

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The sculptor, the Masks of Sorrow and Stalin's Gulag

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 38 OCTOBER 14, 2024

## Devastation by Helene is a product of capitalist rule

BY STEVE WARSHHELL

MIAMI — As daylight broke Sept. 27, Floridians in the Big Bend area around Tampa awoke to devastation wrought by Hurricane Helene, a Category 4 storm. With water levels surging 15 feet above ground level, it hit Steinhatchee and other coastal towns. The storm dropped 16 inches of rain in the Apalachicola area,

**Cuban Revolution shows how to beat hurricanes**

— see page 12

and 40 trillion gallons of water overall, and left 838,000 homes and businesses across Florida without power.

Similar destruction affected much of the Southeast, from here to North Carolina. As of Oct. 1, over 150 people are known dead. Volunteers — in each area and from farther away — organized to help, especially where governments

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## Back people of Israel in a war against Jew-hatred

BY SETH GALINSKY

Over the last few weeks Israeli forces have decimated the leadership of Tehran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon, killing its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah; destroying thousands of its rocket launchers; disrupting much of its communication systems; and began pushing it out of the southern part of the country.

These blows advance the fight to defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews and the fight against Jew-hatred worldwide. It has also deepened demoralization of supporters of Tehran, Hamas and their "axis of resistance."

In retaliation the Iranian rulers fired 180 ballistic missiles at Israel Oct. 1, but the reactionary regime in Tehran is responding from a position of weakness. It faces widespread opposition by workers and oppressed nationalities at home to its military adventures abroad.

Israeli air defenses shot down most of the projectiles — with some help from the U.S. military. Some of the missiles made it through. A Palestinian in the

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## 'Build solidarity with Boeing, port strikers!'

'Workers need to build a party of labor to fight for political power!'  
— Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president, left, joins picket by postal workers in Eagan, Minnesota, part of nationwide day of protests by American Postal Workers Union Oct. 1.

### Richter: 'Workers, farmers have common interests'

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — "I have a straightforward, realistic program — workers in our millions should take power into our hands," Dennis Richter, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, told 32 people at a Militant Labor Forum here Sept. 28.

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### Fruit: 'Two strikes on the front line of class struggle'

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

UNION CITY, N.J. — "Fuel prices are so high that truckers see little income and farmers get even less from what they produce," Paul de Leon, a truck driver from Elizabeth told Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, as she cam-

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Militant/Laura Anderson

Hundreds of International Longshoremen's Association workers picket at Port of Miami Oct. 2 as 45,000 dockworkers strike at 36 U.S. ports from Maine to Texas for first time in decades.

## Back dockworkers strike! East, Gulf Coast ports shut

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Some 45,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association went on strike Oct. 1, shutting down three dozen ports from Maine to Texas. It's the union's first strike since 1977. Forty percent of U.S. imports come through these ports.

Like tens of thousands of other workers, dockworkers are fighting for

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## Boeing strike is a battle for the whole working class

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

RENTON, Wash. — "Solidarity really works," David Forsythe, a retired engineer at Boeing, told the Militant on the picket line here Sept. 27. "This is one of those rare instances in life when you have a chance to do the right thing."

Along with other members of the Society of Professional Engineering

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## Working people face challenge of sky-high child care costs

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Government officials, the Kamala Harris election campaign and the liberal big-business media repeatedly claim inflation is a thing of the past. All is well. However, working-class families still face crippling high prices for necessities like food, gas, housing, health care and just about everything else. Especially exorbitant is the cost of child care.

Neither the capitalist rulers nor their main political parties, the Democrats and Republicans, have any answers

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## Step up the fight against ban on the 'Militant' in Florida prison

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"Amnesty International USA is once again calling on the Literature Review Committee to overturn the impoundment decision by Jackson

Correctional Institution authorities of the Vol. 88, No. 17 issue of the Militant," Justin Mazzola, deputy director of research, wrote on behalf of the organization in a letter sent Sept. 30.

Like dozens of other groups and individuals, Amnesty sent a letter months ago to the Florida Department of Corrections committee calling for them to reverse the ban by prison of-

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Nurses in Sydney press fight for wage increase, more staff

# Hurricane Helene devastation

Continued from front page  
we were unprepared and slow to respond, including veterans of the Cajun Navy from Louisiana.

The full extent of the catastrophe won't be known for some time, but, as always, working people were hit the hardest.

"Helene's timing wouldn't be good anytime, but now is awful," wrote Brad Haire in the *Southeast Farm Press*, describing the serious predicament facing farmers.

Going into the storm, an estimated 65% to 75% of the region's cotton bolls were open and exposed. Farmers rushed to try to pick what they could, but under 10% had been harvested, he said. Before the storm, the crop looked promising, now it looks like a near total loss.

"The farmer loses all costs up to harvest and may even lose harvesting, packing and marketing costs," Karl Butts, a vegetable farmer in Plant City, Florida, near Tampa, an area hard hit, told the *Militant*.

"Many crops are all vulnerable to flood and high wind conditions and row crops at harvest stage have full canopies and fruit load and are susceptible to damage making them impossible to harvest," he said. "Mature fields that are under flooded conditions for 24 to 48 hours are toast."

"It's easy to understate the actual impact on farmers, including destruction and damage to equipment, out-buildings, homes, loss of power to coolers, washing out of farm roads, furrowing out fields and water control structures. It's a lot more than just lost income," Butts explained.

"With the high costs of production, a farmer must have everything

go right to make anything. But Helene isn't just about losing a crop, it's about losing everything."

## Steinhatchee, North Miami

Amid the devastation in the town of Steinhatchee in Taylor County, the *Palm Beach Post* reported how Crystal Mroz, manager of Maddie's Market, a local convenience store, came to the aid of her neighbors. As she and a half dozen others opened the shop's doors after the storm, they saw a shambles of potato chips, beer cans, cans of food and coffee that had spilled from the shelves. Mud covered the floor.

People were largely left on their own to cope with the disaster. Working-class solidarity was crucial.

"It's free for all — take everything," Mroz told people in the storm-ravaged community. "Anything and everything is yours. Just be careful walking around, please."

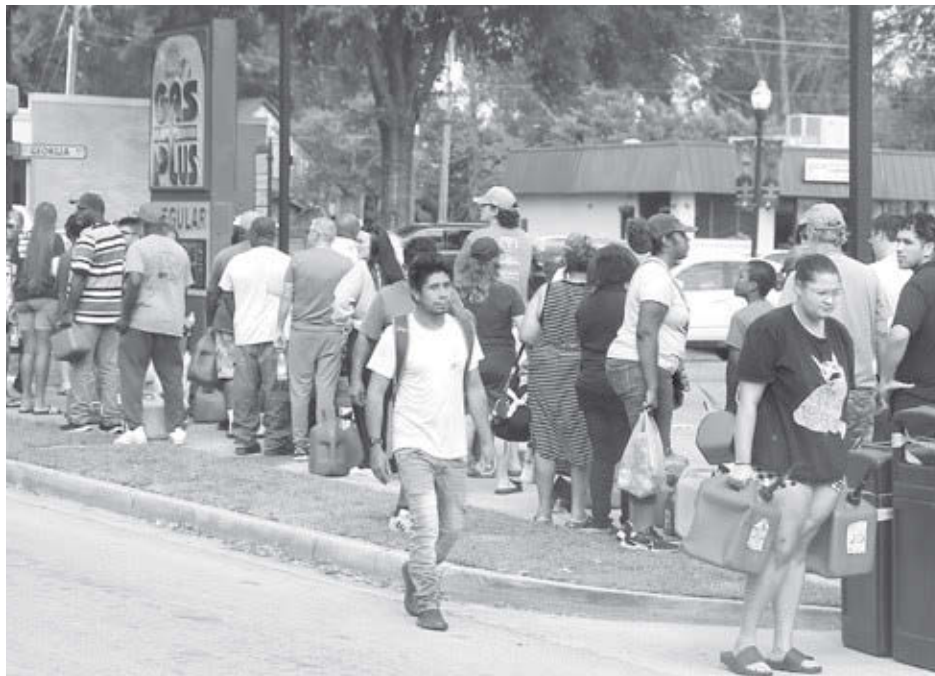
In the heavily wooded, working-class area of North Miami, even the relatively modest tropical-storm-force winds and rain were enough to cause life-changing damage to residents.

Johnny Ramirez, a truck driver, stepped outside his rented three-room bungalow to find a 75-foot-tall tree felled across his driveway and into part of the street.

"I told the landlord that the tree had to be trimmed, but he paid no attention. It took a hurricane for the whole neighborhood to see it was rotten and termite infested."

The landlord cut the tree but left the trunk and branches for Ramirez and his neighbors to contend with. They worked together to help each other.

"Lucky thing for us that a neighbor



AP Photo/Artie Walker Jr.

Facing social crisis after Hurricane Helene, working people line up for gas Sept. 29 in North Augusta, South Carolina. Workers, farmers are hit hardest by lack of government preparation.

has a truck," Ramirez told the *Militant*. "He and his sons went around with a chain saw taking care of the damaged trees and hauling them off to the city incinerator. We would have had all kinds of problems if they didn't show up to help."

## North Carolina hardest hit

One of the hardest-hit areas in the region was the western hill country in North Carolina. In Asheville, "the ground disappeared on South Tunnel Road, leaving a giant sinkhole full of asphalt soup, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* reported. "Houses floated away. Bridges crumbled.

"The flood waters flipped semi-trucks into mangled piles." Water supplies, electricity, wifi and cell service were cut off.

"At the beginning it was all fun and games, just watching the water be where it was," Syd Yatteau in nearby Swannanoa told the paper. "And then it just kept going up."

Roads were cut off. In Swannanoa, helicopters were used to drop food from overhead to a church and a Harley-Davidson shop for distribution.

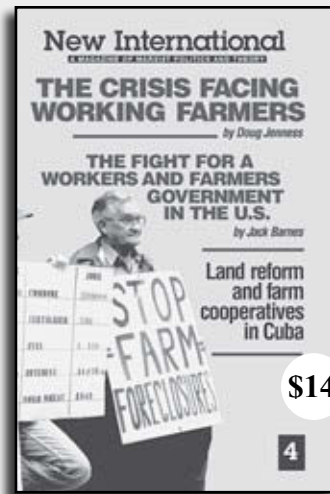
People gathered wherever they could find a signal to use their phones to contact others. They wanted to let friends and relatives know they were OK, and to try and reach others to find out how they were. They would say, "Are you OK? Do you have food? Can I help you?"

With banks closed and electricity down, meaning no access to ATM machines, many were running out of money. People who could would cook food and give it away. Jason Razillard handed out baked goods and coffee from the back of his van near the Riverlink Bridge overlooking the flooded River Arts District.

The city's water supply infrastructure is badly damaged. People here say they're looking at weeks or months before it can return to service.

