

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Puerto Ricans protest use of their land for US military operations
— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 89/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 29, 2025

A letter to our readers:

Join fall drive to expand the reach of the ‘Militant’ and the SWP

The Socialist Workers Party is launching its fall party propaganda campaign. We’re asking you, our *Militant* readers, to join in helping expand the reach of the paper and introduce the SWP to more working people. The eight-week effort begins Sept. 20 and runs through Nov. 18.

The goals include selling 1,300 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1,300 books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other working-class revolutionary leaders, offered at a special discount when bought with a subscription, and raising \$140,000 for the annual SWP Party-Building Fund. This fund is at the heart of meeting the party’s budget.

As the drive begins, politics today is marked by deepening capitalist rivalries — trade conflicts, an escalating arms race and shooting wars that inevitably lead toward World War III — if not stopped by the working class, by parties capable of organizing millions to make socialist revolutions.

Continued on page 5

Years of liberals demonizing Trump led to the killing of Charlie Kirk

BY TERRY EVANS

Charlie Kirk, a conservative politician who organized to win young people to support Donald Trump, was shot and killed as he spoke in front of 3,000 people at Utah Valley University Sept. 10. He was known for engaging political opponents and challenging them to “prove me wrong.”

Six days later, Utah County Attorney Jeff Gray filed charges against Tyler Robinson, an electrical apprenticeship student at Dixie Technical College, including aggravated murder and six other counts. Gray said he planned to seek the death penalty against Robinson.

The charging document says Robinson confessed to the killing to his parents and his roommate. It quotes from messages he posted saying Kirk “spreads too much hate.” The document says Robinson’s DNA was found on the trigger of the rifle used to kill Kirk.

Robinson left a note to his roommate under the keyboard of his computer before the shooting saying, “I had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk and I’m going to take it.”

Continued on page 9

Back Israel’s battle to defeat Hamas, end its grip on Gaza



Ramez Habboub/Abaca Press/Sipa USA via AP

Tens of thousands of Palestinians leave Gaza City on urging of Israeli forces, opening up space for IDF troops to move in against Hamas, while minimizing civilian casualties.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israel is moving to wrest control from Hamas of its key remaining stronghold in Gaza. This is despite increased pressure from Washington and other imperialist ruling classes, reactionary regimes across the Middle East and middle-class radicals around the world who are demanding Israel agree to end the war, which would let Hamas survive.

Decisively defeating the Nazi-like group is a necessity to prevent it from carrying out its goal of more anti-

Jewish pogroms, ultimately leading to a new Holocaust. Israel’s dismantling of Hamas and incorporating Gaza in some form would also remove the biggest obstacle in the way of Palestinian working people being able to organize to defend their own interests and national aspirations.

Condemnation of Israel by capitalist rulers is intensifying as its defensive war registers gains. With U.S. backing, the U.N. Security Council on Sept. 11 unanimously endorsed

Continued on page 7

Teamsters strike against Republic Services in Boston in 10th week



Teamsters Local 25

Teamsters on strike against Republic Services filled the stage at Labor Day in Boston Sept. 1. “As long as it takes, we are going to be out there,” striker Kenny Sullivan told the crowd.

BY SANDRA LATHAM

PEABODY, Mass. — “Republic doesn’t care about the customers or the workers,” striker Afri Ituen told the *Militant* as he was finishing his shift on the Teamsters picket line here Sept. 13. When he’s working, Ituen’s job is to toss the trash in the back of the trucks as they move down the streets. “I lift and throw literally tons of garbage a day, of-

ten clocking more than 30,000 steps,” he said. “Of course, I get that many steps or more walking the picket line.”

Some 400 workers at Republic Services in the Boston area, members of Teamsters Local 25, have been on strike since July 1. Another 30 Republic workers in Cumming, Georgia, are also on strike. All told more than 2,000 other

Continued on page 2

Putin’s war on Ukraine hits Poland, as NATO, Moscow hold war games

BY TERRY EVANS

In a deliberate violation of Poland’s airspace, Moscow deployed 19 drones across that country’s border Sept. 9, during a broader assault on working people in Ukraine.

Warplanes from the Netherlands and Poland, both members of the

Washington-led NATO military alliance, shot down three of the unmanned aircraft, the first direct military clash between NATO-allied forces and Moscow since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his regime’s war to conquer Ukraine.

The clash occurred as sharpening rivalries between capitalist powers worldwide are driving an arms race and threaten wider wars. As part of their

Continued on page 6

Health insurance bosses’ profit drive hits workers hard

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In their drive to further boost already booming profits, health insurance bosses are jacking up monthly premiums by the most in 15 years, tightening the squeeze on working-class families as we confront a deepening capitalist economic crisis marked by high prices on food, rent and other basic necessities, as well as declining openings for decent-paying full-time jobs.

Health insurance premiums are projected to increase by 6.5% to 18% in 2026, in some cases even more, reports

Continued on page 9

Inside

Workers will have a chance to end exploitation, war 9

British Columbia gov’t workers strike, demand higher wages 2

As coal bosses push for profits, black lung on the rise again 4

— On the picket line, p. 3 —

N. Calif. midwives, anesthetists organize one-day strike at Kaiser

Hotel workers in Houston extend strike at Hilton Americas

British Columbia gov't workers strike, demand higher wages

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The British Columbia General Employees' Union, which represents 34,000 government employees across the province, launched strike action Sept. 2, after the union's members voted 92.7% to go out. Their contract expired March 31.

The central issue is workers' need for higher wages. One popular placard said "2% is for milk," a reference to the New Democratic Party government's paltry offer for a raise. Strikers told the *Militant* that one half of the 60 pickets at the Ministry of Finances offices here were already working two jobs to try and get by, and living paycheck to paycheck. Drivers passing by honked their horns in solidarity.

More than 2,600 union members joined the picket lines in Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey and Prince George. And they grew larger throughout the week. The union's members work in all branches of government, including social services, health care, firefighters, education, government liquor stores, courts and administrative jobs.

The union is demanding an 8.25% increase over two years, plus cost-of-living adjustments to counter inflation. "The employer's refusal to put forward a wage proposal that meaningfully addresses the affordability crisis leaves us no choice but to escalate job action," union President Paul Finch told CBC News.

British Columbia Premier David Eby rejected the union's call to increase the wage proposal. Boosting

wages would not be fair to taxpayers, he claimed, because the province is "facing big fiscal headwinds."

The union explains the workers shouldn't be forced to bear the burden of the government's priorities. "We didn't create the deficit," Finch said. "Nor should the hard-working people in B.C. — that includes our members — have to forego cost-of-living increases in order to try and balance it."

"What has created this deficit is poor governance," he said, "overspending on capital projects, tax breaks for the wealthy, and tax breaks on key resource projects that every British Columbian should be receiving benefits from."



Militant/Ned Dmytryshyn
Government employees' picket line in Vancouver Sept. 15, as workers fight for higher wages. Strikers told *Militant* many have to work two jobs to get by, living paycheck to paycheck.

Teamsters strike at Republic Services in 10th week

Continued from front page

Teamsters at Republic have struck in cities around the country, either over contracts or in solidarity.

The striking Republic workers were the highlight of Boston's Labor Day Parade. Local 25 union President Tom Mari talked about the strike and then striker Kenny Sullivan spoke. "As long as it takes, we are going to be out there, shoulder to shoulder. As long as it takes, we are going to win. Union solidarity. That's what Labor Day is all about," Sullivan said.

"We just want what's right and what's equal pay for the union," striker Ian Spence told WCVB News at the Labor Day action. Republic Services workers in Massachusetts are demanding the

same pay as workers get who do similar jobs at smaller companies in the area.

Republic is the second-largest trash hauling company in the United States. It made some \$2 billion in profits in 2024. CEO Jon Vander Ark's total compensation in 2024 was \$13 million, up from the \$8.5 million he got in 2021, the first year he ran the company. The company says it is spending some \$100,000 per day on extra security for scab drivers.

"Some people have had to get other Teamsters jobs, but no one has crossed the picket lines," Scott Rancati told the *Militant*. He was interested to hear about the fight by flight attendants at Air Canada to be paid for all the time they're working, including before the plane departs, after it lands, and during flight delays.

