

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Holiday greetings to fellow workers behind bars

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 48 DECEMBER 25, 2023

600,000 public workers go on strike against Quebec gov't

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — The Quebec government is on a collision course with some 600,000 union teachers, education support workers, nurses and health care workers, social workers and other public workers, as well as the vast majority of working people who support them. Their union contracts expired March 31.

As of Dec. 10, the government had refused to meet their demands for wage increases to match inflation and to take steps to address the intolerable working conditions they face, which have created a crisis in Quebec's health care and education systems. At the end of November two patients in the emergency ward at a Montreal suburban hospital died after waiting hours to see a doctor.

Over 65,000 teachers, members of the Autonomous Federation of Education (FAE), have been on strike since Nov. 23. More than 420,000 public sector workers in the Common Front of four union federations set up weeklong picket lines for four days beginning Dec. 8. Some 80,000 nurses and other health

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Families of Putin's troops: 'Bring our boys home!'

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin tries to disguise his attempt to conquer Ukraine and its people as a war to defend "Mother Russia" from threats by Washington and NATO. In fact his goal is to reestablish the Russian Empire, denying Ukraine is a nation with a right to exist.

Putin announced he would seek reelection Dec. 8 in a sham presidential vote set for March 17. His main rival, Alexei Navalny, incarcerated in a maximum-security prison on a 30-year sentence, has disappeared from contact with supporters since.

Voting will take place across Russia and in territory seized by Moscow's forces in eastern Ukraine that Putin claims is now part of Russia. He is allowing loyal opposition forces to run to try to give the election a veneer of legitimacy.

Since Putin became president in 2000, his opponents have ended up in exile, or prison, or died under suspicious circumstances. He had constitutional

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SWP campaigns widely, advancing a road forward for the working class



Alyson Kennedy, left, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, spoke with editor Fatimah Azeem of the *Mercury*, student paper at University of Texas at Dallas, Dec. 8.

BY JANET POST

Members and candidates of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. are joining in discussions about the danger of Jew-hatred, the importance of Israel as a refuge for Jews, the struggle of the Ukrainian people to defend their independence, and solidarity with strikes and other working-class battles. They're

going to workers' doorsteps, union picket lines, demonstrations against antisemitism and setting up literature tables on campuses.

SWP members Dennis Richter and George Chalmers from Fort Worth, Texas, talked with autoworkers at the big GM SUV assembly plant in nearby Arlington Dec. 8. Five thousand members of United Auto Workers Lo-

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Fight against Jew-hatred!



Reuters/Johanna Geron

Thousands march in Brussels, Belgium, Dec. 10, protesting against Jew-hatred, for Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews and to defend itself. Sign on right says, "Antisemitism kills."

Nearly half of Israel's Jews trace their roots to Arab countries

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A recently published book — *Sephardi Voices: The Untold Expulsion of Jews from Arab Lands*, by Henry Green and Richard Stursberg — addresses a seldom-discussed history. Green touched on this in a public meeting in Miami Dec. 3, titled "Voices of Jewish Refugees from Arab Lands."

He addressed the conditions hundreds of thousands of Jews living in the Middle East and North Africa faced being driven out of their own countries, largely by reactionary Arab rulers, leading up to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 and after.

One million Jews lived in nine largely Arab countries in the region after World War II — Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen, as well as in Persian

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Defeat of Hamas key to protecting Israel as a refuge for Jews

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israeli soldiers are making steady progress against Hamas in Gaza, destroying command posts, eliminating its leaders and beating back its forces, increasing numbers of whom are surrendering. Even with the widespread destruction the fighting has caused, more Gaza residents are taking advantage of the increased space to speak their mind and are openly criticizing the Tehran-backed Jew-hating terrorist group.

Hundreds of Hamas fighters have surrendered to the Israel Defense Forces, in many instances captured on video. The U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War estimates that at least seven Hamas battalions have capitulated.

Dismantling Hamas as a fighting force and eliminating its leadership structure is key to preventing the Tehran-allied

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Defense of constitutional freedoms crucial for the working class today

BY TERRY EVANS

As President Joseph Biden's reelection bid flounders, the heart of the Democratic Party's 2024 campaign is to use the courts to stop Donald Trump's campaign. Their legal tactics run from lawsuits aimed at ruling him off the ballot for "insurrection" to a slew of criminal cases seeking to have him thrown in prison.

Their aim is to deny working people the fundamental right to vote for the candidate of their choosing, seeking to replace the ballot box with the courts. The insurrection cases are based on a clause in the Constitution's 14th Amendment that was intended to prevent former Confederate military and political leaders from running for office after the victory of the North in the Civil War. These cases have been thrown

out in each of the six state courts where they've been heard so far.

Democrats claim Trump's call for the 2020 election results to be overturned amount to an "insurrection." What they're really targeting is the right to free speech. Thirteen similar cases against Trump are still pending.

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'Washington Post' workers hold 1-day strike over wages, jobs

UK refuse workers win strike, strengthen their union

Kindertransport — In 1938 London let a few Jewish children in

BY JULIE CRAWFORD

LONDON — Kindertransport, the evacuation to the U.K. of 10,000 mainly Jewish children fleeing Nazi persecution in 1938-39, is touted by capitalist politicians and the media as an example of the British government coming to the aid of the Jewish people.

The children came from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Poland over a 10-month period beginning in December 1938. But, “there is history and there is myth,” Andrea Hammel writes in *The Kindertransport — What Really Happened*, just published by Polity Press. Hammel is a professor of German at Aberystwyth University in Wales. She presented the book at the Wiener Holocaust Library here Dec. 6.

The library itself had been the target of a Jew-hating attack Nov. 2 when its entry sign was spray-painted with the word “Gaza.”

The library is currently featuring an exhibit titled “Expelled! The History of the Polenaktion,” which marks the 85th anniversary of the mass expulsion of 25,000 Jews from Germany to Poland by the Nazis in 1938. Some participants at the book presentation took the opportunity to visit the powerful exhibit, including this correspondent.

“I wrote the book to make a critical history of the Kindertransport available to a wider audience,” Hammel said, describing the real record of the immigration policies of successive U.K. governments before the Kindertransport program began. The Aliens Act of 1905 was adopted to limit Jewish immigration after tens of thousands of Russian and Eastern European Jews arrived “to escape anti-Semitic pogroms and persecution after 1880,” she writes. Further

legislation in 1914 and 1919 added more restrictions.

“It is a fact that in the 1930s the U.K. government’s policy was not laying the foundation for a noble tradition. It was mainly concerned with keeping refugees fleeing Nazism away,” she said.

Between 1933 and 1945, an annual average of just 6,000 Jews were permitted entry. London also put strict limits on Jews trying to get to British-controlled Palestine.

With more and more press reports of the Nazi terror, pressure grew on the capitalist rulers to do something. That intensified with the pogrom in Germany over the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938, known today as “Kristallnacht,” the beginning of the Nazi’s “Final Solution” — the drive to exterminate the Jewish people.

Kindertransport was the British government’s response, a visa waiver scheme for unaccompanied children under the age of 18, reduced after a few months to under 17. It lasted less than a year, ending when London declared war on Germany Sept. 3, 1939.

The government demanded that Jewish parents had to put up 50 pounds for every child admitted — equivalent to 3,500 pounds (\$4,400) today — a cost that many families could not afford. The only children permitted had to be “self-supporting, of good character and with robust good health,” Ham-



Statue outside London train station commemorates Kindertransport children. To escape Nazi terror in Europe, for 10 months U.K. rulers let in 10,000 mainly Jewish children, but barred their families. They closed the door on millions seeking refuge from the Holocaust.