## New International no. 4

Includes "The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government" by Jack Barnes



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# THE MILITANT

## Pathfinder titles for blind, low vision readers

Pathfinder Press, with titles available in Braille and large print through [Bookshare.org](http://Bookshare.org), was welcomed at the National Federation of the Blind convention in Orlando, Florida. Participants discussed growing labor resistance, fight against Jew-hatred.



Militant/Ned Measel

Pathfinder booth at 2024 National Federation of Blind convention in Orlando, Florida.

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

# Battle for whole working class

Continued from front page

Employees in Aerospace, Forsythe has joined picket lines set up by the 33,000 Machinists at Boeing aerospace facilities around Seattle to show support to the striking workers.

Members of the International Association of Machinists District 751 and W24, who work at Boeing facilities in Washington state, Gresham, Oregon, and Southern California, walked off the job Sept. 13, after rejecting a tentative agreement and voting in favor of a strike by 96%.

A barrage of honking, and emphatic cheers from passersby, including joggers and bicyclists, have boosted the picket line. One driver rolled down the car window to tell strikers, “You guys should get what you’re asking for.”

At the IAM Local 751 hall in Renton Sept. 27 there were rows and rows of tables full of donated food and other items. A member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers came by with a large stack of trays for making sandwiches. A pile of firewood and stumps were outside, ready to be cut for burn barrels to keep strikers warm. A couple of workers showed up with a large flat-bed truck loaded with more firewood.

A picket line has been set up near the rail yard, dock and spur track into Boeing’s Everett plant. Before the strike, rail cars carrying airplane parts were brought there by train and barge. Now the picket line has stopped deliveries to the struck facility.

“We are fighting for a 40% wage increase over a four-year contract, and less time to reach full pay,” Kelsey Eagan, who has worked at Boeing for two years, told the *Militant*. “We are fighting for reinstatement of the pension. That one sounds like it could be a really big fight.”

Workers are determined to win back concessions made in past years under the pressure of bosses’ threats to take production out of Washington state.

## Boeing fails to bypass union

At Boeing’s Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville, California, John, one of the striking workers, told the *Militant* Sept. 25 that “Boeing didn’t give any more in the latest contract offer. They took from retirement to shift an extra 5% onto the wage increase, like a pea and shell game. People are so angry they didn’t tell the union. The company leaked it to the *Seattle Times* first, then put it on the Boeing website trying to circumvent the union.”

The union refused to vote on the offer. The IAM points out that union members only received wage increases of 8% over the last decade, during a time of steep price rises.

Boeing’s latest offer “looks like it’s disrespectful,” Kelly Pham, a SPEEA union engineer at Boeing in Everett, said. She joined the Renton picket line to show support for her striking co-workers.

“I know people who are living in their cars. They start you at \$14 or \$16 an hour,” Valorey Pham, Kelly’s mother, said. She’s been working at Boeing for over a year as a mechanic.

She pointed to the company’s latest offer. “Boeing was hoping we’re not going to read it — it’s like 300 pag-

es!” she said.

Boeing is refusing to discuss pensions. In a Sept. 27 statement, the union said, “The company remains adamant that it will not unfreeze the defined benefit plan.” The statement says that Boeing is not willing to engage in serious talks about other issues that workers have made clear are top priorities, like higher wages, quicker progression to the top wage rate and more personal time off.

Donations are coming in to the union’s fund. More help is needed! Join the picket lines! Contribute at [www.iam751.org/strike2024/](http://www.iam751.org/strike2024/)

Bernie Senter in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

## Back dockworkers strike! East, Gulf Coast ports shut

Continued from front page

a union contract that includes wage increases to offset today’s high prices, defend safety on the job and protect jobs under threat from increased automation.

The United States Maritime Alliance, the employers’ group representing nearly 200 businesses, has refused to negotiate seriously, pinning its hopes on the White House and calling for the administration to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act. That notoriously anti-labor law allows the president to force workers to return to work for an 80-day “cooling off” period. So far that hasn’t happened.

Despite headlines in the big-business media claiming dockworkers already make huge salaries, starting pay for dockworkers under the current contract is \$20 an hour. After six years the pay can go up to \$39 an hour, if you can get in enough hours to progress.

But if you don’t get enough hours, the salary doesn’t go up no matter how long you’ve worked, Mark Bass, president of ILA Local 1410 and the strike coordinator at the Port of Mobile in Alabama, told the *Militant*. “There are people who’ve worked even 12 years who aren’t yet at top pay.”

He said longshoremen often miss out on family time due to work schedules and are expected to be on call 24/7. “A ship can arrive midafternoon and workers will work on it until it’s unloaded, which can be many hours, even into the next day,” he said, “working under all weather conditions, in rain, sleet or even snow. On the other hand, when ships are not in port, we don’t get work.

“Safety is a big concern for the union,” he said. “The USMX is installing more and more automation, without regard for safety factors, without care for the human beings who work there.”

Tents are set up by ILA locals from all over Texas at the docks outside Houston. Pickets carried signs saying “No work without a fair contract” and “Fight automation, save jobs: ILA demands job security.”

The picket line was over 300 strong at the Bayport Container Terminal in Pasadena, Texas, Oct. 2. Car drivers and truckers passing by honked in support. Rick Johnson, a member of ILA Local 1351 that organizes clerks and checkers who verify cargo at the nearby Barbour’s Cut Container Terminal, told the *Militant* that the number of clerks at the gates has been cut from 30 to 2. “They are using automated scanners and eliminated these jobs.”



Picket line outside Boeing plant in Everett, Washington, Sept. 30. Honks and cheers greeted the striking Machinists. “You guys should get what you’re asking for,” one driver shouted.

Jack Pennington, president of ILA Local 28 who works as a welder at the Bayport Terminal, told the *Militant* workers used to monitor temperatures on refrigeration units. Now it’s done by a remote system. One unit with plasma was supposed to be kept at 28 degrees below zero, he said, but the temperature went up, no alarm went off and the plasma had to be thrown out.

Tim Harris, the ILA vice president of the South Gulf Coast District, told the *Militant*, “We are asking for more money, but money makes no difference if there are no jobs.”

In Miami, Eugene Dixon, the president of ILA Local 1416, pointed to the fights by rail workers and the successful strike by 17,000 members of the Communications Workers of America in nine states across the Southeast. “This is the right time to fight,” he said.

A delegation from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which organizes dockworkers on the West Coast, joined thousands of ILA members and supporters on picket lines outside the Maher Terminals in Port Elizabeth, New Jersey, Oct. 1.

“When we fight, we win,” said Bobby Olvera Jr., president of the ILWU, telling the crowd that the ILWU from Alaska to San Diego, British Columbia and Hawaii stood with the ILA.

A growing number of international unions have announced their support for the strike. “We and our brothers and sisters in the ILA are fighting the same fight,” a statement by the SMART-TD rail union says. “By supporting our Longshoremen brothers and sisters, we not only advocate for their rights but also ensure the stability and integrity of our own industry.”

And the statement reminds members, “You are not obliged to cross a picket line.”

## Postal workers rally across the US

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Chants of “Union proud, say it loud!” marked the American Postal Workers Union national day of action held in 90 cities across the U.S. Oct. 1.

“The bosses want more productivity out of less people. One person is doing the job of two or three,” Assad Conley, a clerk at the San Bernardino, California, facility for 12 years and vice president of APWU Local 4635, told the *Militant*. This issue was uppermost for many protesting

The Teamsters issued a statement of support, and Sean O’Brien, the union’s president, joined the ILA picket line on the Boston docks Oct. 1. “The U.S. government should stay the f\*\*k out of this fight,” the Teamsters said, adding, “Don’t forget — Teamsters do not cross picket lines.”

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA also backs the strike. “Solidarity with the ILA workers fighting corporate greed to get the contract they deserve!” they said. “Their fight is our fight.” These flight attendants continue efforts to organize workers at Delta Airlines, organizing a rally at Delta headquarters in Atlanta Oct. 3.

## Boss press smears the ILA

The bosses have worked overtime to slander these workers and their union. As union pickets were being set up on the first day of the strike, the *New York Post* wrote that ILA President Harold Daggett “lived in luxury, owning a yacht and driving a Bentley — and fought off alleged ties to the Mafia.” That “Dude had more yachts than me!” Elon Musk posted on X.

The *Post* article dredged up two 2005 Justice Department cases that charged Daggett with being an “associate” in the mafia. He was acquitted in both.

Over decades Daggett and the ILA have fought to expose the New York-New Jersey Waterfront Commission as a union-busting outfit. He called the commission’s accusations of mob ties total fabrications and a “dark, ugly attack on Italian Americans.”

This strike will be a battle. Build solidarity! Join a picket line. Help get out the word!

Susan LaMont in Atlanta, Alyson Kennedy in Houston and Laura Anderson in Miami contributed to this article.

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# 'Interests of workers, farmers'

Continued from front page

Earlier Richter had brought solidarity to the picket lines of striking glassworkers at Prelco, during his four-day tour here. He was joined at the forum by Sylvain Nelson and one other striker, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions.

"The employer offered us a 10% increase in a six-year contract," Nelson told the meeting. "With inflation, that is not enough."

When workers voted for a five-day strike, "the employer began sending material to their other factories. In the face of that, we walked out. One hour afterward we were locked out. Our demand is for 21% in a four-year contract."

"They got a court injunction limiting the number of pickets. We have received a whole pile of warnings." But the glassworkers have also received solidarity from other unions, he said. Richter pointed to some one-dozen teachers, members of the Autonomous Federation of Education, who joined the glassworkers' picket line to show their solidarity.

Richter also attended a union barbecue organized by the strikers. He was invited to speak there. The number of union fights going on today, he said, underlines the fact that the low point of labor resistance is behind us. "The fight for a party of labor that will lead the fight for workers power begins today with building solidarity."

Teodora Asare, an Ontario school support worker and member of the Canadi-

an Union of Public Employees, attended the forum. She was part of the two-day strike by CUPE members in 2022 that defied the Ontario government, forcing it to withdraw a law banning their action. The Ontario labor movement planned to have a province-wide walkout unless the government backed down.

Asare offered encouragement to the Prelco strikers. "Don't give in, be strong," she said. "With our two-day strike, they really backed off and gave us what we deserved."

"The Ontario government brought in Bill 124 that froze our wages for three years," she said. But with labor movement support, the workers won their fight, getting a better contract and forcing Ontario Premier Doug Ford to withdraw plans to fine them for every day they were on strike.

"So I say don't back off!" Asare said.

"The workers in Ontario stood their ground," Richter said. "Any time we decide to fight we will not get a fair hearing in the courts. They will try to stop workers from picketing. Only with numbers and solidarity can we resist. But workers can do it. That is how the Teamsters union was built in the 1930s in the Midwest," he said, pointing to the class-struggle leadership that led the strikes and organizing drives bringing hundreds of thousands into the union.