Some of the "replacement workers" the company has brought in from nonunion Republic facilities, Rancati said, have filed a lawsuit against the company making them do some 90 minutes of unpaid work each day. "We invited them to join our picket lines and urged them to make sure they were getting paid," he said.

Rancati said some of the replacement workers were getting into accidents because they're not used to maneuvering the trucks in Boston's

narrow alleys. One hit a young woman and sent her to the hospital. The woman's mother, Beth Kontos, is the retired president of the American Federation of Teachers in Massachusetts.

"As a union member, I have walked the picket line with Teamsters Local 25 members in Peabody," Kontos told the *Peabody Weekly News*. "They deserve a good contract, and our communities deserve safe, quality service with experienced Teamster drivers."

The union has also organized mobile pickets that trail the garbage trucks doing struck work through the neighborhoods, making sure they're working safely. This slows them down, Rancati said.

This was the second year an outdoor action replaced the traditional Labor Day Breakfast, an annual gathering of Democratic Party politicians and union officials. Last year striking hotel workers picketed the Park Plaza Hotel, where the breakfast had been scheduled. It was reorganized outdoors as a solidarity event that included the hotel strikers and their supporters.

Afri Ituen said he talks with the younger workers about the importance of the strike and solidarity. "We're union brothers and we have to stand up for each other, I tell them."

THE MILITANT

'Workers must fight to take political power!'

"To take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class, workers need to build revolutionary parties in every country," Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, told workers marching for Puerto Rico's independence in Manhattan Aug. 31.

Militant
Paul Mailhot, right, SWP candidate for mayor of New York, campaigns Aug. 31.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

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

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

The Militant

Vol. 89/No. 34
Closing news date: September 17, 2025
Editor: John Studer
Managing Editor: Terry Evans
Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Vivian Sahner, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, three weeks in June, and one week in September.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

N. Calif. midwives, anesthetists organize one-day strike at Kaiser

OAKLAND, Calif. — More than 600 midwives and nurse anesthetists went on strike at 20 hospitals throughout the Kaiser Permanente system in Northern California Sept. 8.

Hundreds rallied and picketed on a busy street outside the Oakland Kaiser hospital, demanding wage increases and adequate staffing. The pickets, most on strike for the first time, got constant honks of support from passing cars, buses and trucks.

The strikers, who make up the basic delivery team for most non-cesarean births at Kaiser, are new to the labor movement. After voting to unionize as members of the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals, they're fighting for their first contract.

Pickets told this *Militant* worker-correspondent that because conditions and pay at Kaiser are inferior to other area hospitals, many have left to get other jobs, leaving those remaining to face understaffing and burnout, as well as inferior care for patients.

"Kaiser is stonewalling, trying to intimidate us, putting profits over people," UNAC/UHCP President and RN Charmaine Morales told the strikers during a rally at the picket line. "We're demanding the staffing, resources and respect that make safe, expert care possible. We will not back down!"

Hundreds of physician assistants and acupuncture providers at Kaiser went out on a one-day sympathy strike and joined the action. Members of other unions at the hospital, including stationary engineers and nurses, also took part.

— Betsey Stone

Magee-Womens Hospital nurses celebrate winning a union

PITTSBURGH — Nurses at Magee-Womens Hospital led the Labor Day parade of thousands here Sept. 1. In mid-August they voted to join the Service Employees International Union Healthcare Pennsylvania by a vote of 402 to 305.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the largest hospital system

in western Pennsylvania, owns more than 40 hospitals and is notoriously anti-union. This was the first successful nurses' organizing effort at any UPMC facility.

Winning adequate staffing levels was the central issue driving the campaign. Nurses at some other area hospitals recently won union contracts with improved staffing levels and significant raises.

"It took a long time to get the union," Jean Stone, a labor and delivery nurse, told the *Militant*. "We tried 10 years ago but failed. To organize for a union 'yes' vote, we talked it up at work, did a lot of phone work and held many weekly meetings. We were all there for the vote count. There was elation, it was a huge relief."

"But now that we won," she said, "we're charged with working with those who aren't happy with the result. We want to bring them in, make them feel better about being union now."

On Sept. 9, SEIU posted that Advanced Practice nurses at the same hospital also voted to join the union. The 60 new members include nurse practitioners, neonatal nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives and others.

— Candace Wagner

Hotel workers in Houston extend strike at Hilton Americas

HOUSTON — After nine days on strike, 400 workers represented by UNITE HERE Local 23 who work at Hilton Americas-Houston here have extended their walkout through Sept. 20. The extension was announced as over 150 strikers and their supporters attended a public meeting of the Houston City Council Sept. 9. Seven strikers addressed the gathering, and after each one all the other strikers chanted ¡Sí, se puede!

The strikers described the conditions they face on the job. "We helped the hotel make over \$3 billion in revenue last year," Amber White, a Hilton worker and mother of three girls, told the meeting. "My wages aren't enough to feed my family. I sacrifice eating so my kids can eat. We're the oil and grease that make the hotel run."

Rosa León has worked in housekeep-



Militant/Betsey Stone

Striking nurse anesthetists and midwives rally at Kaiser hospital in Oakland, California, Sept. 8 in fight for wage raise and adequate staffing. Over 600 walked out at 20 hospitals that day.

ing for 21 years. "I came to the hotel empty-handed and will have to leave empty-handed when I retire," she said. "There is no retirement plan. I don't want younger workers to go through what I have gone through."

Cook Marcella Zaleta said she has to work three jobs to try to provide for her family. "I work 16 hours a day and even with no days off I don't have enough money to survive."

Willy Gonzalez, UNITE HERE Local 23 secretary-treasurer, told the City Council members, "The workers are seeking a \$23 hourly minimum wage — a raise from the current base rate of \$16.50. Management so far has offered an immediate \$1 raise to \$17.50, followed by a 75-cent increase in January" and some smaller raises later on.

"No one can deny that the hotel is extremely profitable," he added. "But it's the people who have made that hotel a success. That hotel was built with public money, that hotel was entrusted to do right by the people of Houston, and it has betrayed these people."

This is the first hotel strike in Texas history. The strikers need solidarity! Join the picket line, which is up from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

Send messages and donations to UNITE HERE Local 23, 2506 Suther-

land St., Houston, TX 77023, or go to the strikers' GoFundMe page, "Support Hilton Americas Workers' Fight for a Fair Contract!"

— Dennis Richter

Airport Plane Train workers vote union in, seek first contract

ATLANTA — Nearly 100 workers who operate and maintain the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport's Plane Train voted 56-24 to go union. The International Association of Machinists Rail Division and Transportation Communications Union/IAM announced the election results Aug. 20.

The Plane Train is managed by Atlanta airport officials, but the workers are employed by French rail manufacturer Alstom, which operates and builds the cars. The Plane Train carries about 250,000 passengers daily between terminals at the world's busiest airport.

"We look forward to negotiating a strong first agreement that secures the wages, benefits and protections they deserve," TCU/IAM President Artie Maratea told the press.

— Janice Lynn, UNITE HERE member at Atlanta airport

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

September 25, 2000

Working people should reject the assault on democratic rights in Britain under the guise of protecting children. The scapegoating of those who have previously served sentences for sex offenses is an attempt to erode the social solidarity that the working class needs.

The last Tory and current Labour governments are responsible for establishing a national register of sex offenders in the hands of the cops.

The "anti-child abuse" campaign has nothing to do with protecting children. For them children have no value except as future workers to be exploited. It's the billionaire class and their dog-eat-dog system that are the biggest threat to our class, including children, from their assault on fundamental social rights to the violence they unleash through the cops and fascist-minded gangs, and the wars they drag working people into.

THE MILITANT

September 26, 1975

In 1969 and 1970 terrorist attacks were carried out against antiwar, Black and socialist activists in Illinois. A group calling itself the Legion of Justice took credit. It has now been revealed that the Legion was financed, armed and organized by the police department of the city of Chicago and the U.S. Army.

The story that is unfolding underscores the fact that government collusion with ultrarightist forces to destroy movements against oppression and exploitation is not limited to CIA assassination plots in other countries.

A united defense effort, in which the Socialist Workers Party played an important part, forced a halt to the wave of attacks. To combat this type of terrorism, the links between the government and the right-wingers must be exposed.