Militant/Pamela Holmes

mel said. Those with signs of mental or physical illness were excluded.

Those with signs of mental or physical illness were excluded. Hammel pointed out that funding and organization for the program was left by the government to charities and other voluntary organizations, often Jewish. There were many more applicants than the 10,000 who got in.

Through research and interviews over 20 years, Hammel has detailed the experiences of many of the children. Families fleeing persecution wanted to emigrate “as a unit” she said. But the scheme ripped families apart — leaving parents to face the Nazi terror. The youngest refugee was a 6-month-old baby. Siblings who arrived together were often separated. Only a minority would ever see their parents again. Hammel cites the example of Renate Collins — not one of her extended family of 64 survived Hitler’s death squads.

A number of children were housed in camps, boarding schools and children’s homes, often in terrible condi-

tions. Some 200 boys and girls were sent to Gwrych Castle, near Abergele, Wales, without electricity or adequate food and with scant sanitation. Two children from Berlin, Anne and Horst Marschner, who were deaf, somehow managed to circumvent the “disabilities” criterion but ended up placed in facilities with no provision for someone who was deaf.

Those placed in family homes had to get to know foster parents who spoke a different language and were not Jewish. Next to nothing was organized to deal with the trauma of having been “persecuted, uprooted and separated from their parents.”

“The forcible estrangement of child refugees from their background can only be described as criminal,” Hammel writes. Many foster parents were well-meaning. Others not so much. Hammel details cases of physical and sexual abuse, and child exploitation.

Within a year of their arrival, youths of 16 and above — about one-tenth of the total — were incarcerated by the government as it embarked on the mass internment of tens of thousands “enemy aliens,” almost entirely people who had fled Nazi persecution.

Hammel points out that of the 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, 1.5 million were children.

She fielded questions and comments after her presentation. “Many of us have recently taken to the streets to defend Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for the Jews,” said Jonathan Silberman, a leader of the Communist League. “The Kindertransport story is further evidence that the liberal democracies cannot be relied upon as a safe haven. The U.S. and U.K. governments put up barriers to Jews fleeing the Holocaust. This was a war not to fight fascism, but to divide the world among the competing imperialist powers.

“The only solution to the Jewish question is to put an end to the system that continues to breed Jew-hatred — which is the capitalist system.”

THE MILITANT

Rail workers continue fight to win paid sick leave

With brutal schedules on the railroads, some rail bosses still expect injured or sick workers to show up every day. BMW track workers are fighting for paid sick leave, a key demand bosses refused in national rail contract fight last year. They’re making gains today.



Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees BMW rail workers rally in Hammond, Indiana, Nov. 15 demanding paid sick leave.

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SWP advances working-class road

Continued from front page

cal 276 there had joined thousands of other UAW members on strike against the Big Three auto bosses this fall.

In front of an overpass to the plant, Richter and Chalmers showed workers the *Militant* with the headline “Defend Israel’s right to exist as refuge for Jews!” and a statement by the SWP campaign, “Fight against Jew-hatred.” Next time “it would be good to bring a sign,” Richter told this *Militant* reporter.

They sold eight copies of the paper and spoke with a number of workers about the importance of Israel’s war to defeat Hamas. Richter said the workers were very receptive to the party’s stand against Jew-hatred and its place in the line of march of the working class.

A long-haul truck driver, who was taking a break in the plant’s parking lot, expressed concern about the condition of Palestinian workers and took a back issue of the paper to read. But then he came back to talk more and bought the latest issue. “Just because working people raise questions about what Palestinian workers and farmers face doesn’t mean they are against Jews having the right to a homeland,” Richter told the *Militant*.

“It’s important to use the *Militant* in explaining the terrorist aims of Hamas, and its roots,” he added. “This is no liberation organization. It’s in the interests of the Palestinian people for Hamas to be defeated, which will give working people there the space to fight for a leadership that can advance the rights of all workers.”

Gerardo Sánchez and Hilda Cuzco,

two other SWP members from Fort Worth, took the *Militant* door to door in Richland Hills, selling two subscriptions. “Thank you for supporting Israel. It’s the right thing to do. People are forgetting what Hamas did to the Israelis,” one new subscriber, who preferred not to have her name printed, told them.

“One worker from Mexico was surprised to see the 1941 photo in the *Militant* of fascist dictator Adolf Hitler meeting with Nazi collaborator Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, one of the forerunners of Hamas,” Sánchez said. He bought a *Militant* subscription, telling Sánchez, “Hamas is a criminal organization.”

Dallas-Fort Worth SWP members also took the paper to two area campuses — Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas at Dallas.

“It was finals week, so we need to go back,” said Richter, who joined Cuzco at Southern Methodist. “At the office of the student newspaper a faculty adviser told us that Hillel had set up a long Sabbath table with 239 chairs representing the Israeli hostages, with posters of each hostage taped onto the chairs. They set up 1,400 Israeli flags around the tables to represent those who were massacred Oct. 7. She said many students visited the exhibit to talk. They also put a menorah in the window of the student center.”

On Dec. 8 Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, and Josefina Otero met with Fatimah Azeem, the editor of the *Mercury*, the student newspaper at the University of Texas at Dallas, and some of its reporters.

There is a widespread controversy there over the administration’s removal of “Spirit Rocks,” three large boulders that since 2008 have been used by students to debate their views on current issues. Recently that has included Russia’s war against Ukraine, Black rights, transgender issues and now, the unfolding developments in the Middle East.

After Oct. 7 students painted demands either against Jew-hatred or backing Hamas. One rock was deco-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Margaret Trowe, left, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from California District 12, joined other defenders of Israel’s right to exist to take on supporters of Hamas “resistance” at Berkeley City Council meeting Dec. 12. Calling for civil discussion, she spoke against cease-fire resolution.

rated with a Star of David. Another rock read, “The Terror, Israel.” After another was painted with “Zionism = Nazism,” campus administrators had all the boulders taken away while students were gone for Thanksgiving break.

Azeem told Kennedy and Otero that students weren’t forewarned about the removal and they were surprised. “We’ve always been for free expression,” she said. The student government has resolved that the rocks be reinstated.

“I walk past the rocks every day, and I’ve even spray painted Stars of David on them,” Jewish student Oliver Hood

told the *Mercury*. “No matter what side you’re on, the removal of the rocks is a removal of free speech on campus.”

On the way out of campus, Kennedy and Otero noticed that some students had put up “mini rocks” with pro-Hamas slogans and flags.

The debate continues.

In a number of areas SWP members are calling subscribers to discuss renewing. For more information on how to join in getting the *Militant* out in political discussions like these, contact the nearest party campaign headquarters listed on page 8.



Students at University of Texas at Dallas are fighting to overturn administration’s removal of “Spirit Rocks,” above, students used to express their opinions on Israel, Hamas.

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Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate

Texas

Alyson Kennedy, U.S. Senate

Former Black Panther leader Ed Poindexter dies in prison

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — Former Black Panther Party leader Ed Poindexter, who was framed up and imprisoned for 53 years, died Dec. 7 in a Nebraska prison at the age of 79. In the last few

years, his family and supporters fought for his compassionate release, as he was suffering from advanced kidney disease and Parkinson’s disease.