## Crisis facing working farmers

During the meeting, Josette Hurtubise, a retired schoolteacher who had



Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for vice president, speaks at union barbecue of striking Prelco glassworkers, members of Confederation of National Trade Unions, in Montreal, Sept. 27.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

taken part in actions around the strike in Ontario, described a recent discussion she had with a grain farmer.

Farmers "have no control over prices," Hurtubise said. "This farmer got a call from the Port of Montreal. They said there is a drought in Brazil. It is the time to sell. They said the price is set by the Chicago Stock Exchange which sets the world price, is that true?"

Richter said what she described is similar to the conditions facing working farmers in the U.S. "Farming is class divided," he said. "There are big farmers and those who don't have much land. Government subsidies go to the big farmers. It is true that the Chicago Board of Trade sets commodity prices."

"Technology exists today that makes it possible for us to do away with hunger," the SWP candidate said. "I recently went by a John Deere dealership in my hometown, Glencoe, in Minnesota. They sell planters that can plant 37 rows at a time. One person can plant thousands of acres by themselves."

"But as long as food is a commodity there will be a crisis of overproduction," he said. "If the large capitalist farmers don't get the price they want, they will take thousands of acres out of production to keep the price up."

"Working farmers produce food needed by working people and need enough income to live on," Richter said. "The SWP calls for immediate government aid that allows small farmers to cover their costs of production and for no foreclosures so they can continue farming. The land needs to be nationalized to prevent the banks from seizing it, and to guarantee family farmers never lose their land."

"The fight for this can bring workers and farmers, both producers, together in the fight to bring working people to power."

## Join SWP fall drive to expand reach of 'Militant,' books

BY JOHN STUDER

Efforts by members of the Socialist Workers Party are underway to maximize the reach of the presidential campaign of Rachele Fruit for president and Dennis Richter for vice president, win hundreds of new readers to the *Militant*, sell 1,300 books by party leaders and other revolutionaries, and raise \$140,000 to further the party's work. Anyone who wants to join us is welcome — contact the party campaign headquarters nearest you listed on page 11!

The first week of the campaign was marked by the twin strike battles at Boeing and on the docks, as well as nationwide protests by postal workers. Everywhere fighting workers welcomed the *Militant's* coverage and support for their battles. Many were attracted to the paper's coverage of today's labor struggles, the fight to defend Israel as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms, Ukrainian workers' battle to defend their national sovereignty, and the party's presidential campaign.

Laura Anderson reports from Miami that campaigners got a warm welcome from many of the 60 postal workers picketing the main post office there Oct. 1. Some said they remember the paper from delivering it to subscribers. Two got subscriptions and six others got the latest issue.

At Atlanta's main post office, three pickets got subscriptions, and one bought *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs and *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

Every ILA local in Texas turned out



Militant/Kaitlin Estill

James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Washington, D.C., delegate to Congress, speaks at rally at northeast D.C. post office of postal workers union fighting for a new contract.

for a picket of several hundred Oct. 2 at the Seabrook Bayport Terminal outside Houston, Alyson Kennedy reported. The local president of ILA Local 1504 from a warehouse in Galveston got a six-month subscription to the *Militant*, as well as *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. Both were for his local, which has a substantial Black membership.

At an ILA action the day before, two introductory subscriptions were sold to union members and two for six months to ILA locals. One worker got the Spanish edition of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*, also by Barnes.

Socialist Workers Party candidates were invited to speak at a number of strike actions. Dennis Richter, the party's candidate for vice president, spoke

at a barbecue organized by striking Prelco workers in Montreal. And James Harris, the SWP candidate for Congress in Washington, D.C., spoke at the postal workers' rally there.

Party members and supporters in Los Angeles joined a rally of a couple hundred in front of City Hall Sept. 23 organized by Local 11 of UNITE HERE that demanded the city guarantee a minimum wage of \$25 for all workers employed in the tourist industry ahead of the 2028 Olympics here. They also campaigned at a Sept. 28 demonstration of 300 hosted by United Teachers Los Angeles calling for steps to assure affordable housing for city workers. Participants bought 11 *Militant* subscriptions and 17 books.

The international campaign began Sept. 21 and will continue for eight weeks through Nov. 18, after the 2024 elections are over. Printed here are the goals adopted by SWP branches and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Next week's chart will include where the drive is at.

A key part of the effort is to win endorsers for the SWP's Fruit-Richter ticket from workers and others who want to join in getting out the party's call for building a party of labor to organize working people in their millions to take political power into their own hands.

This week Fruit will be touring in Minneapolis and then in Seattle, to bring solidarity to strikers at Boeing. Richter will be in Oakland.

## Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, SWP fund

Sept. 21 - November 19

Country	Sub quota	Books quota	Fund quota
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Atlanta	55	55	\$10,000
Chicago	90	90	\$14,000
Cincinnati	50	50	\$5,000
Dallas-Ft. Worth	50	50	\$5,000
Los Angeles	115	115	\$15,000
Miami	35	35	\$5,000
Minneapolis	65	65	\$5,500
N. New Jersey	70	70	\$7,500
New York	100	115	\$20,000
Oakland	85	85	\$15,000
Philadelphia	60	60	\$6,500
Pittsburgh	40	40	\$6,000
Seattle	60	60	\$14,500
Washington	50	50	\$4,500
Other			
Total U.S.	925	940	\$133,500
<b>Prisoners</b>			
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			
London	45	45	
Manchester	40	40	
Total U.K.	85	85	
Canada	90	90	
Australia	30	30	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>\$133,500</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>

# 'Two strikes on the front line'

Continued from front page

paigned at a truck stop on the New Jersey Turnpike Sept. 27. There needs to be a way to earn a living, he said.

"This will be the way it is until workers run the country," and we are capable of doing it, Fruit said. "Today workers are standing up. We build solidarity with these fights."

"What are your ideas about bringing workers together?" de Leon asked. "I don't see how you get across that bridge."

"We are for a working-class movement, a party of labor, a political party to defend our interests," Fruit said. "The Democrats and Republicans will never defend working-class interests. They are the bosses' parties. Change starts on the picket line. When you see the 33,000 Machinists on strike at Boeing you can feel the power that our class has. Solidarity is key."

To learn more about the party's views, de Leon got a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

The following day Fruit told a campaign meeting here that "for the last six months we have been talking about September as the month when 45,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association, 33,000 machinists at Boeing and 200,000 postal workers were facing contract deadlines. And now, here we are."

"As workers go through these fights, they gain experience and confidence to push harder for what's needed," she said. "After the nurses at three Pittsburgh hospitals won raises and better nurse-to-patient ratios, Katie Kiesel, a nurse and member of the SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania union, told the *Militant* it was only the start. Only when all nurses and hospital workers in the area stand together, Kiesel said, 'can we completely transform health care in this region. We're committed to building a movement that achieves that.'"

In the past two years prices on food, rent, gas and other basic necessities have soared. As conditions of life deteriorate, and wars escalate, millions are being drawn into politics, looking for ways to fight for our survival. That's why more workers today are organizing unions and using their unions.

"What is needed is a political party

to mobilize and unite working people, independent of the boss parties," Fruit said. "It must be a party based on the unions, that can organize the whole working class to fight together in a struggle to replace capitalist political power with a workers government."

"It's a fight that can be won," Fruit said. "That's the single most important thing we have to learn from the Cuban Revolution."

## Capitalists' crisis, not nature

"In the past 48 hours we've seen the devastation that comes as Hurricane Helene tore through the Gulf of Mexico, through Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and on up," Fruit said. She pointed to the rising number of deaths and the 4 million without electrical power.

"Events like this affect our class worldwide, but there is only one country where the working class has been mobilized and organized to try to prevent the loss of life in disasters like this. And that's in revolutionary Cuba where the working class is in power," she said. The government ensures no one is abandoned during hurricanes, in stark contrast to the U.S. rulers' conduct when storms hit here.

"The Cuban toilers — under the greatest of odds, facing an imperialist embargo — have shown the world what can be achieved, how social relations can change, how human beings will change. And the Socialist Workers Party fights like hell to defend their revolution," Fruit said.

"We are a few days from the one-year anniversary of the Oct. 7 massacre carried out by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad with help and direction from the reactionary capitalist government of Iran," Fruit said.

That pogrom slaughtered 1,200 people, mostly Jewish civilians, left more than 5,000 wounded and seized 250 hostages. Rape and sexual violence were organized against women, and men — strategic, deliberate, celebrated and documented by the perpetrators.

"Oct. 7 was a moment of truth, a test for every political current and party," Fruit said. "As we campaign in our unions and in working-class communities, we explain that Jew-hatred — a reflection of the crisis of capitalism — is a life-and-death question for the working class. We have to act



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president, right, speaks to trucker at New Jersey Turnpike truck stop Sept. 27, accompanied by Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in N.J.

against every move to slander, scapegoat and attack Jews.

"We defend Israel, which is a capitalist country, as a refuge for the Jews from anywhere in the world," she said. It is the only country that will fight, arms in hand, against the slaughter of the Jews. "But Israel can't solve the problem."

## Fight Jew-hatred, join Oct. 7 events

"The solution is tied to building a revolutionary working-class party of all nationalities in every country — including in Israel, and most importantly, in the U.S. — that works toward workers taking power."

Fruit pointed to the remarks by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the U.N. on Sept. 27. "My country is fighting for its life," he said. "Israel yearns for peace, but our enemies seek our annihilation. ... We will win because we don't have a choice."

He said there was a choice "between a historic reconciliation between Arabs and Jews or the tyranny and terror of more Oct. 7s." Many U.N. representatives walked out during these remarks.

Fruit urged everyone at the meeting to join upcoming events marking the Oct. 7 pogrom.

"No new capitalist world order is possible that would make the world more peaceful," Fruit said.

"Across Africa, governments are massively indebted to lenders like the World Bank, Washington and more recently to the rulers of China," she pointed out. One participant in the cam-

paigned meeting asked about the debate at the United Nations over whether to give Africa, with 54 countries and some 1.5 billion people, two permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council, but without veto power. "Is this an obstacle to getting solutions?" he asked.

"The U.N. came out of World War II and it's a body of capitalist governments," Fruit said. "They are the problem, contending to steal all the wealth from working people."

"Workers need to organize ourselves, tackle our problems like Thomas Sankara led working people in Burkina Faso to do," she said, pointing to the 1983-87 popular democratic revolution in that West African country.

## Join, build the SWP campaign

"There are five weeks left in this campaign," John Studer, the Socialist Workers national campaign director, said during the discussion. "Workers know there is something deeply wrong with the economy. They abhor the Oct. 7 attack on Jews in Israel."

"The biggest discussion is whether the working class is capable of doing something about it. The SWP thinks it is and we want to discuss that with as many workers as possible. We want workers to break with the capitalist parties, endorse the SWP campaign and become part of it. Join with us at actions Oct. 1 to support postal workers and on Oct. 7."

