

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Back Canada Post workers strike
over wages, working conditions
 — PAGE 2

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 45 DECEMBER 2, 2024

SWP campaigns expand reach of 'Militant,' books; fund tops 100%!

BY TERRY EVANS

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. have gone over the top on their quotas in the fall party-building campaign!

In the weeks after the U.S. election, party members continued joining in strike picket lines and visiting workers on their doorsteps to discuss what workers can do to defend ourselves

EDITORIAL

Welcome to our new readers!
 —page 9

from boss and government attacks. They've introduced the party's revolutionary program and class-struggle road forward, selling 1,316 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1,436 books by SWP and other revolutionaries and raising \$141,637 for the SWP's annual Party-Building Fund. The eight-week campaign to extend the party's reach concluded Nov. 19.

SWP campaigners found wide-
Continued on page 3

Socialist Workers Party: The working class put its stamp on the 2024 elections



Militant/Eric Simpson

Hotel workers rally in San Francisco Sept. 2. Hotel workers, port workers, unionists around the country are fighting for higher wages, defense against inflation, more hiring, livable schedules. Before and since elections, more workers are using unions to fight attacks by bosses, gov't.

BY BERNIE SENTER

LOS ANGELES — "Given the events over the last couple days, it is necessary to begin this forum by describing the virulent attack on Jews in Amsterdam Nov. 7, and what it portends," Norton Sandler, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, told a Nov. 10 Militant Labor Forum on

the 2024 elections.

"Following a soccer match, supporters of the Israeli team were targeted and chased through the streets by marauding gangs. These attacks were pre-planned. Many were injured by these thugs," said Sandler. Despite advance warning, the cops failed to prevent the violence against Jews. Some of the attacking groups had direct ties to Hamas.

"Amsterdam is a reminder that Jew-hatred and pogroms are an integral part of the imperialist epoch that we are living through," he said. "The SWP de-

Continued on page 7

Israeli blows to Hezbollah key in fight vs. Jew-hatred

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israeli blows to Hezbollah in Lebanon have been so devastating that the Jew-hating group — and its backers in Tehran — made it clear Nov. 18 that they are willing to withdraw to some 20 miles north of Israel's border in exchange for a cease-fire. They also dropped the demand that Israel first agree to a cease-fire in Gaza.

Hezbollah hopes to buy time to work with Tehran to rebuild its forces in Lebanon, rearm and prepare for a war to destroy Israel and kill or expel Jews from the region. To that end, Tehran is increasing its stockpile of enriched uranium, bringing it closer to being able to build a nuclear weapon.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insists there can be no cease-fire until Hezbollah is disarmed and agrees to "shutting down the supply routes used to transport weapons" along with eliminating "its missile capabilities."

Israeli advances in Lebanon — including the killing of much of Hezbollah's central leadership — is helping to defend the safety of Israel, the only country that unconditionally offers Jews a refuge. Israel has also largely dismantled Hamas' death squads in Gaza and destroyed much of Iran's anti-aircraft systems and a key nuclear weapons site.

Hezbollah began firing hundreds of missiles at northern Israel on Oct. 8,

Continued on page 6

Massachusetts teachers on strike in fight state gov't says is illegal



AP Photo/Steve LeBlanc

Striking teachers from Beverly, Gloucester and Marblehead rallied at Massachusetts Statehouse in Boston Nov. 19, part of fight for parental leave, hiring and increased pay for teachers' aides.

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS

BEVERLY, Mass. — Over 1,400 public school teachers here and in the nearby towns of Gloucester and Marblehead on the North Shore are in their second week of strikes. Members of the Beverly Teachers Association and Union of Gloucester Educators went on strike Nov. 8, and Marblehead Education Association teachers on Nov. 12.

The three unions share common is-

ues — higher pay, especially for para-professionals, more parental leave and hiring more support staff. They had been working under contracts that expired Aug. 31.

Teachers in Newton, west of Boston, set an example by winning solid gains on similar issues when they went on strike for 15 days last January. They won a pay increase of 13% over four

Continued on page 9

Germany is today's 'sick man' of Europe as capitalist crisis deepens

BY TERRY EVANS

For years the rulers in Germany have used their domination of the European Union to enrich themselves on the backs of working people, especially by squeezing their weaker

rivals in Greece, Italy and the rest of southern Europe. But today the German economy itself is mired in stagnation and debt, leading the bosses to push harder against workers' wages and conditions at the same time that the rulers confront an increasingly unstable world.

To compound their problems, Germany's capitalist class now has a minority government after Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition fell apart

Continued on page 2

'The rent is just too damn high in New York City!'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — Persistently high rents and home mortgage prices make it increasingly difficult for working people to live here. And workers face similar situations in growing numbers of cities and rural areas across the country.

"Why 'Affordable Housing' in New York City Can Still Cost \$3,500 a Month," headlined a *New York Times* article Nov. 12, the first in a series on "The Housing Crunch." But what city authorities dub as "affordable" is out of

Continued on page 9

Inside

Putin sends his troops to be slaughtered in Ukraine war 4

Torture videos show Hamas' systematic brutality in Gaza 6

— On the picket line, p. 5 —

Nurses strike, rally in Sydney over wages, work conditions

Kentucky factory explosion kills two workers

Back Canada Post workers strike over wages, working conditions

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — Some 55,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers went on strike across Canada Nov. 15, fighting for better wages and livable work conditions. Negotiations have dragged on since Nov. 15, 2023. “Canada Post left us no choice when it threatened to change our working conditions and leave our members exposed to layoffs,” the union said.

One key issue is Canada Post’s plan to hire part-time employees to deliver parcels on weekends. This would create a two-tier system, with new workers earning less and having fewer benefits. Right now Canada Post has to employ full-time workers and pay them double time for this work. “They are trying to create a two-tiered system of compensation,” CUPW National President Jan Simpson told the *Globe and Mail*.

After workers have suffered years of ravaging price hikes the employers are offering a miserly 11.5% wage increase over four years. The union is demanding 24%. This also includes catch-up for low wage increases in the past. The union is also defending the defined-benefit pension plan its members have now, while the bosses want to switch to a separate plan for new employees that doesn’t guarantee what workers will actually get.

On Nov. 16 this *Militant* worker-correspondent visited a picket line at the huge Canada Post Distribution center, where 3,000 workers are employed. Workers described how supervisors spy on letter carriers on their routes, writing them up for the slightest infraction. After being written up three

times they can be fired. Roxane Gale, a postal union representative who works as a clerk, told me they are fighting to defend all the workers. “We are fighting for the retired, the young, the current workers. We need to recognize the fights that went on before.”

The Teamsters who organize Purolator, a major delivery service in Canada, announced that in solidarity with the postal workers they will not handle packages from Canada Post.

The bosses and their backers in the government have been carrying out a concerted campaign in the media against the workers. Dan Kelly, president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, said the strike is “really bad timing” for small businesses. Santo Li-gotti from the Retail Council of Canada said the work stoppage “couldn’t come at a worse time” with the retail supply chain “taking a beating” after recent rail and port labor actions. “Not to mention Christmas and Black Friday are just around the corner.”



Bay Today/Stu Campaigne

CUPW Local 576 members picket at post office in North Bay, Ontario, Nov. 15, fighting for better wages, working conditions, end to plan to hire part-time weekend workers at lower pay.

Both the rail workers and port workers were ordered back to work under the notorious Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, which allows the government to order “essential” workers back to work and impose binding arbitration.

Mark Lubinski, president of the postal workers local in Toronto, told

CBC, “The climate seems to be that Canada Post and other employers are waiting for the government to legislate us back to work.” The government did that in 2011 and 2018.