THE MILITANT

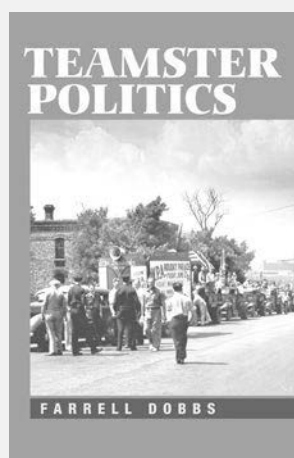
September 25, 1950

War-inflated prices have spurred wage demands by unions representing several million workers. In addition to increased basic wage rates, the most significant aspect of recent settlements, particularly in auto, is the widespread inclusion of cost-of-living escalator clauses in contracts.

Unless the workers are in position to raise their basic wage rates, much of the advantage of escalator clauses may be lost over a long period of time. Escalator wage adjustments, at best, are always three months behind prices.

The most serious threat to the workers is a government wage freeze. No one doubts that President Truman intends to invoke his wage-freezing powers as soon as he thinks it expedient, which will not be until after the November elections. This is one big reason why the workers are anxious to get pay increases as quickly as possible.

Recommended reading



"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."

— Farrell Dobbs

Other books in four-part series:
Teamster Rebellion
Teamster Power
Teamster Bureaucracy
\$16 each or all four for \$50
pathfinderpress.com

Puerto Ricans protest use of their land for US military operations

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Days before callously killing 11 people on a speedboat in international waters off the coast of Venezuela Sept. 2, Washington carried out a rapid military buildup in the Caribbean that so far has amassed eight warships, several Navy P-8 surveillance planes and one attack submarine in the region.

The Pentagon dispatched 10 F-35 stealth fighters to Puerto Rico — in position to carry out airstrikes in the Caribbean or inside Venezuela if ordered — and began amphibious landing training exercises involving 4,500 U.S. sailors and over 2,000 Marines Aug. 31.

The U.S. rulers’ use of its colony in Puerto Rico as a military base isn’t new. “I’m appalled at what is going down right now, the rapidity of it,” Myrna Pagán, a leader of Vieques Lives Matter, told the *Militant* in a phone interview from Vieques Sept. 12. “Suddenly we are to be used as a trampoline again, just as Vieques was used when the U.S. invaded Grenada and Panama.

“We have fought so long to get our land cleaned, to know peace on this island so our people can thrive,” she said. “And now we’re supposed to go back in history and become a tool the U.S. government will use again. It’s unacceptable.”

Washington seized Puerto Rico as part of its spoils in the so-called Spanish-American War in 1898. The U.S. Supreme Court defined the island as “belonging to” but “not part of” the U.S., saying it was occupied by “alien races.” The U.S. rulers imposed citizenship on Puerto Ricans in November 1917, days before entering World War I, to allow for drafting Puerto Ricans into the army and using the island as a military base. There is a long list of Puerto Ricans killed or wounded serving as cannon fodder in the interests of U.S. imperialism.

In 1941, as U.S. rulers prepared to enter World War II, Congress authorized setting up a Navy base on Vieques, a small island less than 10

miles from mainland Puerto Rico. U.S. troops evicted some 10,000 residents at gunpoint, driving them to a small strip in the center of the island.

They transformed Vieques into a giant target range, raining down live ordnance containing napalm, depleted uranium and other toxic chemicals for over 60 years.

The Pentagon took over nearly 70% of Vieques, opening a 60-year fight by generation after generation of working people there to get U.S. forces out. The military used Puerto Rico as a base of support in the bloody coup financed by the CIA in Guatemala in 1954. Planes launched from Puerto Rico carried thousands of U.S. Marines in the April 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic. In May 1969, U.S. jets sprayed a chemical simulating nerve gas over the land and waters of Vieques to test protective gear for U.S. troops fighting in Vietnam.

A base for U.S. aggression

As early as 1981, Maurice Bishop, prime minister and central leader of Grenada’s revolution, warned that “Ocean Venture 1981,” a 14-nation NATO exercise in Vieques that year was “a practice run for direct invasion of Grenada by U.S. troops.” The 10-week exercise included 250 ships, 1,000 aircraft and 120,000 troops. Months before U.S. troops invaded Grenada in October 1983, following a Stalinist coup that overthrew Bishop, maneuvers called Universal Trek ’83 were held in Vieques to work out the final details. Puerto Rico served as a staging ground for half of the invading troops.

Vieques residents, and other Puerto Ricans and allies abroad, fought tenaciously against the use of their land for bombing practice and as a training ground for launching Washington’s 1989 invasion of Panama. Over 20,000 U.S. troops invaded, seizing Gen. Manuel Noriega, Panama’s head of state, after the U.S. indicted him on drug trafficking charges.

The struggle against the U.S. military



Militant/Juliet Luther

Some 50,000 people protest in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, against U.S. Navy base, target practice on Vieques, July 4, 1999. Puerto Ricans fought for decades to get U.S. military off their land.

base exploded in 1999 after a 500-pound bomb, dropped by a U.S. Navy plane during a training exercise, killed local civilian guard David Sanes. Groups of fishermen, teachers and other protesters carried out civil disobedience actions, setting up encampments, some of them in the area of the bombing range.

Some 50,000 people marched in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, demanding the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques. The Navy was forced to suspend its bombing for a year.

In 2000, a huge crowd of some 85,000 working people marched in San Juan, Puerto Rico, when Washington announced plans to resume bombing.

Under the unrelenting pressure from the people of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Navy shut down operations in Vieques in 2003. President George H. Bush admitted defeat, saying, “They don’t want us there.” The decades of bombing left behind enormous destruction and caches of toxic chemicals. Stud-

ies showed that residents of the island were significantly more likely to get cancers, heart and liver diseases and diabetes than other Puerto Ricans. U.S. troops are still collecting unexploded bombs and various contaminants.

“We were not so naive to think the Navy was leaving forever,” Pagán told the *Militant*.

“It pains us greatly that they come to Puerto Rico to use our land, our air, and our sea for their military exercises. We know the pollution these exercises left behind in Culebra and Vieques,” Sonia Santiago, a founder of Mothers Against War, told the press Sept. 7 at a protest action in front of the Muñoz Air Base in Carolina, Puerto Rico.

“There is a whole new generation appalled by this,” Pagán said, explaining that more protests are planned. “We don’t want any military actions here. We will not accept that, and will do whatever is necessary to prevent it.”

As coal bosses push for profits, black lung cases are on the increase again

BY KATHIE FITZGERALD

PITTSBURGH — Over the last decade, black lung disease has been on the rise among U.S. coal miners, particularly in Appalachia. On Aug. 24, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* described years of inaction by the Mine Safety and Health Administration in testing and monitoring deadly silica dust in the mines.

A rule to reduce silica dust levels, originally proposed by MSHA over a year earlier, has been postponed a number of times both by MSHA and because of a lawsuit filed by the National Mining Association and coal executives.

The United Mine Workers of America, United Steelworkers, and other unions and health organizations filed friend-of-the court briefs in favor of implementation of the rule.

Radiologist Brandon Crum told the *Post-Gazette* that he began to see sick workers at his Kentucky clinic at the end of 2013. In just 18 months

he treated 60 miners with the most severe form of the disease, and the workers were younger.

“This isn’t your granddaddy’s black lung. It’s worse,” Amanda Lawson, a benefits counselor for Bluestone Health Center in Princeton, West Virginia, told the *Militant*. “Two weeks ago I sent off 10 X-rays of new miners for diagnosis. I just got them back yesterday, six have black lung.”

Called progressive massive fibrosis, this deadly form of the disease comes from exposure to silica dust, which is 20 times more toxic than coal dust. As bosses push to extract profit from thinning coal seams, miners must cut through ever-thicker layers of rock, releasing silica into the air and into their lungs. This form of the disease is hitting one in every five people who have worked in the mines in Appalachia for at least 25 years.