Joanne Kuniansky, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, contributed to this article.

# Postal workers rally across the US

Continued from page 3

today like the Boeing and longshore workers strikes. "Younger folks don't accept that conditions are unjust," Conley, who is 40, said. "So we say this is how you fight it."

The post offices here are short staffed, but when people retire, they aren't replaced, Jonathan Smith, the president of the New York area APWU Local 10, told the *Militant* at their rally on the steps of the main post office. The bosses keep trying to hire more "supplemental" workers at lower wages, he explained.

Azmat Muhammad, has worked as a postal clerk at the Trenton, New Jersey, facility for 10 years. He works "a hard shift, 4 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.," including every weekend, and his wife works as a substitute teacher so they can juggle taking care of their five-year-old daughter. "Child care is too

expensive," he added.

"Our wages aren't keeping up with rising prices," said Syed Hussain, another postal worker at the action in New York. "Without the right to strike, we're at the mercy of management," he added. "The last time we went on strike was in 1970. It was effective, now it's illegal."

At the Washington D.C., picket, Yvonne Huntley, who is retired after working for 44 years, was part of the 1970 strike. Some 200,000 postal workers nationwide walked out in defiance of government warnings that any strike would be "illegal." They won wage rises and gained a contract based on collective bargaining. But postal union members are still classified as "essential workers," barred from striking and forced into binding arbitration.

"Sometimes," Huntley said, "you have to do what you have to do."

## Endorse Socialist Workers Party 2024 campaign!

Rachele Fruit for president & Dennis Richter vice president

Campaign for what you are for, not who you're against!

### I endorse Rachele Fruit for president.

- Here is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help spread the word. (Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- Send me a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, the paper of the SWP campaign. (\$5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Org./Union \_\_\_\_\_

Socialist Workers Party 2024 Campaign, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Tel: 347-871-0282 & Email: socialistworkers2024@gmail.com

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about workers struggles for a union movement in every workplace today. It gives a voice to those engaged in battle and helps build solidarity. We need your help to make it a success. If you are involved in a skirmish or strike or know other workers who are, please contact us at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story gets told.

### Automotive-parts workers at BorgWarner win better contract

After a two-week strike, auto parts workers at BorgWarner in Lansing, New York, overwhelmingly voted up an improved contract offer Sept. 21. The over 700 members of Teamsters Local 317 voted 539-60 to accept a four-year agreement that increased wages by 21% and defeated company efforts to raise health insurance costs. The workers make automotive chain systems for engine timing and power transmission.

"We were able to keep the insurance from doubling," John Cometti, a business agent for Local 317, told the *Cornell Daily Sun*. In addition to a \$5,500 ratification bonus, workers with 25 or more years seniority will get four more vacation days. All the workers will receive five additional paid personal days and one additional paid holiday.

Some progress was made on pushing back overtime. Up to now new hires have had to work mandatory overtime for their first seven years there, but strikers cut that to four years.

— Vivian Sahner

### Nurses in Sydney press fight for wage increase, more staff

SYDNEY — Nurses and midwives in New South Wales public hospitals went on a 24-hour strike Sept. 24 as they stepped up their campaign for a new union contract, including an immediate 15% wage increase. Over 10,000 marched and rallied outside the state Parliament here in a noisy and festive display of determination.

Holding hundreds of handmade placards, they chanted "Union power!" "15% now!" and "1,2,3,4, we want more in '24." It was the second strike by nurses and midwives in the state in two weeks. Their union, the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, says the

wage increase is needed to meet today's high prices and to bring pay up to par with that in neighboring states. This is needed to prevent workers from leaving to go to better paying jobs elsewhere, which means more work for those who remain. The New South Wales government is offering only a 10.5% increase over three years.

The union's Sutherland branch president, Colette Duff, told the rally, "We are being ignored and told we are being greedy." Michael Whaites, the union assistant general secretary, said, "If they won't listen, we will get louder." Additional union rallies were held across the state.

As it becomes more difficult for working people to access general practitioners, demand at hospitals has grown. Nurses say that patient safety is threatened by the long work hours and inadequate health funding.

O'Bray Smith, the NSW union president, told the rally the union's membership has grown to over 80,000. Nationally, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation is the country's largest union, with over 326,000 members.

— Mike Tucker

### Union organizes solidarity with strikers at Best Theratronics

KANATA, Ontario — More than 40 Unifor Local 1541 members at Best Theratronics, a nuclear facility that manufactures medical equipment here, have been on strike since May 1. A key issue is higher wages. Union members rejected an offer by owner Krishnan Suthanthiran for a two-year contract with no wage increase. On May 10, members of a second union there, Public Service Alliance of Canada Local 70369, also went on strike when the company made no offer of higher wages to them either.

Angered by the bosses' refusal to



Militant/Mike Tucker

More than 10,000 nurses and midwives march outside New South Wales state Parliament in Sydney, Australia, Sept. 24, part of one-day strike for an immediate 15% wage raise.

negotiate, Unifor organized a week of solidarity Sept. 23-27, encouraging union members across Ontario to come to Kanata and reinforce the picket lines. Striking workers on the line Sept. 24 told the *Militant* that they came from many cities, including Toronto, London, and as far as Windsor, to help them to keep the plant closed.

"Corporations are worldwide, maybe it's about time unions look at doing the same thing," said Mike Armstrong, a staff representative for Unifor Local 414 from Ottawa, explaining why they mobilized union members from all over.

"Our boss wants us to crawl back to work. He tells us, 'Don't bite the hand that feeds you,'" said Erica Leduc, a production controller and the PSAC local vice president. "He doesn't even show up to negotiate," added Steve Labelle, an electronic technician and Unifor Local 1541 president. Both said that Unifor and Public Service Alliance of Canada working together has been crucial to their fight.

— Beverly Bernardo

### Aramark workers strike sports stadiums over wages, health care

PHILADELPHIA — Food, beverage, retail and concessions workers at

Aramark, members of UNITE HERE Local 274, went on strike at the city's sports and entertainment complex Sept. 23. The strikers work in the three arenas of Philadelphia's professional basketball, baseball, football and hockey teams in South Philadelphia.

Union members set up pickets for four days as negotiations on a new contract continued. The local organizes 1,500 sports stadium workers here.

In July 98% of the workers rejected a company offer and voted to authorize a strike.

In an act of union solidarity, Teamsters Joint Council 53 drivers have refused to cross the picket lines to deliver beer. In a flyer to sports fans, they said it was a good time to tailgate. Other union workers have joined the pickets, including fellow Local 274 hotel workers, members of the Transport Workers Union and SMART-TD rail workers.

The union's central demands are for "family-sustaining wage increases" to keep up with inflation, year-round work, health care coverage and one contract with uniform benefits at all three venues.

Union utility workers at the Wells Fargo Center, which houses the hockey, basketball, and lacrosse teams, as well as concerts, only get paid \$14.11 an hour.

In 2023 Aramark, whose world headquarters is here, took in \$18.9 billion.

In April the bosses offered a measly 25-cent-an-hour wage increase. The union responded first with a one-day strike, then a series of four-day strikes and a June rally at the Center City Aramark international headquarters. The local plans ongoing strike actions.

UNITE HERE organizes over 4,000 workers in the area, at the stadiums and in the city's hotel, restaurant and food-service industry. The hotel workers' contracts have expired, and negotiations are underway.

— Osborne Hart

## — 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



### October 18, 1999

Working people and all supporters of democratic rights have an obligation to speak out in defense of free speech and against censorship, in face of New York City Hall's threat to cut funding and take other punitive measures against the Brooklyn Museum of Art based on the content of an art exhibit.

This is an attack on the rights of all working people, including on access to public cultural institutions such as museums and libraries — gains that are the product of working-class struggles over the past century and a half. Workers need to reject any attempt at defining an official art — either under a capitalist censor's eye or in a workers state.

Part of the fight of the labor movement must be to broaden access to art, books and music of all varieties. Workers don't need to be told what's "good" or "bad" art. They can make up their own minds.



### October 18, 1974

The UN World Population Conference opened on Aug. 19. The delegates from the imperialist powers, particularly those representing Washington, argued that "too many people" are a threat to humanity.

The solution offered by the capitalists is the same today as it was more than a century ago. Frederick Engels wrote in 1844, "The consequence of this theory is that since it is precisely the poor who constitute this surplus population, nothing ought to be done for them, except to make it as easy as possible for them to starve to death; to convince them that this state of affairs cannot be altered and that there is no salvation for their entire class other than that they should propagate as little as possible."

However, with the end of the capitalist system this "surplus" population would become a valuable asset in the construction of a new society.



### October 17, 1949

Thought-control was one of the worst features of Japanese life, they used to tell us. Many people assumed that after the American authorities took over, thought-control would be eliminated. This assumption was ill-founded because thought-control is back in Japan. The only difference seems to be that the current variety is labeled "Ordered by MacArthur" instead of "Ordered by Hirohito."

The previous two weeks has led to the dismissal of more than 1,000 teachers and professors. By the end of the year the victims are expected to number several thousand educators.

The purge results from a law passed "under occupation supervision [which] states that no government employee is hereafter permitted to indulge in any form of political activity either during or after working hours. That's the kind of "democracy" U.S. imperialism has exported to Japan.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles  
Meet and Hear Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for Vice President. Sun., Oct. 13. Dinner, 5 p.m.; program, 6 p.m. Donation: \$5 program; \$10 dinner. 5828 Wilshire Blvd. Tel.: (323) 643-4968.

# 300 Montreal port workers strike over family-breaking schedules

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

MONTREAL — Port workers, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 375, began a three-day strike here Sept. 30. Union members rejected the employers' last offer by over 99%, and voted 98% to authorize a strike.

Of the 1,197 union members at Canada's second-largest port, over 300 are on strike at two terminals run by Termont, which handles 41% of container traffic.

As soon as picket signs went up, union members were greeted with solidarity from passing truckers and other drivers honking their horns.

Improved scheduling is a central demand. Port workers must call in every afternoon to find out if or when they are working the next day, and where. They're required to be available 19 days out of 21. Union members point out that with both women and men working outside the home nowadays, this makes family, social and personal life unmanageable.

In preparation for the conflict, bosses have been rerouting maritime traffic to Halifax for months and reducing work hours for many Montreal port workers.

At the terminal entrance next to the union office, four Teamsters union members, who work at Canadian National Railway, joined the line with union signs of solidarity. In late August, after some 10,000 freight rail workers across Canada had been on strike or locked out for three days, Ottawa ordered them back to work, citing harm to the "economy." Rail workers were denied the right to strike and are subject to compulsory arbitration on a new contract.

