work for TransPennine Express, which imposes worse pay and conditions on contractors. The workers are demanding an hourly wage of 15 pounds (\$18.30) and sick pay and other benefits that rail company workers get.

“Since the action began, union membership has shot up. We’ve won part timers and new starts to join the action,” Manchester rail worker Paul

Kenyon told the *Militant*.

RMT member Anne Howie, a train dispatcher for TransPennine Express and employee of Carlisle Support Services at Manchester Piccadilly station, recently won her reinstatement, after TPE bosses summarily threw her out of work for an alleged safety violation, without an investigation or going through the review procedure that workers directly employed by the company would get. Rail bosses call such summary firings of contractors “client removal.”

Over 1,100 people — including many drivers and conductors at the station and around the country — signed a petition demanding Howie’s reinstatement.

“This shows exactly what trade unionism and standing together is all about,” Conor Price, Manchester South RMT branch chair, told the *Militant*. “‘Client removal’ cannot go unchallenged.” The union won a similar fight last year when fellow Carlisle dispatcher Pete Clifford won reinstatement.

More than 100 ticket checkers hired by Carlisle Support Services at stations operated by Northern Rail are pressing their fight for equal pay and conditions with workers doing the

same job who are employed directly by Northern Rail. Carlisle refuses to recognize the RMT union there. A lively picket was held outside Carlisle’s Manchester offices Sept. 22 and further actions are planned.

LA hotel workers fight for contract

BY BILL ARTH

LOS ANGELES — Some three dozen striking hotel workers, beating drums and plastic buckets and blowing on vuvuzelas, picketed the Westin hotel near the Los Angeles airport Oct. 7. They were protesting the latest contract offer from the bosses, an association of 40 hotels here, that would significantly increase workers’ medical care costs.

The hotel workers’ union, UNITE HERE Local 11, has organized rolling strikes by its 15,000 members for more than three months. Hotel workers in Santa Monica and Beverly Hills went on strike last week. On Oct. 6, workers struck eight hotels near the airport.

Two hotels, Westin Bonaventure and Biltmore Los Angeles, have broken ranks with the owners’ association and signed tentative contracts. Workers say these agreements meet many of the union’s demands, including more inclusive hiring procedures for formerly in-

carcerated people and an end to the use of E-verify, which is used to cut out immigrant workers.

Jeffrey Santos, who has worked 18 years as a banquet server, told Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, that he works “at five different hotels to get enough hours. Banquet servers get minimum wage plus a service charge and need to work 60 hours a month to be eligible for benefits. The hotels are trying to raise the number of hours.”

Santos said he had bought a house in Compton in 2019 for \$300,000, a fixer-upper, but now the same house would cost \$600,000. “Workers can’t afford it.”

“We need a movement of the working class so we can get to the point where we can take power out of the hands of the capitalists,” Garza said. “That’s the only way we can even begin to make things livable, to remove housing and health care from the profit system.”

Hamas massacres Jews in Israel

Continued from front page
reminder of the living threat of Jew-hatred in today's capitalist world — from the Middle East, to Europe, the United States, and elsewhere in the Americas and beyond.

In a single day last week, Hamas-led death squads murdered over 1,200 Israeli men, women and children and wounded more than 3,000 inside Israel near the Gaza border.

The vast majority were Jewish civilians, as well as a number of Arab Israeli citizens and more than a dozen immigrant farmworkers from Thailand. Today 20% of Israel's population are Arabs. Dozens of soldiers died fighting to defend people from the onslaught.

Hamas also kidnapped over 150 hostages, including children, whom they are threatening to kill if the Israeli government doesn't accede to its demands. The blood-soaked operation is an assault on Israel's place as a safe haven for Jews the world over in the face of rising anti-Jewish demagoguery and violence.

The pogroms began in the early morning of Oct. 7, which was both the Jewish Sabbath and holiday of Simchat Torah. Hamas claims they and their allies launched 5,000 rockets at Israeli cities and kibbutzim (farm collectives), and simultaneously used bulldozers and other rams to break through barriers to surge into Israel. Targeting some 22 locations, the death squads used pickup trucks, motorbikes, paragliders, drones and inflatable boats, all assembled with the help of Tehran.