Revolution in the miners’ union

Not long ago, black lung had been virtually eliminated in the U.S. In the late 1960s, coal miners began a battle against the bosses that transformed the United Mine Workers of America into a powerful social force. They won a large measure of control over conditions in the mines, setting up union safety committees with the power to shut down production over

Continued on page 5

SPECIAL OFFERS FOR MILITANT SUBSCRIBERS

Books workers need today to learn more about the program of the Socialist Workers Party

20% OFF ALL OTHER PATHFINDER TITLES

The low point of labor resistance is behind us

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY LOOKS FORWARD

\$5

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

Stakes for the international working class

V.I. LENIN
LEON TROTSKY
FABRICE DUBRE
JAMES P. CANNON
JACK BARNES
DAVE PRINCE

\$5

MALCOLM X
Black Liberation & the Road to Workers Power

\$10

Are they rich because they're smart?

CLASS, PRIVILEGE AND LEARNING UNDER CAPITALISM

JACK BARNES

\$5

Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women

\$7

ALL 5 BOOKS ABOVE FOR \$32 WITH A MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION

Teamster Rebellion

\$10

Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity

\$7

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

\$12

The Turn to Industry

\$8

Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia

\$5

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

\$5

Also 3-pack of New Internationals #7, 10, 12 — \$30 with a subscription

SEE DISTRIBUTORS ON PAGE 8 OR VISIT PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

Join ‘Militant,’ SWP campaigns

Continued from front page

More and more workers sense this reality, as rival capitalist classes worldwide are locked in cutthroat competition for markets, resources and spheres of influence. At the same time, the bosses are driven to attack wages, and working and living conditions of workers at home.

What is to be done? The *Militant* features the Socialist Workers Party — its program, candidates and activities among workers and their unions — as the only way forward. It is the party to join.

The *Militant* backs Israel’s war against Hamas, at a critical stage today as Washington and other powers step up pressure on Israel to stop short of decisively defeating Hamas, which

would guarantee there will be more pogroms against Jews and the threat of a new Holocaust. The *Militant* is the only paper that starts with the facts — from the truth about Israel’s war against Hamas to the importance of growing protests by working people in Iran — to explain what is at stake for working people worldwide.

The *Militant* champions the fight by Ukraine’s toilers to defend their national sovereignty against the murderous war being waged against them by Moscow, as well as the growing opposition to that war by working people in Russia.

Workers in the U.S. and worldwide face blows from the growing capitalist economic, social and moral crisis. They are looking for answers and a way forward. They respond positively to the communist program presented by the candidates and campaigners of the Socialist Workers Party, and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K., covered in the *Militant* every week.

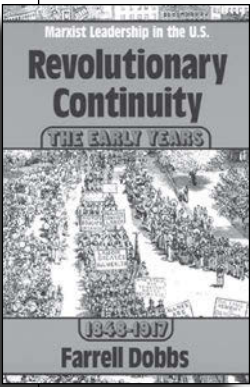
Join us in taking the *Militant*, the party and its candidates, its books and the SWP Party-Building Fund door to door in working-class neighborhoods, on picket lines, on the job, at social protests and other gatherings where politics are being discussed. Given the deepening capitalist crisis, there is more interest today than in past years.

We look forward to hearing from you!

John Studer

John Studer
Militant editor

Revolutionary Continuity The Early Years 1848-1917 by Farrell Dobbs

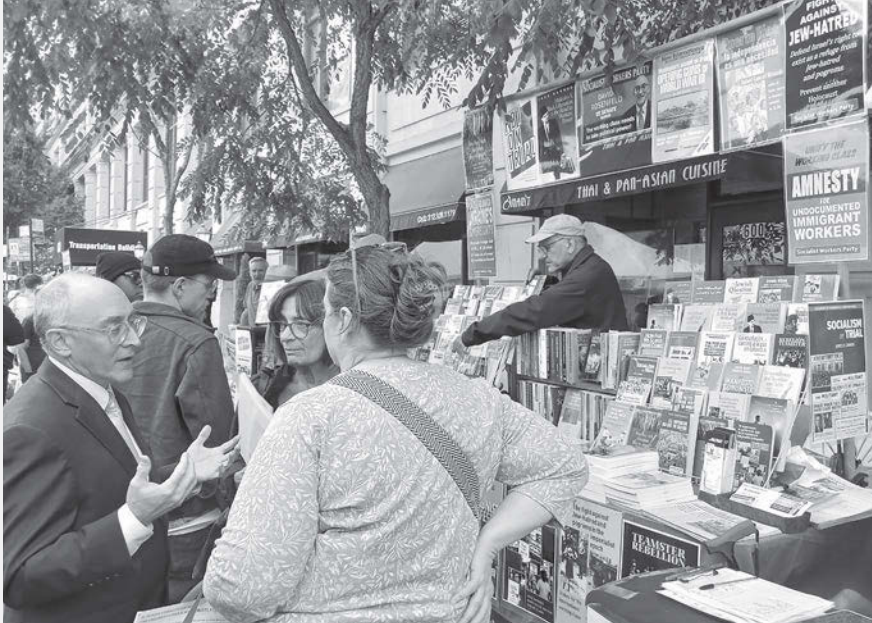


How successive generations of fighters joined in the struggles that shaped the U.S. labor movement, seeking to build a class-conscious revolutionary leadership capable of advancing the interests of workers and small farmers and linking up with fellow toilers worldwide.

1st of 2 vols. \$20

pathfinderpress.com

155 Pathfinder books sold at Chicago’s Printers Row



Militant/Naomi Craine

CHICAGO — Socialist Workers Party members from Chicago, Cincinnati and Minneapolis set up a well-stocked booth of books by party leaders and other revolutionaries at the Printers Row annual book fair here Sept. 6-7. It was often swamped with people checking out the titles and having political discussions.

Over the two days, 155 books were purchased and 37 people bought subscriptions to the *Militant*. Top sellers were *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by SWP leaders Evelyn Reed, Joseph Hansen and Mary-Alice Waters; *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes; and *Teamster Rebellion*, the first in a four-book series on building the union across the Midwest in the 1930s by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the union and party.

Books on women’s emancipation and titles by and about Malcolm X and Thomas Sankara, who led the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso, were among the best sellers.

Kimberly Church drove over 500 miles from Jenkins, Kentucky, to the book fair. She was excited to see the Pathfinder booth, buying books and a *Militant* subscription. She spoke with David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Illinois, who was campaigning at the fair. When she met Betsy Farley from the Cincinnati branch of the party, she said, “I had no idea there was a revolutionary party organizing only three hours from where we live!” They exchanged contact information to get together again soon.

— JACQUIE HENDERSON

As coal bosses press for profits, black lung cases are on the increase again

Continued from page 4

safety. They also championed the establishment of health clinics throughout Appalachia. Cases of black lung declined more than 90% through the mid-1990s.

The story of this fight can be found in Pathfinder’s *In Defense of the US Working Class*, in a chapter entitled “The fighting history of the United Mine Workers,” taken from a program done by Radio Havana in Cuba.

But as profit-hungry coal bosses moved production to the West, weakening the union, they also went on the offensive in the remaining mines in Appalachia.

In response, members of the National Black Lung Association, the UMWA and others have long called for more stringent regulations. Feeling the pressure, the Mine Safety and Health Administration announced in April 2024 the new “silica rule” to cut in half the miners’ federally allowed limit of exposure to silica dust. The mine bosses sued, challenging the rule.

MSHA granted mine owners a year

to adjust. But days before the April 2025 deadline, MSHA announced a four-month delay. Then in August, a federal judge extended the “pause” another two months, in a partial ruling in the case filed by the coal companies.

“The Department of Labor and MSHA should be fighting to implement this rule immediately, not kicking enforcement down the road yet again,” UMWA President Cecil Roberts said. “Every day they delay, more miners get sick, and more miners die. That’s the truth.”

Gary Hairston, president of the National Black Lung Association, told the *Militant* they are organizing their chapters to speak out to build support for implementing the rule.

“Time and again, MSHA inspectors found dangerous levels of dust spewing in the mines — conditions that can prompt a temporary shut-down of an underground workplace,” the *Post-Gazette* report said, “but failed to impose any penalties, only to find the companies violating the same thresholds again.”

The paper’s reporters pored over government statistics, concluding that “in the last five years, inspectors found that at nearly 200 mines — including some of the most active in the nation — the readings were at toxic levels.”

