INSIDE UAW members debate, vote up contract, more fights to come –PAGE 2

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLI

LIT,

OL. 87/NO. 47 DECEMBER 18, 2023

Rail workers rally, demand paid sick leave

BY JOHN STUDER

Dozens of track workers, members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes union, held two protests Nov. 15 — one outside the headquarters of the Indiana Harbor Belt railroad in Hammond, Indiana, and the other at the U.S. offices of Canadian National Railway in Homewood, Illinois. The bosses of the two railroads are refusing to let workers take paid sick leave when they need it.

Carrying signs saying "IHB is greedy" and "Stop the war on railroad workers," two dozen union workers picketed in Hammond. "The job has always been that you show up to work whether you're sick or injured, you're just expected to," Thomas Kirby, BMWE director of organizing, told the press.

Workers from other unions came to give support. "They're making working conditions that aren't acceptable," said Terry Steagall, a retired member of the United Steelworkers union. Continued on page 5

Democrats tout 'Bidenomics' as workers face job losses, inflation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Joseph Biden administration, his 2024 campaign spin doctors and the liberal media insist inflation is dropping to "acceptable" levels. But the conditions working people face are anything but "acceptable."

It's not just grocery prices that keep going up, but basic monthly payments for heat, electricity and car insurance; debts on credit cards; and child care.

Those making house payments and renting apartments have seen their electricity bills jump by 25% since January 2020. In some states it's even higher — 59% in California; 42% in New York, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports. Natural gas prices to heat homes over this period rose 29%; car insurance costs are 33% higher; and the average annual cost of child care last year was \$10,853.

Those praising "Bidenomics" and Continued on page 4

SWP moves to expand reach of the 'Militant' and recruit new members



Support Israel's fight to exist as a refuge for Jews





What was the Holocaust?

BY ILONA GERSH

The over 1,200 Jews slaughtered in the Oct. 7 Tehran-backed Hamas pogrom against Jews in Israel was the largest number of Jews killed in a single day since the Nazi Holocaust in the second imperialist world war. Some 3,000 more were wounded and over 240 kidnapped and dragged back to Gaza to have their lives dangled as trade bait.

The Oct. 7 pogrom by the Hamas killers showed their determination to follow the same path as the Nazis. Their slogan — chanted by middleclass radicals in the U.S. and worldwide — is "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" They mean, "Palestine will be free of Jews." It is a call today to implement Hitler's "Fi-Continued on page 7 Photos by Israel Defense Forces Israeli troops in Gaza found huge stockpile of rockets, weapons, inset, near school and hospital Dec. 6. Hamas terror group deliberately hides and fires missiles into Israel from working-class areas. Their goal is to maximize civilian casualties among Palestinians from Israeli return fire in order to win international sympathy.

Fight against Jew-hatred!

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israel's efforts to dismantle Hamas' capacity to wage wars on Jews resumed in Gaza Dec. 1, after the reactionary group reneged on its agreement to release all the women and children it seized during the Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel. Some 17 to 20 women and children are still among the 138 hostages remaining in captivity.

In exchange for the earlier releases, the Israeli government had paused its offensive against Hamas for a week, freed 240 imprisoned Palestinian women and children convicted or charged with acts of violence, and facilitated more than 2,700 truckloads of food, medicine and other basic necessities into Gaza, which has been under Hamas' dictatorial rule since 2006.

Continued on page 6

Defend independence of Ukraine! No to the US gov't push for 'peace'

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Nov. 24 on a secret plan circulated by officials of the U.S. and Germany, the two biggest arms suppliers to Kyiv. It shows the rulers of the two imperialist powers are leading a behind-the-scenes push for Kyiv to allow Moscow to hold onto some of the territory its forces have seized in exchange for an end to the bloodshed. According to *Bild*, the White House **Continued on page 8**

SWP member Edwin Fruit, right, discusses the fight against Jew-hatred and support for Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews, after Hamas' murderous Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in southern Israel, with Frank Bass, left, and Doug Nelson at University of Minnesota, Nov. 13.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Working people everywhere have a stake in getting out the truth about Hamas' deadly slaughter of Jews in Israel Oct. 7, and the threat posed to the working class by Jew-hatred.

At protests backing Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews, on workers' doorsteps, at factory gates and elsewhere, members of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. join in and bring copies of the *Militant*, books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders, and SWP election campaign statements to discuss advancing a class-struggle road forward for working people.

Party members look to expand the reach of the paper, take today's burning political questions to workers and **Continued on page 3**

The U.S. rulers' response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, like their response to all events worldwide, has always been to advance their own strategic economic, political and military interests, not those of the Ukrainian people. Their aim is to restrict the war from escalating, not to guarantee Ukraine's sovereignty, which would require the defeat and withdrawal of Moscow's forces.

The determination and courage of Ukrainian working people has pushed Russian President Vladimir Putin's bloody invasion back. But after 650 days, as winter descends on the country, the front lines of the war are frozen for now. Washington is utilizing the current stalemate to try to push the Ukrainian government to engage in talks with Moscow.

The German tabloid Bild reported

InsideCommunist League finds interest
at London protest against Hamas 3Thousands rally against
Jew-hatred in Ottawa3-On the picket line, p. 5Refuse workers strike continues,
bosses' move for injunction fails

Militant/Gabrielle Prosser

UAW members debate, vote up contract, more fights to come

BY TERRY EVANS

The United Auto Workers announced Nov. 20 that its members at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis had voted up new contracts after strikes at the Big Three's assembly plants, parts production sites and distribution centers. They cover over 146,000 autoworkers.

The fight was watched closely by millions of workers who also face falling real wages and worsening conditions from past concessions to the bosses and today's deepening capitalist crisis.

There is no question workers won some important gains. And most came away feeling the union was stronger, better prepared to fight.

The UAW's selective strikes, involving from 13,000 to 50,000 workers, took place over six weeks. The union demanded a 40% wage increase, an end to the hated two-tier wage and benefit system, return of a cost-of-living clause so wages match inflation, making all temporary workers permanent, reinstatement of pensions and health care for workers hired since 2007 and other measures. The strike was popular, both among autoworkers and other unionists.

Many of the demands aimed to make up for deep concessions the union made from 2007. The Big Three bosses said the deep unfolding financial crisis threatened them with bankruptcy. The government agreed to step in, but only if the union agreed to big cutbacks.

"Many of us were hired in right after the big concessions were put in place," Trish Randolph, who works at the Ford Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville, Kentucky, told the *Militant* Nov. 28. Workers there voted against the contract by 55%. "We came in at much lower wages and it took us eight or nine years to get to top pay. We're really glad that the newer workers are getting a big jump in pay."