The Hamas units also hit a handful of military bases to keep Israeli soldiers from getting in the way of their efforts to kill as many Jews as possible.

A central target was an all-night music festival in the desert near Kibbutz Re'im, where some 3,500 people had gathered. The Hamas operatives fired rockets, grenades and thousands of bullets at unarmed festivalgoers.

Over the next six hours they killed at least 260 people, many at point-blank range, riddling fleeing vehicles with bullets and shooting people on foot in the back as they fled. Dozens were slaughtered in bomb shelters where they sought refuge. Hamas triggermen looted the pockets and bags of many of their victims.

Videos show terrified festival participants being forced onto motorcycles, jeeps and trucks to be carted off to Gaza

as hostages. Hamas documented its heinous atrocities and ostentatiously posted them online for the world to see.

One of those taken captive by Hamas was Shani Louk, a 23-year-old woman from Germany. Hamas broadcast a video of her apparently lifeless body being paraded through the streets of Gaza on a flatbed truck, stripped half naked, as Hamas members cheered, chanted and spit on her. He mother told the press Oct. 11 she has gotten reports her daughter is still alive, though severely wounded, in the hands of Hamas.

When Israel Defense Forces finally arrived at the site where the slaughter took place, they were joined by groups of Bedouin Arab citizens of Israel who had driven there to rescue survivors. One of those they helped was Maya Alper. "This is not just war," Alper said. "This is hell."

More than 100 Jews, some 10% of the population, were exterminated by death squads going door-to-door in the Kibbutz Be'eri. One survivor, 70-year-old Amit Shalvi, told *Haaretz*, "Where am I, in a pogrom in Lithuania?"

Dozens more were murdered in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, including some 40 children and babies, some beheaded. Much of this depravity was caught on video or in photos by the attackers themselves, or by Israeli surveillance cameras, and have been publicly released.

When IDF forces got there and held a press conference, one soldier shouted, "Tell the world what you saw here!"

What you see there is exactly what you see.

In all its horror.

Coming on top of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, this massacre of more than 1,000 Jews and others marks a turning point in world politics. Capitalist rulers everywhere — from Saudi Arabia to Iraq, Beijing to Washington — are looking for new openings and new imperialist pacts and alliances to best defend their national class interests. The dangers and realities of new conflicts and wars are growing.

Slaughter aimed to massacre Jews

The *Wall Street Journal* quoted unnamed senior members of Hamas and Hezbollah Oct. 8, who said officers of the Iranian regime's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had been holding regular meetings with the two groups since August to prepare for the



South First Responders

Cars shot up, blocked as Jewish participants in all-night music festival near Gaza tried to flee Hamas' murderous attacks Oct. 7. Killing or kidnapping Jews was Hamas' main objective.

pogrom. They said Iranian security officials greenlighted the attack at a meeting in Beirut on Oct. 2.

Iran Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini, whose regime openly calls for the destruction of Israel, claimed Tehran wasn't involved, that this was the work of Hamas and Islamic Jihad alone. But he hailed the atrocities, saying, "We kiss the foreheads and arms of skillful and intelligent designers." He added, "God willing, the cancer of the usurper Zionist regime will be eradicated at the hands of the Palestinian people and the resistance forces." For these groups, "Zionist" is a synonym for Jew.

"From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" is the banner of Hamas, the Iranian government, and their supporters abroad, including in the U.S. Their real aim, however, is "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be Jewish-free!"

In recent years these misleaderships have actively sabotaged any opportunity for negotiations to recognize Israel and carve out an independent Palestinian state. They have no interest whatsoever in a so-called two-state solution — a mantra that not only offers no viable solution to the exploitation and oppression of the region's toilers, nor is any longer remotely feasible.

The decision by Hamas, Tehran, Hezbollah and others to attack now was coldly calculated. Relations had been expanding between Israel and a growing number of Arab regimes, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco. Discussions were underway on normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and the Israeli government. The counterrevolutionary leaders in Tehran view this as a serious threat to their expansionist aims and military operations in the region.

