

THE MILITANT

EDITORIAL

To fight high prices,
build union solidarity

— PAGE 9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 46 DECEMBER 9, 2024

After Trump win, Democrats shift assault on political rights

BY TERRY EVANS

From the moment Donald Trump announced he was running for president in 2016, the Democrats and their liberal allies in the media and the middle-class left have targeted him. More importantly, they've targeted the millions of workers Hillary Clinton famously referred to as "deplorables."

The rulers "fear us because they recognize that more and more working people are beginning to see that the bosses and their political parties have no 'solutions' that don't further load the costs — monetary and human — of the crisis of *their* system on us," Steve Clark wrote in his October 2016 introduction to *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*.

Hillary Clinton's election committee paid a former British spy to manufacture a dossier smearing Trump as a Russian agent. Democrats got courts to

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NZ rally shows Maori pride, growing class differentiation

BY MIKE TUCKER

One of the largest rallies in years took place in Wellington, New Zealand's capital, Nov. 19. It was widely reported in media around the world as a protest for Maori rights.

The rally of up to 40,000 was organized by the Maori Party, a bourgeois opposition party with six seats in the New Zealand Parliament. It was supported by other opposition parties and promoted by the major media. Many participants were Maori, who came to assert pride in their identity and culture and their willingness to defend what has been won over decades of struggle.

The organizers' goals, however, had nothing to do with advancing the interests of Maori and of working people.

Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand, who make up 17% of the population. While claiming it

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Ceasefire marks Israeli gains against Hezbollah in Lebanon



Rightist gangs in organized "Jew-hunt" in Amsterdam Nov. 7. Pro-Hamas thugs beat up Jewish soccer fans as Dutch police stood by. The pogrom in the heart of "democratic" imperialist Europe shows that the fight against Jew-hatred is vital for the working class worldwide.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Israeli and Lebanese governments announced a ceasefire Nov. 26, which was signed onto by the leaders in Tehran and by Hezbollah. The agreement — if honored — is an advance for Israel's fight to defend its existence as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms. It is a product of the big blows Israelis have dealt Hamas, Hezbollah and the reactionary bourgeois regime in Iran since Oct. 7, 2023.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a Nov. 26 video address to the people of Israel that the ceasefire will allow them to "complete the task of obliterating Hamas" in Gaza. And it puts the Israeli people in a better position to "prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon."

"Removing that threat is the most important mission to ensure the existence and future of the State of Israel."

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Massachusetts teachers advance in strikes for higher pay, more aides



Striking teachers, supporters picket Nov. 22 in Beverly, Massachusetts, over pay, especially for paraprofessionals. Two-week-long strikes ended with tentative agreements reached Nov. 26.

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS

BEVERLY, Mass. — Beverly and Marblehead teachers have been involved in strikes over higher pay,

AS WE GO TO PRESS...

Teachers' unions in Beverly and Marblehead announced gains won in recent strikes, tentative agreements, allowing schools to reopen.

more and better-paid teachers' aides, longer parental leave, and improved conditions in the schools. Public employees strikes are illegal in Massachusetts, and punitive escalating fines

against the two unions are mounting. An Essex County Superior Court Judge warned that a state-appointed "third party" could be imposed into the negotiations, forcing an end to the strike if teachers and the school committees didn't reach an agreement by Nov. 24.

"We will not go back until we get a living wage for paraprofessionals. They need to know that," Beverly Teachers Association Co-President Julia Brotherton responded that same day. She called the anti-strike law "unjust and immoral."

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Canada Post strikers defy gov't attacks in fight for jobs, wages

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

MONTREAL — As they head into their third week on strike, morale of members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers picketing at hundreds

of Canada Post locations across the country is high.

"On the line here, people talk a lot about respect. We've been humiliated repeatedly by special laws and forced back to work," CUPW shop steward Guillaume Brodeur told the *Militant* at Montreal's Chabanel depot. "Yes, we need the raises, but people aren't talking about that as much. They're ready to be out for weeks. We were making jokes this morning about going until Christmas. We don't want that, but we'll go back when we have a fair and equitable agreement."

The federal government has intervened to order postal workers back to

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Paris concert, fellow musicians celebrate anti-war pianist killed in Russian prison

BY ROY LANDERSEN

A special concert in Paris Nov. 18 featuring renowned classical pianists Grigory Sokolov and Sergei Babayan was held in honor of Pavel Kushnir. A brilliant young piano soloist, he died in July in jail in Russia's remote Far East after speaking out against the regime of President Vladimir Putin and his invasion of Ukraine.

Kushnir's imprisonment only became widely known after he was the first political prisoner under Putin's increasingly repressive regime to die while conducting a hunger strike. Many hundreds of protesters are imprisoned across Rus-

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Hotel workers strike over wages and jobs in San Francisco

Maori pride, class differentiation

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speaks as the voice of all Maori, the Maori Party is based on, and seeks to advance, the class interests of a layer of capitalists and middle-class professionals.

The catalyst for the protest was the Treaty Principles Bill recently presented by ACT, a libertarian party that is part of the National Party-led coalition government that replaced Labour in office last year. ACT's bill seeks to redefine how the Treaty of Waitangi is interpreted in law today. The Maori Party says Parliament has no right to discuss it.

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed between colonial representatives of the British government and a number of Maori chiefs in 1840, as part of London's conquest and bloody colonization of New Zealand. It gave recognition to Maori, who were the majority at the time. But with the establishment of capitalist rule, Maori land was seized and Maori language and culture suppressed. Courts and governments ruled the treaty had no status in law.

Maori fought to resist this. As they became a large component of the working class following World War II, these struggles gained strength, and became intertwined with union fights. They were reinforced by the Black-led fight that overturned Jim Crow segregation in the U.S. and the revolutionary struggle that brought down the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Over the past six decades, through marches, land occupations, union fights and political campaigns, racist discrimination has been pushed back

and Maori won major gains.

Since 1975, the government's Waitangi Tribunal has heard claims from Maori tribal authorities for land, resources and finance as compensation for what was stolen. Tribal corporations now control assets worth 70 billion New Zealand dollars (\$40.8 billion). Maori language and culture is widespread throughout the media, the education system and government administration.

Class differentiation among Maoris

Fifty years ago, more than 95% of Maori were wage workers in factories, services or agriculture. While still facing the legacy of discrimination, Maori are found throughout all classes and occupations today.

A register of this shift is that 27% of the seats in the current Parliament are held by Maori, double the percentage of Maori voters, and 35% of the government's cabinet are of Maori descent.

Many of the gains won by Maori were incorporated into legislation acknowledging their rights under the Treaty of Waitangi. Today, the treaty is incorporated into more than 50 pieces of legislation, affecting many aspects of life. But what the treaty means is not defined by legislation, but by interpretation by the courts.

The current bill before Parliament seeks to change this, but has no chance of becoming law as all other parties have said they will vote against it.

The previous Labour Party government of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern pursued a course that increased the role of regulators and bureaucrats and imposed race-based and woke



AP photo/Mark Tantrum

Rally by 40,000 people in Wellington, New Zealand's capital, Nov. 19, showed indigenous Maori people's pride in their gains. Action was called by Maori Party and backed by Labour, other opposition parties. None act to advance interests of Maori and of all working people.

policies, often using the Treaty of Waitangi as justification.

Ardern's government became widely disliked by workers and farmers as economic conditions worsened. It went down to a landslide defeat last year. The parties that make up the new government of Prime Minister Christopher Luxon had pledged to reverse many of the woke policies introduced by Ardern and to cut the civil service.