Defense of the right to strike is at the heart of this fight. Solidarity is in the interests of all working people.

Germany is ‘sick man’ of Europe as capitalist crisis deepens

Continued from front page

Nov. 6. Its collapse was prompted by Scholz firing the finance minister in a dispute over whether to ignore laws that aim to prevent the government from increasing its levels of debt. New elections will take place Feb. 23.

The continent’s second-most powerful ruling class, in France, also has a weakened minority government. Both Berlin and Paris confront sharpening competition for markets and resour-

ces against their rivals, including the rulers in the U.S. and China. At the same time they face Moscow’s murderous moves to conquer Ukraine and to extend the clout of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s expansionist regime in Europe.

Germany’s faltering capitalist economy — for decades the strongest on the continent — is now the new “sick man” of Europe,” the *Financial Times* wrote July 16. Since 2019 Germany’s gross domestic product has risen only 0.2%. In sharp contrast, over the same period U.S. GDP is up by 10.7%. Over the last year industrial production in Germany has slumped 4.6%.

For years the German rulers profited by unequal trade relations with southern European countries, like Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain. But today the economic malaise wracking the German bosses is deepening the crisis of capitalism across all of Europe.

Bosses turn the source of this crisis

on its head when they attempt to blame the working class for their declining fortunes. The Nov. 1 *Financial Times* quoted an anonymous company executive who scolded “work-shy” young Germans for undercutting the country’s “competitiveness.” Mercedes-Benz CEO Ola Kallenius blamed autoworkers for taking too many sick days. The fact is they’re gearing up for more attacks on workers’ wages and conditions.

Working people in Germany and across Europe are being made to bear the brunt of a crisis not of their making, and are increasingly determined to defend themselves from the employers’ attacks.

Sky-high prices and layoffs

Inflation in Germany soared to a 50-year high in 2022. Food prices alone rose by 12.4% in 2023. At the same time, 64,000 autoworkers in Germany have been thrown out of

Continued on page 3

THE MILITANT

Beijing conference condemns US embargo of Cuba

Delegates from 16 countries condemned the U.S. blockade that costs Cuba billions annually and does damage to the lives of working people there. Many voiced gratitude for the solidarity Cuba has extended to the peoples of their respective nations.



ICAP/Leima Martínez
Participants at 10th Asia-Pacific Regional Cuba solidarity conference, Beijing Oct. 29.

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The Militant

Vol. 88/No. 45
Closing news date: November 20, 2024

Editor: John Studer
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Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, and one week in September.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
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Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

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

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

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SWP campaigns top 100%!

Continued from front page
spread interest in building solidarity with union strike struggles, disgust at what Democratic and Republican administrations alike do on behalf of the capitalist class they serve, and interest in learning more about the root cause of the growing conflicts shaking the crisis-ridden world order. More workers today sense the imperialist rulers in Washington and elsewhere are dragging humanity toward the unthinkable prospect of a third world war.

Days after a deadly explosion at the Givaudan Sense Colour factory in Louisville, Kentucky, SWP members Amy Husk and Jacquie Henderson talked with workers who live near the plant Nov. 17.

The horrific blast “should never have happened,” Hope Harp told the two SWP members. “Two workers are dead, others injured. You can see glass that went flying from homes and the twisted metal from the plant.”

Harp is a member of Millwrights Local 1076 and a recruiter for the union. The consequences of the blast are “everyone’s concern,” she said. “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

Harp got a *Militant* subscription and four Pathfinder books, including a prepublication order for the new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by SWP leaders Mary-Alice Waters, Evelyn Reed and Joseph Hansen. The book offers a Marxist explanation of the origins of women’s oppression and a class-struggle road toward ending it.

Stronger unions show way forward

In McKeesport, in the Pittsburgh metro area, SWP member Tony Lane spoke with Stephanie Cook on her doorstep. She works at a nearby candy factory. They discussed the outcome of the election and Barack Obama’s remarks that Black men who don’t

vote for Vice President Kamala Harris are prejudiced against women.

“That’s not why I didn’t vote for Harris!” Cook said. “We need a better country.”

“What workers do together through our unions today is a start on the way to improve the conditions we face,” Lane said. Cook agreed. The SWP calls for a class break with the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties and building a party of labor. Cook got a subscription to the *Militant*.

In the same area, SWP member Sergio Zambrana spoke to a worker who told him about a nearby battery plant where workers in September organized a local of the United Steelworkers. She got a *Militant* subscription and 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. She wants to get together again and get a copy of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

In Montreal, office worker and long-time *Militant* reader Nancy Crawford renewed her subscription after attending a Nov. 16 Militant Labor Forum. Communist League member Beverly Bernardo asked Crawford what she likes about the paper that she began reading after CL members knocked



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

After deadly explosion at Louisville factory, Hope Harp, right, a member of Millwrights Local 1076, told Socialist Workers Party member Amy Husk Nov. 17, “What happened in that plant should never have happened. Two workers are dead. This is everybody’s concern.”

on her door some years ago.

Crawford said she’s “long recognized the imbalances and injustices in the world, and it only seems to be getting worse.

“My goal is to learn more about what can be done to combat inequality,” she said. “The solution can’t come from the government. It has to come from the people.”

In the weeks ahead, members of the

SWP and CLs, along with some new supporters won to the party’s 2024 presidential campaign, will continue taking an internationalist, working-class program to working people in cities, towns and rural areas.

To join in advancing this course and the effort to build the party that workers need, contact the branch of the SWP or the CL nearest you listed on page 8.

Germany: ‘sick man’ of Europe as capitalist crisis deepens

Continued from page 2

work since 2018. Auto giant Volkswagen announced Oct. 28 it will shutter three plants, its first-ever factory closures at home, with a 10% wage cut for the remaining workers. Despite the closure threat, workers at the company’s Osnabrueck plant, members of the IG Metall union, went on strike Nov. 6 demanding higher pay.

In late October, 71,000 IG Metall members walked out at auto companies Porsche AG, BMW and Mercedes. They said no to a 3.6% raise over 27 months, demanding 7% instead. Their actions follow a wave of strikes earlier this year by workers at airports, banks, railways and elsewhere.

“You notice the solidarity has become stronger,” Christoph Leonardt, a striking worker at a scrap metal plant near Leipzig, told the *New York Times* in March. The strike ended in May after 180 days, the longest in Germany’s postwar history.

A slump in production at key automotive, chemical and engineering industries was exacerbated by a sharp rise in natural gas prices that followed Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

For years the German rulers had one of the most decrepit capitalist armies in Europe, relying on playing Washington and Moscow against each other for defense. After Putin’s invasion of Ukraine they

scurried to rebuild their armed forces.

Today, Berlin is the second-biggest supplier of arms to Ukraine. But unlike the governments of the U.S., France and the U.K., Germany’s rulers have refused Ukraine’s requests for more powerful and long-range missiles. Scholz says Berlin’s strategy is “Russia must not win and Ukraine must not lose” the war.

Earlier this year Defense Minister Boris Pistorius warned that Berlin faced decades of confrontation with Moscow and argued for a more rapid German military buildup than Scholz was undertaking.

Deepening crisis across EU

Prospects for the rulers of France, Europe’s second-strongest imperialist power, are no better. For decades they utilized their economic and military ties to regimes in former French colonies to try to offset their decline. But these connections are being ruptured in the course of the conflicts shaking West Africa. Paris has been forced to withdraw its forces from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Now it plans to further reduce troops deployed in Chad, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Senegal.

At home, French Prime Minister Michel Barnier announced his 2025 budget last month. It would delay increases in state pensions for 14 million retired workers, from next January until July, and increase vehicle sales taxes. If the proposals are rejected by the National Assembly, Barnier says he will use special governmental powers to enact them anyway. The last two French budgets have been “adopted” this way.