Tehran also believed that sharp bourgeois political divisions inside Israel between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his critics had turned attention from the border and weakened the Israeli government's military preparedness.

And they questioned the willingness of the Joseph Biden administration in Washington to respond decisively to an attack.

Middle-class left applauds Hamas

Virtually the entire middle-class left in the United States rushed to applaud Hamas' bloody terror against Jews in Israel.

An Oct. 8 demonstration in New York's Times Square, initiated by the Party for Socialism and Liberation and the People's Forum, was joined

by Workers World Party, the Communist Party and Democratic Socialists of America. "We don't want two states. We want all of it!" participants shouted. Some openly chanted slogans against Jews. At least one person held up a cellphone picturing a swastika.

Similar actions — all saying not a word about the calculated slaughter of Jews carried out by Hamas, its allies and benefactor in Tehran, instead calling the massacre "resistance" — have taken place elsewhere.

Since Hamas smashed their rivals in a bloody civil war for control of Gaza in 2007, their repeated rocket barrages and other terror attacks aimed at Israeli Jews inevitably drew sharp responses from Israeli forces, worsening even more the dire conditions of the 2 million people in Gaza. Hamas has done little to provide for the population. While constructing deep networks of underground tunneling for their commandos — where they are likely holding hostages today — there are few bomb shelters or protection for civilians.

Hamas exploits these conditions to appeal for funding from the U.N. and other agencies, much of which they use for their military and political purposes, not the needs of Gazans.

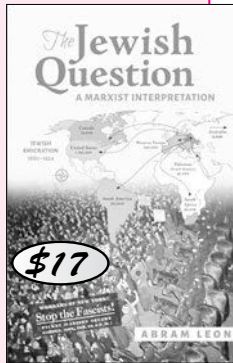
The fact is, Hamas is a political obstacle both to the national aspirations and class interests of working people in Gaza. The organization and its bourgeois Islamist leadership care nothing whatsoever about them.

In response to this week's bloody pogroms, the Israeli government declared war on Hamas. It has begun aerial operations striking targets in Gaza and has mobilized 360,000 reservists in advance of a possible incursion into Gaza. The state of Israel is determined to eliminate Hamas' ability to launch murderous attacks on its citizens and other residents ever again.

Further reading. . .

Why is Jew-hatred still raising its ugly head? What are its class roots? Why is there no solution to the Jewish question without revolutionary struggles that transform working people as we fight to transform our world?

pathfinderpress.com



Condemn Jew-hating pogrom

Continued from front page

"We distributed flyers for the next Militant Labor Forum, 'Defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews!,' as we talked with participants," Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, told the *Militant*. "I carried the sign in the picture shown on front page, and Laura Anderson, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, carried an-

other, saying, 'No to Jew-hatred, never justified to murder civilians.'"

Fruit said she was both surprised and pleased that among those she met at the rally was a co-worker of hers, and fellow member of UNITE HERE Local 355, at a hotel in Miami. They'd met before but had never talked politics or gotten to know each other. "He's a worker from Mexico who said he came to the rally to support the Jewish people," Fruit said. He bought a copy of *The Jewish Question* written in 1942 by Belgian revolutionary Abram Leon.

SWP candidates and other party members and campaign supporters are taking this political perspective to working people in cities large and small and to rural areas. A working-class party has to be built that can lead a revolutionary fight for workers power, overthrow capitalist exploitation and oppression, and join in the world fight for socialism. That's what the SWP is out to do.



Stuart Meissner

Swastika shown at pro-Hamas New York Oct. 8 rally, viewed by participants as part of their action.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 26, 1998

The most effective way for workers, farmers and other democratic-minded people to respond to the killing of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard by antigay thugs is to join in public protests against this crime and demand full civil rights for gays and lesbians.

As the instability of the world capitalist system increases, social tensions and political polarization continue to mount. Attorney General Janet Reno has stepped up calls for new "hate crimes" laws in the wake of Shepard's killing.