The Maori Party inaccurately portrays many of the attempts to reverse Ardern's policies as an assault on Maori rights. It demagogically labels the National Party-led government as "fascist" and its policies as committing "genocide."

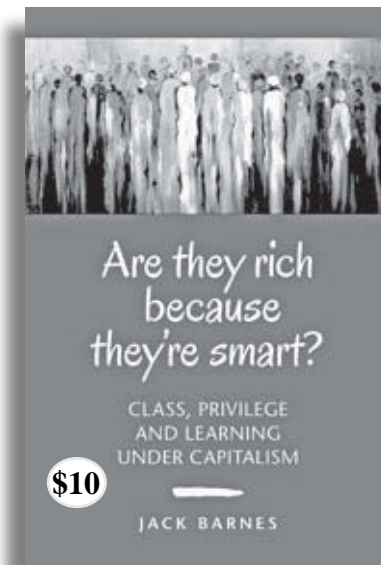
But Maori culture and language are alive throughout New Zealand today. There is broad support for Maori rights, and less racism than ever.

The crisis conditions hitting the working class bear down with even greater weight on Maori, and also on Pacific Islanders who have migrated to New Zealand over the past century from Wellington's colonies and semi-colonies in the Pacific. While living standards for the majority of these layers in the working class are getting worse, the size and wealth of privileged middle-class and professional layers, including among Maori, has expanded.

These class divisions pose more clearly how the road to end racism and the national oppression of Maori is intertwined with the fight by the working class to replace capitalist rule with a government of our own. Through union and other working-class struggles, including fights for Maori rights, working people will come to see the need for our own party to fight for workers power.

The Maori Party, like the other parties in Parliament in New Zealand today, upholds capitalist rule.

For further reading



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THE MILITANT

Cuban deputy foreign minister: 'End US embargo!'

Carlos Fernández de Cossío focused on the devastating impact of Washington's 64-year economic war against Cuba in talk at Rutgers Law School in Newark, New Jersey. "We have a firm determination for Cuba to be free of foreign interference," he said.



Bob Miller
Carlos Fernández de Cossío, Cuba's deputy minister of foreign affairs, at Rutgers Nov. 14.

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Buffalo Milk-Bone workers stand tall in strike for wages, health care

BY CANDACE WAGNER

Members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 36G have been on strike at J.M. Smucker Company's Milk-Bone dog treat factory in Buffalo, New York, since Oct. 28. They're demanding a significant wage increase and affordable health care plan. These issues resonate with workers everywhere. And their fight has won widespread support from other BCTGM locals and area unions.

Four members of Bakery Workers Local 114 from Franz Bakery in Springfield, Oregon, traveled to Buffalo to join the strikers on the picket line. Workers at the bakery voted Nov. 20 to accept a new contract after a three-week strike. The local says on its website, "The new three-year agreement features an historic wage increase, retroactive pay, maintenance of health benefits and retirement improvements."

On Nov. 20 Milk-Bone strikers, the visiting Local 114 members, BCTGM international officers and others brought the fight to Smucker's corporate headquarters in Orrville, Ohio. Steve Palumbo, chief steward of the striking local,

posted photos and videos of the protest on the Milk-Bone Workers on Strike Facebook page. "BCTGM LOCAL 36G and its members will not back down from corporate greed," he wrote.

Milk-Bone striker Cathy Kennedy told the *Militant* that mechanics who are working in the plant said management is telling them that the company plans to wait out the union. "Waiting for us to accept the lousy offer they gave us. Good luck with that," she said. "Management also told them that we 'didn't understand' the medical plan they offered us. We did understand. We're not idiots."

Tony Serra, one of the day-shift picket captains, described discussions he has had with newer workers. "They're thanking us for standing up. I tell them, 'It's your future. I've got 38-plus years in the industry, you've got to stand for what you believe in.'"

Liz Murray, the wife of striker John Murray, baked a tray of cookies and decorated them with slogans like "United we bargain," "Divided we beg" and "Never cross the picket line."

Members of BCTGM Local 81



Steve Palumbo/Inset: Roger Miller

Rally at Smucker's in Orrville, Ohio, Nov. 20. Company owns Milk-Bone in Buffalo, where BCTGM Local 36G is on strike. Inset, special pro-union cookies brought to the picket line.

from Traverse City, Michigan, traveled to Buffalo with a large assortment of supplies for the pickets.

"Teamsters Local 449 keeps coming back with firewood and hot dogs, United Auto Workers members from the Tonawanda engine plant brought truckloads of wood, and the Teachers Federation brings coffee and donuts every week," Serra told the *Militant*. "Local 3 of the National Association of Let-

ter Carriers came by with refreshments after reading about the strike online. People showing up is phenomenal!"

The strikers are now receiving unemployment benefits. One striker set up a GoFundMe page to raise funds for picketing supplies. "We're pretty dug in, getting ready for the long haul," Serra said.

The picket lines are up 24/7. Bring solidarity and join them at 243 Urban Street in Buffalo!

Democrat-led assault on constitutional protections shifts after election

Continued from front page

imprison eight of his political associates and smeared others. They mounted two failed impeachment trials against Trump. More recently, they tasked the Justice Department and some prosecutors with bringing frame-up charges against him to try and destroy him and his threat to retake office in 2024.

But Trump's reelection Nov. 5 confirmed that most working people were sick of the Democratic administration over the scourge of high prices and other effects of today's capitalist crisis, as well as its attacks on constitutional rights. Workers were looking for an alternative to the Biden administration, hoping to get some relief.

Still, the Democrats and the left are determined to find new ways to fight the "fascist menace" they believe workers put in the White House. They're making some tactical retreats from earlier forays while opening new assaults.

Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith filed a motion Nov. 25 to dismiss his case against Trump for challenging the outcome of the 2020 election. This case was a flagrant attack on free speech, as Smith sought to criminalize Trump for things he said, not anything he did.

Within hours of Smith's filing, Judge Tanya Chutkan granted his motion. But she said she was doing so "without prejudice," and that prosecutors could reintroduce the same case once Trump leaves the presidency in 2029.

Efforts to preserve frame-up cases

Smith also filed Nov. 25 to remove Trump's name from the case charging him and two co-defendants with hanging on to allegedly classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate. Previously, Judge Aileen Cannon threw out the case, but Smith is appealing that ruling. He wants to keep going after the co-defendants.

Trump was indicted after Smith organized an armed FBI raid at the estate, a politically motivated assault that made a mockery of the constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizure. Trump was charged under the notorious Espionage Act, used in the past to target and to try to silence opponents of Washington's wars and the Socialist Workers Party.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is trying to keep his case against Trump hanging over the president-elect. In May a Manhattan jury convicted Trump of charges concocted by Bragg for making hush money payments after an alleged sexual encounter 18 years ago with a porn star. From the beginning, the case was a brazen abuse of the right to a fair trial.

Bragg manufactured a charge that the payments violated federal campaign finance law, after federal prosecutors had already investigated the allegation and found it improper. Judge Juan Merchan, whose daughter worked for an anti-Trump outfit, ruled the case could proceed.

Merchan has now indefinitely postponed the sentencing of Trump. But the president-elect cannot appeal the frame-up unless Merchan sentences him.

Bragg — who ran for office on a promise to get Trump at all costs — proposes the case be put on hold for the en-

tire four years of Trump's second term in order to be resurrected in 2029.

The eight-year-long witch hunt against Trump has now switched to new terrain. Part of this is a shrill propaganda campaign to smear him as a fascist, a misuse of the term that would be farcical if it wasn't so dangerous. Hitler smashed the unions in Germany in the 1930s, carried out the slaughter of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, established a bloody dictatorship and sought to expand German capital's reach in the second imperialist world war.