Many workers told the *Militant* they were angry about government attacks and welcomed the rail workers warmly. Two Confederation of National Trade Unions members locked out since June by glass manufacturer Prelco here joined the line. Union

member Michelle Pelletier told the *Militant*, "We're all together, no matter what color your flag, that's not important. We held their signs for them."

## Dockworkers back rail workers

On Aug. 29, port workers union presidents from Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax came together in an unprecedented press conference in Montreal to back rail workers' right to strike at Canada's two main railroads, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City.

"The government has reduced the right to strike for all federal workers to subzero," Montreal CUPE spokesman Michel Murray said. "The reasons given for government action were purely economic. Yet what is a strike for, other than to put economic pressure on the employer? Port workers across Canada will not allow the right to strike to be put in the shredder."

Following a five-day walkout in 2021, Ottawa declared the Montreal port workers "essential," ordering them back to work under compulsory arbitration. Since then, nothing has been resolved.

"The Canadian supply chain is already fragile," said the Maritime Employers Association in a thinly veiled



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Teamsters join in solidarity as over 300 Montreal port workers, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 375, begin a three-day strike Sept. 30 at two terminals run by Termont. Bosses handle 41% of container traffic at Canada's second-largest port.

call on Ottawa for new strikebreaking action. "The uncertainty caused by this long delay and the recurrence of labor disputes are affecting the Quebec and Canadian economies, and Canada's reputation as a reliable and resilient trading partner."

"Like the port workers, we walked the picket line for safety on the job and against fatigue," Philippe Tessier, one of the four members of the Teamsters solidarity delegation on the picket line, told the *Militant* Sept. 30. He is also the

Communist League candidate in the Quebec National Assembly by-election in the Terrebonne riding near Montreal.

"When the port bosses and their government cry about fragile supply chains and the Canadian economy they want to boost their profits at the cost of our lives," he said. "The labor movement as a whole and all working people need to mobilize solidarity with the Montreal port workers and defend our right to use our unions to bargain and to strike."

## East Palestine residents protest settlement with railroad

BY TONY LANE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — "We got railroaded on Wednesday," Chris Albright, representing Justice for East Palestine Residents and Workers, told a meeting of 30 people here Sept. 28, referring to the decision by Judge Benita Pearson to approve the \$600 million settlement between some 55,000 class-action plaintiffs and Norfolk Southern rail bosses in a Youngstown courtroom.

"We're still fighting," Albright added. "It's not over yet." He condemned Pearson for denying their affidavits urging the court to get more information on the chemical contamination from the February 2023 train derailment, subsequent fire and burn-off of toxic chemicals.

*Salem News* reported Pearson called the settlement "fair, reasonable, and adequate," despite affidavits challenging earlier test results.

The Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment held a press conference outside the courthouse, blasting the settlement as a "mere pittance for what these victims need for their health care and evacuation to safer locations," the newspaper reported.

"Norfolk Southern, the criminal railroad company that caused and exacerbated this disaster and poisoned thousands of citizens," the group said, "has only provided superficial support, conducted faulty research while attorneys have hidden results of their toxicology study from the residents, and negotiated the fastest settlement agreement in history, one that does not meet the needs of the injured, homeless, and ill residents."

The *Salem News* reported that Jami Wallace, president of the Unity Council, shouted "sham" when the judge rendered her decision, prompting Pearson to order police to "put [Wallace] to the pavement." Wallace told the *Militant* the judge then said, "Does anyone else want to challenge me?"

Wallace said many people opted into

the settlement "not because it was a good deal, but because they thought it was the only chance to sue."

At the Sept. 28 meeting, Zsuzsa Gyenes from East Palestine told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* the derailment forced her and her young son out of their home and into hotels for 17 months. She says she has no idea what she'll end up getting because, like all the class-action members, any reimbursement money already received from Norfolk Southern will be deducted from the court-ordered payment. "That money is being taken away as if we were being paid twice, but that was definitely not the case," she said.

### 'This is far from over'

"Now the railroad and the attorneys can finally 'go away,' marking the end of this ordeal for them, just as they've wanted all along," Christina Sicheloff told the media. She lives in Darlington, Pennsylvania, with her son Eddie, 6 miles from where the train derailed. "But for those of us who live here, this is far from over."

"They're still not giving us answers," another Darlington resident, Carly Tunno, told the *Post-Gazette*. "They're still not admitting to the extent of the contamination. We still don't have anywhere to go."

"These are attorneys that were supposed to operate in our best interest," she added. "They did not do that."

The *Salem News* reported the ruling cleared the way for plaintiff attorneys to receive 30% of the settlement for legal fees and expenses, equaling \$180 million.

"I was appalled that the judge wouldn't let me testify in court," toxicologist George Thompson, who filed one of the affidavits, told the Sept. 28 meeting.

Thompson reviewed what chemicals had been on the train, and said,

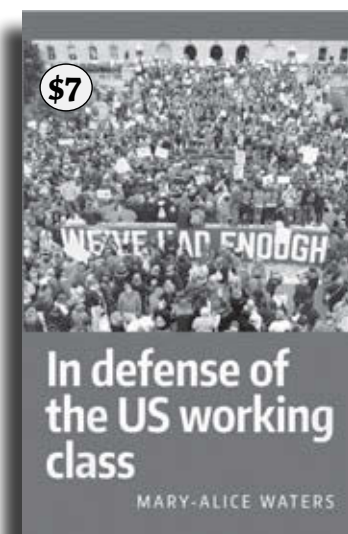
"It's not what's on the train, but what came out in the fire, what happens when these products are burned."

He also spoke to the massive volume of chemicals caught up in the fire and burn-off, challenging the assumption in the settlement that limited payments to people living within a 20-mile ring around East Palestine. "The contamination was more widespread."

Residents were exposed to a slew of hazardous chemicals in a single incident, Thompson said. "Nobody has ever studied a fire with the high temperatures seen in East Palestine and the number of chemicals and products involved," he told the *Pittsburgh Union Progress*.

The National Transportation Safety Board said that Norfolk Southern bosses didn't need to carry out that burn-off. But they wanted to get the trains moving first. They put the community and people in 16 different states at risk.

Thompson called for an independent expert to be brought in to reassess air, water and soil test results from Norfolk Southern and the Environmental Protection Agency. The railroad should create a trust fund to compensate people for the fair market value of their home or business if they want to leave the community.



pathfinderpress.com

## LETTERS

### Postal worker: 'Thanks!'

As a member of the American Postal Workers Union, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the *Militant* for carrying a notice about our National Day of Action on Oct. 1. Aside from the sales associates with whom you might interact at the retail window of your local Post Office, the American Postal Workers Union represents approximately 200,000 members who toil 24/7 to ensure that the mail is safe, secure and routed to its destinations accurately and timely.

I also want to thank Rachele Fruit (SWP candidate for president) and Gabrielle Prosser (SWP candidate for U.S. Congress) for taking part in our local rally in Eagan, Minnesota, a suburb of Saint Paul. This rally was just another reminder for us in the Twin Cities metro area that candidates from the so-called major parties may talk about supporting workers, but the SWP backs it up and gets people actively involved in the struggle. It was great to see the SWP at our rally. Thank you so much for standing with the Postal Workers!

Timothy Frankland,  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

# The sculptor, the Masks of Sorrow and Stalin's Gulag

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Ernst Neizvestny was a Russian sculptor whose modernist works, despite determined efforts by the Stalinist officialdom of the time to suppress them, left a tribute that stands today to the memory of millions thrown into labor camps or killed resisting the regime's repression.

In 1996, a few years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Neizvestny's 50-foot concrete monument, the Mask of Sorrow, was erected at Magadan, a port city on Siberia's Pacific coast. Its picture was printed in last week's *Militant*.

It is dedicated to tens of thousands of political prisoners who perished laboring in gold mines there. The powerful sculpture is close to the Road of Bones, which was literally built over the remains of up to a million prisoners who worked on it. In 1946, many Soviet Union army veterans were sent there, falsely accused by the regime of Joseph Stalin of collaborating with the enemy. Their "crime" was being held prisoners of war by German forces.

A follow-up memorial by Neizvestny titled the Masks of Sorrow, with twin weeping faces, one facing east, the other west, was dedicated to all those who died in the Stalinist Gulag. It was commissioned by the municipal government in Neizvestny's birthplace, the central Russian city of Yekaterinburg. Hidden away by Russian authorities for 27 years, it was finally publicly displayed in 2017. Unfortunately, the artist died the year before.

In *Art & Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny, Endurance, and the Role of Art*, noted critic John Berger explains that in 1942, during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Neizvestny volunteered for military service at age 16.

He wrote a poem, a prophetic image of the heavy Russian losses in Moscow's war on Ukraine today, which reads:

The living and the corpses embracing.  
In blood.  
No disgust. Soon we'll all be dead. ....  
Anyone from the Second Storm  
Battalion still alive?

He was badly wounded and left for dead. Some 20 years later he was awarded — posthumously, the authorities assumed — the Order of the Red Star.

Incredibly, he had survived. "In the intervening years, no one had made the connection between Lieutenant Neizvestny — missing patriot, presumed dead — and a notorious, officially condemned, decadent and 'un-patriotic' sculptor of the same name," Berger wrote.

Neizvestny's modernist style led him to clash with Soviet cultural authorities. Frustrated by official obstruction to his and other artists' work, he emigrated in 1976, eventually settling in New York.

## Cracks in Stalinist monolith

In a secret speech given to a closed plenum of the Communist Party in 1956, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin's "cult of personality." For the first time, the scale of Stalin's purges in the late 1930s and the huge system of punitive labor camps, the Gulag, was revealed.

Khrushchev's "revelations" showed that the Stalinist totalitarian monolith was cracking. Heroic working-class-led uprisings followed that year in Hungary and Poland, fighting for workers' democracy. Both were brutally suppressed at Khrushchev's orders.

As cultural policy in the post-Stalin era began to loosen, Neizvestny in 1962 joined other abstract artists in putting on a large exhibition in Moscow. It was sponsored by the Soviet Artists' Union.

The sensational art show drew such huge crowds that the Kremlin felt compelled to shut it down. Khrushchev personally showed up, angrily denouncing the avant-garde art as "s-t" and a "disgrace," Berger recounts.

Neizvestny confronted him. "Here in front of my works," he said. "I am premier, and we shall discuss as equals."

## Art under Stalin was 'rotten'

An argument erupted, with the sculptor telling Khrushchev that he "was neither an artist nor a critic and was illiterate when it came to aesthetics." He told the Soviet premier that art, falsely labeled as "socialist realism" under Stalin, was "rotten."

"The methods Stalin used served the cult of personality and this became the content of the art he allowed," Neizvestny said. "Therefore the art was rotten too."

Under the Stalinist regime, both be-



At 1962 Moscow art exhibit, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, left, denounced works by Russian sculptor Ernst Neizvestny, right with fist clenched, who defiantly responded that art under Stalin was "rotten" like his regime. Neizvestny's Masks of Sorrow monuments are dedicated to millions who died in Stalin's Gulag.

fore and after his death, artistic expression deemed threatening to its counter-revolutionary interests was not only censored but brutally suppressed.