Working people should oppose these laws. Every move to give greater powers to the cops and courts will be used against the working class and its organizations. No additional legislation is needed to make assault, battery and murder illegal. Officials shed crocodile tears over Shepard, while they demand more restrictions on democratic rights.



October 26, 1973

New information has come out of South Africa on the struggle of Black miners at the Anglo American Corporation's Western Deep Levels gold mine. The miners' protests, which led to the murder of eleven workers by police last month, have won a promise of major wage increases for Anglo American's 120,000 African employees.

The struggle is part of an upsurge of actions by Black workers and students in South Africa and Namibia. The government has found it difficult to crush these struggles through repression. This is because of the power of Black workers in industry, more and more in skilled and semiskilled positions. The government has been forced to grant some concessions.

A sign of the breadth of the struggle was the announcement of a second wage increase before the end of the year.

Fidel Castro: 'Without doubt, Israel has right to exist'



Since the pogrom by Hamas and its allies, Stalinists and middle-class radicals have been organizing actions under the slogan, "From the river to the sea, Palestine must be free" — a call for the destruction of Israel and slaughter of the Jews. That's the exact opposite of what Fidel Castro, the central leader of the Cuban Revolution, had to say about Israel and Jew-hatred.

Castro often strongly disagreed with the Israeli government. At the same time he openly expressed his support for the right of Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jews.

In 2010, after then-Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had proclaimed the Holocaust — the murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis — was an "unprovable and mythical claim," Castro invited *Atlantic* magazine writer Jeffrey Goldberg to come to Cuba and interview him.

Fidel told him the Iranian government would better serve the cause of peace by acknowledging the "unique" history of antisemitism and trying to understand why Israelis fear for their existence.

"I don't think anyone has been slandered more than the Jews. I would say much more than the Muslims," Castro told Goldberg. "They have been slandered much more than the Muslims because they are blamed and slandered for everything."

"Over 2,000 years they were subjected to terrible persecution and then to the pogroms," Castro said. "The Jews have lived an existence that is much harder than ours. There is nothing that compares to the Holocaust."

"Let's imagine that I were [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu," Castro said, "I would remember the 6 million Jewish men and women, of all ages who were exterminated in the concentration camps" when making decisions.

Goldberg asked Castro, "Do you think the State of Israel, as a Jewish State, has a right to exist?"

"Yes, without a doubt," Castro replied.

"True revolutionaries never threaten to exterminate a whole country," Castro had told *Le Monde* in September 1967, in response to Arab governments and others calling for Israel's destruction.

— SETH GALINSKY

Minnesota prisoners protest conditions

BY GABBY PROSSER

ST. PAUL, Minn. — "They should shut it down if they can't handle it," Ondella Thomas told some 30 protest-

ers and media gathered outside the governor's house here Sept. 16. They were drawing attention to protests by over 100 prisoners against conditions in the B-East unit of Minnesota Correctional Facility in Stillwater.

On Sept. 3 the prisoners had refused to return to their cells for more than six hours, protesting the extended period they were locked down in their cells, lack of air conditioning in extreme heat, and lack of clean drinking water. The Department of Corrections says they're confined because of staff shortages.

Under the pressure of public attention, prison officials said they've ordered over 50,000 bottles of water for inmates to drink. Prison officials admit there was no violence during their protest.

After returning to their cells, most of the prisoners were kept locked down for more than a day, unable to bathe or contact friends and relatives. The seven men the Department of Corrections says organized the action remain in "restrictive housing."

Many at the Sept. 16 protest called for "low risk" inmates to be transferred to outside housing and be allowed to work or take vocational training under the state's Work Force Release Program. They also raised closing the Stillwater facility, noting that would solve the staffing shortage.

UAW strike is a fight for the entire working class

Continued from front page of Professional Flight Attendants, Communications Workers of America and the United Steelworkers.

Strikers here are winning widespread support. “This fight is for all of us,” Osvaldo Mendoza, a member of IBEW Local 134 who works for Metra, the regional passenger rail, told the *Militant*. “We did a collection at work and brought 100 tacos to the strike picket line.”