Despite his condition, the state never approved his release. This is another indictment of the workings of the capitalist rulers’ prisons, part of their class-driven criminal “justice” system. This is not a secret to the millions of workers who have been incarcerated or have a relative, neighbor, co-worker or friend who was thrown behind bars.

Known as the “Omaha Two,” Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyenwe Langa (formerly David Rice), became well known as organizers of protests against police brutality in the late 1960s, including the 1969 killing of 14-year-old Vivian Strong. For this, they were targeted by the Omaha police; agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; and by the FBI.

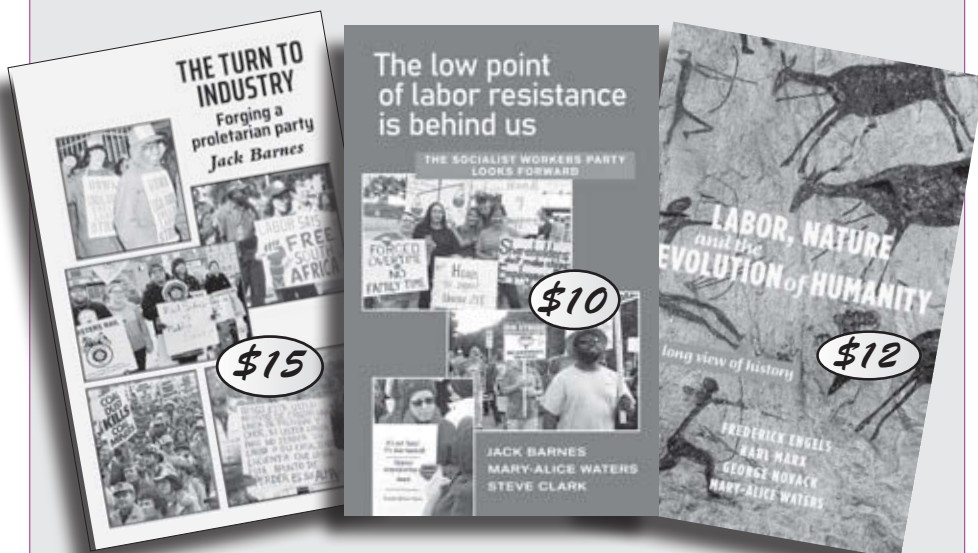
They were framed up in August 1970 on charges of killing an Omaha police officer, who had been lured into a home where a suitcase bomb exploded.

Supporters of Poindexter and we Langa had forced out into the open government documents showing how authorities were out to discredit and dismantle the Panthers’ political work. Witnesses placed the two Black rights fighters elsewhere at the time of the killing. Nonetheless, Poindexter and we Langa were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. We Langa died in 2016 after 45 years behind bars.

Poindexter had deserved a new trial because of the “credible reports of significant misconduct in the prosecution” of the case, Mindy Rush Chipman, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska, said after his death. “Ultimately, you cannot separate this case from the circumstances at the time which continue to this day, namely law enforcement agencies targeting people and groups calling for racial justice.”

From the day they were arrested in 1970, to the day they died, Poindexter and we Langa maintained their innocence. They were never broken by the prison system.

Recommended reading



from pathfinderpress.com

Dominican gov't pits workers against Haitian immigrants

BY RÓGER CALERO

The government of President Luis Abinader in the Dominican Republic has stepped up deportations of Haitian immigrants and Dominican citizens of Haitian descent. This takes place as the May 2024 presidential election is approaching.

Abinader's campaign aims to rally support by fanning anti-Haitian bigotry. And it follows calls by foreign and native investors alike to squeeze more productivity from workers and more "tax exemptions" from the government.

The Dominican rulers are exploiting the deep economic, political and social crisis in Haiti to fan reactionary Dominican nationalist sentiments. They hope to use these divisions to mask their profit-driven attacks on wages, working conditions and government social programs.

The continuing influx of Haitian immigrants creates "a process in which we're losing our nationality and overloading essential public services," Abinader told the Dominican congress in February.

Other politicians have joined in this attack. The Haitian influx will provoke "a stampede of Dominicans going abroad, and the fate of the [Dominican] territory and its inhabitants would be left in hands of Haitian immigrants that would not take long in turning it into a copy of what already exists in their country," Eduardo García Michel, an academic who has served in the government, wrote in a Propuesta Digital editorial in March.

In September the Abinader administration closed down the border and cut off all trade with Haiti, in response to the Haitian government's plan to build a canal to draw water from the shared Massacre River that separates the two countries. The Dominican rulers seek to maintain their dominance over the water supply at the expense of farmers in Haiti.

The Dominican government has deported over 113,000 ethnic Haitians in 2022, including pregnant women and unaccompanied minors. And it's on pace to surpass that figure this year. Many of those deported were born and raised in the Dominican Republic, but were stripped of their citizenship in 2013 when a court ruling eliminated birthright-citizenship for more than 200,000 Dominicans whose Haitian-born parents had been undocumented.

These attacks have deepened the pariah status and exploitation of Haitian migrants, denying them political rights as well as access to schools, government-funded medical care and other basic services.

"Dominicans and Haitians who live

in the sugar plantations get along well," Ive Cahio told *Militant* reporters during their recent visit to sugarcane communities in the Dominican Republic. Cahio is a Haitian sugarcane worker who has been active in the fight led by the Sugarcane Workers Union (UTC) for retirement pensions for thousands of Haitian and Dominican workers.

"The problem is when you go to government offices or a hospital and they don't treat you properly," he said, referring to the discrimination Haitians have to endure.

Migrant workers — and Dominicans — without medical insurance have to pay thousands of pesos out of pocket just to see a doctor. In the meantime, Haitians are blamed for the crumbling public health services, which are grossly underfunded to begin with.

A trap for the labor movement

Leaders of the country's main trade union federations have joined government officials and bourgeois politicians in pushing the false illusion that for Dominican-born workers to have decent wages and living conditions, immigrants must be denied.

Félix Martínez, national secretary of Sinatracom, the construction union, argues that the competition with Haitian immigrants forces Dominican workers to face low wages and bad conditions, leading them to leave the country. But rather than organizing Dominican and Haitian workers to fight together against the bosses for better conditions, Martínez and other union officials back the government enforcing limits on migrant labor.

By law, 80% of the workers in every company must be Dominican.



Vladimir Fuentes

Retired Haitian sugarcane worker Ephesiel Bonel, left, holds up his identification card from formerly state-owned Río Haina Sugar Mill, often only ID these workers have. At right is Yega Fabián, another retired Haitian worker. Shirt says, "Pensions for all sugarcane workers."

But this isn't implemented in many cases, including in construction, sugarcane and other agricultural production, which have an overwhelmingly Haitian labor force. Large numbers of Haitians also work in the hotel industry, doing housekeeping, maintenance, landscaping and other jobs, including tourist services. Many Haitian migrants speak three languages — Spanish, French and English.

Real improvements of conditions for workers — national and foreign born, male or female, Black and white — can only come from struggles waged by our class through the unions, not only for better wages and conditions, but also for government-funded health care, education and other social gains.

Poison of anti-Haitian prejudice

Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent have faced discrimination over generations and the Dominican ruling class has used mass deportations and

even harsher attacks at different times to break down the solidarity that exists between the two peoples.

Under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, who ruled the country with an iron fist from 1930-61, he promoted the "vision" of a Dominican Republic that was Spanish, Catholic and light skinned. He counterposed this to racial stereotypes portraying Haitians as "inferior," whose darker skin, Creole language and different religious practices were a threat.