There was a lot of discussion and debate over the tentative contract recommended by union officials. In a number of the big assembly plants members voted to reject it. Overall, the contract passed at all three companies.

A 25% wage increase was won in the four-and-one-half-year contract. Workers still start at lower rates, but the progression from starting rates to full pay is cut from eight to three years.

Some workers were angry the pay raise wasn't higher at the beginning of the contract so it would compound more over its life. Workers at GM's Fort Wayne Assembly plant in Indiana voted the contract down because they wanted bigger raises in the first two years, Rich LeTourneau, UAW Local 2209 shop chair, told the *Detroit Free Press*.

Matt Horner has worked there for 20 years and is at the top rate, but will see only \$2.80 an hour added to his wages immediately. "Why do I have to wait another four years for any kind of raise that's gonna benefit me and my family," he said. He voted against the contract.

Fight for pensions for all

Retirees hired before 2007 still have pensions and will get an increase, the first raise in 15 years. But "the increase was only 9.4%, which barely covers inflation for the past two years," Local 14 President Tony



Lessons of the revolution in Grenada and its overthrow

Workers, farmers, women and youth were organized to take part in the 1979-83 Grenada Revolution under the leadership of Maurice Bishop. Its overthrow by a Stalinist faction opened the door to a U.S. invasion. This has deep lessons for building a revolutionary party today.



Nov. 18 London meeting discusses Maurice Bishop and the revolution in Grenada.



United Auto Workers Local 551 members rally at Chicago union hall Oct. 7. Watched by millions, UAW strikers fought to win back concessions given to Big Three bosses in 2007.

Totty at the Toledo Propulsions System plant in Ohio told the press.

The situation facing workers who got jobs after 2007 is far worse. "We don't have pensions or health care when we retire," Randolph said. These workers get an inferior 401(k) plan, as do all new hires. "Pensions and post-retirement health care were a huge topic," newly elected President Katie Deatherage of Local 2250 at GM's plant in Wentzville, Missouri, told the press. She said 70% to 75% of workers there were hired after 2007. Workers voted the contract down.

"Getting back cost-of-living adjustments is really important," Randolph said. Workers' wages at Ford will be adjusted every three months to incorporate any raise in the government's consumer price index. "But we were hoping for more compensation across the board. I'm only getting \$3.50-an-hour more."

With the strike solid and more Big Three workers ready to join the selective strike action, some UAW members say it was possible to win more.

Autoworkers "lost everything in one contract," Jerry Coleman told NPR. He works at the Stellantis Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio, where a majority of workers voted no. "There's no reason why they can't afford to give this stuff back to us in one contract."

The vote for the contract was 64% across the three companies. Thousands of workers didn't vote. At Ford, 21,500 of the 57,000 UAW members chose not to cast a ballot. At GM, 10,000 of the

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Editor: John Studer Managing Editor: Terry Evans 46,000 union members didn't vote.

Bosses lost no time making clear they intend to try to take more out of workers now that the strike is over, with speedup and forced overtime. Workers will have to "work aggressive schedules," GM boss Gerald Johnson threatened Nov. 20. "We are going to have to work very hard on productivity," Ford CEO James Farley said the same day. Of course, there is no "we" on the assembly line.

One result of the strike is the decision of bosses at several nonunion auto plants to grant wage hikes, hoping to tamp down interest among workers there looking to fight for union recognition.

"Many of these plants are now giving workers big raises because of our fight," Randolph said. Workers at Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee, got an 11% hike; workers at some Nissan plants, 10%. Wages at Hyundai will rise by 25% over four years. At Toyota the number of years it takes to reach top rate will drop from eight years to four.

Another gain won in the strike was bosses' agreement that workers in some of the rapidly expanding electric-car battery plants can join the union.

These fights continue. Days after the UAW announced plans to organize unorganized plants, Tesla boss Elon Musk made clear he would fight back. "I disagree with the idea of unions," he said.

Amy Husk in Louisville, Kentucky, contributed to this article.

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Help expand reach of the 'Militant'

Continued from front page

into the unions and to recruit new members.

On Dec. 1, SWP members Dennis Richter and Josefina Otero campaigned in Madisonville, Texas, a city of just over 4,500, known as the mushroom capital of the state. Outside the gates of Monterey Mushrooms, the biggest employer in the town, workers driving out of the parking lot at the end of their shift streamed by the Spanish-language sign "Defend Israel's right to exist: Socialist Workers Party" that Richter held up.

Over the course of an hour, 15 workers got copies of the *Militant* and one bought a Spanish-language copy of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP leader Jack Barnes.

"We introduced ourselves to the workers in each passing vehicle," Otero told the *Militant*, "and explained that the *Militant* was a socialist newspaper published in the interests of working people. We also handed out a statement by Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, explaining why the party supports Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews.

No one they spoke to expressed disagreement with the need to fight Jew-hatred, she said, and they agreed Hamas has to be stopped, as it has vowed to attack Israel again and again.

The workers we met, Otero said, also agreed with the party's stance

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in support of Ukrainian sovereignty and the fight to defeat Moscow's invasion of their country.

Some spoke about conditions in the plant, where 700 workers — many from Mexico, Central America and the Philippines — grow and package close to a half-million pounds of mushrooms every week. The factory operates 365 days a year, and shifts only end when the work is done, one worker explained. It could be four hours, eight hours or much longer.

One worker was reaching for his money to get a subscription when a company official showed up and told Otero and Richter they had to leave.

Canada rally backs Jews in Israel

Communist League members and supporters in Canada traveled to Ottawa, the country's capital, Dec. 4 to join a rally of thousands backing Israel's right to exist. It was sponsored by the Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA. The English and French-language signs they wore around their necks said, "Fighting Jew-hatred is a union question" and "Oppose Jewhatred: Calls for a cease-fire mean supporting Hamas." The placards drew many thumbs up, with people taking photos and wanting to talk.

Beverly Bernardo told the *Militant* they sold 12 copies of the paper and a copy of *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon. "We received \$23.50 in donations from those who appreciated our unwavering support for Israel's right to defend itself and against Jew-hatred," she said.

Branches of the SWP and Communist Leagues are building Militant Labor Forums where workers and youth can come and hear presentations and panel discussions on key questions facing the working class and debate the stakes for the labor movement in the fight against Jew-hatred. These weekly programs help workers chart a course of action forward.

To get a subscription to the *Militant* or join members of the SWP or Communist Leagues campaigning in the working class, contact the nearest branch listed on page 4.