Germany’s capitalist rulers account for a quarter of the European Union’s GDP, ensuring that the capitalist crisis in Germany will intensify the challenges facing all of Europe’s ruling

families and that of the EU as a whole.

In the 20 countries that use the euro currency, economic output grew at zero percent in the last quarter of 2023 and has stagnated since.

Today there are 27 governments in the EU. The political bloc was created with a storybook myth that it would lead to a convergence of Europe’s competing ruling classes, and a lessening of class and regional differences. In fact, it was a way for the rulers in Germany and France to take advantage of their edge over the rulers in the southern European countries to prosper and better compete with Washington.

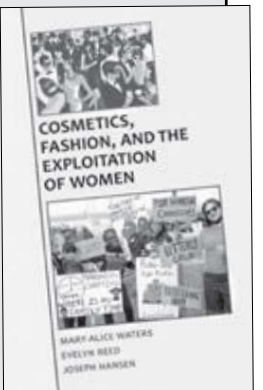
Today the gap between the capitalist economies in Europe and the U.S. is widening.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, SWP fund Sept. 21 - November 19 (final chart)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	55	56	55	61	\$10,000	\$10,745
Chicago	90	91	90	92	\$14,000	\$14,156
Cincinnati	50	52	50	55	\$5,000	\$5,070
Fort Worth*	55	57	50	60	\$5,000	\$5,100
Los Angeles	115	116	115	117	\$15,000	\$16,115
Miami	35	35	35	26	\$5,000	\$5,240
Minneapolis	65	67	65	68	\$5,500	\$5,666
N. New Jersey	70	74	70	72	\$7,500	\$7,811
New York	100	107	115	125	\$20,000	\$20,703
Oakland	85	86	85	89	\$15,000	\$15,000
Philadelphia	60	61	60	70	\$6,500	\$6,681
Pittsburgh	40	41	40	48	\$6,000	\$6,068
Seattle	60	69	60	63	\$14,500	\$15,041
Washington	50	51	50	52	\$4,500	\$4,751
Other		11		94		\$3,490
Total U.S.	930	974	940	1,092	\$133,500	\$141,637
Prisoners		107				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London*	50	58	130	140		
Manchester*	45	51	40	42		
Total U.K.	95	109	170	182		
Canada	90	95	90	112		
Australia	30	31	30	50		
Total	1,145	1,316	1,230	1,436	\$133,500	\$141,637
SHOULD BE	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	\$140,000	\$140,000
*Raised goal						

Prepublication special offer!

How the cosmetics and fashion bosses rake in profits from the social insecurities of women and youth. This lively debate from the mid-20th century — now in a 2024 edition with a new preface and an opening article by Mary-Alice Waters — offers a Marxist understanding of the origins of women’s oppression and fight for their liberation as part of the working-class struggle for power.



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Putin sends his troops to be slaughtered in Ukraine war



Daniel Ofman/The World

Several thousand Russians rallied in Berlin, above, and other European cities Nov. 17 against Putin regime, war on Ukraine. Placard on right says, "Victory for Ukraine! Freedom for Russia!"

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin has stepped up the pace of his invading forces' drive to seize more territory in the Donetsk region of Ukraine through "meat wave" frontal assaults. The Ukrainian defenders, stretched and out-gunned but motivated and determined to defend the sovereignty of their country, are inflicting the heaviest losses of the war on Moscow's troops.

Part of Putin's motivation is President-elect Donald Trump's stated aim to use Washington's substantial if declining weight in world politics to press the two sides into talks to end hostilities.

The U.S. rulers have sought to keep their options open to best advance their own strategic interests in the region by providing Kyiv with just enough arms to forestall defeat, but not enough to win. In mid-November, the outgoing Joseph Biden administration eased its limits on Kyiv using long-range U.S. missiles against military targets on Russian territory, after a year's hesitation. But this only applies in the Kursk region of western Russia, where Kyiv made an incursion and has held most of the ground it seized.

A counteroffensive by 40,000 Russian troops, reinforced by some 10,000 North Korean soldiers, is trying to dislodge Kyiv's forces there. The Ukrainian-held Russian terrain would be a lever for Kyiv in any negotiations over Moscow's occupation of 18% of Ukraine's territory.

In its ongoing effort to target civilians, Moscow launched 120 missiles and 90 drones against Ukrainian cities Nov. 16-17. The majority were shot down but the airstrikes killed at least seven people and severely damaged parts of Ukraine's already weakened electrical system.

The tactics of the Russian army brass in Kursk and on the front in southeastern Ukraine are now costing 1,500 to 2,000 troops killed and severely wounded a day. There have been over 700,000 Russian casualties since Putin's invasion began in February 2022.

Russian marines suffered disastrous losses from their first attempt to retake the settlement of Novoivanovka from Kyiv's forces in Kursk. But their commanders stubbornly continued the same type of assault another five times. Losses surged into the hundreds as Ukrainian defenders knew exactly what to expect.

According to a Nov. 16 Euromaidan report, the riverbanks near the township's only bridge were "littered with dead Russian soldiers and destroyed armored vehicles." Other elite Russian forces elsewhere have also suffered sizable losses at the hands of tenacious Ukrainian defenders.

Russian soldiers' relatives protest

Although anti-war protesters now face immediate arrest in Russia, some 20 wives, mothers and daughters of mobilized conscripts protested outside the Ministry of Defense building in Moscow Sept. 21, the second anniversary

of Putin's unpopular mass draft. They insisted Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov meet their demand that mobilized reservists, who have spent two years at the front, be brought home.

Paid provocateurs showed up to disrupt the protest. One pro-Kremlin woman got in a protester's face, telling her to "stay home and pray." The provocateurs "insulted the wives and mothers," baiting them as "foreign agents," reported Russian opposition outlet Mobilization News.

But they couldn't rattle the soldiers' family members, so police intervened and "shamefully detained the mobilized men's relatives." Two reporters for the independent news outlet SO-

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Kursk villagers in Russia demand end to 'damned war'



NeMoskva

"End this damned war, which has taken so many innocent lives," an elderly man says in an online video clip, blaming Russian President Vladimir Putin for the situation he and those standing with him find themselves in. He stands in front of some 50 fellow villagers displaced from Olgovka, in western Russia's Kursk region, as he reads from their letter denouncing Putin's war against Ukraine. "We've been left homeless," he continues. "We've been living in hell over the past three months."

"Some of our neighbors were killed. Some are missing since an evacuation order was never given," he said, calling the situation in the war-torn village like "scenes from a horror film."

Over 150,000 civilians in the Kursk region were forced to evacuate in early August after a surprise cross-border incursion by Ukrainian forces. Months later, nearly 40 separate videos have appeared on the popular Russian social media site VKontakte, telling Putin to end his "cursed war." His regime tries to suppress all opposition at home by banning use of the word "war," insisting Moscow's nearly three-year-old invasion of Ukraine be called a "special military operation."

"Listen to the people of the borderland," the man from Olgovka added, who "want our children to live in peace, not to constantly hear air raid sirens." They pointed out that "after all, we're forced to endure all this not by our own will."

In the first week of November, displaced residents from the Sudzhansky and Bolshesoldatsky districts staged "unauthorized" demonstrations in the regional capital of Kursk over the failure of local authorities to find them suitable accommodations. They were told it could take up to five years to rebuild and they haven't received any promised compensation for their destroyed properties.

— ROY LANDERSEN

Cuban deputy foreign minister says, 'End US embargo!'