Using the term "fascist" to describe Trump will weaken workers' ability to recognize and fight the real thing when it arises as the class struggle in the U.S. deepens.

New attacks launched

The second part of liberals' new effort to go after Trump is to use a phalanx of lawyers and propagandists to target his cabinet nominees and efforts to implement his program once he's in office.

One target is Peter Hegseth, a former GI who fought in both Iraq and Afghanistan, who Trump nominated for secretary of defense. On Nov. 19, the city attorney's office in Monterey, California, released to the press a confidential police report on a seven-year-old incident involving Hegseth. After reviewing the report at the time, prosecutors decided there wasn't enough evidence of a sexual assault to justify filing charges against Hegseth. But liberal prosecutors decided to hand the report to the press anyway.

The public release of this cop file sets a dangerous precedent. Its sole aim is to smear a political opponent, by insinuating he might have carried out a sexual assault when no charges were brought. Millions of workers have been written up after run-ins with cops where charges were never filed. Such reports shouldn't be held on standby for use as weapons against strikers or other future targets of government snoops.

Trump's nomination of Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer for labor secretary

is another step in his efforts to portray the Republicans as a pro-worker party. Her father was a Teamster and her nomination came after a recommendation from Teamsters union President Sean O'Brien.

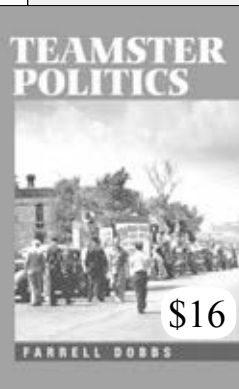
The nomination is "hard to believe," complain the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*. They are unabashed in painting the Republicans as a bosses' party.

As Trump seeks to build a different image, the Democrats have increasingly ditched the appearance they presented for decades as "friends of labor." Today they're dominated by upper-middle-class meritocratic layers represented by former President Barack Obama.

Neither the Democrats nor Republicans, including a Donald Trump administration, speak for the interests of working people. They all look after the interests of the capitalist ruling families at a time of deepening economic and social crisis. Workers are increasingly turning to unions to fight boss attacks on jobs, wages and working conditions. More of us will come to see that these battles are also political battles, and that our class needs our own party, a party of labor.

In this struggle, we have a big stake in defending constitutional freedoms from government assault, regardless of who the target of its attacks may be.

Teamster Politics



"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."

— Farrell Dobbs

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Meeting celebrates life, political contributions of Jim Altenberg

BY JOEL BRITTON

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — The life and political contributions of Jim Altenberg and the Socialist Workers Party were celebrated at a meeting here Nov. 16. Altenberg died Oct. 31 at age 70.

Talks, displays and messages to the meeting highlighted the history of the SWP and the growing interest in the party among workers today.

Betsy Stone, organizer of the party's Oakland branch, chaired the meeting. "Jim joined the SWP in Denver in 1978 when he was 24," Stone said. "How was he won to the party? It began when he was in high school. He was inspired by the Black liberation struggle and supported the fight to desegregate the schools in Denver. He participated in demonstrations against the Vietnam War."

As a member of the Phoenix branch of the party, Altenberg supported copper workers on strike against Phelps Dodge. "Jim wrote for the *Militant* from Morenci, Arizona, a company town where Mexican workers suffered blatant discrimination," she said. "The union battles that brought an end to segregation in the copper towns of Arizona gave Jim optimism about what the working class can accomplish."

Altenberg was won — like others of his generation — to a party whose roots are grounded in international proletarian communist continuity. From Marx and Engels to Lenin and Trotsky, leaders of the Russian Revolution, and carried forward by the Socialist Workers Party. He was won to the perspective that a socialist revolution can and needed to be made in the U.S. and in other capitalist countries. He was inspired by the Cuban Revolution under the leadership of Fidel Castro. He was won to a party where members decide and work together to do what is needed.

Norton Sandler, a leader of the SWP in Los Angeles, said Altenberg joined as party members were involved in the industrial unions and in their fightback against the attacks of the bosses and their state, in the coal mines, steel and other industries. He highlighted Altenberg's participation as a process operator and union member at the Tosco oil refinery near here.

"Our comrades in this and other industries won respect from fellow trade unionists by working safely, and resisting attempts by profit-driven bosses to dangerously cut corners," Sandler said.

"Jim wrote for the *Militant*, detail-

ing the unsafe conditions that led to an explosion where he worked that killed four fellow workers."

Altenberg resigned from the party in 2000.

Later he joined the party's supporters auxiliary, those who support the party by working to keep in print the programmatic conquests, won in struggle, recorded in books prepared by party leaders, including writings and speeches of other revolutionaries.

"Messages to the meeting describe Jim's diligence, attention to detail and working with others as equals," Jim White, who worked with Altenberg as a supporter, said in his remarks. "These are values common to those who support the party's work and keep its program in print."

A display highlighted the SWP's turn to the industrial working class and its unions in the late 1970s. It featured the party's involvement in the mass proletarian movement that smashed Jim Crow segregation and the SWP's leadership role in the movement to end Washington's war in Vietnam.

Another panel, "The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward," celebrated the party's 2024 campaign of Rachele Fruit for president and Dennis Richter for vice president, which advanced a road forward for workers to organize to defend their class interests. Another panel highlighted the



Militant/Eric Simpson

Norton Sandler, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in Los Angeles, speaking at meeting in San Leandro, California, Nov. 16, celebrating the political life of Jim Altenberg.

work of the supporters auxiliary. Altenberg's political life and contributions were part of these panels.

'Growing interest in the party'

"We are living in times when the party finds a growing interest in the party's course," Dave Prince, a member of the SWP National Committee, told the meeting, "a growing interest in working-class struggles among exploited producers and others.

"They want to know, 'Where is this going? What is the cause? How to stop World War III? What is to be done?'"

"For the Socialist Workers Party, for the working class, this is not a period of despair, or seeing the world as simply

on the precipice," he said. "But a world in which — through struggle and great events — lines are drawn, class consciousness and politicization develop — conditions that spur the advance of building proletarian parties, of the organization of the working class, and of its capacity to take state power in alliance with exploited producers.

"This is what the Socialist Workers Party looks forward to winning recruits to."

Sixty-three people attended the meeting, including members of Altenberg's family and that of his long-time companion Carole Lesnick. Participants contributed \$4,687 to the work of the SWP. A delicious potluck buffet was served.

Pathfinder expands titles accessible to blind workers

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

More than 50 Pathfinder Press books by Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary leaders are now available in formats accessible to readers who are blind or face other obstacles to reading. Several years ago, Pathfinder launched a project to convert its printed books into accessible formats. The aim is to help draw broader layers of working people into discussion, study, union activity and social protests, and revolutionary working-class political activity.

Pathfinder makes these books available through Bookshare, an online library that services people around the world who, for whatever reason, have trouble reading books and other material in print. These accessible e-books can be read or listened to on a computer, tablet, smart phone or specialized reading devices. Readers can increase the type size, change the typeface or change the background

color — whatever makes it easier to read. They can hear the text read out loud on their computer or phone while they follow it on screen.

Bookshare also makes these books available to download for electronic devices that produce Braille displays, DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) "talking book" files, MP3 audio books and other formats. For information about getting Pathfinder titles and other books through Bookshare, go to www.bookshare.org.

