

THE MILITANT

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

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 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 Employees 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, BMW 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

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



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.

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 middle-class 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

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

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



Militant/Gabrielle Prosser

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 Com-

munist 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

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

BY ROY LANDERSEN

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

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

Inside

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

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



Militant/Salm Kolis

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

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.

THE MILITANT

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.

Militant/Dag Tirsén

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

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018. OR SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT: WWW.THEMILITANT.COM

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £4 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £8 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, A\$10 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 87/No. 47

Closing news date: December 6, 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 September.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

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

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

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.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £30 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 5 Norman Road (first floor), Seven Sisters, London, N15 4ND, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 100 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Send A\$70 for one year to above address.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

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

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-UJA. The English and French-language signs they wore around their necks said, "Fighting Jew-hatred is a union question" and "Oppose Jew-hatred: 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.

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-UJA.

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 Leipziger. 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

Discounted books for prisoners

Pathfinder Press offers books at a 50% discount plus \$2.75 shipping per order.

Prisoners can mail their prepaid orders to:

Pathfinder Press, PO Box 162767
Atlanta GA 30321-2767

For more information:

www.pathfinderpress.com

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 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

Jerusalem, told the crowd. "It raises the voices of women still in captivity."

Communist League members and supporters, wearing signs defending Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews and condemning the Iranian-backed terrorist group's anti-Jewish and anti-woman 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."