BY LEA SHERMAN

NEWARK, N.J. — Carlos Fernández de Cossío, Cuba's deputy minister of foreign affairs, spoke to a meeting of 35 at Rutgers Law School here Nov. 14.

Law professor Charles Auffant, who has organized trips to study Cuba's legal system for the past 20 years, chaired the meeting. He announced these trips will now be open to undergraduate students.

Fernández de Cossío focused on the devastating impact of Washington's 64-year economic war against the Cuban people and their socialist revolution.

"The U.S. prohibits any imports to Cuba with only a few exceptions, and it prohibits imports to Cuba from any country, regardless of the product, if it has 10% or more U.S. product in it. What products in the world does that not include?" he said. Examples he gave included getting parts for dialy-

sis machines or parts to repair Cuba's aging electrical grid.

"This is multiplied more and more, repeated in every area," he said. "No import of metal, no cars, candy bars and much more. And Cuba cannot use U.S. dollars in its trade with international partners."

He pointed out that under both Presidents Donald Trump and Joseph Biden, the U.S. has unjustly put Cuba on its list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The embargo has caused severe problems with basic services like electricity and health care. "Many in Cuba are looking to move," said Fernández de Cossío.

At the same time, all of Washington's attempts to isolate Cuba — the 1961 invasion at the Bay of Pigs, CIA schemes to assassinate Fidel Castro — have failed to undo the revolution.

of Putin's unpopular mass draft. They insisted Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov meet their demand that mobilized reservists, who have spent two years at the front, be brought home.

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But they couldn't rattle the soldiers' family members, so police intervened and "shamefully detained the mobilized men's relatives." Two reporters for the independent news outlet SO-

"Cuba has a respectful and cooperative relationship with the majority of countries of the world," he said. "We have a firm determination for Cuba to be free of foreign interference, but we are willing to have constructive, civilized relations with the U.S."



Bob Miller

Carlos Fernández de Cossío at Rutgers.

TAvision were also held for several hours and warned that the women's protests should not be covered.

The women have been released, a statement in Mobilization News said, "but this shame cannot be erased from history. The authorities took the men away and are now at war with their wives, mothers and daughters."

In September 2022 Putin launched his unpopular "partial mobilization" to draft 300,000 civilians for the war. Mass protests erupted across the Russian Federation and hundreds of thousands of young men fled the country.

Despite the heavy casualties, Putin has not called up new mobilizations. He fears this would set off open opposition to his regime's war among working people and the oppressed nationalities of the Russian Federation who bear the brunt of Russian losses. These Russian toilers are the most important ally of the Ukrainian people.

Chanting "No to war!" and "Russia without Putin!" and carrying banners saying "Ukraine's victory is also ours!" several thousand Russians and supporters marched in Berlin Nov. 17. Organizers included Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of late opposition figure Alexei Navalny, as well as former political prisoners Ilya Yashin, Vladimir Kara-Murza and Oleg Orlov, all of whom were released Aug. 1 in a prisoner swap. They aim to deepen the opposition of Russians to Putin's war.

The protest demanded the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine and the release of all political prisoners by Moscow.

Similar rallies were held in London, Amsterdam, Warsaw, Vienna and elsewhere.

—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.

Nurses strike, rally in Sydney over wages, work conditions

SYDNEY — Up to 10,000 nurses and midwives marched through the central city and rallied outside state Parliament here Nov. 13, chanting, "We won't take it anymore, we want more in '24" and "15% now!" The protest was both angry and festive, with many bringing homemade banners. "Pay us 15% before we are living in a tent," read one.

Rallies and marches took place in other centers across New South Wales. The actions were part of a 24-hour strike to press the demands of more than 50,000 nurses and midwives in the state's public hospitals.

The Nurses and Midwives Association is demanding a 15% immediate annual pay increase to meet rising prices and to bring pay up to par with that in neighboring states. Following earlier strikes and protests, the union agreed Sept. 30 to an interim 3% pay raise while negotiations continued over four weeks.

However, the union said, the state government made no new offers, instead saying any wage increase would be at the expense of promised increases in staff-to-patient ratios. "What other occupation is required to pay for the resources to do their job out of their own pocket?" responded the union's general secretary, Shaye Candish.

"We have a cost-of-living crisis," Michael Whaites, the union's assistant general secretary, told the Nov. 13 rally, answering government claims that the nurses are greedy. "It's not greedy to want to pay your rent."

Among a number of union contingents supporting the nurses' rally was the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, which is also taking action against the state government for improved wages and

conditions in a new union contract.

Over the following two days nurses and midwives at two of the top private hospital providers in Sydney walked off the job to also press for an immediate 15% pay increase.

— Mike Tucker

Striking UK food workers reject offer, win solidarity

SPALDING, England — Now into the eighth week of their strike, hundreds of Unite union members at the Bakkavor food factory here voted by 81% to reject the bosses' latest pay offer.

The workers walked out Sept. 27 after rejecting a pay raise below recent price increases. It included a one-off payment of 50 pounds (\$63). The only thing the bosses' new offer raised was to increase that one-time payment to 350 pounds.

The determination of the strikers remains solid, expressed in the high turnout on picket lines and 100 workers joining the union since the strike began.

Unite organizer Sam Luczynski visited Iceland recently, where the strike received support from the Efling trade union, as well as major media coverage. Iceland is home to Bakkavor's main shareholders, brothers Agust and Lydur Gudmundsson.

"At stake in this pay fight is maintaining a strong union at the Spalding factory," East Midlands Unite organizer Sam Hennessy told a Nov. 6 union meeting here, to set an example for the company's 21 other U.K. plants.

"Workers at Spalding have maintained paid breaks and shift premiums that have been eroded in other plants. The company has said it wants to revisit these terms and conditions at Spalding — conditions that the work-



Militant/Mike Tucker

Thousands of nurses and midwives march in Sydney and rally at the New South Wales state Parliament there as part of a 24-hour strike demanding an immediate 15% pay raise.

ers here have fought hard through the union to defend," Hennessy said.

Supermarket shelves are emptying of some Bakkavor products in the run-up to Christmas, especially soups, dips and wraps. Tesco, the U.K.'s biggest supermarket chain, "appears to be the most affected," the *Grocer* magazine reported Nov. 6.

The company is threatening to move production from Spalding to other plants and is attempting to bypass the union by offering to settle wage raises with individual workers.

Media coverage of the impact of the strike has been growing in the last couple of weeks, widening openings to win broader union solidarity.

Send messages of support to Unite East Midlands, 5 Kesteven Street, Lincoln, LN5 7LH or email: education.eastmids@unitetheunion.org. Send strike fund donations to Unite East Midlands Region, 1% Fund, Account 20173975; Sort Code 60-83-01.

— Jonathan Silberman

Kentucky factory explosion kills two workers

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Two workers were killed and at least 11 injured

when the Givaudan Sense Colour plant here exploded around 3 p.m. on Nov. 12. Part of the plant collapsed and the explosion sent shrapnel flying into the surrounding neighborhood. Plate-glass windows of nearby businesses shattered and the sound of the explosion could be heard for miles.

Angelita Oldham, a worker in the plant, told the local news media that she had reported safety issues in the plant to management before the explosion. After speaking to the press Oldham was removed from a company meeting and isolated from her co-workers. "I wasn't allowed to ask questions or talk to my co-workers," she said. "I think they did that because I spoke the truth, and my only objective is to speak for those who cannot advocate for themselves."

Militant worker-correspondents spoke with a number of workers in the Clifton neighborhood Nov. 17 who were upset about the dangerous conditions in the nearby plant and how it affects the surrounding community. Many said they will attend a meeting the following day called by Givaudan company officials.