Bob Roberts is someone who uses Bookshare and screen reader software to read Pathfinder books. He recently read *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class* and *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*. "Hearing the book is often easier than reading as my eyesight is challenged," he said. "It facilitates the flow of a sentence and paragraph. I also use screen reader software for reading the *Militant* each week. It has made quite a big difference."

A team of volunteers worked to learn the software and standards being developed worldwide to make written material more accessible in digital formats. They write descriptions of every photo and other illustrations, adding navigation links to allow the reader to move between the text and footnotes and between the text and the index. They add page navigation that matches the pagination of the print book, to help those who read and study the books along with others.

There are now 24 Pathfinder titles in fully accessible EPUB format available through Bookshare. These include Pathfinder's most recent titles: *The Low Point of Labor Resistance*

Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward and *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*. The first Spanish-language title converted by the volunteers will be available by the end of the year. The complete list is available at the Pathfinder website, <https://www.pathfinderpress.com/collections/books-for-the-blind>.

An additional three dozen Pathfinder titles are available in a text-only format at Bookshare.

Similar efforts in Cuba

Cuba's National Association of the Blind (ANCI) is involved in similar efforts to aid those there who, for whatever reason, face challenges in reading. I visited their booth at the Havana International Book Fair in February 2023. At the time, a group had come by bus to participate in a daily program ANCI organized during the fair. These participants came to get books that the association makes available free of charge.

A few took books in Braille, with the text embossed in large format. Many held out computer flash drives to download books in digital format from a laptop at the stand. They can read the books by listening to the text read out loud on their computer or cellphones.

There are an estimated 7.5 million people with blindness or limited vision in the U.S. Millions of others have dyslexia and other learning or physical challenges that make it difficult for them to read and study print books. So do many millions more around the world.

Spread the word about these accessible Pathfinder titles at Bookshare! Help extend the reach of working-class ideas!

Recommended reading



from pathfinderpress.com

UK farmers protest new taxes as input costs soar, income falls

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — Over 10,000 farmers, their families and supporters came from across the U.K. to rally outside Parliament Nov. 19. They demanded the government scrap its imposition of a 20% inheritance tax on farms valued at more than 1 million pounds (\$1.26 million). The measure was announced in Chancellor Rachel Reeves' recent budget.

They carried signs saying, "Rachel Reeves Queen of Thieves" and "Stop milking us dry." The protest took place while the National Farmers' Union, which is dominated by wealthy capitalist farmers, lobbied members of Parliament nearby.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government claims the tax will only affect a few hundred of the richest farmers and alleges it's necessary to fund the National Health Service.

Farmers say otherwise. The government measures farmers' assets to include land, machinery, nonresidential buildings, fertilizer and livestock. A new combine harvester alone costs 500,000 pounds, to say nothing of the value of the land. The National Farmers' Union says up to 70,000 farmers will be hit by the tax.

The march follows years of increasing input costs for feed, fuel and fertilizer and declining incomes (down 73%

for cereal and 68% for dairy farmers between 2022 and 2023), alongside record prices for land pushed up by wealthy speculators. As a result, many farmers are heavily indebted.

"We can't even raise the cost of our milk because it's the big supermarkets who set our prices," Geoffrey Bond who farms 600 acres in North Devon, told the *Daily Telegraph* at the march. "I still owe the bank 1 million pounds and that's more than enough debt to pass on," he added. "We are under intolerable pressure."

"I don't think farmers will back down," Briony Greenland, a mixed sheep and beef farmer from Devon, told the *Militant*.



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Thousands of farmers, their families and supporters from across U.K. rally in London Nov. 19 against government imposition of new farm taxes. Farmers face rising costs, lower income.

Canada Post strikers defy gov't in fight for jobs, wages

Continued from front page

work in numerous strikes in the past, derailing fights aimed at protecting jobs, services and wages. While Ottawa has used special legislation to send rail and port workers back to work this year, Labor Minister Steven MacKinnon told the press the government's plan is to promote "intensive mediation" to "bridge the gap between the parties."

The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses demands the federal government intervene now to end the strike, claiming small business owners depend on Canada Post's comparatively more affordable services.

Workers' hourly starting wage is now 22.68 Canadian dollars per hour (\$16). "That's only a few cents different from the starting wage when I began 19 years ago," striker Ian Fournier told the *Militant*. The union is demanding a 24% wage raise over four years. The employer is offering just 11.5%.

"For us, different conditions and wages for new employees is a red line we will not cross," Brodeur said. The boss's plan is for new hires to be put on a "flexible" weekend part-time sched-

ule, to get even lower wages and fewer benefits than current employees.

Employers say these cost-saving steps are needed to compete with Amazon and other competitors.

"For small faraway communities, Canada Post is essential," Brodeur said. "It can cost three or four times more to get your medicine or parcels from other delivery services."

"And workers at Amazon in Laval [near Montreal] are trying to get a first contract, now that they won union recognition," striker Hugo Charette said. "The other delivery services are watching what happens at Canada Post. We can drag the standards upward."

"We go to every door in the community," he said. "There are people who wait for us every day at the same time. If their mailbox is full, we know something's wrong." Fournier added, "I've called ambulances a number of times for people on my route."

Supportive honks from drivers in cars and trucks are constant on the picket line. Numerous union delegations and other workers have joined the pickets in solidarity.

Jeff Acolatse, a digital layout and printing worker, visited pickets at the

St. Lawrence central sorting station. "It was a great experience," he told the *Militant*. "The employees work hard as individuals and they do their best to make ends meet. But there's just too much inflation."

Drop by a picket line near you!

Hotel workers strike over wages and jobs in San Francisco

BY ERIC SIMPSON

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 500 workers walked off the job at the Marriott Marquis downtown here Nov. 24, bringing to six the number of hotels now on strike. Some 2,500 UNITE HERE Local 2 members are walking the picket lines, demanding wages that keep pace with inflation, the reversal of staff cuts and a stop to bosses' plans to charge hundreds more each month for health care.

"The company has to be ready to negotiate in good faith, because we are ready to go for Thanksgiving. We are ready to go for Christmas, ready to go for New Year's. Whatever it takes until we get a fair contract and they meet our demands," striker Carlos Santamaria told ABC TV News.

Hundreds of strikers marked the 60th day of the expanding walk-out Nov. 20 by marching through the downtown area, despite a cold, drenching rainstorm.

Following the march, workers at two more hotels, the W and the St. Regis, voted by 90% to authorize strike action. This means workers are ready to strike at eight more hotels, including two in the East Bay.

Negotiations the week before with bosses representing the Marriott, Hyatt and Hilton chains, the first since the start of the strike on Labor Day, ended badly. The bosses refuse to address workers' concerns. They want to start new hires on a second-tier health plan. Under the current plan, workers don't have anything deducted for their own health coverage, and only \$10 monthly for their family.

Hotel occupancy here is slowly recovering from a slump in tourism during the COVID-19 crisis, rising to 70% this past September. The bosses are pushing to make workers pay for their crisis.

SAVE THE DATES!

Flight Attendants across the industry demand progress on the contracts they have earned. Join them!

December 11	Frontier AFA
December 17	PSA and Air Wisconsin AFA
December 19	United AFA

See Association of Flight Attendants Facebook page for updates

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

December 13, 1999

MIAMI — A political debate is taking place here around the future of a five-year-old Cuban boy, Elián González, who survived a boat smuggling tragedy. U.S. officials have given him residency over the objections of his father in Cuba.

González is one of three survivors of the 13 people who left Cuba on Nov. 21. His mother died at sea. Since he was discovered off the Florida coastline, the press and the Cuban rightist organizations have used the boy to try to slur Cuba and its socialist revolution.