Local 551 President Chris Pena chaired the rally. “In 2008 we gave concessions. Our rights were stripped away,” he said. “But now we are on strike to get back what we gave up.”

The union is fighting for a big pay increase, a 32-hour workweek for 40 hours pay, to reinstate a cost-of-living adjustment to fight the effects of inflation, an end to the divisive two-tier wage and benefits setup, and for improvements to retiree pensions and health care plans.

Other speakers at the rally included Chicago Teachers Union President Stacy Davis Gates; Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants; Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson; and Elmer Labog, chairperson of Kilusang Mayo Uno, a labor confederation in the Philippines.

“Yesterday we forced GM to say yes to include in our negotiations the workers at EV battery factories,” Fain told applauding union members.

“Never have I seen so much solidarity on the job, on the picket line and nationally,” said Cornelius Vandergroes, who has 24 years in at Ford. “This strike has been a long time coming.”

Ford worker Chanda Lawson said, “As a single mom, inflation is making it impossible for me to make ends meet. We need wages that keep pace with inflation. I had never heard of COLA before, but this is definitely what we need.

“My co-workers’ morale is really good,” she added. “Local restaurants have even been dropping off food at our picket lines. It’s great!”

Striker Frederick Young said, “Ford holds you on probation for two years as a temp. This has to end. I’m a 58-year-old man and you want me to work for \$16 an hour and some change? My son makes more than I do. That hurts my



Chanting, “No deal? No wheels!” members of United Auto Workers Local 551 rallied at their union hall Oct. 7 in Chicago. The 4,600 workers at Ford there went on strike Sept. 29, bringing the total to 25,000 workers on strike against the Big Three auto companies in 21 states.

soul and pride.”

“Ford doesn’t care about safety,” said Denise Brown, with 20 years at the plant. “They used to allow us five minutes paid stretching time before the line started. They eliminated that, saying it takes too much time away from production. Consequently, injuries have increased. I’ve had six work-related surgeries.” Her granddaughter came to the rally with her.

Stephen Hightower of UAW Local 2335 works at Lear Corporation in Indiana, which makes car seats for Ford. “Their struggle is our struggle,” he said. “We are currently in negotiations for a new contract. We have voted down the last three company offers. We must establish strong union ties.”

Toledo UAW strikers: ‘No justice, no Jeeps!’

TOLEDO, Ohio — Three weeks into the UAW strike, the picket lines ringing the Jeep Complex here are strong, spirited and well-organized. The chant “No justice, no Jeeps!” is a favorite, and it’s now emblazoned on signs, T-shirts and hoodies. A rap song with that title recently debuted at a union rally for “supplemental” temporary workers in Detroit.

The pickets at each plant gate are made up of workers from the same work department, strike picket captain Paula Reed told the *Militant*. “We were a work team inside, now we’re a strike team — and getting to know each other much better.”

Gesturing to a young striker nearby, she said, “I knew he was a single dad but it wasn’t until we got out here that I really learned what it’s like for him to work 70 hours a week and take care of his daughter.

“We’re a family on the picket line. We cook, we socialize, we bring our children here,” she said. “The union has a community service committee that’s organizing help for things at home, child care, other issues. It’s part of holding the picket teams together.”

Almost every striker we talked to pointed to the solidarity they’re getting from other workers and unions as a reason for the high spirit on the lines. “It’s really uplifting to see the support for us,” Randy Putterbaugh said. “The Steelworkers, Teamsters have come by, some rail workers from their union, people traveling come. There’s a guy from Florida, he’s been here for a week! He drives by, honks, brings things.”

A convoy organized by nearby UAW Local 14 early in the strike made a big impression on the Jeep strikers, Putterbaugh said. “There were over 100 cars! It took over half an hour for them to get around the plant.” Reed agreed. “These guys wouldn’t tell you this,” she said lowering her voice, “but they had tears in their eyes when that caravan came around.”

Putterbaugh and fellow striker Gary Lupu think the strike is making progress. “Agreements on COLA, the right to strike over plant closures, GM agreeing to electric-battery production under our national master agreement is fantastic,” Putterbaugh said.