An April 11, 2003, blast at the plant released 26,000 pounds of aqueous ammonia into the air. One worker at the plant was killed, 26 Clifton neighbors were evacuated and 1,500 told to shelter in place.

— Amy Husk

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

December 6, 1999

In the coal fields today miners are fighting against bosses attempts to gut the lifetime health benefits they won in struggle. Truck drivers are walking the picket lines to win a union at the largest nonunion trucking company in the U.S. Working farmers are seeking ways to resist being forced off the land. Puerto Ricans are mobilizing to demand the U.S. military stop using the island of Vieques as a bombing practice zone.

These battles are examples of the new proletarian movement that has begun to rise in the city and countryside.

There is plenty of evidence of the world disorder of capitalism. Imperialist governments are preparing for more military and other conflicts and all try to pull working people in behind this course. But the number one enemy of workers is the ruling class in our own country; in the U.S. workers' enemy is Washington.

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 6, 1974

The Houston Independent School District is on a campaign to track down Mexican-born schoolchildren who are in the U.S. "illegally." Children who are found to be noncitizens or to lack residency papers are being forced to pay \$66 a month to remain in school. This has resulted in some families withdrawing their children from school.

Families "suspected" of being "illegals" are being visited by school officials. In some cases these officials can't speak Spanish. Families have been confronted with the repeated demand, "Passport! Passport!"

The attacks against undocumented workers promise to increase as they are made scapegoats for the deepening economic crisis. The attacks on the schoolchildren point to the increasing importance of the "illegal alien" issue and the need for redoubled opposition to these attacks on families without documents.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 5, 1949

Two major events last week served to point up the precarious character of the "stabilization" achieved under the Marshall Plan in Western Europe. One was the 24-hour general strike in France, the other the resurgence of land seizures by poor peasants in Italy.

The strike call was the first genuine French general strike in 12 years. The action was merely a warning of things to come, if a substantial upward adjustment in wages is not forthcoming. The universal response showed the power of united action sentiment among the workers.

In Italy land hunger has characterized the peasantry for decades. The fall of Mussolini and the turbulent postwar years witnessed a widespread movement for the seizure of the landed estates by the peasants. Land seizures have once again taken on the aspect of a large scale movement, particularly in southern Italy.

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Torture videos show Hamas' systematic brutality in Gaza

BY SETH GALINSKY

A video of Hamas thugs torturing Palestinians in Gaza is graphic proof that far from being a liberation movement, Hamas is one of the biggest obstacles Palestinian workers and farmers face to be able to defend their class and national interests.

The video sheds light on why growing numbers of working people in Gaza — tired of Hamas' dictatorial rule and emboldened by Israeli advances in dismantling the Jew-hating organization — feel able to speak out in opposition to this reactionary group.

The Israel Defense Forces released the 45-minute video Nov. 10 — compiled from videos made by Hamas from 2018 to 2020 recently found by Israeli soldiers on a computer in Jabaliya.

The videos show prisoners chained upside-down to the ceiling with sacks over their heads — or in other painful positions — as Hamas thugs alternately toy with them or beat them on the soles of their feet.

This is no surprise to anyone familiar with Hamas. From the day it took power in Gaza after winning a close election against Fatah in 2006 and then launching a slaughter that drove its opponent out of the area, Hamas has used torture and murder against members of its own organization and other Palestinians it accuses of being “collaborators” with Israel.

This goes hand in hand with Hamas' determination to eliminate all Jews from Palestine, a legacy of its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood and other collaborators with the German Nazis. This goal was built into its 1988 founding covenant.

In addition to torture, at least six prisoners were executed in 2012 after being accused of giving Israel information. One was tied to a motorcycle and dragged through the streets.

In 2014 Hamas executed 24 prisoners, including at least eight on “trial,” and tortured dozens of others.

Amnesty International reported that many of those abducted by Hamas have been “subjected to torture, including severe beatings with truncheons, gun butts, hoses and wire or held in stress positions.” And the report noted that some of the torture took place at Gaza City's main al-Shifa Hospital. That's the same hospital Israeli forces occupied last year after discovering a Hamas command post underneath. It is also where Israeli hostages had been held.

This brutality goes along with Hamas' reactionary political line. The group beats and jails homosexuals. In 2016 it tortured and executed Mahmoud Ishtawi, one of its own commanders, after he was accused of being gay.

In 2021 a Hamas judicial council forbade women from traveling without the permission of a male guardian. In 2022 it banned street music.

The people of Israel and Gaza have paid a high price for Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom against Jews. The Hamas death squads killed 1,200 people, wounded thousands, took 250 hostages, and raped and mutilated dozens of women. They also killed dozens of Arab citizens of Israel and immigrant workers who worked with Jews.

Thousands of Gazan civilians — in addition to some 15,000 Hamas thugs — have been killed since Israel launched its war to eliminate Hamas as a threat Oct. 8, despite Israeli army warnings to civilians to leave potential combat zones. With the successes Israeli forces have had, many Gazans feel free today to speak out, blaming Hamas for the destruction they have faced.

Hamas is a ‘betrayal’ of Palestinians

Interviews have recently been published by the Media Line outlet with several Gaza residents who worked inside Israel before the war. Their words puncture the myth promoted by apologists for Hamas, that the group is viewed by Gazans as their protector. It also shows the possibilities for Jewish and Arab workers to join together in common struggles.

Hasan, who worked in a factory in Israel for 20 years, said, “It was generally good. I earned enough to live a dignified life in Gaza. But now we live like animals.

“This is the result of having bad Islamists in power, like Hamas,” he



Israel Defense Forces

Clip from 2019 video shot by Hamas in Jabaliya of prisoner being tortured by Hamas thugs. Along with goal of killing Jews, Hamas has brutalized Palestinians in Gaza since seizing power.

said, adding, “Israel also bears responsibility.”

Sami and his son Riyadh also spoke to Media Line. Sami was working in Israel Oct. 7. When he tried to cross back into Gaza, he was detained by the Israeli police, beaten, jailed for a month and then sent back. Sami's wife and children were killed during an Israeli strike, as was Riyadh's wife.

“Today we have nothing, no work, no homes and our children are gone.

There is nothing left,” Sami said. Despite his mistreatment by Israel's capitalist government, Sami noted that in Israel he worked with both Jewish and Arab citizens and they all got along. Hamas being in power “has dragged us back 200 years,” he said. “This is not a national movement. It is a betrayal.”

Hamas “started the war on Oct. 7,” Riyadh said. “If they had not initiated this nothing would have happened.”

Israeli blows to Hezbollah key in fight vs. Jew-hatred

Continued from front page

2023, the day after Gaza-based Hamas murdered 1,200 people, wounded thousands, took 250 hostages and raped and mutilated numerous women. Hezbollah aimed to reinforce the impact of the worst anti-Jewish pogrom since the Holocaust in World War II. As a result of its bombardment, more than 60,000 Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs alike, were forced to evacuate their homes near the Lebanese border.

According to a 2006 U.N. brokered agreement, Hezbollah is supposed to stay north of Lebanon's Litani River. Instead, Hezbollah — which is far better armed than the Lebanese National Army — built a network of military tunnels in the south and prepared to launch its own pogrom against Jews in Israel. Israeli troops found weapons and even rocket launchers placed in almost every Lebanese home near the border.

Origins of the Party of God

Hezbollah — Party of God in Arabic — was formed in Lebanon at the initiative of the reactionary capitalist regime in Iran, part of consolidating a counterrevolution that pushed back gains made by working people and

the oppressed during the 1979 revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah of Iran. Tehran sent money, weapons and 1,500 trainers to Lebanon. Hezbollah became the central force in Tehran's efforts to extend its influence throughout the region.