The boy's father, Juan Miguel González, has demanded that his child be returned to Cuba. He told the press he "has been kidnapped. Here, he has health care and education free. He does not lack anything." González works at a hotel in Varadero. His son lived with him five days of the week. All four of the child's grandparents have called for his return.

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 13, 1974

Valentyn Moroz, a 38-year-old Ukrainian historian, is on the verge of death.

Sentenced to nine years of imprisonment and five years of exile on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" in November 1970, Moroz began a hunger strike on July 1 of this year. He had been subjected to savage beatings by inmates egged on by guards and administered mind-destroying drugs.

This vicious treatment has been handed out to Moroz because he wrote four essays detailing the repression in the Soviet Union and the Stalinist policies aimed at the destruction of Ukrainian culture and domination of Ukraine by the Great Russian nationality.

The Stalinist parties around the globe, like the Communist Party USA, have remained silent on the Moroz case or, even worse, supported such outrages. They share in the responsibility.

Free Valentyn Moroz!

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 12, 1949

The U.S. Supreme Court last week ducked the issue of the constitutionality of "loyalty" oaths — the most widespread form of civil rights violations in the witch-hunt now sweeping the country. The high tribunal refused to rule whether the Los Angeles County "employee-loyalty" test is a violation of the Bill of Rights.

The Supreme Court also postponed a ruling on two appeals against the constitutionality of the "non-Communist" oath of the Taft-Hartley Law. These appeals by CIO unions have been pending many months.

The Supreme Court's action again demonstrates that this highest capitalist judicial body cannot be relied on to enforce constitutional liberties. Not the courts of the American Big Business ruling class which fosters the witch-hunt, but the mass organization and action of the people can effectively defend democratic rights.

Pianist killed in Russian prison

Continued from front page

sia for their opposition to the Kremlin and its Ukraine war.

Kushnir's death at age 39 only came to light when one of his cellmates sent a message out saying "our comrade" died July 27. "The best pianist in the region," the letter said, was "charged under the same article as us, 205.2 [promotion of terrorism]." He added, "They drove him to it. He didn't even live to see the trial."

"Pavel Kushnir chose internal exile and dared to speak out against war. He paid for it with his life," said an open letter in support of the concert signed by some 60 internationally renowned conductors, composers and pianists. Signatories included Martha Argerich, Daniel Barenboim, Kirill Gerstein, Paavo Jarvi, Evgeny Kissin, Gidon Kremer, Alexander Melnikov, Kirill Petrenko, Simon Rattle, Alexandre Tharaud, Christian Thielmann and dozens more.

This was the first time since Putin's murderous war began nearly three years ago that such globally famous musicians have so strongly supported an anti-war Russian performer. Some of the signers live and work in Russia.

"This is an incredibly brave act on their part," pianist Olga Shkrygunova, a childhood friend of Kushnir, said. "Pavel has become a symbol of light, honest and uncompromising. He resonates in everyone in his own way."

The concert program opened with Frederic Chopin's Mazurkas. They express the Polish-French composer's nationalist resistance to the 19th century occupation of Poland under Russia's czars.

Kushnir, who was Jewish, strongly

identified with this artistic defiance. In the months before his arrest in Birobidzhan, the capital of what was originally established as a Jewish autonomous region in Siberia, he dedicated his weekly radio program there to Chopin's piano works. Kushnir believed the arts should be free and accessible to everyone.

Considered a musical prodigy, Kushnir had studied at the elite Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. In 2011 and 2012 he joined mass rallies as Putin's regime became increasingly authoritarian. In 2014 he denounced Moscow's seizure of Crimea.

Moscow's assault on Ukraine sparked sizable protests, which were increasingly repressed by harsh police measures. Kushnir turned to posting against the war online. Shkrygunova remembered that he said, "Two nations are dying in this war. It must be stopped as soon as possible."

Breadth of Kushnir's activities

It was only after his death that much about his activities became known. In addition to being a remarkable pianist, Kushner was an oppositionist making personal protests while reaching out to fellow dissidents, like the female performance art group Pussy Riot. He was a writer who left behind two handwritten novels. His *Russian Cutup* is an anti-war tale portraying the Putin police state as a giant pig. After his death, a group of his newly acquainted supporters worked overtime to publish it.

Shkrygunova said he refused to join her in Germany, even as Putin's vice tightened. However, he avoided being pressed into performing at pro-regime war concerts by playing



Mikhail Kushnir

Pavel Kushnir plays Rachmaninoff prelude at festival in his hometown of Tambov, Russia, in 2010. He opposed Putin, Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, saying, "Two nations are dying,"

"far from the capitals."

His last job was as pianist for the philharmonic orchestra in Birobidzhan.

Kushnir's active opposition to the regime and its war came to the notice of the police when he posted online a video Jan. 5 entitled "Life," where he expressed outrage at the 2022 massacre of civilians by Russian troops in Bucha, near Kyiv. He said, "Down with the war in Ukraine, down with Putin's fascist regime. Freedom for all political prisoners!"

He was seized by masked men in Birobidzhan and detained on charges of "terrorist activity." He responded with a hunger strike. After two months he began to refuse liquids as well as food. He died six days later. A picture of his body in the coffin shows a black eye and bloodied lips. Friends believe he was beaten.

Other performers bemoaned the fact they hadn't known of his activities and arrest. "We could not pool money to send him a lawyer — we just didn't know," Svetlana Kaverzina, an opposition politician in Novosibirsk, central Russia, wrote on Telegram. "We didn't write letters of support — we didn't know."

In a video he posted not long before his death, Kushnir said, "We will not bow to the Beast." He urged his supporters to continue the struggle. "There is a future," he said. "Let's go all the way. Stay true to our past."

After news of his death, a spontaneous memorial to him appeared at the monument to victims of political repression in Novosibirsk.

Videos of Kushnir's performance of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Preludes and other works are available on YouTube.

Chicago rally opposes thug attack on defenders of Israel, free speech

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

CHICAGO — Two weeks after two Jewish students at DePaul University were attacked by masked thugs, 50 supporters rallied with the students at the spot of the attack Nov. 21 in front of the student center on the Lincoln Park Campus here.

Max Long and Michael Kaminsky had taken to standing outside the student center looking for the opportunity to discuss the nature of Israel, the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas pogrom there, and the war in Gaza.

Long held a handmade sign saying, "Come talk about Israel with an IDF soldier." Long is an Israel Defense Forces reservist who was deployed to Gaza as part of a counter-explosive unit recovering hostages after the murderous Hamas attack killed 1,200, most of them Jews. It was the largest slaughter of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust.

On Nov. 6 Long was approached by a man whose face was covered with a balaclava. A second man attacked him from behind, knocking him unconscious. The two then turned on Kaminsky, who had run to Long's aid. Long suffered a concussion and Kaminsky's wrist was broken in the attack.

At the Nov. 21 rally, Long and Kaminsky told supporters and the media that they would not be silenced.

"Days after the attack," Long explained, pro-Hamas students "distributed 'Wanted' flyers with my name on it. Jewish students are afraid to speak on their own campus. We cannot allow threats and violence to silence us. We want to encourage dialogue, not silence it."

Kaminsky said the university administration also bore responsibility. "We were attacked because of the university's failure to protect Jewish students." He said that a DePaul safety officer witnessed the whole attack and did not intervene.

Long and Kaminsky believe they were targeted by the pro-Hamas thugs because they've been effective in getting a hearing. "Ninety percent of the discussions we had were productive, whether we agreed or disagreed. We often ended by shaking hands," Kaminsky said.