“MSHA had not conducted at least 1,509 mandatory inspections from fiscal years 2018 through 2021,” the report showed. “In 172 of those cases, it failed to perform any dust sampling.”

After nearly 28 years as a miner, Hairston was forced to stop work-

ing at age 48. Despite the obstacles thrown at him by the disease, he continues to fight for the prevention and safety all miners deserve.

Need for a new union fight

“The new silica rule would be good, but it has to be enforced, that’s the biggest thing,” he told the *Militant*. “It’s like the fox guarding the chicken coop. The coal companies don’t care, as long as they get their coal.”

Government regulations are never the answer to protecting the health and safety of working people. The government always rules for the bosses. To tackle the dangerous conditions in the coalfields requires what was done 50 years ago — building unions and union power. “I worked in a nonunion

mine for a couple years,” Hairston said. His bosses ignored the requirement to hang a ventilation curtain, a standard safety measure to keep out hazardous gases and to provide fresh air. “They didn’t even hang the curtain until the inspector came!”

The gains won by the mighty battles fought by miners in the 1960s and ’70s have been gutted. But the fight to win them set an example that can be reconquered and more.

Labor resistance is on the uptick today, as reflected in the recent battle waged by flight attendants at Air Canada. They organized a militant fight to be paid for all their labor, including defying a government back-to-work order and in other strike actions. This bodes well for the future.

Discount on books for prisoners

Pathfinder offers books and pamphlets at a 50% discount off the cover price.

There is a flat rate of \$2.75 for shipping and handling. Prisoners can mail their prepaid orders to Pathfinder Press
PO Box 162767
Atlanta GA 30321-2767

Link at pathfinderpress.com

Socialist Workers Party Campaign Join in building the working-class alternative

California

Norton Sandler, governor
Laura Garza, mayor of Los Angeles
Margaret Trowe, US Senate

Florida

Laura Anderson, mayor of Miami

Georgia

Susan LaMont, mayor of Atlanta

Illinois

David Rosenfeld, US Senate

Minnesota

Kevin Dwire, mayor of Minneapolis
Edwin Fruit, Minneapolis City Council

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, governor
Craig Honts, lieutenant governor

New York

Paul Mailhot, mayor of New York City

Ohio

John Hawkins, mayor of Cincinnati
Ned Measel, Cincinnati City Council

Pennsylvania

Tony Lane, mayor of Pittsburgh

Washington

Jacob Perasso, mayor of Seattle
Rebecca Williamson, King County Executive

Putin war on Ukraine hits Poland

Continued from front page

military preparations, the German and Polish governments mobilized forces to lead NATO war games days before and just after Moscow’s incursion.

Some of Moscow’s drones sent into Poland were shot down. Some got as far as densely populated urban areas far from Poland’s border with Belarus before crashing. In the face of the evidence, President Donald Trump claims the incursion “could have been a mistake.” The violation of Polish airspace lasted for seven hours. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said there was no question it was deliberate.

On Sept. 12, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte announced several additional fighter jets and a warship — from France, Denmark, Germany and the U.K. — would be deployed to Poland. Some 10,000 U.S. troops are already stationed there, part of Washington’s widespread military deployment on the European continent.

Since the start of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, the Polish government has more than doubled its military spending and is fortifying its 400-mile border with Belarus and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. The numbers volunteering for Poland’s civilian military training programs are at record high levels.

Moscow: ‘End Polish statehood’

The Russian government “will treat it [Poland] precisely as a historical enemy,” Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia’s Security Council, announced in November 2023. The Polish government’s rearmament plans “could lead to the death of Polish statehood in its entirety,” he threatened. Months earlier, Putin condemned the course of the Polish government in 1939, saying its “aggressive policy” was responsible for the invasion of the country by the Nazi regime in Germany.

Today some 30,000 Polish soldiers and allied NATO troops began what they called “Iron Defender 2025” war games across the country Sept. 1, due to last until the end of the month.

Beginning Sept. 11, the German navy is leading additional NATO military exercises in the Baltic Sea. Some 8,000 German troops are involved, as well as soldiers from the three Baltic states, the U.K., the U.S. and eight other countries. The drills are aimed at testing the ability of NATO forces to move rapidly from Germany, their central supply hub, to areas of conflict elsewhere.

At the same time, Moscow began joint war games with forces from Belarus near the Polish border. They feature the use of new nuclear-capable missiles and a simulation of a nuclear attack. Trump seeks to advance Washington’s relations with the Belarus government and, if possible, with Moscow. He accepted an invitation to send U.S. military top brass to observe the drills.

Trump’s special envoy, John Coale, is negotiating the re-establishment of trade relations with Belarus, sanctions relief for the country’s national airline and the possible reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Minsk.

The U.S. rulers’ course in Europe is based on their drive to impose stability across Europe and elsewhere

for their own predatory interests, not for the defense of Ukraine or Poland’s sovereignty. Washington’s goal is to grab markets and resources from its competitors and to try to pull Moscow away from its deepening ties to Beijing, the U.S. rulers’ main global rival.

Meanwhile, the Russian rulers are unremitting in their brutal attempt to conquer Ukraine’s people. In July alone Moscow launched nearly 6,300 drone attacks, targeting heavily populated cities. But Putin’s forces have made only small territorial advances, a reflection of the determination of working people in Ukraine to defend the country’s sovereignty and repel the invasion. Moscow continues to use workers and farmers in Russia as cannon fodder in vast numbers, leading to high casualty rates and growing opposition at home.

The three-and-half-year-plus bloody conflict is a harbinger of more devastating wars to come.

Ukraine rail unionists describe fight against Moscow’s war

BY JANET POST

Moscow’s murderous war on the Ukrainian people has deliberately targeted working people in urban and rural areas, killing thousands. Members of Ukraine’s trade unions make up a significant part of the volunteer military forces on the front lines. At the same time, they’re keeping industry running to produce the resources and infrastructure Ukraine needs to defend itself.

Andriy Khyzhniy, head of a rail section of the Trade Union of Railway and Transport Construction Workers of Ukraine (TURU), and Kateryna Izmailova, chair of TURU’s Youth Council, described this in a June interview by Sacha Ismail and Chris Ford from the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign in the U.K.

The group also reported on remarks made by Vyascheslav Grigorievich Fedorenko, a section president in the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine at the Kryvyi Rih depot, delivered at a labor conference in Kyiv the same month.

They talked about what rail union members are carrying out under war conditions and, at the same time, the challenges posed by anti-union measures being pursued by Ukraine’s

capitalist government.

“The area my trade union organization covers is near the front line. It includes two big railway hubs that are under Russian occupation,” said Khyzhniy. His union section has lost “thousands of members. That includes many who still work on the railway, but have been forced to migrate to other regions, and are now in other sections of the union.”

“The role Ukraine’s railways have played since the full-scale invasion is huge,” he said. Rail workers evacuate people “from front-line regions, and in very harsh conditions,” doubling the number of passengers normally carried. They transport military equipment, soldiers, “and even prisoners of war for exchange.” The work of the railways is closely integrated with Ukraine’s military mobilization.

“That is only possible because workers are very committed to protecting their country, and so ready to take on such a massive workload.”

He said they have to pay close attention to safety questions “to check for threats of attacks, for damage to systems and equipment, for mines, for signs of sabotage and terrorist activity.” He pointed out that in “parts

of Ukraine nurseries and schools are closed, and so workers have to bring their children to work with them.”

“It isn’t possible to leave their workstation to go to the shelters” when Russian attacks rain down, Fedorenko said at the Kyiv conference. “The bombs and drones prevent workers from sleeping at night.”

“Most locomotives date from the 1950s and present safety risks for railway workers, users and the general public,” he said.

Fedorenko said some 10% of rail workers are on the front lines and that the unions work hard to provide them with needed supplies, like “medicines, bulletproof vests and binoculars.”

Up to late June, 23 rail workers had been killed at work and 600 had died on the front or in bombardment of Ukraine’s cities, Fedorenko said. But the rail bosses “refuse to pay the compensation linked to deaths, passing the responsibility onto the deceased workers!”

Bosses use war to attack unions

The Ukrainian government is taking advantage of the war by “taking measures that adversely affect our terms and conditions,” Khyzhniy said in the interview. For example, Kyiv has tossed aside the 40-hour workweek workers won and imposed a 60-hour workweek. And under the government’s war measures, strikes and protests are considered illegal.