Hezbollah took its name from a paramilitary thug group that was formed in Iran in 1979 to help target the millions of working people who entered political life during the upheaval that ousted the shah, including vanguard workers and communists. Its slogan was “The only party is the Party of God, the only leader is Ruhallah [Khomeini].”

Members of Iran's Party of God, armed with chains, clubs, brass knuckles, knives and firearms physically broke up political meetings and demonstrations. On May 1, 1979, Party of God thugs destroyed the Workers House, the union headquarters in Tehran. They shut down newspapers; destroyed political organizations, from bourgeois rivals to Stalinist groups; and were central to the consolidation of the reactionary bourgeois-clerical regime.

While Hezbollah — based on Lebanon's Shiite Muslim population, like the regime in Tehran — never had majority support there, its Tehran-supplied funding and weaponry made it the dominant political and military force. Several bourgeois parties based in the Druze and Christian communities became its allies.

But the Israeli advances into Lebanon and its attacks on Hezbollah positions in Beirut have opened rifts in Hezbollah's alliance, and emboldened others to speak out.

“Hezbollah can no

longer claim it is defending Lebanon,” Gebran Bassil, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, a former Hezbollah ally based on Christian Maronites, said Nov. 14.

Hezbollah, like Hamas, puts its command posts and bunkers in civilian neighborhoods. And like in Gaza, the Israel Defense Forces often warn civilians in Lebanon to evacuate before a strike. Still, hundreds of civilians have been killed or injured.

Anti-Zionism a cover for Jew-hatred

Apologists for Hamas, Tehran and Hezbollah claim that they are not anti-Jewish, just anti-Zionist. But Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Gen. Mohammad-Jafar Asadi let the truth slip out on Iran's state-owned national TV Nov. 10. He told a reporter that “the evil Jews have been perpetuating” a huge massacre.

Surprised, the interviewer tried to correct him, saying he must be “referring to the Zionists” since “there are anti-Zionist Jews.”

But Asadi didn't back down. The Koran, he claimed, “says that the Jews are our biggest enemies.”

The attempts by the reactionary regime to whip up support for its war moves against Israel are falling on deaf ears. Protests and strikes have grown in Iran and are spirited and confident. At a Nov. 16 action in Tehran, some 300 retired women school teachers waved 10,000 toman notes — worth about 15 cents — in the air, smiling while chanting that their pensions are like a boat that is stuck in the mud.

The following day retirees led by the Haft Tappeh sugar cane workers union marched through the streets of Shush, demanding freedom for imprisoned union leaders and activists, including Ismail Gerami and Sharifeh Mohammadi. “Our rights are only gained in the streets,” they said.

NEW INTERNATIONAL A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY



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SWP: 'The working class put its stamp on 2024 elections'

Continued from front page

fends Israel's right to exist as a refuge for the Jews. But the Socialist Workers Party also explains that Jew-hatred and pogroms will only end when the working-class takes political power."

Looking at *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, written by Leon Trotsky and adopted by the SWP in 1938, helps in thinking about the U.S. election, he said. Trotsky explained the two basic afflictions facing the working class under capitalism are unemployment and high prices. "Bourgeois elections give a distorted picture of class struggle, but the conditions and battles workers face today were fundamental to the outcome of the 2024 election."

High prices, Sandler said, are devastating the working class. Wages for those employed don't come close to keeping up with rents, groceries, child care and prices for everything workers need. Millions work two jobs to try to survive, and daunting credit card debts are rampant. Work schedules, long hours and forced overtime imposed by the bosses make it difficult for workers to have a life. This especially affects working-class women.

And these conditions come down hardest on African Americans, Sandler said, even as the size of privileged middle-class and professional layers in the Black community have grown. Small wonder more Blacks voted for Trump.

The world crisis of the capitalist system continues to deepen, Sandler said. Politics is and will increasingly be marked by rival capitalist powers implementing trade conflicts and new wars to redivide the world. And they all look to deepen the exploitation of the working class to sharpen their competitive advantage and defend their profits.

These trends were accelerated by Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine, as well as the Tehran-backed Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas pogrom against Jews in Israel and developments since across the Middle East.

The bosses' parties

For decades the Democratic Party campaigned as the party of the working class. This changed with the Barack Obama presidency, an administration that consciously worked to obscure the class nature of politics. Obama was instrumental in anointing Harris as the Democratic Party presidential candidate and pushing Joseph Biden aside this year, Sandler said. In promoting Kamala Harris, Obama was looking for what would have been in effect a third Obama term.

The Republicans succeeded to a sub-



Norton Sandler, member of SWP National Committee, campaigns at Los Angeles teachers' rally Sept. 28. Workers' battles reflect steps forward by U.S. working class, he told Nov. 10 forum.

stantial degree in convincing workers that they were the lesser evil. And this was true despite the position of many trade union officials, who went all in for Harris, Sandler said. Other union officials, sensing the mood of the ranks, didn't support either Trump or Harris, including the United Mine Workers, International Longshoremen's Association, and the Teamsters.

The upper-middle-class meritocratic layers who dominate the Democratic Party — like Obama — view workers as the source of bigotry, racism and reaction. Obama's condescending admonition to Black men to get on board backing the sister was a prime example.

After the election, David Axelrod, a prominent commentator on CNN and a former top aide in the Obama administration, was one of many Democrats who said the party had become a "smarty-pants, suburban, college-educated party" that will keep losing elections, Sandler said. "You can't approach working people like missionaries and say, 'We're here to help you become more like us.'"

The Trump victory struck a blow to the Obamas and the meritocracy the Obamas are a part of, he said, and it struck a blow to the wokeism promoted broadly in the Democratic Party and in middle-class radical currents.

The Democrats badly misjudged the weight of the abortion issue, putting constitutional amendments on ballots in a number of states in hopes of boosting votes for their party, Sandler added. But while many working-class women support decriminalization of abortion, they see it as just one part of a broader battle — for better wages, conditions that enable them to start and sustain a family,

access to child care and health care.

Abortion referenda won in seven states, he said, including Montana, Arizona, Nevada and Missouri. Harris lost all four.

Ever since Trump's first victory in 2016, the Democrats have carried out a relentless assault on constitutional protections in order to use the FBI and compliant courts to try and drive him out of politics. With his victory Nov. 5, the myriad of legal cases Democratic Party prosecutors at the federal, state and local levels have been pursuing against him began to fall apart. These outrageous prosecutions ran roughshod over rights workers need to defend ourselves from government attacks.

Now we'll see what a Trump administration, backed by control of both the House and Senate, will do, he said. Any effort to carry out mass deportations will run into resistance from workers around the country seeking to strengthen working-class unity, and also from the employers, who depend on immigrants to fill jobs in factories, construction, hotels, restaurants, farms and more.

We will continue to advance the demand for amnesty for immigrants

in the U.S., and the need for the labor movement to recruit *all* workers to strengthen the unions.

SWP campaign set an example

The Socialist Workers 2024 campaign set an example, Sandler said, advancing the program and road forward the working class needs. Our presidential candidate, Rachele Fruit, and her running mate, Dennis Richter, along with SWP candidates across the country, got known by fighting workers.

"We raise the necessity of establishing a party of labor and organizing workers in their millions to defend our class interests and fight to take political power. This got a serious hearing that will continue going forward."

What we say — that the low point of labor resistance is behind us and a new breeze is blowing — is true, Sandler said. Petitions from workers seeking to unionize were up 27% over the last year. Workers are more willing to strike.

"We will explain the necessity of fighting for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to prevent layoffs, and for provisions that when prices rise, your pay rises accordingly," he said. "And we explain the necessity of fighting to establish a floor necessary for working-class families, and a government-paid supplemental income necessary for us to survive."