Khrushchev shook Neizvestny's hand, but left with a threat. "Inside you there are an angel and a devil," he said. "If the devil wins, we'll crush you. If the angel wins, we'll do all we can to help you."

Neizvestny paid a price for his boldness. He was barred from official work for several more years. But when Khrushchev died in 1971, his family commissioned Neizvestny to create his gravestone monument.

At the time of Neizvestny's death in 2016, Putin declared it "a grievous loss for Russia's culture and for world culture." He said the controversial artist was "one of the greatest sculptors of our time."

# Appeals court questions New York Trump conviction

BY TERRY EVANS

An appeals court hearing Sept. 26 offered further confirmation that New York Judge Arthur Engoron's conviction of Donald Trump in a civil fraud case last year was an egregious and politically motivated ruling.

The case was cooked up by Democrats along with several other prosecutions against the Republican presidential candidate. It's part of a yearslong effort by the Democrats and liberal media to put him in prison and drive him out of politics.

Engoron had peremptorily ruled last September that Trump and his sons, Donald Jr. and Eric, were guilty of lying about the Trump Organization's business assets to get better loan deals. When the trial opened, the only real outstanding issue was the penalties to be imposed. Then Engoron put the presidential candidate under a gag order. Finally he levied an enormous \$454 million fine, including interest which continues to grow every day, even as Trump exercises his constitutional right to appeal the case.

The charges had been brought by New York Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat who campaigned for election on a vow to bring Trump down. From start to finish, her case was aimed at draining Trump's finances, dismantling his family's real estate business and doing as much damage to his 2024 presidential campaign as possible.

A five-judge panel of New York's Appellate Division heard Trump's appeal. Appeals Judge David Friedman made it clear he didn't see any crime. He asked if there had ever been a prosecution under

this statute, "where the supposed victim has the ability and legal obligation to discover the allegedly misrepresented matters by conducting its own due diligence; where the supposed wrongdoer advised the supposed victim, through written disclaimers, to conduct his own due diligence ... and where the victim never complained about any fraud."

New York Deputy Solicitor General Judith Vale defended the conviction, claiming Trump had benefited by getting lower interest rates. But Friedman wasn't impressed. He pointed out Trump would have received "exactly the same" interest rates, even if he had "a different net worth."

Judge Peter Moulton said, "The immense penalty is troubling in this case."

## Attack on constitutional rights

The huge fine defies the Constitution's Eighth Amendment, which offers all defendants an important protection. It says "excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed."

When Vale tried to explain what the alleged "fraud" was, Judge John Higgit interrupted, pointing out that "what's being described sounds an awful lot like a commercial dispute." Higgit then questioned whether James, the state's prosecutor, had gone "into an area where she doesn't have jurisdiction?"

A ruling on the appeal is expected to take some six weeks.

Democrats are trying to make their cases against Trump central to Kamala Harris' election campaign, claiming the mountain of legal attacks they've launched prove he's "a threat to democracy."

The following year, a museum holding a wide range of Neizvestny's sculptures and paintings was opened in Yekaterinburg alongside the Masks of Sorrow. One local official noted that "hundreds of thousands of people from the Urals suffered during the years of mass repression." Another said regular visitors would help "preserve the memory and prevent the recurrence of similar events."

Now, the Putin regime is reversing that message, clamping down on artistic freedoms as it deepens its course of repression at home and his war on Ukraine bogs down. A key part of this is whitewashing the crimes of Stalin.

In 2016, the giant Mask of Sorrow was vandalized by graffiti saying, "Stalin lives." But it still stands as a powerful protest against the regimes of both Stalin and Putin.

One of these cases, brought against Trump by special counsel Jack Smith was back in court in Washington, D.C., Sept. 24. Smith was appointed by Biden's Justice Department. Federal Judge Tanya Chutkan granted a request by Smith to file a 180-page court brief reintroducing his case, seeking to find Trump responsible for the Jan. 6 melee at the Capitol. The motion was an attempt to keep their case alive after the Supreme Court ruled that all presidents — including Trump — are immune from prosecution for actions carried out in the conduct of their office.

Chutkan let Smith file his brief, despite it being four times over the normal limit. Even though the election is just six weeks away, Smith also urged the judge to release substantial amounts of the sealed document to the press and the public. Smith's new cut-down indictment charges Trump with "conspiracy to defraud the United States," for what he said to state officials, to Vice President Michael Pence and to a crowd at a Jan. 6, 2021, rally at the Capitol.

Regardless of whether claims about Trump's comments were true, they're protected by the First Amendment. Democrats are increasingly taking aim at the constitutional right to free speech.

If "sick" people are putting out "false narratives" on public issues, they have to be stopped, former Secretary of State John Kerry told a World Economic Forum meeting in New York Sept. 25. And, he said, "Our First Amendment stands as a major block to our ability to just, you know, hammer it out of existence."

# Israel's war against Jew-hatred

Continued from front page

West Bank was killed by shrapnel. A school and more than 100 houses were damaged, along with minor damage to a few military bases.

Hezbollah began daily attacks on northern Israel Oct. 8, in "solidarity" with Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel, the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust during World War II.

Hezbollah — much better armed than Hamas — has lobbed more than 9,000 missiles and rockets at northern Israel over the last year, forcing more than 60,000 Israelis to "become refugees in their own land," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 27 in his speech.

Hamas and its allies — financed, trained and facilitated by Tehran — "savagely murdered 1,200 people," he said. "They raped and mutilated women. They beheaded men. They burned babies alive. They burned entire families alive ... in scenes reminiscent of the Nazi Holocaust." Hamas promised to repeat the pogrom "again and again." A year later it still holds a hundred or so hostages in atrocious conditions.

Netanyahu noted the danger to Jews and to people worldwide if Tehran develops nuclear weapons. He said that "Israel will do everything in its power to make sure it doesn't happen."

On Sept. 17 some 3,000 booby-trapped beepers had blown up, followed by dozens of walkie-talkies the next day, killing at least 32 and wounding thousands of Hezbollah operatives.

Not long after Netanyahu finished his U.N. speech, the Israeli air force destroyed the Hezbollah headquarters in Beirut, killing Nasrallah.

With Hezbollah's leadership and communications in disarray, Israeli troops began a limited ground offensive in southern Lebanon Oct. 1. In fact, over the last year Israeli special forces had already carried out more than 70 raids there, blowing up rocket launchers, arms depots and tunnels

located inside residential neighborhoods and in forested areas.

Israel Defense Forces spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari reports that Hezbollah had been preparing for what the Nazi-like group called "Conquer the Galilee," an Oct. 7-type attack on Israel.

If not stopped, Tehran and its axis of resistance will continue preparing a new Holocaust aimed at completing the Final Solution of the Nazis — killing all the Jews.

## Netanyahu: No choice but to win

That's why Israel continues to defy demands from Washington and other imperialist governments to end its war on Hamas, to not "escalate" in Lebanon and to avoid combating Tehran.

Netanyahu concluded his speech at the U.N. saying, "Israel will win this battle. We will win this battle because we don't have a choice."

President Joseph Biden issued a statement after Nasrallah's death that Washington "supports Israel's right to defend itself." But in the next paragraph he said, "Our aim is to de-escalate the ongoing conflicts in both Gaza and Lebanon through diplomatic means," reaffirming a course that would leave Hamas wounded, but still intact.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported Sept. 29 that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was furious that Israeli officials didn't inform him about the attack on Hezbollah headquarters until it was underway.

Washington's starting point is not defending Jews. All it cares about is defending U.S. imperialism's economic and political interests, including stability in its relations with governments in the region and for maritime shipping and oil production.

But the capitalist government in Israel refuses to subordinate the need to fight Jew-hatred to its alliance with Washington. By refusing to back down and making real progress, Israel is striking a blow to U.S. imperialism.

The liberal bourgeois press, while



Residents of Azaz, northern Syria, celebrate Sept. 28 after learning of death of Hezbollah leader Nasrallah. The Tehran-backed group is hated by millions for helping the Assad dictatorship, along with Tehran and Moscow, crush popular rebellion that began in 2011.

admitting that Nasrallah's goal was destruction of Israel, printed obituaries painting him as a charismatic leader "loved" by Shiite Muslims. The *Washington Post* said he "was seen as a father figure, a moral compass and a political guide" by his followers, and as "the man who empowered Lebanon's once down-trodden and impoverished Shiite community."

A Sept. 27 *New York Times* article claimed that even though Nasrallah "referred to Israel as 'the Zionist entity,' maintaining that all Jewish immigrants should return to their countries of origin," at the same time he

was for "one Palestine with equality for Muslims, Jews and Christians." The murderous actions of Hezbollah throughout the Middle East belie these bouquets from the U.S. press.

Hezbollah was a direct creation of the regime in Iran in 1982. The Iranian rulers sought to extend their influence into Lebanon as they consolidated a counterrevolution at home aimed at reversing gains made by working people during the 1979 revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah of Iran. Hezbollah works to advance Tehran's goal of destroying Israel and killing or expelling all the Jews there.

# Blows to Hezbollah open door to advances by region's toilers

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hezbollah's actions have earned it the hatred of millions across the Middle East.

The reactionary group has never had majority support in Lebanon, and many still fear violent reprisals if they speak out against Hezbollah. Israel's victories are an aid to working people looking to get the boot of Hezbollah, Hamas and Tehran off their necks. More are speaking out.

At the urging of the Iranian rulers, Hassan Nasrallah sent 7,000 Hezbollah thugs to Syria to crush the 2011 popular uprising against Bashar al-Assad and prop up his dictatorship. More than 300,000 civilians died in the course of the 10-year-long war, many at the hands of Hezbollah.

Thousands of Syrians in Idlib, Azaz and other cities still under the control of Assad's bourgeois opponents celebrated the death of Nasrallah, marching through the streets and passing out sweets. There was also a large action in Daraa, which is still under Assad's control.

Hezbollah is widely reviled in Iran by working people and oppressed nationalities. When hundreds of thousands took to the streets across Iran in 2022 after the death of Zhina Amini, following her arrest by the hated "morality police," Nasrallah claimed the protests were "provocations" orchestrated by Washington and Saudi Arabia.

The attempts by the Iranian regime to whip up support for its war moves are not going well. Mehdi Chamran,

the head of Tehran's city council, complained to the press Oct. 1 that there are people satisfied with the blows Hezbollah is suffering in Lebanon. He called for these people to "be drowned in the sea like the Pharaoh."

The Progressive Students Organization at the University of Isfahan Oct. 1 noted the widespread opposition to Hezbollah. The "wartime atmosphere, which should have caused people to temporarily step back from their demands and protests over the miserable economic conditions, has had no effect," it wrote. Instead they "have maintained their protests and strikes" with over 30 labor actions in the three days after Nasrallah's death.