Members of the Chicago Jewish Alliance and other local Jewish groups and #EndJewHatred participated in the rally. Brooke Goldstein, a New York-based human rights lawyer and executive director of the Lawfare Project, commended the students and announced her organization is legally representing them.

She and other speakers called on the university to take action to protect the safety and free speech of all students on campus, including Jews.

Greek unions general strike protests high prices



Giorgos Arapekos/NurPhoto via AP

Workers in rail, shipping, public transportation and construction, at hospitals, schools and elsewhere, joined a general strike across Greece Nov. 20 to protest soaring prices, unaffordable rents and low wages. The one-day action was called by a number of unions.

Public-sector unions are demanding a 10% wage raise and a return of bonuses cut in previous years. Rallies of 15,000 strikers were held in Athens, above, and 4,000 in Thessaloniki, the country's second-largest city.

Following the 2008 financial crisis, the rulers in Germany and France used their dominant position in the European Union to press successive Greek governments to slash social services, wages and pensions in return for a so-called bailout. Unemployment jumped and real wages fell by 8.3%, the steepest plunge for working people anywhere in the EU.

Today the Greek capitalist rulers' economy is growing at a faster rate than most of their rivals in Europe. Unemployment is the lowest in 20 years. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has raised the minimum wage four times since 2019.

But this has failed to offset the escalating costs of energy, food and housing that workers confront, the unions calling the protest said.

— TERRY EVANS

Ceasefire marks Israeli gains

Continued from front page

Under the terms of the 13-point accord brokered with the participation of Washington and Paris, over the next 60 days Hezbollah will withdraw all its forces from southern Lebanon to north of the Litani River, and Israeli troops will gradually withdraw to Israel — with 10,000 Lebanese army soldiers taking their place to assure Hezbollah does not return.

Remaining Hezbollah rocket launchers, weapons stores and its other military infrastructure in the south are to be destroyed. And Hezbollah is not to procure any new weapons.

A side agreement by Washington declares that the U.S. government recognizes Israel's "right to act at any time" against violations of the accord in southern Lebanon and against direct threats from anywhere else in the country.

"If Hezbollah violates the agreement and tries to arm itself, we will attack," Netanyahu said. "If it launches a rocket, if it digs a tunnel, if it brings in a truck carrying rockets, we will attack."

Driving the point home, Israeli forces hit over 300 Hezbollah sites in the 11 hours before the ceasefire took effect, from the Syrian border to Beirut to southern Lebanon.

At a press conference in Beirut, Hezbollah leader Mahmoud Qomati argued that the ceasefire is a "victory and the enemy did not achieve any of its goals."

Sardar Mohammad Jaafar Asadi, a senior official of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, had a more sober view. "Although this truce is not 100% favorable to us, we welcome and support it," he told Tasnim news agency. Tehran and Hezbollah hope they — as well as Hamas and the rest of the Tehran-funded and -organized "axis of resistance" — can recover from their defeats and begin quietly violating the accord to rearm and prepare for future attempts to destroy Israel and eliminate all the Jews.

Hezbollah started the war

The war in Lebanon began Oct. 8, 2023, when Hezbollah — at the urging of Tehran — attacked northern Israel with drones and missiles. They said this was in "solidarity" with Hamas,

which had murdered 1,200 men, women and children in Israel the day before. The Hamas death squads also wounded thousands, took 250 hostages and raped and mutilated dozens of women. It was the largest anti-Jewish pogrom since the Holocaust.

Hezbollah's daily attacks forced 60,000 Israeli citizens — Jews and Arabs alike — to evacuate their homes and farms in northern Israel. A thousand homes there have been damaged and 45 civilians killed.

Over the next year Israeli forces continued to respond to Hezbollah attacks, but held off on any major operation in Lebanon. They focused instead on dismantling Hamas to prevent it from further massacres of Jews.

Then, in a move that took Hezbollah by surprise, thousands of pagers — unwittingly purchased from a business set up by the Mossad — blew up Sept. 17. The next day the same thing happened with Hezbollah's walkie-talkies. These operations killed more than 30 and wounded thousands of the terrorist group's cadre and leaders.

The Israel Defense Forces followed this up with airstrikes aimed at Hezbollah sites, including one on Sept. 27 that killed Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's central leader. Israeli soldiers began ground attacks in southern Lebanon Oct. 1.

Tehran fired 180 ballistic missiles at Israel in retaliation for Nasrallah's death. While most were intercepted, the attack damaged more than 100 homes, a school and killed one person — a Palestinian on the West Bank. But this showed the danger that the regime in Tehran poses to Jews and Israel, even more so if the regime acquires nuclear weapons.

On Oct. 25 Israel retaliated, destroying Tehran's main anti-missile systems, factories essential to building Iran's ballistic missiles and a key site involved in its efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

Shortly afterward, Hezbollah — at the urging of its masters in Tehran — dropped its demand that Israel end its war on Hamas before agreeing to a ceasefire.

By the time of the ceasefire, Israel had killed 3,500 Lebanese, including at least 900 civilians. Another 886,000 fled the combat zones and 99,000 homes were damaged.

Israel defied U.S. pressure

Netanyahu said that another reason for the ceasefire was to "give our forces a breather and replenish stocks." He was referring to the Joseph Biden administration's relentless pressure on Israel to end the war in Gaza before Hamas is destroyed, to back off attacks on Hezbollah and refrain from attacking nuclear sites in Iran.

When Israel was preparing to enter Rafah on the Egypt-Gaza border, a decisive step in dealing blows to Hamas, "President Biden told me that if we go in, we will be alone," Netanyahu reported to the Israeli Knesset Nov. 18. "He also said that he would stop shipments of impor-

Iran: Thousands of retired teachers demand pension hike



Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Unions

Thousands of retired teachers, many coming from other cities, joined a march along a busy street in Tehran to Iran's parliament, the Majlis, Nov. 20, above, demanding an increase in their pensions. It was one of the largest labor protests in Iran in years.

Teachers across the country have joined the weekly protests going on for over a year by retirees from government agencies and steel, sugar, oil and other industries, demanding higher retirement pay. Some actions have also called for the release of imprisoned union leaders.

The "Fifth Development Plan" law passed by the Majlis in 2011 instructed the government to increase pensions to match rising prices. Another law passed said pensions should equal 90% of the wages in workers' job category. But teachers say the laws haven't been implemented and the monthly payment they get barely lasts a week. The government claims it doesn't have the money to implement the laws.

"Our demand is clear: just enforce the law now!" "Government officials, have some shame, stop denying our rights!" were among the most popular chants.

The government is putting the burden of the capitalist economic crisis and the cost of its military adventures in the region on the back of working people.

The government's Mizan News Agency says bread prices have gone up 50% in Tehran over the last few months, while some reports say it has doubled. *Jahan Sanat*, a business newspaper, says that prices are increasing at 32% a year overall.

Even the government-affiliated Workers House complains that approved wage and pension increases don't come close to making up for inflation.

The latest retiree actions take place as the government is threatening to launch a new assault on Israel. But the regime's war moves, unpopular among most working people, won't bring a halt to the protests.

— SETH GALINSKY

tant weapons to us. And so he did."

While the capitalist government of Israel needs and seeks U.S. imperialism's support, Netanyahu knows that it can't be relied on. Washington's only goal in the region is to advance the economic and political interests of the U.S. ruling class, not to defend Jews.