Communist League finds interest at London protest against Hamas

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — Over 200 people rallied outside government offices at Whitehall Dec. 3 to protest the brutal violence and Jerusalem, told the crowd. "It raises the voices of women still in captivity."

Communist League members and supporters, wearing signs defending

Thousands rally against Jew-hatred in Ottawa



Militant/Mary Ellen Marus

OTTAWA, Ontario — Thousands rallied in the snow here in Canada's capital city Dec. 4 to support Israel's right to defend itself against the genocidal assaults of Hamas and to oppose the rise in violent Jew-hating attacks in Canada.

Some 7,000 people came in buses from Toronto and another 2,000 from Montreal to attend the rally, which was organized by the Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA.

Speakers included Raquel Look, mother of Alexandre Look, who was killed by Hamas Oct. 7 at the Supernova music festival in Israel, and Holocaust survivor Nate Leipciger. Anthony Housefather from the governing Liberal Party and Melissa Lantsman, deputy leader of the Conservative Party, also addressed the crowd.

Many participants came with signs demanding the freeing of the 138 hostages still held by Hamas. Handmade signs were everywhere.

"I came today because I had a friend killed at the music festival in Re'im," Yuval Papo, born in Israel and now resident in Canada, told the *Militant*. His fiancé, Lauren Schleich, who is not Jewish, made the trip from Richmond Hill, Ontario.

"We came to show support for Israel and because we are very concerned about growing antisemitism here in Canada," Suzi Cohen, who was there with three other women originally from South Africa, told the *Militant*.

Shots were fired at two Montreal Jewish schools Nov. 8. Two days earlier the city's Congregation Beth Tikvah synagogue and a nearby Jewish community center were firebombed. Hours after the Jewish Community Council hosted a Nov. 26 meeting to discuss these attacks, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at its building on Decarie Boulevard in Montreal.

- BEVERLY BERNARDO

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rape Hamas thugs meted out to women during their Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel. Many pointed to the failure of most women's organizations in the U.K. to denounce the horrific assaults and the fact that it took 57 days for the United Nations women's organization to express "alarm" and say it would "investigate." Hamas has publicly claimed responsibility for what it did, posting videos of attacks online.

"The Iranian regime is behind Hamas. As an Iranian and a Muslim my responsibility is to stand behind you," Mattie Heaven, a Conservative Party councilor in Coventry, said. "This is everybody's fight," said Nimco Ali, Somali-born campaigner against female genital mutilation.

"This is a very important rally," Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, deputy mayor of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews and condemning the Iranian-backed terrorist group's anti-Jewish and antiwoman assaults, met many participants who had taken part in the huge national Solidarity March Against Antisemitism the previous week.

Many protesters appreciated the participation of the Communist League and several visited the CL table with its display of books by revolutionary leaders. Four subscriptions to the *Militant* and a French-language edition of *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon were sold.

A number of people took flyers for the next Militant Labour Forum in London, "Defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews! Oppose US/UK rulers' moves to force Israel to give up the battle to defeat Hamas."

Recommended reading



Workers face job losses, inflation

Continued from front page

shilling for his reelection are worried. "Even most Biden voters don't see a thriving economy," the New York Times said Nov. 28.

Potential Biden voter Mackenzie Kiser, a student at the University of North Georgia, told the *Times*, "The housing market is absolutely insane. We paid the same for our one-story one-bedroom cinder-block 1950s house as my mom paid for her three-story, four-bedroom house less than a decade ago."

Her friend, Lawson Millwood, added, "From what I see it really doesn't look like the working class is benefiting from many things recently."

In fact, 60% of U.S. workers say their income and wages haven't kept up with increasing prices. Most U.S. households would need to take home \$10,000 or more over what they made three years ago to afford the same living conditions they had then, a congressional committee admitted.

Prices to purchase a house rose to a record level in September, and high mortgage rates of about 7.5% prevent millions of working people and increasing numbers in the middle class from buying a home to start a family. This, together with increased apartment rents, has forced many youth in their 20s and 30s to hunker down with their parents, relatives or friends.

The median price of a home in October was \$391,800, as sales that month dropped to the lowest level in over 13 years.

At the same time, in a reflection of the anarchy of profit-driven capitalism, construction bosses are in a frenzy to put up houses. "Despite the emerging signs of a slowdown, investors should know there are opportunities in the markets," one economic "expert" told Reuters.

Many workers who took out loans to buy a car over the past few years are finding that high interest rates are making monthly payments increasingly difficult. Banks and auto finance loans last year hit a record \$747 billion. Total auto debt owed to these vultures was \$1.6 trillion at the end of September. The repo man waits in the wings.

Manufacturing contraction

Retail outlets, including Walmart and Amazon, are implementing new "keep it" policies for those wanting to return items purchased during Black Friday sales over the Thanksgiving holiday. The reason? It costs these companies more to pay you to ship these items back, restock them on shelves and sell them again than they're worth. This is just one hint of the rapacious profits they rake in, even when their stuff is on sale!

And there are increasing signs of a job crisis brewing. November was the 13th straight month where the government reported a contraction in manufacturing — the longest period since 2000-02. And the bosses say their inventories are still "bloated."

Industries that are contracting include paper products, electrical equipment, appliances, computers and electronic equipment.

Needless to say, Reuters reported an increase in manufacturing "attrition, freezes and layoffs."

The economic crisis facing working people reflects a deepening social crisis rooted in the workings of the capitalist system. One example is that the number of suicides reached



a record high in 2022. According to the government, 49,449 people killed themselves last year, up 3% from the previous year. This figure is expected to increase when final data is available, the Washington Post reported. The highest suicide rates were for men older than 75.

The weakening of the capitalist economy has an impact on social services at all levels. The government in New York City announced at the end of November that all public libraries must close Sundays because of budget cuts. They also plan to slash spending on books and videos, building maintenance and repairs.

2013 Maidan uprising marked turning point in Ukraine

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Ten years ago, on Dec. 6 and 8, 2013, tens of thousands of workers and other Ukrainians from all over the country rallied in Kyiv, the country's capital, joining the battle to oust the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovych. The powerful mobilizations came in response to bloody riot police assaults on student demonstrators a week earlier, setting off two months of mass mobilizations and battles in the streets.

By early 2014 that became hundreds of thousands of working people across Ukraine as the fight deepened. Tents and barricades sprang up near the Trade Union House building in Kyiv's Independence Square, giving the "Revolution of Dignity" its popular name, the Maidan.

Behind the depth of these mobilizations lay the national aspirations of the Ukrainian people, who - with the exception of the early years of the Russian Revolution under V.I. Lenin when the Ukrainian language and culture flourished — have chafed under, and resisted, centuries of Russian

domination. This stretched from the czars' "prison house of nations" to the counterrevolutionary Stalin years to Vladimir Putin's war today.