In 1937, Trujillo ordered the army to kill all "Haitians" living in the northwestern border by the Dajabón River. Over 20,000 were slaughtered.

To combat the deep divisions fostered by the ruling class, a conscious vanguard of the working class in the Dominican Republic will need to be built to lead a political fight against national oppression as part of a struggle to take state power from the capitalist and landowning exploiters.

DHL workers in Cincinnati strike over safety, wages

BY BETSY FARLEY

HEBRON, Ky. — More than 1,100 newly organized DHL Express workers at the delivery company's main U.S. hub here walked out on strike Dec. 7. The airport ramp workers and tug drivers, members of Teamsters Local 100, are fighting for their first contract after voting in the union in April. DHL Express is a highly profitable division of German-based Deutsche Post.

Spirits were high on the picket line the next night as workers told the *Militant* why they fought to organize the

union and are now on strike.

"We go to work every night loading and unloading planes with no lights," said Gina Kemp, who has worked here for four years. "It is pitch black. You can't see anything, even with headlights. A lot of us are young, and safety is a big reason we went for the union."

She described how she had been injured while driving a giant airplane cargo loader. "My entire leg went through a hole in the floor. We brought the K-Loader in for repair, but two days later it was back with nothing fixed."

There were at least 22 emergency workplace injuries at the DHL's Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport hub last year, including broken, crushed, and dislocated limbs, Kenton County Airport Board records show.

The company walked out of contract negotiations after six months of stalling. "The company said, 'See you in January,'" Teamsters representative Nick Prather said. "That was it. Our people walked out on strike."

Workers on the picket line said their fight is also about wages and dignity. Starting pay for ramp and tug workers is as low as \$20 an hour.

Ryan Doyen said he was promoted to manager, "But I quit after seeing the dirty tricks and disregard for workers and their safety. I used to be anti-union, now I'm union all the way!" He became a member of the union's negotiating committee and a leader of the strike.

Doyen took a pay cut to return to an hourly job after he heard other managers refer to themselves as "wardens" that needed to "take back" control of the "inmates."

"When Ryan came over to the union it was a big turning point in the organizing campaign," Kemp said.

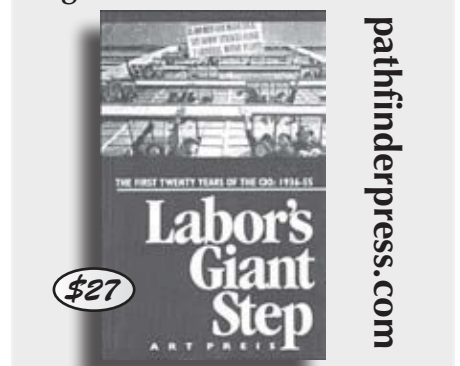
The striking DHL workers need your support! Send messages of solidarity and contributions to Teamsters Local 100, 2100 Oak Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241. If you're in the area, join them on the picket line.



Militant/Betsy Farley

Teamsters members picket at DHL Express in Hebron, Kentucky, Dec. 9. More than 1,100 newly organized workers at DHL's main U.S. hub struck Dec. 7 over safety, wages, dignity.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



pathfinderpress.com

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

‘Washington Post’ workers hold 1-day strike over wages, jobs

WASHINGTON — Over 700 *Washington Post* reporters, editors, copy editors, clerical workers and employees in the paper’s commercial and advertising departments staged a one-day strike Dec. 7. It was the largest labor protest at the company since a bitter strike in 1975-76.

After 18 months contract negotiations between the Washington Post Guild, the union at the paper, and the Jeff Bezos-led management have stalled. The key issues are jobs and wages. “Our salary floor does not pay a living wage in D.C.,” *Post* copy editor Colleen Neely told Fox News. “We deserve better, especially being owned by one of the richest men in the world.”

The bosses say they want to cut 240 jobs — 10% of the workforce. A voluntary buyout package is being offered, along with the threat of layoffs.

A group of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 members joined the noisy protest. “Show your solidarity, because it’s needed,” said Troy Barnes, an organizer for the union, which represents Metro subway and bus operators.

“When the workers unite, we are powerful,” said Antonio Pollard, a veteran of the 2019 Amalgamated Transit Union strike at the Cinder Bed Road in Lorton, Virginia.

— Arlene Rubinstein

UK refuse workers win strike, strengthen their union

WARRINGTON, England — Refuse workers here returned to work Dec. 8 after their two-month-long strike won significant gains. “All 19 temporary workers on nine-month contracts are given permanent contracts, with their new contract backdated to when they started in March, so they have already worked through their probation,” wagon driver and Unite union Branch Secretary Stefan Thorpe told the *Militant*.

The union also won a “dispute resolution” payment and improvements to workers’ pay and conditions. “When

we presented the offer to the pickets, workers started to congratulate one another. We voted unanimously to accept it. The union has been strengthened by this fight,” Thorpe said.

“This result was made possible by the absolute unity of our members,” Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham said in a press release. “By standing together and taking industrial action, they ensured the council made a much-improved offer.”

The Labour Party-dominated Warrington Borough Council went to court to try and force an end to the strike with a court injunction, but the judge declined to do so. This, and the strikers’ determination, forced the council to give in to the union’s demands.

— Hugo Wils



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Workers at *Washington Post* picket Dec. 7 during one-day strike demanding wage raise and against plans by Jeff Bezos-owned paper to cut 240 jobs — 10% of the workforce.

600,000 public workers strike against Quebec gov’t

Continued from front page

care workers from the Interprofessional Health Federation of Quebec (FIQ) will join the other unions on strike for four days beginning Dec. 11.

After all the unions concerned rejected the latest government proposals, Common Front officials announced Dec. 8 that if there is no settlement by Dec. 19, they will launch an indefinite strike at the beginning of January.

“If we have to do it, we will do it,” Danny Guignard, who has worked in a Montreal secondary school for 38 years, told the daily *Le Devoir*.

In contrast to the workers’ demands for a three-year contract featuring wage increases that catch up to inflation, the government proposes a paltry overall 12.7% increase over five years.

“I’ve been teaching for 18 years. Every single round of negotiation has left me poorer in terms of purchasing power,” Robert Green, a history teacher at Westmount High School in Montreal, told the media. “You know, we have never gotten a raise that keeps up with inflation.”

“Things will probably get rough over the next few weeks,” Quebec Premier Francois Legault arrogantly told the

press Dec. 8 after the Common Front threatened an unlimited strike.

“For decades we have failed to improve education and health services, much because of the rigidity of collective agreements,” Legault said, blaming the unions. “It’s not right that our network be managed by unions rather than by managers.”

Legault says he will give more money if the unions show more “flexibility.” What he means “is ripping pages out of our collective agreement,” countered the Common Front.

Winning more solidarity

Over the past weeks, picket lines and demonstrations by government workers have appeared in almost every city and town throughout Quebec. In Montreal, thousands of strikers demonstrated inside the main hall of the World Trade Center to underline the fact that the “Legault government is a government of the rich that governs for the rich,” said Dominique Daigneault, a Common Front leader.

The unions’ strikes and demonstrations are supported by the big majority of working people across Quebec. One expression of this is the response to an

appeal to help FAE strikers in need. The United Steelworkers in Quebec announced Dec. 11 the union is donating \$100,000 in the form of grocery gift cards to the strikers, urging other unions to follow their example.

Stephanie Caron, a French-language secondary school teacher with 22-years seniority, wrote in an open letter printed in the online daily *La Presse* that she along with all the other FAE strikers have had no income since Nov. 23, and many cannot pay their household bills. The FAE has no strike fund.