Oil workers have been holding weekly protests for months. And the Coordinating Council of Nurses' Protests announced Oct. 2 plans for nationwide actions Oct. 6. "We will no longer allow our future to be toyed with," the group said, "reducing us to slavery."

On Sept. 30 Netanyahu released a video with Farsi subtitles directed to the people of Iran.

"Every day you see a regime that subjugates you, makes fiery speeches about defending Lebanon, defending Gaza. Yet every day that regime plunges our region deeper into darkness and deeper into war," he said.

"I know you don't support the rapists and murderers of Hamas and Hezbollah, but your leaders do." "When Iran is finally free," he said, "everything will be different."

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# Sky-high child care costs

Continued from front page

to this crisis. Both of their presidential candidates, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, say they will try to offer taxpayers some version of tax credits for their children. But this would be woefully inadequate to address the deepening social and economic crisis working people face in affording to raise a family and having the time to do so.

Day care costs rose 6.2% over the past year, more than double the rate of overall inflation. And this comes on top of years of price hikes. Child care costs have risen over 220% since 1990.

According to the Department of Labor, families on average spend over 25% of their income paying for child care. In New York, child care costs now average nearly \$20,000 a year, the Century Foundation reports. Such prices are out of reach for 80% of families living in the city. Some families are pushed out of the area desperate to reduce these costs. Others go deeper into debt.

## Day care costs more than rent

The average cost of child care for two children, which the majority of U.S. families have, is greater than the average price of rent in all 50 states and of mortgages in 45 of them. “Childcare costs are a top economic concern for parents this election” headlined a Sept. 22 *Washington Post* article, expressing concerns about how this issue will impact the vote. The article focuses on Nevada, one of the states with the highest-priced child care in the country, where almost three-quarters of young children don’t have access to licensed care.

Alyssa Felix, 21, works six days a week making drawers at a furniture warehouse and often relies on her sister or her sister’s mother-in-law to care for her daughters, ages 2 and 3. She told the *Post* she often has to leave work early or take the day off to care for her children. Almost 70,000 U.S. workers missed work in August because of child care issues. Workers who face forced overtime, or night shifts, have even more problems.

“I want to look for a full-time job, but day care is very expensive. I can’t afford it,” Misty Grajeda, 29, told the paper. She quit her job scheduling health care appointments in Reno so she could take care of her infant child. To help accumulate some funds, she manages to spend a few hours delivering for DoorDash and Instacart in the evenings, after her husband is home

from his job painting houses.

“I’m not a Democrat or a Republican. I believe in looking at the issues,” Sonia Kretschmer, a high school social studies teacher in Reno, told the *Post*. “Right now, it’s about child care.”

She and her husband, James, also a high school teacher, pay \$2,700 a month for preschool for their 3-year-old twins and before- and after-school care for their 8-year-old son. “They’ve borrowed against their home, taken on extra work coaching soccer and bartending, and racked up credit card debt to make ends meet,” the *Post* reported.

When another Nevada couple, Kayla and Ryan Frost, went to work they paid the dog sitter for their German shepherd to also keep an eye on their 3-month-old daughter. But it soon became apparent this wouldn’t work. “We need more help than this,” Kayla Frost told the paper. “We limped along for half a year. We stopped working as much. We were exhausted. It really took a toll.” She was an insurance agent and her husband a mechanic.

The big money that people have to shell out doesn’t go to the child care workers. They face low pay and extra challenges due to a shortage of workers.

# Five US prisoners put to death in one single week

BY JANET POST

For the first time in 20 years, five prisoners were executed in the U.S. in a single week, Sept. 20-26. Seven more are scheduled to be killed before the end of the year, further testimony to the brutality of the capitalist rulers’ “justice” system.

Kahlil Divine Black Sun Allah, formerly Freddie Owens, was executed by lethal injection at the Broad River Correctional Institute in Columbia, South Carolina, Sept. 20, after the U.S. Supreme Court refused a stay.

Allah was sentenced to death in 1999 after being convicted of robbing and killing a convenience-store cashier, Irene Graves, in Greenville in 1997. There was no physical evidence and Allah has always said he was innocent. His co-defendant, Steven Golden, blamed Allah for Graves’ death.

But just weeks before Allah’s execution, Golden, the only witness, told the South Carolina Supreme Court that he had testified falsely under a secret deal with prosecutors who promised him he wouldn’t face the death penalty if he fingered Allah.

## ‘Executed for something he didn’t do’

“Freddie Owens is not the person who shot Irene Graves at the Speedway on Nov. 1, 1997,” Golden wrote in a sworn statement Sept. 18. “Freddie was not present when I robbed the Speedway that day.”

“I thought the real shooter or his associates might kill me if I named him to the police,” Golden said. “I don’t want Freddie to be executed for something he didn’t do.”

Despite Golden’s recantation, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster said there was “no compelling reason” to delay the execution.

Protesters organized by South Carolinians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty demonstrated Sept. 19 at the Washington Street United Methodist Church and the Governor’s Mansion in Columbia, and outside the prison the day of the execution. They deliv-



Jake King/For The Idaho Press

Child care center in Boise, Idaho, in May 2023. Costs for day care have risen over 220% since 1990, and today swallow up over a quarter of most working families’ incomes.

Median pay nationally for a certified child care worker was \$13.71 an hour in 2022. That means a quarter of these workers in New York live below the official government poverty line.

The crisis was exacerbated by the pandemic that caused 16,000 child care centers to shut down permanently. Then, in September 2023, the Joseph Biden administration cut off the \$24

billion in federal funding provided during the pandemic that helped keep hundreds of thousands of remaining child care centers open. This has led to even more closures, higher prices at those that are still open, increasing number of “deserts” — areas where no child care is available — and deteriorating working conditions for the workers providing the care.

ered a petition with more than 10,000 signatures asking McMaster to grant Allah clemency.

This was the first time state authorities had used a single dose of pentobarbital instead of the three-drug cocktail they had commonly used. “It appeared to take Owens longer to stop breathing. ... about six minutes, compared to two to three minutes at previous executions,” said The Associated Press.

Four days later, Marcellus “Khalifah” Williams, a 55-year-old African American, was executed by lethal injection at the correctional center in Bonne Terre, Missouri. He was convicted of killing newspaper reporter Felicia Gayle in St. Louis in 1998. The U.S. Supreme Court denied a stay and Gov. Michael Parson upheld the execution.

There was no physical evidence against Williams, who said he was innocent. His execution had been stayed in 2015 and 2017 with support of St. Louis prosecutor Wesley Bell, who said he is convinced Williams was innocent. Bell’s own office had fought for his conviction in 2003.

Under a 2021 Missouri state law a prosecutor can bring a motion to overturn a conviction if there has been “a miscarriage of justice.” Bell said neither Williams’ footprints nor DNA were found at the site of the killing. Nor was his DNA on the knife used to kill Gayle. Bell also said that an earlier prosecutor had excluded prospective jurors who were Black, resulting in a jury of 11 Caucasian members and one Black. Gayle was Caucasian.

Alabama prison authorities executed Alan Eugene Miller, 59, on Sept. 26. Miller, a truck driver, was convicted in 1999 of capital murder. He was sentenced to death despite the jury not reaching a unanimous recommendation on the death sentence.

Miller “shook and trembled on the gurney for about two minutes with his body at times pulling against the restraints,” the AP wrote. Prison authorities were using nitrogen-gas suffocation for only the second time

in the U.S. “That was followed by about six minutes of periodic gulping breaths.”

“I didn’t do anything to be in here,” Miller said in his final words.

Alabama Corrections Commissioner John Hamm refused to say whether the sedative Miller requested had been used.

## Cruel and unusual punishment

“Death penalty opponents have warned of a litany of potential problems with using nitrogen gas,” wrote the Sept. 26 *New York Times*, “including the possibility that the prisoner could suffer a seizure, vomit under the mask or experience other problems if the mask’s seal were broken, diluting the nitrogen and prolonging the prisoner’s suffering.”

Miller’s attorneys argued his execution was a violation of the Constitution’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment. Two years ago Miller had been tortured in a failed execution. Executioners had needle punctured him 18 times over 90 minutes, failing to insert a catheter, and at one point left him hanging vertically while strapped to the gurney.

Prison authorities have executed 1,600 prisoners since 1976, when the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the use of the death penalty. Above all, it’s a weapon of terror that the capitalist rulers use to intimidate the working class.

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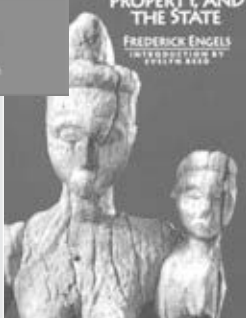
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# Working-class fighters today need to study the lessons of history

Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. The collection of writings covers the sweep of human history, from the emergence of our earliest ancestors, through the evolution of class society, up to capitalism and the development of the modern working class today. The book is a timely introduction to scientific socialism, generalized from the class struggle by Marx and Engels beginning in the mid-1800s. The excerpts are from the first chapter by Mary-Alice Waters, "Without materialist dialectics, there can be no working-class revolution." Copyright © 2021 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Table for slaves to wash off silver mined at Laurion in Greece over 2,500 years ago. Frederick Engels criticized those who moralized against ancient slave society. The evolution of class society registered advances for humanity, laying groundwork for socialist revolution today.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The book includes "The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man" by Frederick Engels, who along with Karl Marx made up the founding leadership of the modern working-class movement. Engels's unfinished text drew on the groundbreaking discoveries of Charles Darwin and other nineteenth-century pioneers in what was then the young science of evolutionary biology. ...

In it Engels explains the place of labor, the "basic condition for all human existence," in transforming nature and ourselves, creating the conditions out of which human society is born. He explains the centrality of the evolution of the human hand with its opposable thumb and resulting facility in making and using tools. From that beginning, speech, the enlarging human brain, and other attributes distinguishing us from the rest of the animal world have evolved.

It is the history of human *social relations*, however, that Engels focuses on above all, relations developed over millennia as our productive capacities expanded. "The animal merely uses its environment," Engels writes. "Man by his changes makes it serve his ends, masters it," and passes along knowledge and new skills from one generation to the next. "This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and once again it is labor that brings this about."

In explaining this interconnection of social labor and nature, Engels built on the materialist foundations laid by Marx. Capitalism expands production only "by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the worker," *nature and labor*, as Marx wrote in *Capital*. Beginning with the simplest elements of capitalism — the individual commodity and wage-labor, which were leading to the modern factory system of production and trade — Marx went on to demonstrate why only the working-class conquest of power can preserve not just life and limb but an earth, skies, and waters compatible with human development. ...