Khyzhniy said that support from trade unions in other countries has been “invaluable.” Rail workers have received food, medicine, emergency supplies and protective equipment.

“Since the start of 2025, there have been over 20,000 missile and drone strikes” by Moscow, he said. “It shows that Putin is not currently interested in peace. Railway workers need peace, but we reject the interpretation of ‘peace’ that would see the occupation of Ukraine, depriving us of our national independence.

“Appeasement of the dictator who is the aggressor means the preparation of future wars, including against other countries in Europe,” he said.

Thousands turn out for Manila International Book Fair



Militant/Patrick Brown

MANILA, Philippines — Tens of thousands of people crowded into the SMX Convention Center here Sept. 10-14 for this year’s Manila International Book Fair. Workers and students came from this capital city of over 15 million and from all across the archipelago. A steady flow of fairgoers stopped by the booth of Pathfinder Books, organized by the Australian distributor of New York-based Pathfinder Press.



Militant

From left, Volodymyr Kozelskyi, president of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine, with *Militant* editor John Studer, Oksana Demyanovych and reporter Frank Forrestal in Kyiv June 2015. Kozelskyi arranged for *Militant* to meet with rail workers in eastern Ukraine.

Back battle to defeat Hamas

Continued from front page

a statement condemning the Sept. 9 Israeli airstrike on a meeting of the Hamas leadership in Qatar, calling it a violation of the country's "sovereignty and territorial integrity."

But the Hamas leadership utilizes the base provided by the Qatari government to try to wipe out Israel. It was from there that it green-lighted the Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom that killed 1,200 people in Israel. Hamas thugs raped and mutilated women, wounded thousands and took 251 hostages. Under the orders of Hamas leaders, the 20 living hostages are still being held captive in Gaza in inhumane conditions, tortured and starved.

Making its opposition to the Israeli strike in Qatar clear, President Donald Trump hosted a dinner in Washington, D.C., for visiting Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman al-Thani Sept. 12. Trump praised al-Thani for his role in negotiations with Hamas and later warned Israel to be "very, very careful. They have to do something about Hamas, but Qatar has been a great ally to the United States."

The day after the dinner al-Thani met with Adm. Brad Cooper, head of the U.S. Central Command.

The Trump administration wants to keep Israel from upsetting stability and the relations Washington seeks with capitalist governments in the Middle East as it pushes to deepen its domination of the region. Its goal is to advance the U.S. rulers' plunder of the natural resources and exploitation of labor there. The administration sees deepening its relations with Qatar — where a vast U.S. Air Force base is located — as a key part of confronting Beijing, its main rival in today's world.

While Israel's capitalist rulers view their alliance with U.S. imperialism as necessary, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu operates on the under-

standing that Israel must be ready to act on its own, or face annihilation.

Netanyahu warned Qatar to expel the remaining Hamas leaders or "bring them to justice. Because if you don't, we will."

U.N. seeks to keep Hamas in power

On Sept. 12 the U.N. General Assembly adopted a declaration for a "two-state solution" between Israel and Palestine. The governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom voted for it, hoping to advance their interests against Washington, which voted against.

The resolution is part of the international propaganda campaign against Israel aimed at blocking the establishment of Israeli rule in Gaza that's needed to defeat Hamas and prevent it from returning.

The resolution would allow Hamas to reestablish its dictatorial rule and has nothing to do with advancing the national rights of the Palestinian people.

Among the demands in the addendum are ones on Israel to allow the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to once again play the key role in distributing aid and administering Gaza. But UNRWA is riddled with Hamas agents. Its employees were part of the Hamas death squads that massacred Jews along with dozens of Arab citizens of Israel and immigrants on Oct. 7.

The reactionary regime in Tehran boycotted the General Assembly vote because it opposes a two-state solution. Its goal is the total destruction of Israel and the elimination of the Jews who live there.

Hamas' last stronghold under attack

Meanwhile, Israeli troops are steadily advancing in Gaza City. The Israel Defense Forces started by ordering civilians to leave the high rises that Hamas uses for shelter before destroying them.

after the majority of shares in the state-owned company were privatized. Like job actions and protests elsewhere in Iran, the fight at Arak was fueled by growing opposition to the regime's war moves against Israel.

A Sept. 8 statement by organizations of oil workers, nurses, retirees, miners, teachers and others notes that the "regime's warmongering and interventionist policies" are having an impact on "the already meager lifeblood of the people."

As word about the Arak workers' fight got out, they began winning solidarity. Retirees at a weekly protest in Gilan province chanted, "Arak

What's the truth about famine in Gaza? Who's responsible?

The bourgeois liberal press, like the *New York Times*, claims there is a widespread famine in Gaza caused by Israel as part of its "genocide" against the Palestinian people, and that Israel is prolonging the war to keep Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in power.

There is a genocidal force in Gaza that is prolonging the war, causing hunger, and deliberately killing civilians — both Jews and Palestinians. Its name is Hamas, backed by the reactionary regime in Tehran and Jew-hating forces around the world.

After the Israeli government released photos that give the lie to the claims of "famine," Ahmad Abushawish, a resident of Gaza, admitted in Al Jazeera Sept. 16, "It is true that today you can see markets and shops with full shelves in southern Gaza. You can see crates of cucumbers and tomatoes, sacks of flour, cartons of eggs and bottles of oil. There are even cafes and restaurants serving pizza, drinks and improvised desserts." He complains that "their prices are astronomical" and that "only a tiny, privileged minority can still sit at a cafe table and sip a coffee for \$9."

But Al Jazeera refuses to explain why. Because Hamas — enabled by U.N. agencies — steals much of the humanitarian aid and sells it to make a profit. It uses food to buy the loyalty of its followers and armed thugs and their families. Hamas deliberately sabotages food distribution it can't control, like the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation centers promoted by Israel to keep Hamas from using food as a weapon to maintain its dictatorial rule. In class-divided, capitalist Gaza, some go hungry, while others eat like kings.

Amid a war started by Hamas for the express purpose of destroying Israel and driving out or killing the Jews, those divisions deepen. Hamas could end the war tomorrow, by releasing all the hostages and disarming.



Instead, it continues to send its thugs to smash the limbs or worse of Gazans who oppose its rules. But the liberal media don't publish those photos.

Sometimes the Hamas propaganda machine messes up and shows there's no famine. "Eye on Palestine" posted a video Sept. 11 of a girl in Gaza near a grill full of food she was cooking. She complained that because of Israel's war, she had to burn paper from her school-work to light the grill.

— S.G.

With Israeli troops on tanks beginning to enter the city and airstrikes hitting more Hamas positions, Gazans continued streaming out of the city Sept. 16. Despite Hamas' attempts

to force people to remain as human shields, the Israeli advances are convincing most of the remaining civilians to head to designated safe zones along the coast. This is key to minimizing civilian casualties and allowing Israel to go after Hamas in its vast tunnel network as well as above ground.

Profiteers are ensuring the burden of leaving Gaza falls heaviest on working people. Truck fees to move belongings from Gaza City to the south have doubled and tripled since the start of the Israeli offensive. Scarce apartments in the south are now listing at 8,000 shekels (\$2,400) a month, out of the reach of most working people, and even a plot to pitch a tent is reaching 1,000 shekels.

Despite the success of the military offensive in weakening Hamas, the high command of the IDF — echoing the stance of the U.S. government — has continued to push the Netanyahu government to end it.

A heated discussion took place recently at the office of Netanyahu with IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, Shin Bet and Mossad officials and members of the government's Security Cabinet, Ynet news reports.

Zamir has been pushing for the Israeli government to accept the framework put forward by Steven Witkoff, Trump's special negotiator for the Middle East. Under that plan, a 60-day ceasefire would lead to Israeli withdrawal from large sections of Gaza in exchange for the release of the hostages and continued negotiations. Zamir also opposes direct Israeli rule in Gaza.

Iran aluminum workers settle protest, steelworkers start one

BY SETH GALINSKY

Some 4,000 workers at the Arak Aluminum Company in Iran's Markazi province have ended 43 days of hunger strikes, sit-ins and other protests demanding better wages and work conditions. The hard-fought battle was closely watched by workers across Iran.