The Maidan revolution succeeded in overthrowing Yanukovych Feb. 21. Russian President Vladimir Putin reacted by using Russia's military base in Crimea to seize the peninsula, putting down both the widespread pro-Ukrainian sentiment and the national aspirations of the indigenous Crimean Tatars. Next he sent agents and troops to work with separatists to assault and occupy parts of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk provinces.

In February 2022 Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, claiming his troops would be welcomed as saviors and Kyiv would fall within three days. He said the idea of Ukrainians as a separate nationality was a fraud and he would be recognized as a new Russian czar.

The scale of resistance by working people today can only be understood by looking back at the Maidan revolution and the way it strengthened the Ukrainian working class.

The Socialist Workers Party responded to the Maidan by sending three *Militant* reporting teams over the next year to meet and learn from the fighters involved. Militant editor John Studer met with coal miners, nuclear workers at Chernobyl and Enerhodar, rail workers and many other defenders of Ukrainian sovereignty, from Sokal in the west to Pavlograd in the east, to iron-ore miners in Kryvyi Rih, steelworkers in Dnipro and transit workers in Kharkiv.

The *Militant* has been able to lead in getting out the truth about and defending the Ukrainian people's battle for independence. It also reports on struggles by the country's working people in their own class interests.

Its firsthand coverage gives the lie to the Putin regime's claim the Maidan was a U.S.-backed "Nazi" coup. Moscow's propaganda lies from then till now, supported by much of the middleclass left, are wearing thin inside Russia itself where working-class opposition to his war on Ukraine is spreading.

"We are a sovereign nation," coal miner Yura Sheremeta told Studer in April 2014 in Chervonograd, western Ukraine. "We have spirit and we will continue to fight. If we don't succeed this time, we will have another Maidan. And I think there will be one in Russia too."

In coming issues the *Militant* plans to run regular features based on these trips to Ukraine and developments in the class struggle since.

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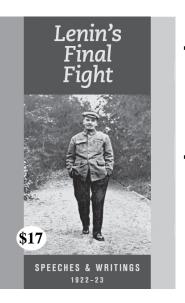
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Rail workers

Continued from front page

"And we're out to change that, corporate greed needs to go away."

The BMWE and other rail unions have taken this fight on as a priority. Paid sick leave was a key demand in the national rail contract fight last year. But the bosses refused to budge.

Rail workers are subject to the notorious anti-labor Railway Labor Act, which covers them all with massive red tape, no-strike provisions and endless delays in the fight for a contract. Last fall Democratic President Joseph Biden and Congress adopted legislation making a rail strike illegal and imposing a contract on the unions that the BMWE, SMART-TD conductors union members and others had voted to reject. It did not contain paid time off.

A separate bill to grant rail workers paid leave was submitted, but, under pressure from the rail bosses, it went down to defeat.

"To be clear, rail companies could do the right thing today and grant workers paid sick leave," AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said after the vote. "But they've refused, putting profits over people."

The rail bosses have imposed big changes on the workers and the industry over the last several years. They've implemented what they call "precision scheduled railroading," running longer and heavier trains on tighter schedules and laying off thousands of workers.

Between November 2018 and December 2020, the bosses cut 40,000 jobs, creating increasingly dangerous conditions and greater pressure on workers. An integral part of their shift was to make it more difficult for rail workers to take any time off.

This situation became front-page news Feb. 3 when a Norfolk Southern freight train with over 100 cars and 9,300 feet long derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. In an effort to get rail traffic moving again, bosses and local officials drained five derailed tank cars containing highly toxic vinyl chloride into trenches and set it on fire, spreading dangerous contamination



Rail workers rally outside Indiana Harbor Belt railroad office in Hammond, Indiana, Nov. 15 to demand bosses agree to provide paid sick leave.

throughout the town and surrounding area, leading to an evacuation and continuing health problems.

Fight continues

Rail workers and their unions organized protests, as did residents of the affected area. Among the steps they forced on Norfolk Southern bosses was an agreement later that month for workers to get paid sick leave.

"IHB has stubbornly refused to join roughly 80% of the freight rail carriers in this country to recognize the need of its employees to respond to unforeseen illness," BMWE Communications Director Clark Ballew told the *Northwest Indiana Times*.

"All of them, not just IHB, everyone across the board, especially the freight railroads," he said, "have whittled down their workforce so far that disasters like East Palestine happen that are dangerous to our workers and the community at large."

Over months bosses at the country's largest rail lines — Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Union Pacific, CSX and Norfolk Southern — have conceded paid sick leave. BMWE's agreement with the BNSF, the largest railroad in North America, came in September.

It's still pretty meager, four days a year with the possibility of using personal days for three additional days off without prior notice. But it's a big step forward. This fight is part of the broader battle by rail workers for conditions, schedules and crew sizes that are based on the need to protect the safety of workers and those who live by the tracks. In reporting the picket lines in Hammond and Homewood, the BMWE noted their fight is "feeding off the recent resurgence of organized labor," saying, "We will prevail."

-ON THE PICKET LINE------

Refuse workers strike continues, bosses' move for injunction fails

WARRINGTON, England — Labour Party-led local authorities failed in their attempt to use the courts to break the strike that began Oct. 3 by over 70 Unite-organized refuse collectors here. Workers recently voted to continue their strike into December.

Union membership has grown significantly since the walkout began, wagon driver and Unite Branch Secretary Stefan Thorpe told the *Militant*. "Twentynine people voted for the strike, 22 at the Woolston Depot, and since then another 50 workers joined the union."

At the heart of the strike is the workers' rejection of the bosses' offer of a below-inflation, flat-rate increase of 1,925 pounds (\$2,430) a year. The refuse workers want an actual raise, not a pay cut.

The bosses' use of temporary contracts and imposition of increased workloads are part of the fight. "Warrington has grown by 6% over the last three years," Thorpe said, "but we still have the same amount of wagons and crews to do our job!

"And 19 workers are on nine-month temporary contracts that end just before Christmas," he added. "They should be made permanent."

The strike is part of a broader set of work disputes by 23 different local authorities against Unite refuse workers across the U.K. who have rejected the bosses' proposed flat-rate offer.

Warrington Borough Council tried to use the 2016 Trade Union Act to get the strike declared illegal, but the court ruled against this.

The ruling has emboldened workers to continue their strike, winning union support. "Fellow Unite council workers I'm in contact with in Wrexham, Cardiff, Leicester, Southampton, Newcastle and more gave us the thumbs up after we won the court case," Thorpe said. The Mid Cheshire Unite branch donated 750 pounds to their strike fund.