“Thirty-two for 40 is not only about layoffs,” Lupu said, “it’s about overtime. Now we only get overtime pay after 40 hours. We should get it after eight hours.”

While *Militant* correspondent Kathie Fitzgerald was speaking with Putterbaugh and Lupu, another striker came up and saw the *Militant*. “What’s that? Can

I take a picture of it?” he asked. “Sure,” Fitzgerald said, “Why don’t you get a copy?” He said, “Have you heard of the WSWWS [World Socialist Web Site], that’s socialist.”

“That group is not socialist and it’s anti-union,” Fitzgerald said. “They show up in the middle of strikes like this one and attack the union, telling workers they should quit.”

Putterbaugh jumped in, “Yes, we need our union. We’re doing this for everybody, hopefully around the world. The more people are fighting the better it is for everyone. We look to the union movement to make a better life.”

Shonda Moss, a few gates down the line, shared that sentiment. Her crew organizes weekly potlucks, play music, cheer and dance to keep their spirits up. She says, “Our strike is inspiring people. It’s like the domino effect. What we do spills from local to local, from union to union, from state to state.”

— Kathie Fitzgerald and Linda Joyce

Ohio GM strikers rally, back demand for end to tiers

WEST CHESTER, Ohio — Some 200 striking UAW Local 674 members and their supporters rallied outside the General Motors Cincinnati Parts Distribution Center here Oct. 3. Local 674 represents 120 workers at the warehouse. Passing drivers blew their horns in solidarity.

Among those at the rally were UAW Local 863 members from the Ford Transmission plant in nearby Sharonville, and members of UAW Local 128 from Troy, who work at Collins Aerospace Systems. The Collins workers had been locked out for a month in February and March 2022 before reaching a contract settlement.

Also present were members of Teamsters Local 100, including recently organized DHL ramp and tug drivers from the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport; workers from the Amazon Labor Union organizing effort at the airport; representatives of UFCW Local 75, which organizes more than 30,000 workers in retail and food processing; and members of National Nurses United. The Dayton Central Labor Council built the rally.

Gwen Frierson, who works at the Ford Transmission plant, told the *Militant* she has worked at six stamping and parts plants in Ohio and Indiana, as the bosses have shut places down. “We’re gypsy workers,” she said.

“We’re fighting for everybody, we’re fighting for the young workers. With the tiers, they can’t buy the cars we make,” Frierson said. “Before the strike we were working eight-hour days, now we’re working 10. They need those parts to survive a long strike.”

“The shorter workweek is a safety issue,” she said. “I could make it a little longer in the plant with it.”

— Ned Measel

UAW strikers discuss experiences at the Ford plant in Wayne

WAYNE, Mich. — “It’s been a journey,” Mario Hearn said, describing his experience working for Ford since 1999. He had worked on and off as a temp for over a decade at the Dearborn plant, and now works here. He said he was part of a group of workers hired back by Ford in 2012, and the company had promised

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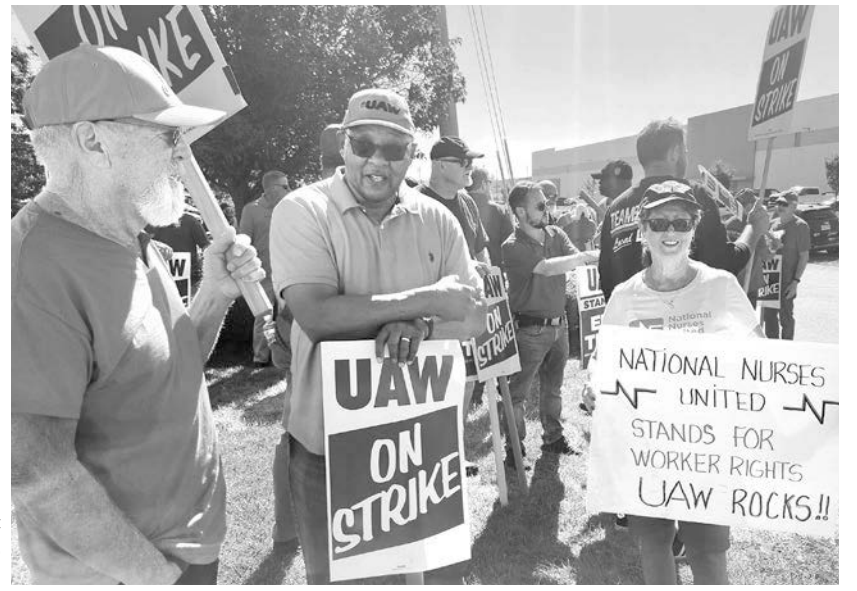