“A group of teachers has launched a Facebook page so that people can support the teachers in need,” retired school teacher and Common Front member Josette Hurtubise told the *Militant*. In just a few days, 10,000 people signed onto the appeal. “People are donating gift cards for food, health goods and more.”

Strike supporters are organizing additional efforts across the province.

And, despite the hardships on parents and students because of the closure of the schools, there is broad support for the strike movement from parents.

“What I would really hope is that they give them more than what they’re asking for. I mean God knows they deserve it,” Gavin Sewell, parent of an 8-year-old Montreal student, told the *Globe and Mail*.

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



December 28, 1998

We urge all working people to join in campaigning against the murderous, imperial assault Washington has unleashed against the people of Iraq, demanding, “Stop the bombing now! Hands off Iraq! All U.S. troops and inspectors out of the Mideast!”

The Clinton administration’s professed concern over Baghdad’s supposed “weapons of mass destruction” is pure hypocrisy. Washington is the only power ever to use nuclear weapons, killing hundreds of thousands in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The U.S. rulers have used chemical and biological weapons against the peoples of Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and other countries.

On top of the 150,000 Iraqis slaughtered in the Gulf war, Washington is responsible for the deaths of more than 1 million more, as a result of the unrelenting sanctions the U.S. government has spearheaded in the years since.



December 28, 1973

The Militant receives many letters from prisoners all over the country. This week we’re turning the entire letters column over to our prisoner readers. A growing numbers subscribe. Many cannot afford to pay. In such cases we send complimentary subscriptions.

The prisoners are by far the most exploited workers in America. By today’s standards the prisoners have become the new “slaves” of America. Low wages, medium working conditions, poor housing, and inadequate medical care.

Nowhere in America is the pay scale so low and the profit so high. The men are required to work a full 40 hours per week. Hourly wages are from 21 cents to 51 cents — yet each man produces in goods and services \$12,000 per year.

We must have a hand in shaping our destiny. They have tried and failed. We are only asking to be treated as humans.

A prisoner,
Georgia



December 27, 1948

The Truman Administration is drafting a bill to “tighten” the Espionage Act of 1917. It was under the Espionage Act that thousands of anti-war socialists and labor leaders, including Eugene V. Debs, were railroaded to prison in World War I.

The chief revision would eliminate that section which now requires “proof of intention and motive.” This provision is especially designed to regularize and legalize the methods of Truman’s “loyalty” purge and “subversive” blacklist, under which individuals and organizations are accused and victimized without a fair and open hearing, the right to confront and cross examine their accusers or to examine the “evidence” against them.

The Truman Administration also proposes to drastically limit the statute of limitations which now bars prosecution for alleged illegal acts three years after their commission.

Teamster Series

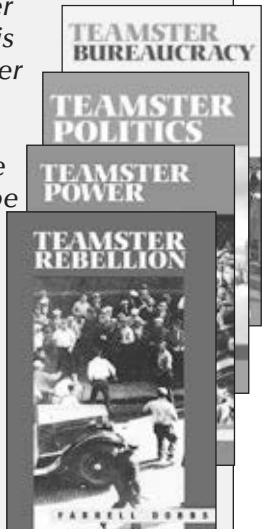
Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s

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.”

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Defeat of Hamas key to protect Israel as refuge

Continued from front page
outfit from carrying out more pogroms, which it has repeatedly promised to do “over and over again.” Hamas and allied Islamic Jihad death squads killed 1,200 people Oct. 7, the vast majority Jews, wounded thousands more, and took 240 children, women and men hostage.

The reactionary bourgeois clerical regime in Iran, Hamas, Lebanon-based Hezbollah and related militia forces in Iraq and Yemen — what Tehran calls its “axis of resistance” — are determined to wipe Israel off the map and kill or drive out the Jews who live there. This is not a war between Israel and Palestinians. It’s a war begun by Tehran, Hamas and their allies against Jews, with big consequences for working people worldwide.

Working people and our unions need to speak out and join actions against Jew-hatred and to defend Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews. As the worldwide capitalist crisis deepens, Jew-hatred will be used by the capitalist rulers to divert attention from the real enemy — their dog-eat-dog profit-driven system.

It’s no secret to anyone in Gaza that Hamas places its command posts and weapon stores in tunnels underneath hospitals, schools, mosques and apartment buildings, using civilians as human shields. Hamas leaders were convinced this would slow down the Israeli response as it has in the past, while getting Palestinian civilians killed that can be claimed as “martyrs” to win sympathy abroad.

The Hamas-run health ministry claims more than 18,000 people in Gaza have died amid the fighting. Israel officials say some 7,000 are Hamas combatants.

Gaza residents speak against Hamas
More and more Gaza residents are losing their fear of Hamas, which has ruled over them with an iron fist since 2007. And they’re stepping forward to lay the blame for the death and destruction squarely on the reactionary Islamist group.

On Dec. 6, an Al Jazeera Live reporter outside Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza began blaming Israel for the crisis there, when an elderly Palestinian woman challenged him. “All the aid goes to the [tunnels] underground,” she said, while a crowd gathered around, all caught on video. “A lot of aid comes in, but it doesn’t reach the people.”

The Al Jazeera reporter tried to per-



Woman tells Al Jazeera reporter in Gaza that “all the aid goes to them [Hamas], to their houses, they take everything.” Israeli army’s blows degrading Hamas open up space for Palestinians in Gaza to speak out.

sue her she was wrong. “It is being distributed,” he said. “This is what they say.”

“All the aid goes to them [Hamas], to their houses, they take everything,” she responded. “They can shoot me, do whatever they want to me.”

The reporter cut her off, turned to the camera and said, “It seems that the situation is unclear.”

Radio Elam, a station based in the West Bank, interviewed Gaza-based journalist Muhammad Mansour. “I have a message for the Hamas government

— go to hell,” Mansour said. “Allah will take revenge on you for the destruction you brought upon us.”

“We were deported from Gaza City to Khan Yunis, and from Khan Yunis to Rafah,” he said, referring to instructions from the Israel Defense Forces for civilians to leave combat zones. “Release these abductees already! Sinwar, Deif, [two central Hamas leaders], and their wicked companions hide underground. We don’t even have access to water!”

Israeli police report that dozens of those killed Oct. 7 were sexually

Students take on Jew-haters at Columbia University



NEW YORK — The actions of so-called pro-Palestine groups worldwide who hail Hamas’ murderous Oct. 7 pogrom as “a new stage in the resistance against Zionism” have sparked a rise in Jew-hatred, highly visible on college campuses. Some university administrations have responded with encouragement for those groups, others with suppression of free speech. Columbia University officials here banned a Dec. 6 “teach-in” titled “Significance of the October 7th Palestinian Counteroffensive,” sponsored by Columbia Social Workers 4 Palestine.

Some Jewish students disagreed with the ban, saying people should hear for themselves the outrageous views the group promotes. In fact, the ban makes these groups look like victims and sets a precedent for campus officials banning any group they don’t like.

Organizers defied the ban and held the event in the School of Social Work lobby. Israeli Ariana Pinsker-Lehrer, above, a graduate student there, told the *Times of Israel* that she went to the event to ensure “these students were forced to hear the Jewish and Israeli voice.”

“To characterize the events of Oct. 7 as a counteroffensive where my people were killed and maimed and yes, raped,” she told the group when she took the floor, “as anything else but terrorism and a massacre is unacceptable.”