Messages of solidarity can be sent to: stefan.thorpe@unitetheunion.org. — Hugo Wils

Special Offer **Teamster Series** Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s by Farrell Dobbs

Working people should condemn the government probes into the affairs of

December 21, 1998

THE MILITANT



December 21, 1973

-25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

Two FBI documents made public provide clear proof that government agencies have been secretly used for political persecution.

December 20, 1948

The most far-reaching and ominous military alliance in history is nearing

THE MILITANT

NY District Council 37 of AFSCME, which has nothing to do with "rooting out corruption" among the union officialdom. This provocative interference into the affairs of the union deepens the employing class's prerogative to poke into the business of any union and to decide who its leaders should be.

Working people should reject this facade and demand an immediate halt to the government investigation. The internal affairs of a union belong to its members alone.

Corruption in the unions will only be ended through the course of broader labor struggles and an accompanying rise in class consciousness. The unions must be transformed into instruments of struggle and turned away from reliance on "friends" among the capitalist politicians. A 1968 directive from former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover lays out a "counterintelligence program" code-named COINTELPRO, designed "to expose, disrupt, and otherwise neutralize" the Socialist Workers Party, Black organizations, the Communist Party, and "New Left" groups.

This information will strengthen suits now being brought by a variety of groups and individuals against the government violation of democratic rights. This includes the \$27 million suit by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance charging government harassment over the past several years.

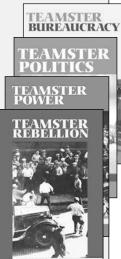
The "counterintelligence program" was never designed for gathering information but was strictly for disruption.

completion in Washington.

Meeting in secret under auspices of the State Department, top diplomatic and military representatives of Great Britain, Canada, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and other countries are drawing up an "Atlantic Pact" which aims at uniting the world's major capitalist powers under leadership of American imperialism for a vast coalition against the Soviet Union.

The State Department has clamped a news blackout on the talks. The Atlantic Pact is the military capstone to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The Truman Doctrine constituted a declaration of "cold" war on the Soviet Union. The Marshall Plan pumped life-saving plasma into the drained arteries of Wall Street's capitalist allies in Europe.

"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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pathfinderpress.com

Back Israel's fight to exist as a refuge for Jews! Fight Jew-hatred!

Continued from front page

Some 1,200 people were slaughtered in southern Israel Oct. 7 by Tehranbacked and financed Hamas death squads, 5,400 wounded and 240 taken hostage. This includes dozens of Arab citizens and permanent residents of Israel and migrant farmworkers from Thailand, Nepal and other countries.

Israel's Walla news site Dec. 4 gave the first overall breakdown on those killed Oct. 7. Fourteen children under age 10 — including two infants — 36 children between 10 and 19, and 25 people over the age of 80 were killed in the assault. The majority were civilians.

Hamas' pogrom, the largest singleday massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, and the Israeli response — like Ukraine's resistance to Moscow's invasion — mark a major turning point in world politics. For capitalist rulers around the world it has spurred shifts in alliances as they compete for markets, political influence and military dominance against their rivals.

Millions of working people, appalled at the massacre of Jews and people who work alongside Jews, are being drawn into politics, looking for a road to end these atrocities.

The pogrom unleashed a rise in acts of Jew-hatred under the banner of opposing "Zionism." These are harbingers of the Jew-hating violence that will in-



Anti-Jewish protest blocks doors, threatens Global Conference for Israel in Denver Nov. 30. Since deadly Oct. 7 pogrom, pro-Hamas groups have targeted Jewish groups, shops, people.

creasingly raise its head as the world capitalist crisis deepens.

Washington provides arms and claims to stand with Israel. But like other capitalist regimes it defends its own interests. This has nothing to do with fighting Jew-hatred, defending Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews or protecting Palestinian civilians.

Washington no friend of Jews

That's what's behind the sharp exchanges between Secretary of State

Antony Blinken and Israeli officials. In his meeting with Israel's cabinet Nov. 30. Blinken pressed the Israeli government to "avoid" damage to hospitals and power stations. But Hamas keeps its weapons, tunnels and command posts underneath hospitals, schools, mosques and apartment buildings, using people there as human shields.

Blinken demands Israel must somehow avoid "further significant displacement of civilians inside of Gaza"

Israeli workers look to unite, overcome divisions after Hamas attack

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hamas hoped its Oct. 7 pogrom that slaughtered 1,200 people and wounded more than 5,000 would terrorize and demoralize Jews and all those who work with Jews in Israel.

Instead, the assault has strengthened the will of working people to defend Israel as a refuge for Jews and to struggle to overcome divisions fostered by the bosses and capitalist government so that Jewish, Arab and immigrant workers can more effectively join together.

Many villages and workplaces in Israel near the borders with Gaza and Lebanon have closed down and 150,000 people have been forced to relocate, often losing their jobs.

Israel's parliament voted to compensation to businesses affected by the war. But laid-off workers only get unemployment benefits, based on a maximum of 60% of their wages over the previous six months. Because the pogrom took place amid the holiday season when workers put in fewer hours, their weekly check ends up being even less than 60% of their regular wage, Yaniv Bar Ilan, a spokesperson for the Koach LaOvdim (Power to the Workers) union federation, told the *Militant* by phone.

Jewish and Arab child care workers who belong to Koach LaOvdim in Jerusalem have seen their income cut by a third because of war-related closures. They took to the streets and threatened to strike, forcing the city government to agree to partial compensation.

The role that Arab citizens of Israel played in rescuing people at the music festival Oct. 7 and the number of Arab and immigrants killed or taken hostages by Hamas is widely known, Bar Ilan said. "A Bedouin bus driver and member of our union still has two

relatives being held by Hamas." This opens the door to unite Jewish and Arab workers in common struggle.

Nonetheless, most public bus drivers — who are in their majority Arabs — didn't come back to work until two weeks after Oct. 7, worried about harassment by a small but vocal minority of passengers. Most of the drivers are disgusted by Hamas' acts, Bar Ilan said, and "are insulted when some passengers call them 'Hamasnics.'"

"We are encouraging drivers to get the union involved," he said. "We have called on the Ministry of Transport to issue a statement condemning this harassment, but they have ignored us."

"What happened on Oct. 7 was terrifying and horrible," Assia Ladizhinskaya, a spokesperson for Kav LaOved (Worker's Hotline), told the *Militant* by phone from Tel Aviv Nov. 27. Kav LaOved is an organization that advocates "on behalf of the most marginalized workers."