"We will also explain that these needed steps cannot be accomplished under capitalism, another reason the working class must take political power."

"We won campaign endorsers among working-class fighters, many of whom joined us in campaigning. The SWP is stronger today," Sandler said.

Party members will help advance solidarity through our unions with our co-workers on the job and with other trade union strikes and struggles.

And the party will continue to fight every manifestation of Jew-hatred, and will continue our decadeslong work in defense of the Cuban Revolution, an example for workers everywhere to emulate.

Workers in Australia protest gov't takeover of construction union

BY MIKE TUCKER

SYDNEY — Over 2,000 construction, electrical and other union workers and their supporters marched and rallied Nov. 12 at the state Parliament here to protest the federal government takeover of the construction division of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union. The protest was organized by the Electrical Trades Union.

In August, the government appointed an administrator to oust the leadership of the CFMEU construction division and take it over. Several hundred elected union representatives and officials were dismissed. This followed sensationalized media allegations of criminal conduct and organized crime links by union officials. Workers are demanding that their elected representatives be reinstated. Any problems in their union can be resolved by the workers themselves.

Organizers and delegates still working for the union were ordered by the government administrator not to pro-

mote or join the Nov. 12 action. Workers were told that their employers could take action against them if they walked off the job to participate. Two previous protests had seen thousands of construction workers walk off the job nationwide to defend their union.

"They did everything they could to threaten us, frighten us, intimidate us and try and stop us coming here today," union delegate Denis McNamara told the rally.

The High Court will hear the ousted leadership's challenge to government administration Dec. 10 and 11 in Canberra. A union rally is scheduled to coincide with the court action there.

The Building and Wood Workers International, representing 12 million construction workers in 140 countries, condemned the government takeover of the union at an international meeting in November. "The CFMEU has been stripped of its right to a trial and its right to the presumption of innocence," it said.

Recommended reading



from pathfinderpress.com

Cuban Revolution forged in 'extraordinary school of experience'

Che Guevara Talks to Young People is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Ernesto Che Guevara was a young Argentine-born fighter who joined Fidel Castro and his Rebel Army to become an outstanding leader of the Cuban Revolution. In 1959, Castro, Guevara and others led workers and peasants to take power, opening the road to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Their example, in continuity with the Bolshevik Revolution, inspired a new generation of revolutionary-minded youth worldwide, initiating a renewal of communism. The excerpt is from "Something New in the Americas," Guevara's speech to the First Latin American Youth Congress held in Havana July 28, 1960. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Oswaldo Salas

Che Guevara at First Latin American Youth Congress, July 28, 1960, in Havana. Led by Fidel Castro, millions of workers and peasants took political power and made a socialist revolution.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

We would also like to extend special greetings to Jacobo Arbenz, [applause] president of the first Latin American nation [Guatemala] to fearlessly raise its voice against colonialism, and to express the cherished desires of its peasant masses through a deep-going and courageous agrarian reform. We would like to express our gratitude to him and to the democracy that fell in that country for

the example it gave us, and for enabling us to make a correct appreciation of all the weaknesses that government was unable to overcome. Doing so has made it possible for us to get to the root of the matter, and to decapitate in one blow those who held power, and the henchmen serving them. ...

Many of you, from diverse political tendencies, will ask yourselves, as you did yesterday and as perhaps you will also do tomorrow: What is the Cuban Revolution? What is its ideology? And immediately a question will arise, as it always does in these cases, among both adherents and adversaries: Is the Cuban Revolution communist? Some say yes, hoping the answer is yes, or that it is heading in that direction. Others, disappointed perhaps, will also think the answer is yes. There will be those disappointed people who think the answer is no, as well as those who hope the answer is no.

I might be asked whether this revolution before your eyes is a communist revolution. After the usual explanations as to what communism is (I leave aside the hackneyed accusations by imperialism and the colonial powers, who confuse everything), I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist — and listen well that I say "Marxist" — it is because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx. [Applause] ...

The Cuban Revolution was moving

forward, not worrying about labels, not checking what others said about it, but constantly scrutinizing what the Cuban people wanted of it. And it quickly found that not only had it achieved, or was on the way to achieving, the happi-

"The Cuban Revolution discovered by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx..."

ness of its people; it had also become the object of inquisitive looks from friend and foe alike — hopeful looks from an entire continent, and furious looks from the king of monopolies.

But all this did not come about overnight. Permit me to relate some of my own experience — an experience that can help many people in similar circumstances get an understanding of how our current revolutionary thinking arose. Because even though there is certainly continuity, the Cuban Revolution you see today is not the Cuban Revolution of yesterday, even after the victory. Much less is it the Cuban insurrection prior to the victory, at the time when those eighty-two youths made the difficult crossing of the Gulf of Mexico in a leaky boat, to reach the shores of the Sierra Maestra. Between those youths and the representatives of Cuba today there

is a distance that cannot be measured in years — or at least not accurately measured in years, with twenty-four-hour days and sixty-minute hours.

All the members of the Cuban government — young in age, young in character, and young in the illusions they held — have nevertheless matured in the extraordinary school of experience; in living contact with the people, with their needs and aspirations.

The hope all of us had was to arrive one day somewhere in Cuba, and after a few shouts, a few heroic actions, a few deaths, and a few radio broadcasts, to take power and drive out the dictator Batista. History showed us it was much more difficult to overthrow a whole government backed by an army of murderers — murderers who were partners of that government and were backed by the greatest colonial power on earth.

That was how, little by little, all our ideas changed. We, the children of the cities, learned to respect the peasant. We learned to respect his sense of independence, his loyalty; to recognize his age-old yearning for the land that had been snatched from him; and to recognize his experience in the thousand paths through the hills. And from us, the peasants learned how valuable a man is when he has a rifle in his hand, and when he is prepared to fire that rifle at another man, regardless of how many rifles the other man has. The peasants taught us their know-how and we taught the peasants our sense of rebellion. And from that moment until today, and forever, the peasants of Cuba and the rebel forces of Cuba — today the Cuban revolutionary government — have marched united as one.

The revolution continued progressing, and we drove the troops of the dictatorship from the steep slopes of the Sierra Maestra. We then came face-to-face with another reality of Cuba: the worker — both agricultural and in the industrial centers. We learned from him too, while we taught him that at the right moment, a well-aimed shot fired at the right person is much more powerful and effective than the most powerful and effective peaceful demonstration. [Applause] We learned the value of organization, while again we taught the value of rebellion. And out of this, organized rebellion arose throughout the entire territory of Cuba.

November BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Welcome to our new readers!

The *Militant* extends a warm welcome to the 1,316 readers who subscribed to the paper over the past eight weeks, part of a successful campaign to extend the reach of the paper, get out books by revolutionary working-class leaders and raise funds needed for the Socialist Workers Party.

A special welcome is extended to the 107 readers of the paper behind bars who subscribed or renewed.

We invite you to use the *Militant*. Write up a few lines for the On the Picket Line column about a strike in your area or other developments affecting the lives and struggles of working people. These articles are indispensable for winning solidarity and for broadening knowledge about the conditions workers face and what we're doing to change them.

Send us letters about political questions you'd like the paper to address.

The *Militant* is an invaluable tool for strengthening the union movement. It explains the class interests of workers on any question cannot be reconciled with those of the ruling capitalist families. The fact that workers are part of an international class with common interests is the starting point for the paper's coverage of world events, from its opposition to the imperialist foreign policies of the rulers in Washington to their drive toward more trade conflicts and wars.

Show the paper to your friends, co-workers, fellow unionists and family members.

Many subscribers were won to the SWP's 2024 presidential campaign and its call to build a party of labor on the road to workers taking political power. Some endorsed the campaign. The party plans to run campaigns wherever possible in 2025.

