Big Three ‘pony up’

Auto strike delivers big win

By Martha Grevatt

The historic strike at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis (parent company of Jeep, Ram and Chrysler brands), which commenced Sept. 15, has ended at all three companies. The United Auto Workers union announced Oct. 25 that it had a tentative agreement with Ford. “We told Ford to pony up, and they did,” said UAW President Shawn Fain in a video message to union members. (uaw.org)

On Oct. 28 the union reached a similar agreement with Stellantis, followed by GM on Oct. 30. To apply greater pressure on the last company, the same night the Stellantis deal was announced, the UAW expanded its targeted strike to GM’s plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee.

The actual Ford contract language was posted online Oct. 29. There are big wins in this contract, which is far better than what the union could have won without a strike. All Ford workers will receive at least a 25% raise, plus the cost-of-living allowance formula, “suspended” during the 2009 GM and Chrysler bankruptcies, has been restored.

Workers at certain Ford facilities, who currently make less than those at other plants, will now be paid the same hourly rate as their counterparts.

The time it takes to reach the top of the pay scale has been dropped from eight years to three and workers now classified as “temporary” or “supplemental” will be made permanent. Some lower-paid workers will see a pay increase of as much as 150%.

Other gains include pension improvements, Juneteenth as a paid holiday, two weeks paid parental leave, the right to strike over plant closings, the right to refuse to cross picket lines and the reopening of the closed Stellantis assembly plant in Belvidere, Illinois. There are no contract concessions, which were often agreed to by the previous, class-collaborationist leadership of the UAW.

Fight against tiers not over

One of the most destructive contract concessions was the two-tier pay structure, agreed to in the 2007 contract and expanded under the contract modifications during the 2009 bankruptcies. Workers hired after October 2007 were paid substantially less and had fewer benefits than those hired before them. They did not get a pension or health insurance when they retired.

Two-tier was first peddled by then-President Ron Gettelfinger and continued under subsequent leaders on the International Executive Board, all

Palestinian joint statement

‘Escalate all forms of resistance’

This slightly edited statement was issued Oct. 29. ac3y by Palestinian forces: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement), Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command.

In their statement, the five powers saluted the martyrs of our Palestinian people and our steadfast and proud people in the Gaza Strip who are facing an organized campaign of extermination, stressing that they are the people of pride, dignity and steadfastness and that they are the people of victory who are loyal to their cause and their homeland, and [the Palestinian forces] pledged to them to continue on the path of resistance until victory is achieved over the Zionist enemy. The attendees affirmed the following:

• This heroic epic is the battle of the entire Palestinian people, which they are waging in defense of their land, their sanctuaries, their existence, and their right to freedom against a barbaric enemy that does not spare any of our people from its crimes. It targets hospitals, mosques, churches, universities, and ambulances, and cuts off electricity, water, fuel, the Internet and cellular communications for our besieged people.

• Adhering to national unity is a main pillar in confronting the Zionist war of genocide against our people, as well as rejecting the enemy’s attempts to divide our people or monopolize any part of it. We stress unifying efforts and closing ranks in this fateful battle.

• We call on the masses of our Arab and Islamic nation and the free people of the world to continue their movements to stop the American-Zionist aggression, open the border crossings, bring in humanitarian aid and fuel, and remove the wounded from the Gaza Strip.

• We salute the resistance forces in our nation, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran, and we affirm that our Palestinian people are not alone in this battle.

• We hold the United States of America fully responsible for the war of genocide against our people as it chose to support, escalate, and participate in the war of genocide against our people, which requires a strong response from the Arab and Islamic countries, as well as countries friendly to our people to stop this ongoing massacre of our Palestinian people.

• We demand the opening of the Rafah crossing and the entry of aid, humanitarian needs, fuel, and medical and relief teams to our people without delay, allowing the wounded to be transported to Egypt and the Arab and Islamic countries, without interference from the occupiers and some of the aggression countries.

• We call on the masses of our people throughout occupied Palestine to escalate all forms of resistance and struggle against the Zionist enemy, targeting its soldiers and settlers, and strengthening popular initiatives of struggle in the face of settler attacks and the encroachment of enemy forces.

• The enemy’s cutting of all access to Gaza, besieging it, and cutting off communications and the Internet completely is a cover for a major crime of genocide that the enemy does not want witnesses to, and we stress breaking this siege with an “official and popular” Arab position.