After the pogrom, the Israeli government canceled the work permits for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. "One day they were welcome and often the main workers in construction and agriculture and the next day they have no income," Ladizhinskaya said. "The government made an exception for 8,000 'essential' workers from the West Bank."

"We don't expect everybody working here to love Israel," she said. "But out of 100.000 Palestinians from the West Bank who have worked in Israel for years, you can count on one hand those that have been involved in terrorist acts.

"Israeli citizens who lost their jobs because of the war get unemployment benefits. But Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza don't. Many

have trouble getting their last paychecks from their employers," she said. "We defend all workers, no matter where they are from.'

Koach LaOvdim, Kav LaOved and many Israeli workers want the government to reinstate the work permits for West Bank residents.

Migrant farmworkers

Before Oct. 7 there were some 30,000 farmworkers, mostly from Thailand, with permits that allow them to stay in Israel for five years. After the Hamas pogrom, which included the killing or kidnapping of dozens of migrant farmworkers, "about 9,000 went back home," Ladizhinskaya said.

"If given the chance, I would return," Thai farmworker Natthawaree Mulkan, one of the Thais held hostage and released at the start of the "pause," told the press from Thailand. "There were many good things [in Israel] that left a lasting impression in our hearts." Tens of thousands of workers in Israel have been volunteering to tend the fields near Gaza in face of the shortage of farmworkers, until the government recruits more foreign migrant workers.

"Migrant farmworkers are more vulnerable," Ladizhinskaya said. "They don't have safe rooms where they live. They may never have heard the sound of a siren and know they have to take cover from incoming rockets from Gaza. Some employers send them out to the fields when they know there is danger, because they care more about their money than the lives of the workers."

These struggles show that there are opportunities to bring Jewish, Arab and immigrant workers together. A decisive defeat of Hamas in Gaza would increase those opportunities.

and establish "safe zones" that Palestinians can go to away from the buildings the IDF targets.

The Israeli government made clear it won't stop fighting to dismantle Hamas, "even if it takes months," Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told Blinken.

The simple fact is this is what will prevent further rounds of Hamas attacks on Jews. Blinken replied, "I don't think you have the credit" with the U.S. government for that.

Hamas: 'No regrets' for massacre

Osama Hamden, a member of the Hamas Political Bureau, was asked on a Lebanese talk show Dec. 1 if he has "regrets" about Oct. 7.

"Regret for shattering an entire division of the occupation army?" was his reply. "I can promise a war of liberation is coming, not just another Oct. 7." His claim that the 1,200 men, women, children and senior citizens Hamas murdered were an army division is blatantly false. It underscores their target is all Jews.

Within days of Blinken's visit, the Israel Defense Forces launched a new offensive, surrounding Hamas' command posts in northern, central and southern Gaza, and

dealing more blows to its command structure. Israeli military officials said Dec. 4 that some 15,000 Gazan

residents have died since Oct. 7 in Israeli assaults, roughly 5,000 of them combatants of Hamas and its allies.

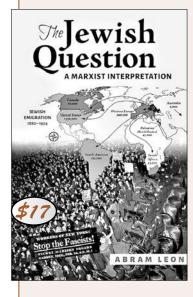
Meanwhile, the Israeli government and private organizations are releasing more details on the brutality Hamas and its allies carried out Oct. 7.

Women brutalized

Army reservist Shari Mendes told the Jerusalem *Post* that her army unit came across bodies of "female soldiers who were shot in the crotch — intimate parts/vagina — or shot in the breast. This seemed to be a systematic genital mutilation of a group of victims."

Many women's bodies had their faces severely disfigured. "It was often impossible for families to be shown faces —

The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation by Abram Leon



10.05

Child care workers in Koach LaOvdim union in Jerusalem Oct. 30 demand compensation for "lost" income when day care centers shut after Hamas assault. Union organizes Jewish and Arab workers.

some cases this was done after death." The Israeli government has guarded the privacy of hostages who have been released. But more information is coming out on their treatment in captivity. The hostages were deprived of adequate food, water and medicine. One doctor who has treated those freed said that at least 10 men and women



The October 7, 2023, massacre in Israel by Hamas,

the worst one-day pogrom against Jews since the Ho-

locaust, has set off a wave of Jew-hatred around the

world. This watershed in the 21st century will mean

more incidents of antisemitic venom and violent as-

From antiquity to feudalism, to capitalism's rise and

Why is Jew-hatred again raising its ugly head? What

are its class roots? Why is there no solution to the

Jewish question without the working class coming to

power to carry out a socialist revolution that can up-

root Jew-hatred, end national oppression and stop the

Abram Leon, aged 26, was killed in October 1944

march to fascism and world war?

www.pathfinderpress.com

in the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz.

saults on Jews, fueled by today's capitalist crises.

decline — Jews have been targets of persecution.

The Militant December 18, 2023



and it seems as if the mutilation of these women's faces was an objective. ... In

were sexually abused in captivity.

One of the freed Thai workers told Israeli officials that they ate "one pita a day" and occasionally were given a can of tuna to share among four. "The Jews who were with me were treated more harshly," he said. "Sometimes they were beaten with electrical cables."

Apologists for Hamas try to bamboozle student radicals and others worldwide who know little about Israel and Hamas by presenting themselves as opponents of imperialist war, progressive advocates of equal rights and for peace.

The pro-cease-fire actions they advocate are themselves a cover for Jew-hatred. During a Philly Palestine Coalition march in Philadelphia Dec. 3, the group stopped outside falafel shop Goldie, one of many Jewish-owned restaurants targeted by the Hamas apologists. They chanted "Goldie, Goldie, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide."

There is only one reason his shop was targeted: because its owner, Michael Solomonov, is a Jew born in Israel. In fact, he has been a critic of many policies of the Israeli government. The coalition calls for a boycott of restaurants owned by Israeli and non-Israeli Jews.

In Paris a contingent of 200 women tried to join a Nov. 25 march condemning violence against women, to highlight Hamas' rape and slaughter of Jewish women. Pointing to the refusal of some women's rights campaigners to condemn Hamas, they carried placards reading, "Metoo unless you are a Jew." Some participants barred them from joining the action.

Jew-hatred and free speech

Some defenders of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews have called for barring meetings or school recognition of groups who offer support to Hamas, rather than politically

confronting them and mobilizing the broad support that exists, especially in the working class, against Jew-hatred.

In an assault on free speech, Columbia University banned Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace Nov. 10, saying they held "an unauthorized event" and used "threatening rhetoric and intimidation."