The head of the Islamic Labor Council at the complex and the company CEO signed an agreement Sept. 11. The bosses agreed to overturn the suspensions of 13 workers and pay them back wages, review wage levels at a meeting of the board of directors, and to drop criminal charges against five workers accused of "disturbing public order," "spreading falsehoods" and "damaging company property."

Workers demanded timely payment of wages, a review of job classifications and wage rates, job safety, modernization of antiquated equipment and an end to harassment by bosses.

The recent deaths of two co-workers at the complex fueled demands for job safety. Workers publicized photos of other serious injuries, caused by the company's refusal to properly maintain equipment, such as ladles for molten metal and overhead cranes.

Workers say that conditions deteriorated significantly over the last year



National Steel Group workers in Ahvaz organize to fight for payment of overdue wages.

Revolution by Cuba’s working people opened up a new world

From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution by Víctor Dreke is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for September. Since the 1950s Dreke has been a leading participant in Cuba’s revolutionary movement — beginning as a high school activist; as a fighter in the battles to defeat U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista; and as an internationalist combatant with Che Guevara in the Congo, and in Guinea-Bissau. He gives a firsthand account of the early years of the Cuban Revolution, when the actions of thousands of men and women changed the course of history and themselves. This excerpt is from the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

“When I was young, my father used to tell me, ‘Don’t get involved in anything,’” Víctor Dreke recalls.

“My father wasn’t for Batista, he was against Batista. But he didn’t believe in anyone. ‘Don’t join anything,’ he’d say. ‘Things will always stay the same. One side wins now, the other side wins later, and the ones with money will always be in power. Study



Courtesy Víctor Dreke

Víctor Dreke, left, second in command under Che Guevara, right, in Congo in 1965, to support anti-imperialist forces. Cuban doctor Rafael Zerquera, center. In the course of Cuba’s revolution, Fidel Castro said, “we learned Marxism from books, but above all from life.”

and get an education and don’t mess with strikes or any of that. It won’t get you anywhere. Besides, that stuff’s not for blacks.’

“That was my father’s way of looking at things. And I think this was how many blacks in Cuba looked at things. Until the victory of the revolution.

“Fortunately, I didn’t listen.” ...

Rebel-minded young people the world over will find it easy to identify with Víctor Dreke and the way he responded to conditions around him. He tells how he and thousands of men and women like him — workers, farmers, students, shopkeepers and street vendors, most still in their teens and early twenties — simply began fighting for a more just world following the March 10, 1952, military coup that installed the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Batista’s regime quickly became one of the most brutal tyrannies Latin America had yet seen. “We were ready to die” to bring down Batista, Dreke says, “but we didn’t know the first thing about revolution.”

In his account of how easy it became after the 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution to “take down the rope” that for decades had segregated blacks from whites at dances in the town squares, yet how enormous was the battle to transform the social rela-

tions underlying this and all the other “ropes” — inherited from colonialism, capitalism, and Yankee domination — Dreke captures the historical challenge of our epoch. At the heart of this book lies the willingness, determination, and creative joy with which Cuba’s working people have defended their revolutionary course since 1959 when confronted by the imperialist empire to the north, a power whose vital interests the world over are threatened by the outreaching dynamic and ongoing example of the new class order in Cuba

As the Batista dictatorship crumbled on January 1, 1959, in face of a rising tide of mass popular resistance and the military advances of the small Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro, the U.S. government accelerated efforts to defend the property and privileges of Cuba’s ruling class along with the vast landed estates and industrial monopolies held by American corporations and wealthy families. To Washington’s amazement, the young revolutionary government could neither be intimidated nor bought off. Every act of Yankee aggression was met by growing millions of determined toilers of city and countryside who swelled the ranks of the revolution and pushed it forward, transforming themselves in the process.

The first free territory of the Americas was born.

Decades later, Washington can still neither forgive nor forget. It continues to turn every effort to destroy the living example of Cuba’s workers and farmers. It looks for every opportunity to punish them for the audacity of having thrown off the imperialist boot and making a socialist revolution on Washington’s doorstep. For the audacity of neither bowing to the empire nor accepting its rules and definitions.

On July 26, 1953, when 160 mostly young, determined opponents of the Batista dictatorship simultaneously attacked the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes garrison in nearby Bayamo, they were, like Víctor Dreke, still far from being the conscious communists they became in the course of struggles to come. “We learned Marxism from books, but above all we learned it from life,” Cuban President Fidel Castro said twelve years later at a mass rally in Santa Clara.

What were we on July 26? he asked. “Among the books they seized from us after the attack on the Moncada barracks were books of Martí and Lenin,” Castro noted, but he and his compañeros were not Marxists or Leninists. “We still had much to learn, much to understand. We understood some of the essential principles of Marxism, the reality of class society divided into exploited and exploiters. We understood the role of the masses in history. But we had not yet deepened our consciousness and our revolutionary education enough to understand, in all its profundity and magnitude, the phenomenon of imperialism. ... That we learned about in our own flesh.”

Through Dreke’s eyes and experiences we see the history shaping class battles unfold. Following the lines of his story, we come to understand how millions like him were transformed from inexperienced if unflinchingly courageous revolutionary youth into seasoned proletarian leaders of a people who have proven themselves capable of defying the demands and multifaceted aggressions of the Yankee rulers for nearly half a century.

And we see both the shape and the scope of the revolutionary class battles still to come across the Americas and around the globe.

September
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Pathfinder
Readers Club
Specials

From the Escambray to the Congo
VÍCTOR DREKE
How the men and women of Cuba transformed their country and themselves as they took power and defended it against Washington's aggression for over 60 years.
\$15. Special price \$10.50

Teamster Power
FARRELL DOBBS
\$16. Special price \$11

Their Trotsky and Ours
JACK BARNES
\$12. Special price \$8.50

Blacks in America’s Wars
ROBERT W. MULLEN
\$10. Special price \$7

Women and the Family
LEON TROTSKY
\$10. Special price \$7

Las mujeres en Cuba: Haciendo una revolución dentro de la revolución
(Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution)
VILMA ESPÍN, ASELA DE LOS SANTOS, YOLANDA FERRER
\$17. Special price \$12

Join the Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT
PATHFINDERPRESS.COM
OFFER GOOD UNTIL October 10

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

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

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Oakland: P.O. Box 6012. Zip: 94603. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: oaklandswp@gmail.com. **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

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

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

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 4750 S. Pulaski Road. Zip: 60632. Tel: (312) 792-6160. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

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

NEBRASKA: Lincoln: P.O. Box 6811.

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

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

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

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

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

TEXAS: Dallas-Fort Worth: 6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 201C Fort Worth. Zip: 76120. Tel: (817) 899-6720. Email: dfwswp@gmail.com

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

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

AUSTRALIA

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

CANADA

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

FRANCE

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

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-3538 8900. Email: cllondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: 07545 526351. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

We will have a chance to end exploitation, war

Deepening rivalries between Washington and other imperialist powers, as well as with Moscow and Beijing are a product of the deepening crisis of capitalism and point to the inevitability of more wars. With each new conflict, the fact that imperialism is marching humanity toward a third world war is clearer to see.

Washington has to date ordered the bombing of two speedboats in international waters off the coast of Venezuela that they claim were carrying drugs. It has deployed an armada of U.S. warships in the Caribbean and rebuilt Washington’s garrison on Puerto Rico, threatening the sovereignty of Venezuela and nations across Latin America.

Vladimir Putin’s regime is escalating its murderous bombardment and drive to conquer Ukraine. As part of a deadly assault there Sept. 9, Moscow fired 19 drones into Poland. Forces from the U.S.-led NATO bloc shot three of them down, the first direct clash between NATO and Moscow in years.

Israel’s war in Gaza is aimed at destroying Hamas and stopping it and its backer in Tehran from carrying out a new Holocaust. In contrast to Israel’s defensive war, Washington’s massive firepower in the Middle East is there to protect its plunder of the region’s peoples and resources, opening the door to new and sharper conflicts.

The U.S. rulers see Beijing as the biggest chal-

lenge to the domination they have profited from since emerging as the victors in the second imperialist world war. Their determined efforts to remain top dog threaten all humanity.