• We adhere to the right of our people to resist, and its confidence in the victory of our people in this battle as we fight this battle in defense of our land, our people, and our sanctuaries, and for the sake of liberation, return, self-determination, and the establishment of the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Glory to the martyrs. Healing for the wounded. Freedom for the prisoners. Victory to our people and their valiant resistance.
Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that does not aim to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problem can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with over $1 trillion in debt.

No social problem can be solved under capitalism.

Workers World Party is working on behalf of all people to build the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits. The wealth workers create should be distributed to everyone in the society, in clear violation of the principle of church and state separation.

In 2022, Johnson introduced legislation modeled after Florida’s ‘don’t say gay’ bill, which would have prohibited discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity at any institution receiving federal funding. He also opposed gender-affirming care for minors.

Multimillionaire Johnson, as chair of the Republican Study Committee between 2019 and 2021, helped draft budget resolutions calling for $2 trillion in Medicare cuts, $3 trillion in Medicaid and Affordable Care Act cuts and $750 billion in Social Security cuts.

Despite his support for cuts and his opposition to approving the aid package, Johnson voted against Biden’s request for $75 billion more for Ukraine.

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Johnson is the latest in a string of right-wing lawmakers to introduce legislation modeled on Florida’s extreme anti-LGBTQ+ law modeled after Florida’s ‘don’t say gay’ bill, which would have prohibited discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity at any institution receiving federal funding. He also opposed gender-affirming care for minors.

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Indigenous solidarity for Palestinian resistance

By Will Hodgkinson
Boston

Thousands of demonstrators — by some media accounts totaling 10,000 — shut down the streets around Boston’s Copley Square Oct. 22 to support the Palestinian resistance to the genocidal U.S./Zionist bombing and occupation of Gaza.

Organized in the days by the newly formed Boston Coalition for Palestine, the rally was part of a Palestinian-led movement that has mobilized millions in actions worldwide.

Ahmad Kawash, President of the Palestinian House of New England, emphasized the significance of today’s action: “This is the largest outpouring of support we have seen in Boston. The people are not afraid to show our solidarity with the Palestinians, as Israeli bombs — paid for and delivered by the U.S. — destroy the homes and lives of thousands of Palestinian families by the hour, over 30 Boston-area organizations have come out in one voice to say, ‘Stop the genocide and siege of Gaza!’”

“As Palestinian students, workers and their supporters at Harvard, Tufts, Brandeis, MIT, Northeastern and Boston College were damaged by the attack by Israeli forces, the US government signed the death warrant for the Palestinian people. But the siege has cut off food, electricity, water and communications. As Israeli forces intensify their bombing and begin land assaults, these figures, as unthinkable as they already are, will almost certainly rise. (Al Jazeera, Oct. 23.)”

In the West Bank, settler militias and IDF troops have murdered over 100 Palestinians and rounded up hundreds more for “indefinite detention.” (France24, Oct. 23.)

“Stop the Israeli aggression against Gaza!”

International organizations estimate that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had destroyed at least 42% of Gaza’s housing by October 20. The country is under siege. While the siege has cut off food, electricity, water and communications, as Israeli forces intensify their bombing and begin land assaults, these figures, as unthinkable as they already are, will almost certainly rise. (Al Jazeera, Oct. 23.)

“Indigenous struggle vs. settler-colonial genocide,” as Mahtowin Munro, co-leader of UAINE, stressed in her opening remarks at the rally: “Palestinian resistance to the Zionist state’s genocidal assault is part of the worldwide Indigenous struggle against settler-colonial genocide and for self-determination. It’s no coincidence that support for the Zionist project comes from the other genocidal settler colonies — the so-called U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.”

Jean-Luc Pierite, president of NAICOB, also expressed solidarity with the Palestinian resistance, highlighting the parallels between the U.S.’s ongoing genocide of Indigenous nations and the Zionist settler project.

Pierite denounced President Joe Biden’s recent visit to occupied Palestine, where he hugged his longtime crony, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netenyahu. Pierite asked: “Where are the open arms for the dying children, the dead babies? Where are the open arms of the United States at this moment? Wrapped around a war criminal.”


Historic win for autoworkers

Continued from page 1

members of the self-titled Administration Caucus. After Chrysler workers voted down a proposed contract in 2015, rejecting tiers, they approved a second contract that included their demands, after which the two-tier workers — but it took eight years or more to get to the top! Now the time is down to three years for current and future workers — that’s a breath of fresh air. Now it’s time for the new contracts to be signed.