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Above Militant/Bill Arth, right Militant

75,000 Kaiser hospital workers organized three-day strike over staffing and wages, including in Los Angeles Oct. 6, above. Right, striking UAW Local 674 members, supporters rally in West Chester, Ohio, Oct. 3.



they would get up to top rate after a year and a half. “When we brought it up, the company said, ‘We don’t know what you’re talking about.’ They must have put that in the shredder.”

“We’ve had huge pay cuts here,” striker Jeff Jennings told the *Militant*. The UAW has taken significant cuts in wages and made other damaging concessions to the auto bosses in past contracts. “Once you give it up it’s harder to get it back.”

Jennings said he comes from a family of autoworkers that goes back generations and this was the first time Ford had been on strike since 1978.

Striker Eric Huth said he had just gotten his 30 years in at Ford and this was the first time he had been on strike. He said getting rid of the divisive two tiers is “the number one issue in the strike.” He said workers had been kept temps “for many years and it’s just not right,” and that with the tiers, “you

work alongside people to have to work another job” to make ends meet.

Strikers said there are a significant number of younger workers in the plant, hired on in the last several years. One young worker, who said her name was Cassie, said she’s been working on the trim line for five years. “I feel like I am making history. It is so cool to be part of something that can make changes.”

Jennings was saying goodbye to an

older worker leaving the picket line. I asked him, “Was that a retiree?”

“No, he was a member of the bricklayers’ union,” he said. “One of the officers in his union had come down and he decided to come too. We’ve seen teachers and Teamsters. It’s nice to see that support, everyone together.”

“We run the country. We make the world go round,” he added. “This is the younger generation’s future.”

— Tony Lane

Kaiser hospital workers demand: ‘Hire more workers! Raise our pay!’

Continued from front page

tral issues are the need for more staffing to cut the workload and improve patient care, as well as higher wages in face of today’s high prices.

The strike was carried out by a coalition of unions, including SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West, which represents 60,000 of the workers. The strikers included licensed vocational nurses, X-ray technicians, surgical technicians, phlebotomists, certified nursing assistants, pharmacy technicians, respiratory therapists, as well as housekeepers and food service workers.

Union leaders say that if Kaiser refuses to meet workers’ demands, a longer and bigger strike could be called in November.

Over the three days, hundreds of workers joined the picket line at Kaiser South Bay in Los Angeles. “We’re fighting to get more staffing. They need to hire more people. This is necessary for the quality of patient care,” striker Maureen Ibarra, an ultrasound worker in the cardiac unit here, told the *Militant*. “Patients have long waits to get an appointment with their primary doctor, a long wait to get results from tests, long waits to get other appointments.

“Burn out from overwork is a problem,” she said.

“Staffing and wages are the biggest issues for me,” said Sam Tecson, an eight-year worker in Kaiser’s pulmonary department. “They pulled some benefits away and now with inflation we need higher pay. We need to support each other, that’s why I am out here.”

Hundreds of workers also took part in the picket lines at the Cadillac Avenue Kaiser Hospital in West Los Angeles. “We work for patients. They don’t care about patients, only the CEO’s pay,” anesthesiologist Maria Felix, who has worked at Kaiser for 27 years, said. “We help doctors intubate people, we monitor, troubleshoot and take care of the anesthesia machine. I’m not so concerned about a bonus but a raise because the cost of living is so high.”

Kristian Huling came to support the picket line from Service Employees International Union Local 721, the largest public workers’ union in Southern Cali-

fornia. “Health care is not a privilege, it is a right,” she told strikers. “I represent 721 standing in solidarity. We need to stand together against corporate greed.”