To better prepare for wars to come, Washington is going after working people here at home, attacking our wages, and working and living conditions; targeting workers without papers to divide the working class; and going after constitutional freedoms we’ve won over centuries of struggle.

Working people and the unions need to take up all these challenges — from fighting to defend our living standards to opposing the U.S. war moves abroad. This requires breaking with the capitalists’ political parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

History shows that the imperialist epoch we live under is the epoch not only of war, but of deepening class struggle and socialist revolution.

Workers will have our chance to prevent the rulers’ march to World War III. We need a party of our own capable of leading millions to take power into our own hands and run society to meet human need, not the bosses’ profits. The two great socialist revolutions of our age — led by the Bolsheviks in Russia and Fidel Castro in Cuba — point a road forward.

Be part of this fight. Join the Socialist Workers Party!

Years of demonizing Trump led to killing of Kirk

Continued from front page

The bullets found with the rifle had political etching on them, including one saying, “hey fascist! CATCH!”

For the last decade, Democrats, the liberal media and the middle-class left have fomented hatred and intolerance toward Trump and his supporters. From the Russia-gate frame-up of 2016, through two impeachment efforts, and a mountain of court cases, their campaign against him has trampled on constitutional protections crucial for the working class.

The shooting of Kirk, and a growing number of violent attacks on political opponents — Democrats, Republicans and others — is a reflection of the deepening political crisis of the U.S. capitalist rulers and their parties. They have no answers to the pressures their system is bringing down on workers today. They fear deepening class struggle is coming.

This is behind the growing intolerance toward opposing views that has become common, especially on campus. Days before the killing, some 900 students had signed a petition demanding college authorities ban Kirk from speaking at Utah Valley University.

In addition, in recent years Jewish students and other opponents of Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, deadly pogrom have faced attacks on campuses across the country.

Normalization of violence

Other murderous attacks include the assassination of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim, two staffers at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., May 21. The killer shouted, “Free, free Palestine” as he was being arrested. In Boulder, Colorado, Mohamed Sabry Soliman threw firebombs at Jews attending a June 1 event called to demand the release of hostages seized by Hamas. Karen Diamond died of wounds she sustained in the attack weeks later.

Brian Thompson, CEO of UnitedHealthcare, was shot dead in cold blood on the way to a meeting in New York City last Dec. 4. Luigi Mangione, who was arrested for the killing, became an object of fascination for some on the middle-class left who glorified the brutal slaying, claiming it was a justified protest against the health insurance bosses.

Liberals have targeted Trump and his supporters with venom for years. Hillary Clinton deemed them “irredeemable” and “deplorable” in 2016.

Following Trump’s first election win, James Hodgkinson, a supporter of Democrat Bernie Sanders, set out to kill as many Republican congressmen as possible with a semi-automatic rifle. He targeted them as they attended a baseball game in June 2017, severely wounding Rep. Steve Scalise.

The Democrats’ election campaign in 2024 revolved

entirely around branding Trump and so-called MAGA Republicans as “fascists.” They turned to Democratic-appointed prosecutors and judges to try to get him convicted of some crime and thrown in jail. Trump was the target of two failed assassination attempts.

As political intolerance has grown, it’s not only Republicans who are targeted. In June, Minnesota Democratic State Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband were shot dead. Vance Luther Boelter, arrested for the killings, was caught with a list of other Democrats.

The killing of Kirk — abhorrent to working people whatever their political views — was celebrated by many on the middle-class left. Comedian Brandy Bryant tweeted, “Breaking: Charlie Kirk loses gun debate.” “Kill all Charlie Kirks,” was painted over the entry to Seattle Central College in Washington state.

MSNBC commentator Matthew Dowd blamed Kirk for his own death, saying, “Hateful thoughts lead to hateful words, which then lead to hateful actions.” Fearing a reaction, MSNBC bosses fired Dowd. JB Pritzker, Democratic Party governor of Illinois, tried to pin Kirk’s death on Trump. “I think the president’s rhetoric often foments” political violence, he said.

Both Democrats and Republicans have used the killing of politicians to press assaults on constitutional protections. Christopher Landau, deputy secretary of state, issued a veiled threat to cancel visas and deport any foreign-born person who says anything the government interprets as glorifying “violence and hatred,” in the wake of Kirk’s killing.

“Class-conscious workers, the trade unions, and organizations of the oppressed and exploited must unconditionally oppose anti-constitutional assaults by the government,” the Socialist Workers Party 2022 political resolution says, “on freedom of worship and speech; freedom of the press, association and assembly; prohibition of ‘unreasonable search and seizure’; and other liberties needed and *used* by the toilers.”

“Whoever the target today, it is working people who will be targeted tomorrow.”

LETTERS

Celebrate life of Helen Nelson

On Sept. 13 some 30 people attended a celebration of the life of Helen Nelson organized by her companion, Jude Keast, and other family members and friends. Helen died in August after a long illness.

For almost 20 years she was a

member of the Revolutionary Marxist Group and then the Revolutionary Workers League, predecessors of the Communist League in Canada. Helen was a lifelong fighter for women’s rights, including in struggles to break down barriers to women being hired in industrial jobs from which they

had been excluded.

She remained a supporter of the Communist League and the international communist movement led by the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and contributed financially until her death.
*Beverly Bernardo
Toronto, Ontario*

Health insurance costs

Continued from front page

KFF, a health research organization. UnitedHealthcare — the largest of these companies, with a whopping 14.9% of the market — claims its rate boosts are necessary to compensate its bosses for “uncertainty” over where the economy is heading.

The top six health insurance outfits — UnitedHealth Group, Kaiser Permanente, Anthem, Am-better, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Aetna — have cornered over 50% of the market.

Getting decent medical care is already out of reach for millions of working people. A recent poll found 91 million adults in the U.S. “said that if they were to need medical care, they would not be able to pay for it,” the *New York Times* reported Sept. 4.

Drug prices are also climbing, and health insurance bosses are denying workers’ prescription drug claims more and more, seeking to put more cash into profits. Such rejections rose by 25% from 2016 to 2023, Komodo Health reported after reviewing 4 billion claims. And the companies’ stepped-up use of AI to handle these claims has made matters worse.

Shuttered maternity wards, hospitals

Recent cuts to Medicaid approved by Congress in July are projected to hit close to \$1 trillion over the next decade. This will accelerate the pace of maternity ward and rural hospital closures. This trend is nothing new. It has been growing for two decades under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Bosses claim it’s no longer profitable to keep them open.

Since 2005, 195 rural hospitals have closed across the country, and over 1,000 more have cut inpatient services. Another “768 hospitals in the U.S. are at risk of closing,” with 315 facing shutdowns in the next three years, reports Healthcare Brew.

In 2024 women in the U.S. had no access to birthing centers or maternity care providers in 35% of the country’s counties. This means a crisis in the health and lives of millions of women, their families and their newborn babies.

Women in rural areas now have to travel greater and greater distances to get basic pregnancy care, if it’s possible at all. In Harlan County, Kentucky, for example, “residents are 79 miles from the closest birthing hospital, and with additional closures this could increase to 95 miles,” the *Washington Post* reports.

Among those being impacted the most by rising health care costs are retired workers on Social Security. For fully 39% of them, this is their only monthly income. Cost-of-living increases are projected to be just 2.8% next year, with the final figure to be announced in mid-October. And the government will use most of this “raise” to pay for higher Medicare premiums and prescription drug costs.

Some 15% of older adults live in poverty today, the U.S. Census Bureau says. And nearly a million more seniors found themselves in this position in 2024.

“American Workers Feel Less Confident About Finding a Job,” the Sept. 8 *Wall Street Journal* informed us, quoting the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. But workers didn’t need the *Journal* or some bank to tell us this.

The following day, the Bureau of Labor Statistics admitted that from early 2024 through March 2025, 911,000 fewer jobs were actually created than the government had said earlier. This includes nearly 100,000 less jobs in manufacturing.

And things haven’t gotten much better since. The number of workers the government counts as unemployed rose to 7.4 million in August, and another 4.7 million who need to work full time have had to accept part-time hours. Millions more aren’t counted as being in the workforce by the government, which ignores them as too “discouraged” to keep looking.