The contract makes progress in addressing the potential of “EV tiers” if the new electric vehicle battery plants are not brought under the master UAW contract. Before the contract, two-tier companies were same pay as the two-tier workers — but it took eight years or more to get to the top! Now the time is down to three years for current and future workers — that’s a breath of fresh air. Now it’s time for the new contracts to be signed.

Unfortunately, while the new tentative agreement makes great strides against “wage tiers” it has not eliminated “retirement tiers.” Many workers with fewer than 16 years seniority cannot afford to retire because they would lose their health insurance.

The fight must continue until all tiers in the auto contracts are eradicated completely.

Time for a shorter work week!

Another concession from 2009 was the loss of over-time pay after eight hours in a day. Ford can still work people over eight hours at straight time pay under grueling “alternate work schedules.”

A key contract demand that the union did not win this time around was a shorter work week — 40 hours pay for 32 hours work, or one paid day off per week. The UAW had not brought this up since the 1970s, when it was one paid day off per month, a move that created thousands of jobs. The last union to call for a 32-hour work week may have been the Professional Air Traffic Controllers’ Organization, a union crushed by then-President Ronald Reagan.

Through automation, workers’ productivity has risen exponentially over the past few decades, with each new wave of corporate restructuring slashing thousands of autoworker jobs. Now the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) which require fewer components and thus fewer hours of labor, could eliminate 30% more jobs in the Big Three. A shorter work week is needed to offset potential job losses.

Even if the 32-hour week is not in these contracts, retaining the conversation after decades of neglecting the demand was a major contribution by the new UAW leadership.

Over the next few weeks, rank-and-file UAW members will attend informational meetings, after which they will decide whether to accept these contracts or go back on strike and fight for more.

The contracts are set to expire on May 1, 2023. Ford let the members know that the next auto strike, if one is called, would be on International Workers Day — May 1.

Seeing the UAW return to internationalism and class struggle unionism after decades of concession bargaining is a breath of fresh air. Now it’s time for the new contracts to be signed, and we won’t be satisfied with just a shorter work week. We want it all!”

Martha Greet is a retired UAW Stellantis worker.
**Workers World Mundo Obrero**

**Nunca tendrán las calles**

Por Susan Abulhawa

A continuación se transcribe la intervención de Susan Abulhawa, directora ejecutiva del Festival Palestine Writes, en una concentración de 10.000 personas a favor de Palestina en la escalinata del Museo de Arte de Filadelfia, el 21 de octubre. Abulhawa es miembro de la rama de Filadelfia del Partido Mundo Obrero.

¿Nos ha subido bien la adrenalina? Voy a pedir a todo el mundo que guarde silencio durante un minuto. Quiero que todos pensemos realmente en los 5.000 palestinos que han sido asesinados, la mayoría de ellos niños que apenas tuvieron la oportunidad de vivir. Hay aproximadamente 20.000 palestinos desaparecidos; se supone que la mayoría de ellos están enterados bajo los escombros y probablemente morirán allí si no los han hecho ya. Quiero que dediquemos un momento a reflexionar. Esto sucedió en el lapso de una semana.

¡Sucedó en el lapso de una semana! El número de muertos se elevará a decenas de miles. Lo sabemos porque esas personas no están desaparecidas en algún lugar. Sabemos dónde están. Quiero que todos sientan a nuestros antepasados a través de nosotros. Y que también sientan esta pérdida y los honren.

Todos estamos aquí. Somos negros, blancos y musulmanes. Somos musulmanes, cristianos y judíos. Venimos de todas partes. No se ve este tipo de participación para ellos. ¿Por qué? Porque los únicos que les apoyan son nuestros líderes corruptos. Los únicos que les apoyan son los que responden ante el dinero, los que responden ante la corrupción.

Nadie les apoya así en ninguna parte del mundo. Porque ellos son los opresores, no porque sean judíos. Quiero que pienses que es porque son judíos. Quieras que pienses que somos antissemitas. Quiero que pienses que los odiáis porque son judíos. ¡No! Nuestros antepasados eran judíos. Nuestros antepasados eran cristianos. Eran musulmanes. Se convirtieron entre religiones. Somos la gente de la tierra que ha estado allí durante milenios de forma ininterrumpida.