There is also a debate opening in the labor movement. While large numbers of working people in the U.S. oppose Hamas and would like to see it destroyed, three national union leadership bodies — the American Postal Workers Union, the United Auto Workers and the United Electrical Workers union — have backed the call for a permanent cease-fire. UAW President Shawn Fain said the union calls for a cease-fire because it "has consistently stood for justice across the globe," including "mobilizing against apartheid South Africa and the [U.S.] CONTRA war," in Nicaragua.

But in calling for a cease-fire Fain says nothing about Hamas' long antiworking-class record that includes breaking strikes in Gaza and arresting union fighters. Leaving Hamas intact, ready to carry out future pogroms against Jews and attacks on working people, has nothing to do with "justice," nor is it in the interest of working people anywhere.

What was the Holocaust? Nazi genocide against the Jews **Continued from front page**

nal Solution" to the Jewish question in the Middle East.

The Holocaust

Six million Jews were killed by the Nazis from 1941 to 1945 through murderous pogroms and in Hitler's death camps in Germany, Poland and other conquered nations.

More than 33,000 Jews were shot dead in just two days in September 1941 at Babyn Yar, a gully on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. German occupation forces organized to put up 2,000 posters in Russian, Ukrainian and German ordering all Jews in the city and the surrounding area to show up Monday morning with all their documents, money and valuables. The Nazis spread a rumor that they would be put on American boats and shipped to Palestine.

Instead, they were stripped naked, the gold was taken from their teeth, and then pushed into the ravine

in waves and shot dead. In 1933 the Jewish population of Ukraine was more than 1.5

million. Today it is 40,000. The largest single slaughter

was called Operation Reinhard, in Poland. In three months, from September to November 1942, at least 1.32 million Jews were killed, about 15,000 a day, close to one-quarter of all Jews murdered during World War II. They were rounded up and transported to four concentration camps in Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

Others were shot down where they lived, to terrorize others and discourage rebellion. Those deemed "not fit for transportation," including the elderly, sick and orphans, were shot on the spot.

The prewar population of

Jews in Poland was 3 million. Today it is only 4,500.

Overall, the world Jewish population was slashed by almost 30%, from 15,300,000 in 1933 to 11,000,000 in 1945. Hitler's aim was the complete annihilation of the Jewish people.

Of the 6 million Jews killed during the Holocaust, almost 3 million were murdered at extermination camps, 2 million were murdered in mass executions and related massacres, and 1 million died of brutal treatment and violence where they lived. They were killed for only one reason — they were Jews. That is what genocide means.

The Nazis announced their intentions with the Nov. 9-10, 1938, Kristallnacht pogrom in Germany, which marked a decisive turning point in the Nazis' war to exterminate the Jews. Nazi thugs destroyed at least 267 synagogues and 7,000 Jewish businesses, vandalized

CHANGES IN JEWISH POPULATION OF SELECT COUNTRIES SINCE 1933

	1933	2022
World	15,300,000	15,253,500
Israel*	175,000	7,181,000
United States	4,229,400	7,300,000
Poland	3,000,000	4,500
Ukraine	1,574,400	40,000
Romania	756,000	8,700
Russia	589,800	145,000
Germany	500,000	118,000
Hungary	445,000	46,500
Belarus	407,199	7,000
Czechoslovakia**	357,000	6,500
Austria	191,000	10,300
Lithuania	155,000	2,300
Bulgaria	48,500	2,000

* 1933 figure is for Palestine

** 2022 figure is for Czech Republic and Slovakia

cemeteries and schools, destroyed an untold number of homes and murdered at least 91 Jews and raped hundreds of women. Some 30,000 more Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps, where more than 1,000 perished.

SWP demands: 'Open the borders!'

The Socialist Workers Party fought for the U.S. government to open its doors to Jews fleeing this terror. But at the outbreak of World War II, the "democratic" imperialist governments of the U.S., the U.K. and elsewhere slammed their borders shut to Jews.

More Jews began to see no alternative but to look to Palestine as a homeland where they could seek shelter. Some 4,500 refugees from camps in Europe set out for Palestine on the ship Exodus in 1947, but the capitalist rulers of the U.K., who ruled over Palestine as their

colony, attacked the ship and forced the Jews back to internment camps in Germany. "The 'crime' of those refugees in the eyes of the British Government is their attempt to escape from Germany, where they saw their friends and relatives perish at the hands of the Nazi regime," the Militant said in a Dec. 1, 1947, editorial. The paper blasted the refusal of the U.S. government to lift a finger to help.

"It is up to the labor movement to combat this callous attitude," the Militant said. "Invite the 'Exodus' refugees to come to America!"

Jews had lived in Palestine for thousands of years. In 1931 there were 175,000 Jews there. By 1948, when Israel was formally recognized as a state, there were 650,000. Today there are over 7 million, and Jews seeking shelter from growing Jew-hating violence continue to look to Israel.

7

— EDITORIAL Defeat of Hamas, fight against Jew-hatred are union business

Everything the bosses and their governments do is aimed at protecting their investments, markets and profits and their cutthroat national interests against rival capitalist regimes. Workers have an opposite class standpoint — we are one international class of toilers with common interests in the fight against imperialist exploitation, oppression and war.

Workers in the U.S., Israel, Gaza and worldwide have a vital stake in the defeat of Hamas. So do our unions. Hamas' massacre of Jews Oct. 7 was a step toward its reactionary goal — slaughtering all Jews or forcing them to flee the Middle East.

Jew-hatred plays a special universal and unceasing role under capitalism. Despite the pious claims of the "democratic" imperialist powers who say the Nazi Holocaust's slaughter of 6 million Jews could never happen again, fascist forces will continue to emerge as long as crisis-ridden capitalism exists.

The normal workings of the profit system breeds sharper and sharper crises and deepening battles between bosses and the working class. Reactionary forces scapegoat Jews for the calamities created by capitalism, seeking support from growing middleclass layers threatened with ruin. When sections of the capitalist class see the depth of their crisis leading workers and our unions to unite and organize to topple their rule, they turn to fascist thugs, using the banner of Jew-hatred to try and crush the unions and revolutionary working-class parties like the Socialist Workers Party.

Reactionary forces everywhere see their main threat as the working class and its struggles to replace capitalist exploitation with workers power. It's not by chance that Hamas' founding charter blames Jews for the 1917 Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution.

Workers worldwide today confront deepening attacks on our jobs, wages, working conditions and political rights. As the title of the popular Pathfinder book says — the low point of labor resistance is behind us. More of us are using the unions to resist.

Today Washington is pressing the Israeli government to agree to a longer and longer cease-fire, to back off from scoring a decisive defeat of Hamas. Calls for an immediate and permanent cease-fire by the United Auto Workers and a few other unions point in the same direction. But in fact, there was a cease-fire in place on Oct. 6, one that was broken by Hamas' murderous assault on Israel.