Pinsker-Lehrer has been active inside Israel in support of Palestinian rights. “I want Israel to be a better country,” she noted, but “you guys think that you have some right to decide whether Israel has a right to exist or not.”

“There are 14 million people ‘between the river and the sea,’” she said, referring to the Jews, Muslims, Christians and others who live in Israel and the Palestinian territories, “and none of them are going anywhere. We need to find a solution that involves all of them and that is not what you are doing.” Her intervention in the meeting — which got some applause — highlights the opportunities to take on the Jew-haters and defend the right of Israel to exist as a refuge for Jews.

— S.G.



Yemeni Jews arrive at Lod Airport in 1950 after fleeing Yemen due to anti-Jewish persecution.

Nearly half of Israeli Jews trace roots to Arab countries

Continued from front page
Iran — many in communities that had existed for thousands of years. But amid convulsions, pogroms and wars, by 2020 the total Jewish population in these countries had plummeted to only 14,500.

In Tunisia, the Jewish community numbered 105,000 in 1948. Today it’s estimated to be 1,050. Tunisia was the only Arab country that fell under direct German occupation during World War II. That government put Jews in forced labor camps, or subjected them to deportations and executions. Thousands of Jews in the countryside were forced to identify themselves by wearing the Star of David, as Jews in Germany had been.

When the country gained its independence from France in 1956, the new government issued a series of anti-Jewish decrees. Jewish community councils were dissolved and ancient synagogues destroyed. During the Six-Day War with Israel in 1967, Jews in Tunisia were attacked by Arab gangs, businesses burned to the ground and the Great Synagogue of Tunis destroyed. Over 40,000 Jews fled to Israel.

In Libya, the German military occupied the Jewish quarter of Benghazi in 1942. They plundered shops and deported more than 2,000 Jews in a forced march across the desert, where more than one-fifth perished.

After the war Britain gained control of the country, watching over a series of brutal pogroms. In Tripoli in November 1945 more than 140 Jews were massacred and almost every synagogue looted. Another round of bloody riots broke out in June 1948. In 1949 the British rulers legalized Jewish emigration, and more than 30,000 Jews fled the country. There were 38,000 Jews living in Libya in 1948; by 2018 there were none.

In Egypt, where al-Husseini’s allies in the Muslim Brotherhood numbered in the tens of thousands after the imperialist war, bombs were set off in the Jewish quarter of Cairo between June and November 1948, killing more than 70 Jews, wounding nearly 200. Another 200 Jews were arrested and had their property confiscated.

In 1956, after Israel routed Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula, Cairo expelled almost 25,000 Jews and confiscated their property. Another 1,000 were imprisoned. In November that year a government proclamation declared all Jews are “enemies of the state.” Thousands were ordered to leave the country and forced to sign declarations “donating” their property to the Egyptian government. In 1948 there were 75,000 Jews living in Egypt; in 2018, it was 100.

In 1944, after Syria gained independence from France, the new government prohibited Jewish emigration to Palestine, restricted the teaching of Hebrew in Jewish schools and called boycotts against Jewish businesses. The following year Arab forces burned, looted and confiscated Jewish property, and the government froze Jewish bank accounts. Still, there were 30,000 Jews living in Syria in 1948.

Beginning in 1947 reactionary Arab forces in the city of Aleppo devastated the 2,500-year-old Jewish community. Scores of Jews were killed and more than 200 homes, shops and synagogues destroyed. Thousands of Syrian Jews illegally fled as refugees, 5,000 to Israel. Over the next few decades those remaining were stripped of their citizenship, faced constant surveillance by the secret police and barred from getting telephones, driver’s licenses or from buying property.

In 2018 there were an estimated 100 Jews in Syria.

abused, a prominent feature of the anti-Jewish assault. Some were gang raped, many were viciously mutilated. Hamas still holds some 138 hostages, including 20 women and children. Some of these women have been sexually assaulted by the Hamas thugs, hostages that have been freed report.

Liberals demand cease-fire

There is an increasing hue and cry for a cease-fire from supporters of Hamas, some capitalist governments and liberal media around the world, as Israeli forces make gains in Gaza. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in a highly unusual move on his own initiative, called an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council Dec. 8 to vote on a resolution demanding Israel accept a cease-fire. But any serious break in the fighting would just give Hamas time to recover, to murder, torture and rape again.

Washington vetoed the resolution, the only vote against the measure. In one reflection of the shifting alliances resulting from Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and the Hamas pogrom — major watersheds in world politics — the French government voted for the resolution. Britain abstained, but said it would have voted yes if a clause was added that condemned the Oct. 7 pogrom.

The United Nations was set up on the heels of Washington’s emergence from the ashes of the second imperialist world war as the top imperialist power. But today its massive bureaucracy gets pulled in different directions as the capitalist “world order” is coming apart.



Protest at Tulane University, New Orleans, Oct. 26 calls for killing or driving all Jews from the region, destruction of Israel. Defenders of Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews have been challenging Jew-hatred in cities and on college campuses across the U.S.

In Gaza, U.N. aid agencies have long been complicit with Hamas. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine runs over half the schools there. The U.N. is involved in health care and distributes funds to Hamas, as well as some aid to Gazans. Their politics are linked to Hamas. Textbooks used in their schools teach that Zionists are the enemy and that Israel must be destroyed.

The UN Women organization didn’t “unequivocally condemn the brutal attacks by Hamas” until nearly two months after the pogrom. Even that statement starts by criticizing Israel’s military operations in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the actions of President Joseph Biden’s administration continue

to show why Jews and Israel can’t depend on U.S. imperialism. Washington sends weapons to Israel and vetoes some anti-Israel U.N. resolutions, but its goal isn’t to defend Jews. It’s to defend the U.S. rulers’ own economic and political interests, including in the Middle East.

At a Dec. 12 fundraiser for his 2024 election campaign, Biden said Israel “is starting to lose support” because of what he called its “indiscriminate” bombing in Gaza. Administration officials are part of the growing chorus for a stop to the fighting.

But it is only by Israel decisively dismantling Hamas that doors will open wide for both the fight against Jew-hatred and for the rights of the people of Gaza.

FIGHTING JEW-HATRED AND THE WORLD CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

Politics in the Mideast, US & World Today

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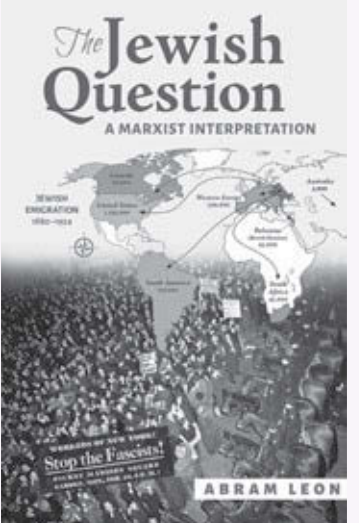
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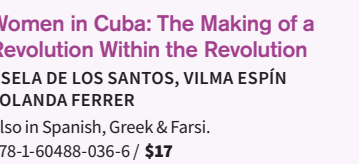
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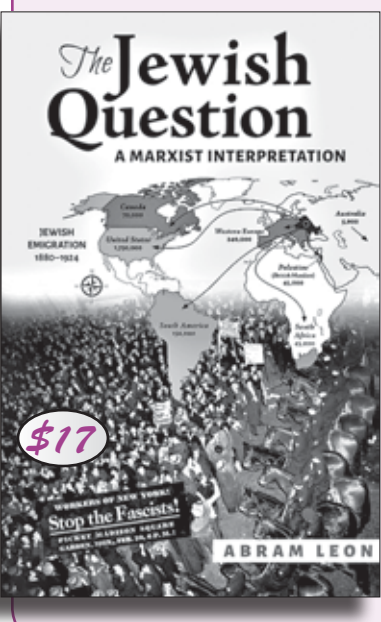
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The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation

by Abram Leon



The Oct. 7 massacre in Israel by Hamas, the largest massacre of Jews in one day since the Holocaust, set off a wave of Jew-hatred around the world.