ICC promotes Jew-hatred

On Nov. 21 the so-called International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Israel Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, claiming that they had committed "war crimes" in Gaza. To give the appearance of being even-handed, the court also ordered the arrest of former Hamas commander Mohammed Deif, who has been dead for months!

The stateless, U.N.-related court was created by European Union governments and others in 2002, but its authority has never been recognized by Washington or the Chinese, Israeli or Russian governments, and 65 other U.N.-member states.

The court has no authority to enforce any of its orders. It relies on member states to carry out its will. These states all act on their own national interests. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told the press that his government will arrest the two Israeli leaders if they come there.

Of course this won't happen, but

the court's false equivalency between Hamas, whose stated goal is the destruction of Israel and slaughter or expulsion of all the Jews there, and Israel, which is defending the safety of a refuge for Jews, is a sign of the depth of Jew-hatred around the world amid the deepening capitalist crisis.

The Israeli government is the only state in the world that defends Jews from attack, arms in hand. At the same time, the fight is weakened by the fact that Israel is a capitalist state. Jew-hatred is intrinsic to the imperialist epoch and it will continue to raise its head unless the working class takes political power — in Israel and Palestine, across the Middle East, in the U.S. and the world over.

Even as the regime in Iran seeks to postpone the coming showdown in the Middle East, it has openly and covertly pursued the development of nuclear weapons.

But working people in Iran are increasingly showing their disagreement with the regime's expansionist, Jew-hating war policy in the region. Despite the regime's efforts to whip up support for its drive against Israel, strikes and demonstrations have grown and become more visible.

Bartarinha, a news media based in Tehran, reported Nov. 27 on Netanyahu's statement that Israel is now "changing the face of the Middle East."

Recommended reading

The fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms in the imperialist epoch

Stakes for the international working class

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'Only social revolution can sweep clean a path for a new culture'

What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings by André Breton is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for December. Breton founded the surrealist movement, an influential current in literature and art, 100 years ago. In 1925, he defended Russian revolutionary leaders V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky against growing Stalinist attacks. "Communism alone," Breton wrote, "permits the accomplishment of the greatest transformation, given the harsh conditions dictated to it." The "Manifesto for an independent revolutionary art," excerpted below, was co-authored by Breton, Trotsky and Mexican muralist Diego Rivera in Mexico in 1938. Copyright © 1978. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.



Co-authors of "Manifesto for an independent revolutionary art," from left, André Breton, Diego Rivera and Leon Trotsky, in Mexico City in 1938 on the eve of the Second World War.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

We can say without exaggeration that never has civilisation been menaced so seriously as today. The Vandals, with instruments which were barbarous and comparatively ineffective, blotted out the culture of antiquity in one corner of Europe. But today we see world civilisation, united in its historic destiny, reeling under the blows of reactionary forces armed with the entire arsenal of modern technology. We are by no means thinking only of the world war that draws near. Even in times of 'peace' the position of art and science has become absolutely intolerable.

In so far as it originates with an individual, in so far as it brings into play subjective talents to create some-

thing which brings about an objective enriching of culture, any philosophical, sociological, scientific or artistic discovery seems to be the fruit of a precious chance; that is to say, the manifestation, more or less spontaneous, of necessity. ...

In the contemporary world we must recognise the ever more widespread destruction of those conditions under which intellectual creation is possible. From this follows of necessity an increasingly manifest degradation not only of the work of art but also of the specifically 'artistic' personality. The regime of Hitler, now that it has rid Germany of all those artists whose work expressed the slightest sympathy for liberty, however superficial, has reduced those who still consent to take up pen or brush to the status of domestic servants of the regime, whose task it is to glorify it on order, according to the worst possible aesthetic conventions. If reports may be believed, it is the same in the Soviet Union, where Thermidorian reaction is now reaching its climax.

It goes without saying that we do not identify ourselves with the currently fashionable catchword, 'Neither fascism nor communism!' — a shibboleth which suits the temperament of the philistine, conservative and frightened, clinging to the tattered remnants of the 'democratic' past. True art, which is not content to play variations on ready-made models but rather insists on expressing the inner needs of man and of mankind in its

time — true art is unable not to be revolutionary, not to aspire to a complete and radical reconstruction of society. This it must do, were it only to deliver intellectual creation from the chains which bind it, and to allow all mankind to raise itself to those heights which only isolated geniuses have achieved in the past. We recognise that only the social revolution can sweep clean the path for a new cul-

"The communist revolution is not afraid of art, it stands for complete freedom for art"

ture. If, however, we reject all solidarity with the bureaucracy now in control of the Soviet Union, it is precisely because, in our eyes, it represents not communism but its most treacherous and dangerous enemy.

The totalitarian regime of the USSR, working through the so-called cultural organisations it controls in other countries, has spread over the entire world a deep twilight hostile to every sort of spiritual value; a twilight of filth and blood in which, disguised as intellectuals and artists, those men steep themselves who have made of servility a career, of lying-for-pay a custom, and of the palliation of crime a source of pleasure. The official art of Stalinism, with a blatancy unexampled in history, mirrors their efforts to put a good face on their

mercenary profession.

The repugnance which this shameful negation of principles of art inspires in the artistic world — a negation which even slave states have never dared to carry so far — should give rise to an active, uncompromising condemnation. The opposition of writers and artists is one of the forces which can usefully contribute to the discrediting and overthrow of regimes that are destroying, along with the right of the proletariat to aspire to a better world, every sentiment of nobility and even of human dignity.

The communist revolution is not afraid of art. It realises that the role of the artist in a decadent capitalist society is determined by the conflict between the individual and various social forms which are hostile to him. This fact alone, in so far as he is conscious of it, makes the artist the natural ally of revolution. ... The need for emancipation felt by the individual spirit has only to follow its natural course to be led to mingle its stream with this primeval necessity — the need for the emancipation of man. ...

The free choice of these themes and the absence of all restrictions on the range of his exploitations — these are possessions which the artist has a right to claim as inalienable. In the realm of artistic creation, the imagination must escape from all constraint and must under no pretext allow itself to be placed under bonds. To those who urge us, whether for today or for tomorrow, to consent that art should submit to a discipline which we hold to be radically incompatible with its nature, we give a flat refusal and we repeat our deliberate intention of standing by the formula *complete freedom for art*. ...

We believe that the supreme task of art in our epoch is to take part actively and consciously in the preparation of the revolution. But the artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very nerves its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his art. ...

Our aims:

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To fight high prices, build union solidarity

Persistently high prices and growing employer attacks are increasing the difficulties workers and our families face. It's harder today to find steady work with livable wages and meet the costs of our housing, health care, child care and other essentials. More workers face a struggle to get by month by month, let alone prosper.

Prices haven't fallen since they soared between 2021 and 2023, a big factor in Donald Trump winning the 2024 election. After the Biden presidency, many workers hope Trump will do something to bring prices down. But protection from the ruinous impact of higher prices will not be found by looking to whichever capitalist politician is in the White House.

There is a road forward. Workers are increasingly turning to our unions to defend our class interests. The unions are 14.4 million members strong, with millions more looking to join or back today's labor struggles.

Demands for substantial wage increases are being fought for in strikes at Milk-Bone in Buffalo, at hotels in San Francisco and Las Vegas, by the 55,000 postal workers, who have walked out across Canada, and teachers in Massachusetts. As they mobilize to press forward, they can make real gains, as shown in recent strikes by the International Longshoremen's Association at East and Gulf coast ports and by Machinists at Boeing.

Building solidarity to strengthen these fights is in the interests of all workers.