Quiero que el mundo crea que ellos son las víctimas. Pero déjame decirles que personas que pueden cerrar los grifos de agua para millones de seres humanos pueden impedir que millones de personas reciban alimentos y medicinas no son víctimas. Las personas que pueden hacer que los medios de comunicación de todo el hemisferio occidental repitan mentiras sobre bebés decapitados sin ninguna verificación, no son las víctimas. Son las personas con todas las armas, con el dinero, con las coberturas racistas, pero sabes lo que no tienen y nunca tendrán. Nunca tendrán las calles.

Somos mucho más poderosos de lo que se imaginan. Quieren hacernos creer que no lo somos. Por eso nos atacan desde todas las direcciones. Por eso, mien tras bombardean a nuestra gente, nos encierran aquí. Intentan silenciar a. Están intentando que este Ayuntamiento corrupto apruebe resoluciones. Están consiguiendo que estos gobiernos corruptos pongan sus banderas en sus edificios. Porque eso es todo lo que tienen.

Quiero que sientas tu poder. Quieres tu poder. Quieres el poder de nuestros antepasados, el poder del amor que nos los unió a los otros, el amor que tenemos por nuestros hijos? Cuando vuelvan a casa, hagan planes para volver a salir cuando los llamemos. ¡Palestina libre, libre! 🇵🇸

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**Marxist Youth League firmly sides with the Palestinian people**

By the Marxist Youth League (MYL) Buffalo, New York

The following statement was issued on Oct. 24, 2023.

Hundreds of students and community members came out in force on Oct. 19 to join a campus demonstration organized by the University of Buffalo (UB) chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). This massive show of organized opposition to the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people by the illegal Israeli occupation came on the heels of two other demonstrations held in Buffalo on Oct. 13 in two different parts of the city, and just before another several hundred-large demonstration on Oct. 20 at Niagara Square.

The people of Buffalo are beginning to link together and say “Hell no!” to Israeli apartheid and the U.S.-funded bombing campaigns, as are people in towns, cities, and universities across the country.

While the U.S. corporate media spends its time beating the drums of war and dehumanizing the Palestinian people for their existence and resistance, tens of thousands within the U.S. have decided that enough is enough. They have decided that they are not willing to stand idly by as bombs and tanks, hunger and thirst, are used to advance an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Palestinian people on their own land. At UB, where most of our efforts have been focused as of late, various community and student groups either attended the rally or gave statements of solidarity with the Palestinian people. This includes the UB chapters of the SJP, Organization of Arab Students, Bangladeshi Student Union, and Young Democratic Socialists of America, along with groups like Workers World Party, Starbucks Workers United, and the Marxist Youth League (MYL). We reiterate our first call to solidarity with the Palestinian people and affirm their right to resist occupation and apartheid by any means necessary.

The MYL wholeheartedly condemns the illegal Zionist occupation for its 75-year-long genocide of the Palestinian people; we condemn the imperialist United States and other Western powers for funding, arming, and running propaganda pieces for the illegal settler-colony, and we condemn Dr. Satish Tripathi, president of UB, and other Western New York university officials for trying to cry crocodile tears to stir up sympathies for the Israeli state while hypocritically refusing to take action against hate speech and the needs of oppressed students here!

We cannot forget the warmonger-in-chief, Joe Biden, warmonger-in-chief, throwing his full support behind the occupation forces, fueling the fire of genocide while pretending to sympathize with the Palestinian people for votes. We condemn him too, of course. But condemnations are mere words. As communists, we understand that we must go beyond condemnations into the realm of organized action if we really intend to pose a threat to our own vicious ruling class for its perpetuation of imperialist, white supremacist violence at home and abroad. The Israeli Defense Forces train with the pigs, aka police, here in the U.S.

They receive arms and ammunition directly from the U.S. military just like the pigs do. All over the world, bodies of armed men and women have been stationed in Black and Brown communities for the express purpose of taking legal control over these communities and imposing both direct and systematic violence.

The Marxist Youth League firmly sides with the Palestinian people and calls on every available and effective tactic to our opposition to it! We must make use of every available and effective tactic to help end this genocide now! 😠

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**Portland Cuba solidarity rally**

Portland (Oregon) End the Blockade of Cuba Coalition held a rally on Oct. 28. Maddi from Workers World Party spoke to the crowd stressing that Cuba and Gaza are both under siege and that only the people of the U.S. can force this government to stop the genocide.

― Photo and report by Lyn Neely

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