From antiquity to feudalism, to capitalism’s rise and death throes of imperialism — Jews have been targets of persecution.

Why is Jew-hatred again raising its ugly head? What are its class roots? Why is there “no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to other problems before humanity,” without revolutionary struggles that transform working people as we fight to transform the world?

Abram Leon, aged 26, was killed in October 1944 in the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz.

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In crisis, rulers will turn to fascism, but workers have power to win

The wave of Jew-hatred that came on top of Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel poses a deadly danger both to Jews and to workers everywhere. Jew-hatred will be an indispensable weapon of any fascist movement the bosses unleash in the future. One picture of the real face of looming U.S. fascism comes from one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December, *Notebook of an Agitator* by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party. Below are excerpts from his letters to the *Militant* March 15 and 29, 1954, on the topic of American reaction and the workers movement. Copyright © 1993 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Life/Margaret Bourke-White
Mass rally by Jersey City Mayor Frank Hague, Jan. 6, 1938. Hague's cops barred unions, communists from the city, broke up union meetings. SWP leader James P. Cannon warned that Hague was "an incipient American fascist," and a deadly danger to the working class.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Those who would judge specific American forms of fascism too formalistically by the European pattern, arbitrarily limit capitalist aggression against the workers' movement in two forms:

They see the democratic form by which the workers are suppressed through strictly legal measures in accordance with the law and the Constitution — such as the Taft-Hartley Law, formal indictments and prosecutions for specific violations of existing statutes, etc. All this, despite its obvious "inconvenience" to the workers' movement, is characterized as democratic.

On the other side they see the illegal, unofficial forms of violence practiced by "storm troopers" and similar shirted hooligans outside the forms of law, as in Italy and Germany. This is characterized as fascist.

But what about violence which is technically illegal and unconstitutional, but carried out nevertheless by duly constituted officials clothed with legal authority? What about such things as the breaking up of meetings and picket lines by official police and special deputies; wire tapping; inquisitions; screening and blacklisting of "subversives;" and all the rest of the intimidation and terror of the witchhunt? These procedures don't fit very well into the "democratic" formula, although their chief instruments are legally-constituted officials, supported and incited by press campaigns, radio demagogues, etc.

This kind of illegal violence under the outward forms of law has a distinctive American flavor; and it is especially favored by a section of the ruling class which has very little respect for its own laws, and cares more for practical action than for theories as to how it is to be carried out.

This is, in fact, an important element of the specific form which American fascism will take, as has already been indicated quite convincingly.

The depredations of Mayor [Frank] Hague, who announced that "I am the law," were a manifestation of this ten-

dency back in the late Thirties. [Leon] Trotsky, by the way, considered Hague an American fascist. He described his unconstitutional assaults on free speech and free assembly, through the medium of *official police*, as a manifestation of incipient American fascism. I think he was right about that. If the workers stand around and wait until the labor movement is attacked directly by unofficial shirted hooligans, before they recognize the approach of American fascism, they may find their organizations broken up "legally" while they are waiting.

The truth of the matter is that American fascism, *in its own specific form*, has already a considerable army of *storm troopers* at its disposal in the persons of lawless prosecuting attorneys and official policemen who don't give a damn what the Constitution says. Incipient American fascism — already, right now — has a press and radio-television power which makes Hitler's *Angriff* look like a throwaway sheet. It has political demagogues, like [Joseph] McCarthy, who are different from Hitler mainly in the fact that they are clothed with official legal powers and immunity, while Hitler had to build up an independent, unofficial and at times persecuted movement without any direct support from the established press, etc.

"McCarthy is different," say the formalistic wisecracks, as if that were a help and a consolation. He is indeed different in several ways. But the most

important difference is that *he starts* with a great power behind him, and operates with formal legal sanction and immunity. The right comparison to make is not of the McCarthy of today with Hitler on the verge of taking power in 1932, but rather with Hitler in the middle Twenties. The main difference we find in this comparison is that McCarthy is way ahead of Hitler. ...

Neither is it correct to look now for the appearance of genuine American fascism in lunatic fringe outfits such as the Silver Shirts, Gerald Smith, etc. A powerful section of the American bourgeoisie, with unlimited means at their disposal are *already fascist-minded*; and they have a big foot in the Government, national and local. They feel no need at present of unofficial movements. ...

It is far more correct, far more realistic, to see the incipient stage of American fascism in the conglomeration of "official" marauders represented by McCarthy than outside it.



The character of a party is not indicated by what it sees and points out but rather by what it does about it. To accuse the SWP of "sounding the alarm on the fascist danger in the U.S." is only to pay to the Party the indirect and unintended compliment of saying that it calls for a struggle against the danger. ...

To sound the alarm against the danger of fascism in the United States — and to state frankly that its victory is possible — is by no means to be taken as an admission that fascism is already in power, or close to it. Neither is it to be taken as a prophecy that fascism is destined to conquer eventually.

That will be decided in the struggle. The aim of our campaign is to "alarm" the labor movement to the reality of the danger and, from that, to the necessity of organizing the struggle on the right basis while there is yet time. The workers still have time to organize the counter-movement, but don't have forever. ...

Power is on the side of the workers, and all the chances of victory are in their favor. But they will never gain the victory without the most resolute struggle. The first prerequisite for that is an understanding of the irreconcilable nature of the struggle and what it's all about. The fate of America, and thereby of all mankind — that's what it's all about.

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Greetings to fellow workers behind bars!

Greetings to fellow workers behind bars!

No matter what side of prison walls workers find themselves on, the *Militant* provides unmatched news on labor and other struggles, presents a program for the emancipation of the working class and tells the truth about the rulers' brutal "justice" system.

Over 1.8 million people are incarcerated in the U.S., one of the highest rates in the world. A further 2.9 million are on probation and more than 800,000 on parole.

Most workers end up in prison without ever having a trial. Prosecutors pile on charges threatening ever-longer sentences, to pressure people to cop a plea. Some 98% of criminal cases in federal courts end with a "guilty" plea, making a mockery of the Constitution.

Under capitalism, cops, courts and prisons function to protect the wealth, property and power of the ruling rich and dispense punishment, to intimidate working people and keep us in line. They're organized to break down solidarity and demoralize workers, and to serve as a warning to millions more to accept the dictates of the bosses and their governments, or else.

From the executioner's chair to solitary confinement, the capitalist prison system functions on "cruel and unusual punishment" — another unconstitutional assault on the rights of all working people.

The *Militant* will continue to spread the word about prisoners' struggles, from recent gains in the fight for the right to vote by former felons in Florida and Mississippi to actions this summer by prisoners in Min-

nesota taking on extended lockdowns in extreme heat.

The *Militant* gives voice to political prisoners, like those caught up in Vladimir Putin's Russian Gulag for the "crime" of speaking out against his invasion of Ukraine. The paper spoke out in defense of former Black Panther Party leader Ed Poindexter, framed up and imprisoned in Nebraska for 53 years for his political activities. Authorities let Poindexter die in prison, despite a campaign for compassionate release as he suffered from advanced kidney disease.