Those calling for a cease-fire focus attention on the worsening catastrophe facing Palestinians in Gaza. But it is Hamas that planned these conditions. The reactionary outfit takes international aid to buy weapons. They place their arsenals and missiles in hospitals and urban areas. Cynically using the plight of the Palestinians to win more funds from the U.N., EU and Washington, they ensure its forces can prepare for endless new rounds of attacks on Jews.

Calling for a cease-fire bolsters Hamas' bigots, murderers and rapists that are morally repugnant to tens of millions of workers. Defeating Hamas and its threat to wipe out the Jewish people is the only way to open the door to common struggles by Israeli, Palestinian and Arab workers in the Middle East.

Jew-hatred is the deadly enemy of the working class. This is the lesson of the imperialist epoch and of Hitler's Nazi dictatorship in Germany. The unions must lead working people to take it on, on the road to forging a working-class party to lead the revolutionary struggles that lie ahead.

Unions today need to back protests defending Israel's right to exist and speak out against the rising assaults on Jews on campuses, at Jewish-owned restaurants, synagogues and elsewhere.

The future that stands before us is not fascist rule. We live in the epoch of working-class revolution. With effective leadership, our class can take power into our own hands and end the source of all oppression capitalist exploitation — once and for all.

Defend Ukraine independence! No to the US gov't push for 'peace'

Continued from front page

and the Chancellery are coordinating pressure on Kyiv by making available only sufficient weapons for Ukrainian forces to maintain the current front line but not retake parts of Ukraine Moscow currently occupies. U.S. State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel denied *Bild*'s report, but another U.S. official told NBC, "there's a growing sense that it's too late, and it's time to do a deal."

Any compromise deal imposed on Kyiv will only give Putin time to try to consolidate his invasion, sowing the seeds for new and wider wars. Putin's determination to wipe Ukraine and its people off the map remains unaltered.

Russian losses fuel opposition to war

The Kremlin is banking on pressure placed on Washington by a long war of attrition that would allow Moscow to outlast Ukrainian forces. Russia's capitalist economy is being converted to war production with factories running shifts around the clock.

Putin issued a decree Dec. 1 for a 170,000-troop buildup to increase the army's size to 1.3 million. He hopes to do this without an open mobilization, which would trigger protests like the one last year.

Russia's population is over three times Ukraine's. Authorities are sweeping up Central Asian migrants by raiding mosques, restaurants and markets where they work. Detainees are taken to military enlistment offices. Pressure is also mounting on prisoners, debtors and employees of state companies to join up.

Russian casualty rates are nearing staggering figures suffered by the czar's army in World War I. Then



Maria Andreeva joins Moscow protest against Putin's war on Ukraine.

Today the figure is about 900 with a couple of days peaking at over 1,300 deaths, the *Kyiv Post* reports.

"We are abandoned," a group of Russian soldiers say in a video circulated Dec. 1. They say they are not properly fed, have to provide their own medicine, and their commanders send them to slaughter, leaving the wounded to rot in the fields.

Reports surfaced Dec. 3 of revolts among Moscow's units along the Dnipro riverbank after heavy losses. In one unit soldiers refused commands to recapture Ukrainian bridgehead positions there and air and artillery cover. Russian troops there also suffered scores of deaths after being sent through their own minefields without maps. Their refusal to attack spread to other units stationed along the river.

Russian soldiers captured by Ukrainian troops describe their treatment at the hands of their officers. Pavel, a former machine-tool operator from Siberia, said his company had been ordered to take territory in northeastern Ukraine earlier this fall. "The captain said we fulfilled our goal. But how can you say that if only 35 out of 100 men come back? And that was just on one day."

Protests were held in a number of Russian cities last month by the mothers and wives of soldiers, demanding troop rotation.

The Way Home group of soldiers' relatives says the Kremlin promised troops mobilized in September 2022 would be home within a few months. "The promises turned out to be empty. We have been betrayed," the group wrote Nov.

27. "The president declared 2024 the Year of the Family. This is ironic, given that wives howl without their husbands, children grow up without fathers and many are already orphans."

The Kremlin accuses the organization of links to Western spy outfits.

"We will retreat only after our men are safe at home. Here and now we are creating the foundation of public solidarity against indefinite mobilization," The Way Home responded.

In Moscow, 20 women Nov. 7 joined the edges of a legal Communist Party rally and raised the slogan "No to indefinite mobilization," before cops took them away. In Novosibirsk authorities allowed soldiers' relatives to hold a protest, but insisted it take place in a government building with most of the press banned. The government is offering increased payments to soldiers' families, "but only if we keep quiet," Maria Andreeva told the *New York Times*. She held a solo protest in Moscow last month, carrying a sign reading "Justice. The mobilized need to come home."

an average of over 1,100 soldiers were killed each day.

on several islands, saying they didn't have effective

-LETTERS

Roots of Hamas 'eye-opening'

The *Militant* article by Terry Evans on the pro-Hitler roots of Hamas is eye-opening, particularly the role played by the Arab Higher Executive Committee of Palestine in 1948. This group organized anti-Jewish militias using "German POWs who had escaped, Bosnians who had served in the Nazi Muslim Legion, Croat Ustasha fascists and Serb Chetnik terrorists who fled Yugoslavia, and former soldiers in Rommel's Africa Korps."

One of the leaders of the Mufti's Jihad Army was Hassan Salameh, a major in the German Wehrmacht during the war. Alongside him was Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, who helped defend the pro-Nazi regime in Baghdad. A second guerrilla group, the Arab Liberation Army, was also led by a former Wehrmacht officer, Fawzi al-Qawuqji.

As Evans recounts, many members of Muslim SS divisions, which killed Jews and unarmed civilians in Bosnia and Croatia during the war, moved to Beirut to participate in the invasion at the behest of Amin al-Husseini.

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After realizing that the *Militant* supports the state of Israel, a racist ethnostate that is built upon the oppression, colonization, and destruction of the Palestinian people and Palestinian land, I cannot in good conscience continue to support an organization that does not support freedom movements, the oppressed, or any sort of anti-imperialist, internationalist values.

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С.Р.

Brooklyn, New York

"Women need their husbands and sons, not payoffs," she said.

Correction

In the article, "Working people in Ukraine fight genocidal war waged by Putin," in *Militant* issue no. 46, Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, is quoted as boasting 700,000 Ukrainian children have been taken to Russia. Kyiv authorities give a lower figure of 300,000, mainly family members of some 3 million Ukrainians forcibly moved to Russia from occupied parts of Ukraine.

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