When Democrats and Republicans claim they'll bring "inflation under control," they obscure how the workings of the capitalist system inevitably cause prices to rise. Bosses' competition with rivals for mar-

kets, at home and abroad, is inherent to capitalism, and it determines which capitalists survive and which go under. This fuels bosses' attacks on workers. As dog-eat-dog competition causes profit rates to fall, the rulers' governments move to print more money, hoping this will buffer the crisis. With the supply of money outstripping commodities, prices inevitably rise with disastrous consequences for workers.

Nothing under capitalism can prevent this. Moreover, the rulers and their backers in the meritocratic upper middle class are blind to the true social and moral consequences of these crises on the working class.

Without fighting for protection from the twin ravages of high prices and joblessness, more workers get thrown deeper into poverty, and the working class as a whole can begin to get torn apart.

It falls to the working class to lead the fight to defend the interests of the millions of toilers. Unions have before, and can again, lead a fight for *full* cost-of-living protection in every contract and all government benefits, so whenever prices rise, our wages go up automatically. Bosses will howl that they cannot afford this, as they do every time workers defend ourselves. But this just points to the fact that every class struggle is a political struggle, and that workers must look to taking political power into our own hands.

Today's strikes, many featured in the *Militant*, are the starting point to push back the bosses' offensive. Unions can mobilize labor support, help win more victories and, in the process, build workers' confidence in ourselves and our own capacities. Build solidarity with these union fights.

Mass. teachers strike

Continued from front page

Members of the nearby Marblehead Education Association are also continuing their strike.

Teachers in Gloucester also walked out Nov. 8. They signed a tentative agreement Nov. 22 and returned to work three days later. They won higher salaries for teachers and extended paid parental leave. The Union of Gloucester Educators, however, conceded that while they won higher wages for paraprofessionals, they still aren't high enough. They will make around \$36,000 by the end of the five-year contract.

Strike solid despite government threats

State and local officials have ratcheted up threats against the teachers. "Tougher action is needed on teachers strikes, much higher fines would make a difference," insisted the editorial in the *Boston Globe* Nov. 19. It urged the state to get tougher on teachers and their unions.

Fines have been levied against the striking unions totaling in the hundreds of thousands of dollars: \$50,000 a day since the third day of each strike, increased by \$10,000 each day the strike continues.

Gov. Maura Healy scolded teachers Nov. 23, threatening that "students need to be back in school" even if new contracts are not in place. It's "unacceptable" that students have been out so long, she said.

At a rally Nov. 24 in front of Beverly Middle School the mood of strikers was high and community support was visible. Pro-teacher signs dotted front yards as this *Militant* worker-correspondent drove into town. Strikers were joined by teachers from Gloucester and Newton with their union hats and placards, as the crowd chanted, "When we fight, we win!"

Dawn Leoni, a Gloucester seventh-grade special education teacher and a former paraprofessional, told the *Militant*, "The school committees tried to divide us, but their attempts made us stronger." She said the authorities' constant drumbeat calling the strikes illegal had actually made parents start asking, "Why is it illegal for teachers to strike? We've had great support from parents and students," she said. Students in Gloucester organized a rally a week ago. "I was so heartened to see my students coming out to show support."

"We'll be out tomorrow morning, on the picket lines at all our schools," Lydia Ames, a Beverly Teachers Association union leader, said, since no agreement was imminent.

Starsha Berchoff, a young paraprofessional at North Beverly Elementary School, described her work. "All paraprofessionals deal with children with special needs — they could be on the autism spectrum or have emotional issues, including acting out physically. They need one-on-one assistance," she said. "But the higher ups won't do it."

"This is a population that doesn't get what they deserve. A lot of parents don't have the resources to fight when their kids aren't getting the services they need. We care about the kids, we have families too."

Berchoff is a single mother with two young children. She said that the extremely low pay paraprofessionals get means many of them have to work multiple jobs.

She said that the union Membership Engagement Committee, of which she's a leader, has been preparing for the strike for 11 months. They coordinate getting word out daily about picketing and rallies, prepare materials for the picket lines and help members who face hardships.

"A lot of good has come from this strike," she said. "We've gotten to know people in other school buildings and seen all the community support. I've never experienced something like this!"

The evening of Nov. 24 hundreds of parents, students and others held a candlelight vigil outside Hannah Elementary School in support of the teachers.

Workers: Negligence caused Louisville factory blast

BY AMY HUSK

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — "I felt, heard and saw this massive plume of yellow smoke and debris go hundreds of feet in the air right outside my window," Hannah Nitzken told WHAS-TV News, describing the Nov. 12 explosion at the Givaudan Sense Colour plant. She lives 300 feet from the factory in the Clifton neighborhood here.

The explosion sent shrapnel flying into the densely populated neighborhood, landing in yards and on roofs. Some residents have had to move out of their homes.

The Givaudan plant here produces food colorings. A cooker explosion was the cause of the accident, the Louisville office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives told the press Nov. 18. Some workers in the plant had warned the company about an overheating cooker.

Two workers were killed in the explosion, Austin Jagers, 29, and Kevens Dawson Jr., 49. At least 11 workers were injured and taken to area hospitals.

Community residents confronted Ann Leonard, president of the Givaudan Sense Colour Business Unit, at a Nov. 18 meeting about the cause of the explosion, demanding the company do more to help people there.

"We were in a blast zone," one person said. "The explosion was so loud it could be heard for miles. Don't we all have to have our hearing checked?" Eunice Ellis said her family is homeless because of the blast. "I need help. We all need help."

"This is the third incident" involving the plant, said Bella Schweizer. "How can we trust anything that you are saying without any action to back it up?" Schweizer circulated a petition she presented to the Louisville Metro Council demanding Givaudan be barred from rebuilding its factory in any residential neighborhood.

Nick Simon, who owns property across the street from the plant, proposed Givaudan tear down the damaged building and build a park, "and name it after the two men you killed."

The family of Kevens Dawson Jr., along with attorney Benjamin Crump, spoke at a press conference the same day. Dawson was left under the collapsed building for over eight hours after Givaudan officials told rescuers all the workers were accounted for. Mailaika Watson, Dawson's girlfriend, said that after she went to three area hospitals looking for him, she became



Residents in Louisville, Kentucky, Nov. 18 confront bosses at Givaudan Sense Colour after deadly factory explosion.

convinced he was still in the plant and went back to find him herself. Eventually firefighters were sent back into the building and found his body at 11:30 p.m.

Dawson's son, Kevens Dawson III, said his father was a "man of principle, respect and love. All he wanted to do is provide and work hard and I just can't help feeling that my father worked himself to death. We're very devastated and we want answers. We want justice."

In the first nine months of 2024 Givaudan — a Swiss-owned producer of fragrances, cosmetics and food coloring — reported sales of 5.6 billion Swiss francs (\$6.3 billion). In 2023 its net income was almost \$1 billion.

In April 2003, when the plant was operated by D.D. Williamson & Co., an over-pressurized feed tank exploded, killing 44-year-old Louis Perry and triggering a massive release of aqua ammonia. In 1996 a railroad car containing liquid ammonium bisulfate overheated as it sat near the plant and blew its lid, blanketing the surrounding neighborhood with the toxic chemical.

Ned Measel, the Socialist Workers Party 2024 candidate for U.S. Congress from Cincinnati and member of UNITE HERE Local 24, attended the Nov. 18 meeting. "Workers in plants and on the rails, as well as the communities they're in, face the bosses' potentially catastrophic assault on safety every day," he told the *Militant*. "The best defense for us is to organize a union at every workplace and for workers to take control of production and safety. No worker should die on the job and no one in the neighborhood should have their health and home threatened."

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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