Many of those who got subscriptions also picked up books that were on special offer. Many more titles are available at the nearest party branch listed on page 8 or at www.pathfinderpress.com.

These books explain in more depth why the root cause of the problems working people face lies in the rule of the capitalist class. They explain why fighting Jew-hatred is of decisive importance for the unions and why the fight to end all national oppression and the second-class status of women is inseparable from the fight for the emancipation of the working class. Our class is the one force with the numbers and power capable of ridding the world of imperialist exploitation and oppression.

In the writings and speeches of leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 and the Cuban Revolution in 1959, you'll find vital lessons we can put to use today.

You'll learn how working-class leadership of the highest caliber has emerged from the ranks of the U.S. working class in the writings and speeches of Malcolm X, Farrell Dobbs and James P. Cannon.

Anchored in the continuity of the revolutionary working-class movement, the Socialist Workers Party maintains unshakable confidence in the capacities of the working class. Support for the work of the party during the fall campaign was registered in the \$141,637 contributed to its annual Party-Building Fund, taking it over the top.

The *Militant* is a tool for building a party that can assemble, educate and organize a vanguard to lead the fight to replace capitalist rule with workers power. Welcome aboard!

Massachusetts teachers on strike, gov't says illegal

Continued from front page

years, pay hikes for classroom aides and 40 days of fully paid family leave.

Currently the starting pay for teachers' aides and other paraprofessionals is around \$20,000, which isn't enough to live on in this area. Most are forced to work two jobs to get by. Strikers are determined to win significant increases in their pay.

In Massachusetts it is illegal for teachers to strike. Area judges have levied \$50,000-a-day fines on the striking unions, which go up by another \$10,000 each day. The total fines levied against each of the three unions was over \$300,000 as of Nov. 20.

The Newton Teachers Association is calling for teachers there to donate to the North Shore teachers strike funds. In the NTA's strike last winter they were hit with a total of \$625,000 in fines.

The association explains in their e-newsletter the heavy financial burden these penalties have on the smaller number of union members in the North Shore.

Newton teachers organized a protest at the school's committee meeting Oct. 21, because it refused to honor the new contract to hire aides for every kindergarten class. "You have the right to appeal this," NTA President Mike Zilles told them, "but the reality is you agreed to do this anyway. So put them in the room."

Teachers hit with fines, strike wins solidarity

Strikers here have pointed out that the school committees face no consequences for not bargaining in good faith, yet the teachers, who are fighting for better conditions in the classroom and care deeply about the students, are hit with huge penalties.

There was a sizable spirited picket line at the Beverly Middle School Nov. 19 when *Militant* worker-correspondents visited to bring solidarity and get the workers' story for the paper. Teachers were wearing red union shirts. Drivers honked continually in support as they drove by. A large contingent from the three unions rallied at the Massachusetts Statehouse in Boston the same day to put pressure on lawmakers.

Lydia Ames, an eighth grade Spanish teacher, told us that 99% of the 650 union members in Beverly had voted to strike. "The school committee said there's no money. But we're very united in this fight. There's great community support. We're doing what we have to do for students and for the profession."



Picket line at Beverly Middle School, Massachusetts, Nov. 19. Militant/Lisa Hickler

Conditions in the schools have eroded over time, she said, hurting both teachers and students. Due to staff shortages, recess is often reduced to 15 minutes — for 12-14 year olds! — and prep time for teachers has been cut. Aides are often pulled away from their duties to replace an absent teacher, leaving vulnerable students with extra needs getting less attention.

Beverly has seen a large increase in population in the last 20 years, but school budgets haven't kept up.

Brian Bayer-Larson, an eighth grade civics teacher at Beverly Middle School, said being on strike "is a bit of a roller coaster. There's great solidarity and camaraderie, but at the same time I'm sad and frustrated because I want to be in school. When I'm at home I can get bummed out, but when I'm on the picket line, I get picked up again."

He showed us a picture he took of a large Teamsters Local 25 truck with a union banner on the side that drove around Beverly the day before to support the strikers. The same day a 1,000-strong parent-organized solidarity march took place here.

"In the long run, this needs to happen to be able to support the most vulnerable kids. There's not enough help in the classroom," he said. The salaries of the paraprofessionals "is what I care most about. We need justice around this." When Bayer-Larson's back in the classroom he'll be talking about the strike with his students. "It will be a good addition to civics class."

Show your support for their strike! Join their picket lines. Contact the union locals to find out how to get involved.

'Rents too damn high'

Continued from front page

reach for the vast majority of the working class.

Some 500,000 households — more than twice the number in the entire city of Miami — spend at least half of their monthly income on rent. Overall, renters in New York pay around 38% of their income on rent. And New York's median rent is nearly double that in the rest of the country.

Only 1.4% of New York City apartments were available to rent last year, the city government reports. And landlords take advantage of the competition this engenders to keep jacking up rents. With a nationwide shortage of some 1.5 million housing units, rents have gone up 47% and home prices leapt 26% since 2020. It's worse here. Many people have had to cram together in thousands of overcrowded "illegal" basement and cellar apartments that are prone to flooding and at greater risk of fires.

Rosanna Glasgow, 37, a member of the Service Employees International Union, earns \$19 an hour working at Kennedy airport. She lives with her mother and her brother, a welder, in the Rockaways in Queens, paying \$2,600 a month for a three-bedroom apartment. With the heat in the building not working and the landlord refusing to fix it, she told the *Times* she has been looking for months for a new place to live, but can't find a comparable apartment that costs less than \$3,600 a month. "I don't know what's going to happen," she said.

More than half of workers and their families here lack enough income to cover basic needs — housing, food, child care, transportation and health care — the United Way of New York City and Fund for the City of New York reported earlier this year. This is a big jump from 2021, when the two groups reported just over a third of city households faced this dire reality.

This housing crisis is reflected in startling statistics on homelessness facing large numbers of children who go to public school in New York. At least 146,000 students, about one in eight, didn't have a regular place to live at some point during the past school year, a 23% increase from the year before. The number of homeless students in New York City has topped 100,000 for nine straight years.

The median household income in the city is around \$70,000 this year. But that's not enough to cover rent and other essentials. And even this median figure hides the sharp class differentiations workers face. The wealthy and those in the upper middle class have no problems affording expensive condos or renting luxury apartments. Newspapers like the *Times* publish slick magazines with pages of ads for homes at \$10 million. For workers, the ones who keep the city running, these look like a sick joke.

The stark reality workers face

Two of the biggest job sectors in the Big Apple are restaurant workers and home health aides. Aide jobs are the fastest growing job market in the city, currently providing 309,000 jobs, overwhelmingly for women. Their minimum wage is just over \$18 an hour. There are 322,000 restaurant workers, with a high proportions of immigrants, many stuck at the city's legal minimum wage of \$16 an hour.

At that pay, to rent a one-bedroom apartment for \$2,330 a month would take up to 84% of your income. You could forget about feeding a family, much less pay for electricity or Wi-Fi.

The fight against high rents and mortgages is one of the key issues confronting the working class. In Cuba, it took a revolution that brought the working class to power to begin to resolve this. Fidel Castro, the central leader of the Cuban Revolution, took this up in a speech he gave to the United Nations General Assembly in September 1960, which is available in the Pathfinder book *To Speak the Truth*.

"The revolutionary government began to take its first steps. The first was a 50% reduction in rents paid by families," he said. "There were families paying up to one-third of their income for rent. The people had been the victims of housing speculation. ...

"The people rushed into the streets rejoicing, as they would in any country — even here in New York — if rents were reduced by 50% for all families."

We need something like that here.