“Local 721 represents county workers,” Huling told the *Militant*. “They want to increase what we pay for health care by 10% or higher.”

Bakery worker union member Alma Padilla joined this fellow union member and *Militant* correspondent in bringing solidarity and joining discussions at the picket lines during two days of the strike, before going to work on the afternoon shift.

“I went to the picket line because I want to support people. Our purpose is the same. The union is strength. Everything is going up — food, housing — while we get a miserable wage,” Padilla said. “This is my second experience in protests. When I saw a hotel workers strike picket line I participated. I want for us to be heard and for all workers to get a raise because we do all the work.”

Longshore union members, striking SAG-AFTRA actors and other area unionists also joined the picket lines.

Norton Sandler contributed to this article.

‘Fight for more staffing is at heart of workers’ demands’

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — Hundreds picketed outside the Kaiser hospital here every day of the hospital workers’ three-day nationwide strike. Spirits were high on the line.

Joining strikers from SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West were Kaiser office workers, who are members of Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 29. “My co-workers asked me if I was going to strike,” one OPEIU member told the *Militant*. “Of course, I told them. This is the first time that the OPEIU has been on a called strike in the 32 years I’ve worked at Kaiser. And because of that we have always trailed in wages.”

Melissa Rodriguez, a technician in the emergency department, said, “Kaiser says it is a ‘nonprofit.’ They made \$1 billion. Show me how it is a nonprofit! They made money hand-over-

fist during the COVID pandemic.

“Untrained scabs are doing our work now,” she said. “Security guards are doing sanitation, including in sterile areas where you need special training.

“I prepared for this strike by paying my bills ahead. We are fighting for a raise so we can save for the future,” she said.

A stationary engineer named Keith joined the line to give support. He knew the *Militant* from the support the paper gave Engineers Local 39 during their strike against Kaiser two years ago. They were on the line in front of the hospital 24/7. “We were out for 92 days,” he said. “Kaiser gave us nothing. They didn’t even talk to the union for a year and a half after the strike. We finally had a meeting this past August, and Kaiser had the nerve to say it was the union that finally agreed to meet.”

Several registered nurses, members of the California Nurses Association, joined the line. “We got our contract,” Tanya Hopkins said, “so we aren’t on strike, but we come out to support the other workers after we finish our shift.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications).

1. Publication Title: The Militant.
2. Publication Number: 0349-040.
3. Filing Date: 09/15/2023.
4. Issue Frequency: Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in June, one week in August, two weeks in December.
5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 46.
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$35.
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, City, County, State, and ZIP+4): 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018-2482.
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018-2482.
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do Not Leave Blank). Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): The Militant Publishing Association, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018-2482. Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): John Studer, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018-2482. Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Not applicable.
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as that of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.) Full name: Susan LaMont, Complete mailing address: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018-2482.
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None.
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: Does not apply.
13. Publication Title: The Militant.
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September 25, 2023.
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation. Average Number of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: a. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run): 3429. b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser’s proof copies and exchange copies): 1328; (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions

Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser’s proof copies, and exchange copies): 33; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS: 1131; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 76; c. Total Paid Distribution [Sum of 15b. (1), (2), (3), and (4)]: 2568; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail): (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 42; (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 2; (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 6; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 107; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d. (1), (2), (3) and (4)): 157; f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e): 2725; g. Copies Not Distributed: 704; h. Total (Sum of 15f and g): 3429; i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 94.24%; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date. a. Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run): 3300. b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser’s proof copies, and exchange copies): 1111; (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser’s proof copies, and exchange copies): 21; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS: 1170; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 75; c. Total Paid Distribution [Sum of 15b. (1), (2), (3), and (4)]: 2377; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail): (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 41; (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 2; (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 7; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 106; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d. (1), (2), (3) and (4)): 156; f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e): 2533; g. Copies Not Distributed: 767; h. Total (Sum of 15f and g): 3300; i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 93.84%.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership. If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the October 23, 2023, issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: John Studer, Editor (signed), Date: 09/15/23. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).