We will continue to challenge every attempt by prison authorities to ban the *Militant*. We have a long and proud record winning these fights, defending the rights of workers behind bars to be part of politics.

We offer reduced rate or free subscriptions to prisoners who need them. We advertise books that Pathfinder Press makes available to inmates at reduced prices, written by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionaries. This includes works by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Fidel Castro, Thomas Sankara and more. These books help readers understand the roots of today's capitalist crisis and wars, and present a working-class road forward.

Today the *Militant* has its largest readership behind bars in decades. We ask you to bring the paper to the attention of fellow prisoners and to your family and friends. And we ask readers of the paper to contribute generously to the Militant Prisoners' Fund to help make these subscriptions possible.

Constitutional freedoms crucial for working class

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The criminal and civil cases against Trump — set for trial in Florida, Georgia, New York and Washington, D.C. — also target free speech and other constitutional protections the working class has a big stake in safeguarding.

More workers are using these rights to discuss what we can do to defend ourselves today. Workers are being drawn into politics in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre of Jews in Israel and Moscow's bloody attempt to conquer Ukraine. More of us are using unions to fight against the worsening wages and working conditions we face as a result of today's deepening crisis of capitalism. Union and working-class political activity requires fervent defense of constitutional freedoms.

New wrinkle: 'Fake elector' cases

In addition to the prosecutions against Trump, Democrats have begun filing cases against his supporters. They've been brought to trial in Georgia, Michigan and Nevada on criminal charges of being "fake electors." Six so-called fake electors were hit with felony charges by Nevada Democratic Party Attorney General Aaron Ford Dec. 6.

Each state government prepares two certificates to present to Congress after a presidential election, one confirming the electors pledged to the winning candidate and one by those electors confirming the result of the vote.

Because he was challenging Biden victories in some states, Trump supporters there selected their own electors, ready to serve if the challenges were successful. They were up against the deadline for submitting the voting certificates, which is in mid-December. When Trump's challenges failed in court, his elector lists became irrelevant. Congress accepted the Biden electors. There was no victim and there was no crime.

Each of the "fake electors" criminal cases is aimed at bolstering the central legal case Democrats have brought against Trump by the Justice Department's special counsel, Jack Smith in Washington, D.C. Trump is charged with conspiracy to defraud the U.S. by challenging the election results.

Smith filed new "evidence" Dec. 5. It says that remarks made by Trump in 2012 and 2016 claiming that voting scams marked those elections "demonstrate the defendant's common plan of falsely blaming fraud for election results he does not like."

But Trump won in 2016, and he wasn't a candidate in 2012. The sole goal of this new "evidence" is to prejudice the overwhelmingly Democratic

jury pool in D.C. against Trump.

On Dec. 1 U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan rejected a motion by Trump that Smith's case be thrown out. His lawyers appealed her ruling to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, arguing that Trump is immune from prosecution because he was the president and everything he did involved exercising his presidential duties. They also said he cannot face unconstitutional "double jeopardy" charges because the same charges in this case had been rejected when the Senate threw out Trump's impeachment in 2021.

Smith is desperate to avoid any delay to the trial, currently set to begin March 4, just one day before the Super Tuesday primary elections. On Dec. 11 he filed a special motion with the U.S. Supreme Court, asking them to take jurisdiction of Trump's appeal out of the hands of the appeals court and consider it themselves on an expedited basis. The high court gave Trump until Dec. 20 to respond. On Dec. 13 Chutkan put a temporary halt to all trial proceedings until the high court makes a ruling, but said her gag order on Trump stays in place.

Trump's 2024 campaign committee issued the following statement, "As President Trump has said over and over again, this prosecution is completely politically motivated. There is absolutely no reason to rush this sham to trial except to injure President Trump and tens of millions of his supporters."

New levels of invective

As Democrats' moves to bump Trump from the ballot face difficulties, their invective against the former president gets more extreme. Biden called Trump a fascist Nov. 15, saying he "echoes language you heard in Nazi Germany in the 1930s."

"A Trump dictatorship is increasingly inevitable," screamed a headline in the Nov. 30 *Washington Post*, trying to justify Democrats' relentless assault on political rights. "When a marauder is crashing through your home, you throw everything you can at him," columnist Robert Kagan wrote. "Obstruct his path back to the Oval Office."

But Trump is no more a "tyrant" than Biden or any other capitalist politician. All of them — Democrat and Republican alike — seek to defend the profit-driven rule of the capitalist class.

The assaults on constitutional protections led today by Democrats will be carried out with even greater ferocity against the working class as we take steps to defend our own class interests against the bosses and their government.

'Bring our boys home!'



The Way Home

Relatives of conscripts demand their return, Moscow, Nov. 7.

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amendments passed in 2020 that lengthened the time he could remain in office.

His regime and its wars are increasingly unpopular across Russia. Although anti-war demonstrations are banned, a protest took place in Moscow Nov. 7 demanding troops currently stationed in Ukraine be rotated home. It was called by The Way Home, a group of soldiers' mothers and wives. It was held at the edge of a larger legal rally of several hundred on a different issue called by the Communist Party.

Relatives of some 20 soldiers joined the action. They held placards that read, "The mobilized are not robots. They need replacement," and "Give the children back their fathers."

Police led them away but didn't detain them.

The Communist Party rally marked the anniversary of the Bolshevik-led 1917 Russian Revolution. But the party today has no connection to V.I. Lenin or the Bolshevik Revolution. It's a pale remnant of the counter-revolutionary regime of Joseph Stalin.

At the protest, Nadezhda, a soldier's wife, told the *Novaya Gazeta*, "The Ministry of Defense had said the priority for 2023 was to recruit 522,000 people into the army, so at the end of last year we thought our men would be given leave at the New Year and we calmed down." But since this September officials have been saying, "They would be there until the end of the special military operation." There is no end in sight.

"Putin should announce," she said, that he "is starting the planned replacement of conscripts."

Kremlin moves to intimidate protesters

Regional governors have been instructed by the Kremlin to prevent actions by The Way Home from spreading in the run-up to the March presidential election. Maria Andreyeva, a member of the group, told the press that army officers had threatened their husbands with worse conditions on the front lines if these demonstrations continue.

The Way Home issued an appeal Nov. 27 inviting others to sign an online petition to show support for its aims. The appeal was addressed to the "Multi-national people of Russia!" Pointing at the Putin regime, it says the Russian people are being "betrayed and exterminated by our own."

The appeal points out that reservists mobilized in the last call-up are made to stay at the front indefinitely, compared to convicted criminals who are promised freedom if they sign up and fight for six months.

The group says it expresses no political view about the Russian rulers' invasion of Ukraine, but "will support whoever brings us our husbands back. Servicemen and their families — unite and fight for your rights. Together we are strong!"

Moscow City Duma Deputy Yevgeny Stupin backs their appeals. He was expelled from the Communist Party for criticizing the Putin regime, which later declared him a "foreign agent."

The government will not send soldiers home because "the front could collapse," Stupin said. Troop rotation would require a second, even more unpopular mobilization. The call-up of reservists last year triggered protests by thousands.

"Protests are put down harshly. Not everyone is ready to come out onto the streets. Conscripts' relatives are no exception," Stupin said. "But the movement will grow."

The Way Home is planning more protests across Russia and a demonstration in Moscow Dec. 16.