Join Socialist Workers Party 2024 campaigns

Fight in the interests of the working class
Solidarity with union battles today

CALIFORNIA

Laura Garza, U.S. Senate
Margaret Trowe, U.S. Congress

Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate

Florida

Rachele Fruit, U.S. Senate

Laura Anderson, U.S. Congress

Georgia

Lisa Potash, U.S. Congress

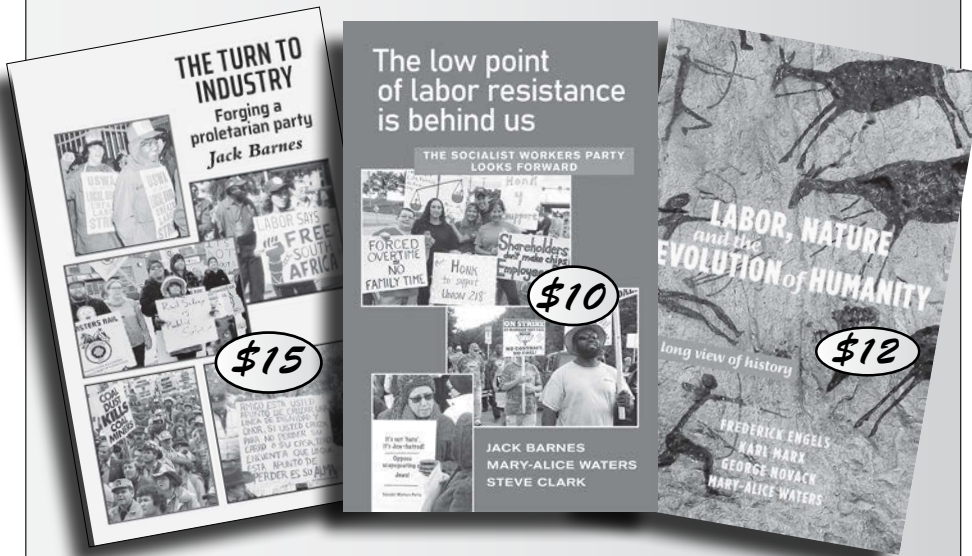
Illinois

Naomi Craine, U.S. Congress

Texas

Alyson Kennedy, U.S. Senate

Recommended reading



from pathfinderpress.com

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

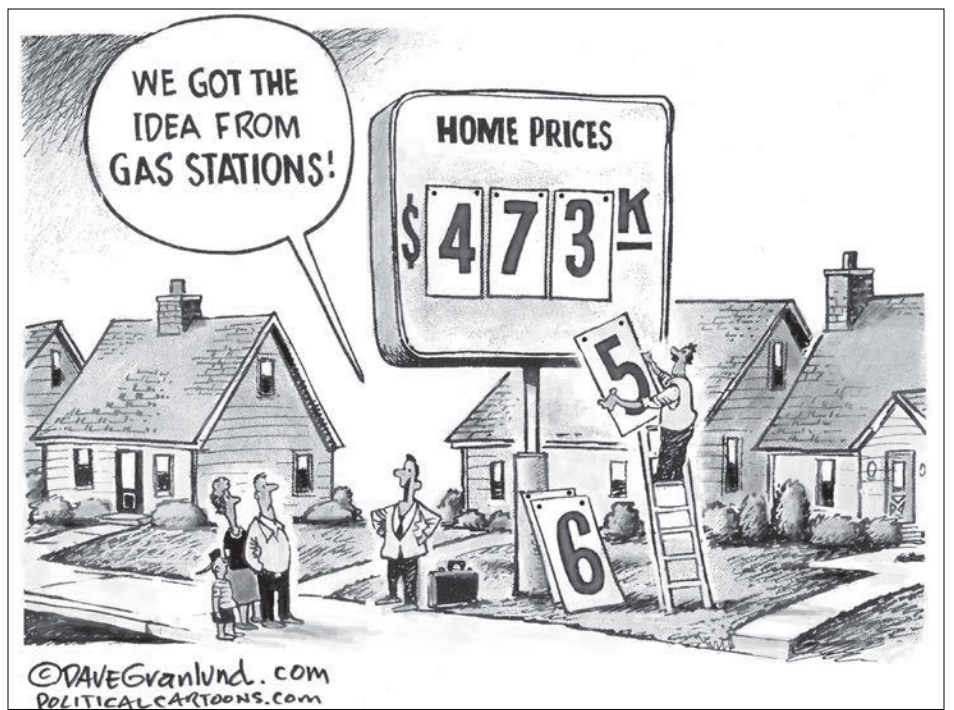
items purchased during Black Friday sales over the Thanksgiving holiday. The reason? It costs these companies more to pay you to ship these items back, restock them on shelves and sell them again than they’re worth. This is just one hint of the rapacious profits they rake in, even when their stuff is 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 Yanukovich. 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 Yanukovich 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 middle-class 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.

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Oakland: 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: oaklandswp@gmail.com. **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

FLORIDA: Miami: 5711 NW 7th Ave. Unit B. Zip: 33127. Tel: (305) 929-8966. Email: swpmiami@icloud.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. Email: swpatlanta@fastmail.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 792-6160. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 2401 1/2 Central Ave. NE, Unit B. Zip: 55418. Tel: (612) 271-1930. Email: swpminneapolis@gmail.com

NEBRASKA: Lincoln: P.O. Box 6811.

Zip: 68506. Tel: (402) 217-4906. Email: swplincn@gmail.com

NEW JERSEY: 3600 Bergenline, Suite 205B, Union City. Zip: 07087. Tel: (551) 240-1512. swpnewjersey@gmail.com

NEW YORK: New York: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (646) 434-8117. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com

OHIO: Cincinnati: 2300 Montana Ave., Suite 230. Tel: Zip: 45211. (513) 837-1038. Email: swpcincinnati@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net **Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 313. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 610-2402. Email: swppittsburgh@gmail.com

TEXAS: Dallas-Fort Worth: 6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 108 Fort Worth. Zip: 76120. Tel: (817) 899-6720. Email: dfwswp@gmail.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Zip: 20012. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 650 S. Orcas St., #120 Zip: 98108. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: swpseattle@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Suite 2, First floor, 275 George St., Liverpool. Postal Address: P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (61) 435-995-604. Email: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

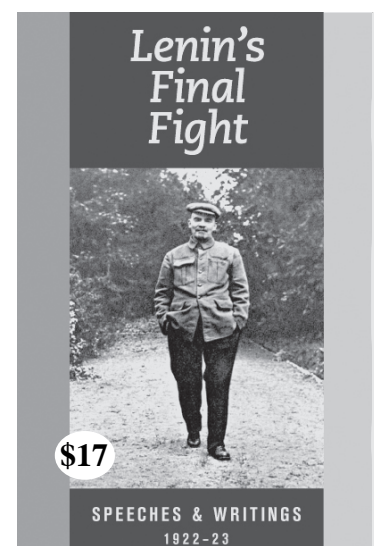
QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clcmontreal@fastmail.com

FRANCE

Paris: BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-3538 8900. Email: clondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: (0161) 312-8119. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com



pathfinderpress.com

Rail workers

Continued from front page

“And we’re out to change that, corporate greed needs to go away.”

The BMW 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 BMW, 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,” BMW 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. BMW’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 BMW 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*. “Twenty-nine 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

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



December 21, 1998

Working people should condemn the government probes into the affairs of 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.



December 21, 1973

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

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.



December 20, 1948

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

Special Offer

Teamster Series

Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s

by Farrell Dobbs

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

\$16 each or all four for \$50

pathfinderpress.com

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 middle-class 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 weap-

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



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 on several islands, saying they didn't have effective

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."

"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.

LETTERS

Roots of Hamas 'eye-opening'

The *Militant* article by Terry Evans on the pro-Nazi 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.

Bill Kalman
Vancouver, Washington

Unsubscribe me

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.

Please unsubscribe me as I have no use for your newspaper.
C.P.
Brooklyn, New York