Such an understanding of history is important in face of today's spreading "cancel culture" among privileged middle-class layers in the universities, foundations, media and government circles, as well as the profoundly anti-working-class, anti-science "woke" politics they promote. ...

Charles Darwin, the pioneer of evolutionary biology and one of the most outstanding scientists of the nineteenth century, has now joined the long line of targets. ...

Marx, Engels, and Novack, like their contemporaries, use the terms "savagery," "barbarism," and "civilization" when writing about three main stages of human social evolution. Those were the terms used by anthropologists in the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries to denote the earliest human societies based on hunting and gathering (savagery), pre-class agricultural societies (barbarism), and class-divided societies (civilization). The first class societies — whether in Mesopotamia or Egypt, Greece or Rome, or most of Asia — came initially with slavery as

the increasingly dominant mode of production, along with the advent of writing, major urban concentrations, and large-scale commerce. ...

"It is very easy to inveigh against slavery and similar things in general terms, and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies," wrote Engels in 1877 in a book-length polemic against Eugen Dühring, a self-important German professor with influence in socialist currents of the times. ... "But it does not tell us one word as to how these institutions arose, why they existed, and what role they played in history."

In turning up his nose at Greek civilization "because it was founded on slavery," Engels said, Dühring "might with equal justice reproach the Greeks with having had no steam-engines or electric telegraphs." ...

Class-divided societies, of which capitalism is but the most recent stage, arose only a few thousand years ago. That's not even a blink of the eye in the history of humanity. Those class divisions emerged along with the increasingly productive social labor of our ancestors, which enabled them to produce more than needed for mere survival. Along with that surplus, however, arose private property, priest-hoods, and states, together with their armies and other repressive institutions used to defend the property, power, and privileges of the ruling few.

For its part, the social and political dictatorship of capital is barely a few hundred years old. Based on work for wages by the great majority of us who have no property to live off and must sell our ability to labor to an employer, capitalism too had a beginning under particular historical conditions. It will have an end under others.

Armed with this long view of history, a working-class vanguard of all nationalities, religions, skin colors, and both sexes — engaged in struggles together with millions of other working people — can develop the experience, political confidence, and fighting capacities to chart a revolutionary course. A course that can take state power out of the hands of the propertied rulers and build governing institutions created by the working class. Only then will a society worth living in for the great majority, one free of class exploitation and oppression, become possible.

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## Build support for striking dockworkers!

On Oct. 1, tens of thousands of members of the International Longshoremen's Association on the East and Gulf coasts joined 33,000 Boeing workers on strike, labor battles with big stakes for all working people. These fights need organized backing by workers everywhere!

A delegation from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which organizes dockworkers on the West Coast, joined the ILA picket line at Port Elizabeth in New Jersey, Oct. 1. "We are one!" ILWU President Bobby Olvera Jr. told the crowd.

That's an example to emulate.

Bosses rely on dividing workers in every way possible, including trying to keep word of strike battles out of the news, to try to undercut working-class solidarity. The port and other bosses are demanding the White House step in and shut down the strike, like President Joseph Biden did when he barred rail workers from striking in 2022. This underlines the fact that

every class struggle is also a political struggle.

The working class has the great strength of its numbers along with its power to shut down production and transport. Every worker can make a difference. Get out the word, organize your union, your friends, family and co-workers to join the ILA picket lines and aid their fight.

The issues in the dockworkers strike confront all workers. They're demanding a hefty wage increase to protect their living standards from the brutal impact of high prices. They're fighting to ensure that bosses' drive for automation doesn't lead to union members being thrown out of work and create more dangerous working conditions.

Organizing solidarity is the road to winning this and other strikes today, and to expanding and strengthening the labor movement. That's the road to advance the class consciousness and fighting spirit of working people!

## Cuban Revolution shows how to beat hurricanes

Cuba is the one country in the world with a government that mobilizes the power of its working people to combat the effects of hurricanes and other natural disasters. In sharp contrast to Washington, it uses all the resources of society and a culture of working-class solidarity to ensure no one is left to fend for themselves. Casualties and destruction are kept to a minimum. The Cuban people are led to prepare, withstand and then rebuild when storms hit the island.

No other country has a government that is capable of preventing natural disasters from turning into social catastrophes. That's because working people there made a socialist revolution. Led by Fidel Castro, they overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959 and took political power. They uprooted capitalist exploitation, organized a thorough-going land reform, mobilized thousands of young volunteers and wiped out illiteracy, nationalized industry, and, in so doing, transformed the population, who discovered their own capacities in the process.

When Hurricane Matthew hit Cuba in 2016, more than a million people were gotten out of harms way and provided with shelter. Workers pulled together to do what is necessary, backed at every step by their government. No one died.

Brigades of electrical workers and soldiers were sent to the threatened region *before* the storm hit, so repairs could begin immediately afterward. Supplies to people rebuilding their homes were provided at half price and long-term loans at low

interest were made available. Those most in need were given materials free of charge.

In contrast, the profit-driven priorities of the U.S. capitalist rulers and the conditions they impose on working people here ensure everyone is left on their own when storms hit. And despite heroic acts of solidarity displayed by workers helping one another, our class bears havoc and misery when natural disasters strike. That will remain the case until workers establish a government of our own.

With crops destroyed by Hurricane Helene, many working farmers are closer to ruin. Officials say water systems in parts of North Carolina will take weeks or more to repair. As we go to press, 1.5 million people are still without power.

The U.S. capitalist rulers' lack of preparation and slow response to the storm shines a spotlight on their callous attitude toward workers' lives. In Wakulla County, Florida, residents were under mandatory evacuation orders. But the county sheriff's office made no effort to evacuate prisoners at the Wakulla Correctional Institution.

Only by taking political power into our own hands can working people establish a government based on a different class outlook. The Cuban Revolution shows what workers power makes possible. Studying how that revolution was made is vital preparation for organizing a vanguard in the U.S. to lead tens of millions of working people here to conquer power, reconstruct society in the interest of the vast majority and join the struggle for a socialist world.

## Hong Kong imprisons journalists for sedition

BY ROY LANDERSEN

On Sept. 26 two editors became the first journalists in Hong Kong convicted and sentenced on sedition charges for their news reporting under the city's draconian new national security laws. The rulers in Beijing continue to tighten their repressive grip on the formerly semi-autonomous financial hub after massive anti-government protests there in 2019.

This March, Article 23 of the security law replaced a sedition law written by the former British colonial rulers. As well as widening police powers, it established new crimes of treason and insurrection, along with a blanket offense of inciting hatred against China's rulers. And it calls for closed-door trials.

Chung Pui-kuen, 54, a top editor at the now defunct Stand News, was sentenced to 21 months in prison for sowing "hatred" of Hong Kong authorities. The "crime" of the popular online outlet was live streaming coverage of millions joining street demonstrations five years ago to oppose Beijing's interference and demand greater political freedoms.

Patrick Lam, 36, who received a shorter sentence, was released for time served. Chung and Lam were arrested in a 2021 police raid, which led to Stand News being closed. The two editors spent nearly a year in jail before getting out on bail.

The landmark ruling has reinforced the chilling ef-

fect on freedom of expression, including for the media, as crackdowns tighten.

"On the 10th anniversary of the Umbrella Movement, nothing happened" on Sept. 28, Daniel Chan wrote the *Militant* from Hong Kong. Previous commemorations of the 79-day "occupation" of the city center demanding democratic elections were marked by small protests met by police mobilizations, he said.

Under Article 23, Chen writes, people can be "charged with incitement for virtually whatever they do, from scribbling slogans like 'five demands, not one less' on the back of a seat on a bus, to even citing 'revolution is no crime, to rebel is justified,' a famous saying by Mao Zedong."

Mao was the longstanding Stalinist leader who came to power in the 1949 Chinese Revolution and waged ruthless repression against working people. He has been rehabilitated by the Xi Jinping regime to justify its own anti-working-class course.

To make sure of convictions, Hong Kong's chief executive can now "state that a certain case is related to national security and has to be presided over by a judge" who is specially handpicked, Chan said. "The chief executive has already done so twice."

Under the harsh new laws, at least 303 people have been arrested, and 176 individuals and five entities charged.

## Fight 'Militant' ban

Continued from front page

officials in Malone. This fight in defense of prisoners' constitutional rights to read political literature of their choice and the right to freedom of the press, and for the *Militant* and other publications to reach their subscribers behind bars has been going on for over five months.

"We recently learned that the impoundment was upheld back on July 18," Amnesty International's Sept. 30 letter says, "but that the attorneys for the *Militant* reportedly were not informed of this decision until more than a month later on Aug. 21. The Literature Review Committee held an appeal hearing on Aug. 29, but the publication has not learned the decision of that hearing as of the date of this letter.

"We are calling on your office to expeditiously provide the publication and its attorney, David Goldstein, with the decision from its Aug. 29 appeal hearing as well as an explanation for the lack of timely notice of the decisions made at each of the hearings on this matter," the letter said.

The *Militant* was informed May 17 that Jackson prison officials had banned issue no. 17 on April 29. This current issue is no. 38! They claimed an Associated Press photo showing the body of a Jewish man murdered by Hamas and being driven around Gaza City to cheers by Islamist thugs during the Nazi-like group's Oct. 7 pogrom, "depict hatred toward a specific race."

The picture was in a feature article reprinting the opening chapter of Pathfinder's latest book, *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

Prison authorities claimed that the photo — and the whole issue — are "dangerously inflammatory," encouraging "riot, insurrection, rebellion" and "organized prison protest."

"This notion that it depicts hatred towards a particular group is completely unsupported by the article's content, which does not describe, advocate, or glorify any such activities or violence," wrote Amnesty International in its initial letter to the Literature Review Committee June 5. "In fact, the article specifically details the long fight *against* anti-Semitism, condemns Hamas for its Oct. 7 attacks largely against Israeli civilians, and sets it in the broader context of attacks on the Jewish community throughout history."

"The act of informing subscribers about events of the outside world in and of itself," wrote Mazzola, "should not be a means to violate prisoners' freedom of expression."

This fight has won widespread support from a broad array of organizations, from Amnesty to the Florida Press Association, urging the Review Committee to uphold the First Amendment and overturn the ban.

Related to this fight are protests by the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Booksellers Association, Prison Policy Initiative, and dozens of other organizations against restrictions prison authorities have placed on workers behind bars having access to books. They sponsored a Prison Banned Books Week at the end of September. Prison officials in Florida enforce some of the biggest restrictions on books. They banned 20,000 titles in 2022, the Marshall Project reported.

Help get more letters sent to the Literature Review Committee urging that the ban on *Militant* no. 17 be ended!

### Fight prison ban on the 'Militant'

**Get letters of support** from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to Literature Review Committee, Florida Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399, or email to Saritza. Legault@fdc.myflorida.com, with copies to themilitant@mac.com

**Send a check** to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked "Prisoners Rights Fight."