

Labor Rights: Support the Strikes Against the Global Trade Monopoly and the “Merchants of Death”.

Emanuel Pastreich

Why we back the ILA and the Boeing Workers in their strikes

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We see for the first time since the general strikes of 1937 the potential for labor action in the United States to take on directly the means of production and transportation that are dominated by global finance and that form the cancer at the heart of our diseased economy.

Such strikes could potentially become the focal points for a mass movement against the grotesque merger of global finance, class warfare, and militarism that has created, over the last thirty years, a complete dictatorship of trusts and private equity.

Although the focus of the individual workers involved in the strikes falls on the preservation of their jobs, nevertheless, many workers have made statements in recent days that indicate a growing awareness of how their actions serve as a vanguard in the resistance to techno-tyranny, the rule of corporations, the militarization of our society, and the drive for world war.

If for no other reason, we should stand with them for this cause. Their brave efforts offer a way forward beyond the complaining and identity politics that have crippled critiques of the current system.



The strike began on October 1, when 45,000 dockworkers of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) walked off the job. The scale of this strike was so large that it became the first large-scale organized resistance to the techno-fascist fusion of corporations, banks, and government that runs the country, and that impoverishes us every time we buy milk at the supermarket, every time we pay a phone bill, and every time our internet services are mysteriously altered.

The strike spread to thirty-five ports on the East and Gulf coasts, including New York-New Jersey, Houston, Savannah and Charleston. Efforts to support the strike by dockworkers in Canada and Mexico were also underway. How far the struggle will go depends on many factors, not the least of which is the commitment of all citizens to economic justice.

The dockworkers joined forces with strikers at Boeing factories who are taking on the largest of the merchants of death. 33,000 Boeing workers have been on strike for three weeks after refusing a crippling a contract agreed to by their pro-corporate leadership. The workers at Boeing have been joined by striking workers at other military contractors such as Textron Aviation and Eaton Aerospace.

Boeing is the leading proponent of endless war and its lobbyists and agents have their fingerprints all over the current drive for world war and nuclear war in Ukraine and Lebanon. It was unthinkable, even a few months ago, that this all-powerful bemouth could be challenged from within.

These two strikes took on global trade and military production simultaneously thus offering the possibility of a fundamental shift in American politics—one driven by the realization that we face the real possibility of world war abroad and totalitarian rule at home.

Any workers who defy the ruthless system of global trade, logistics, distribution, and retail that is controlled by a handful of multinational corporations and who, the same time take, on the weapons manufacturers who push for war, deserve our full support.

The ILA launched into a full-throttled strike on October 1, and it gained support in Mexico and Canada, and even started discussions about sympathy strikes elsewhere in the United States that could lead to the first massive strike impacting vital infrastructure since the 1930s, and they were prepared to do so at precisely the moment that world war looms, at precisely the moment that labor is supposed to bow down to the fake political process dominated by private equity. Then, out of the blue, yesterday, October 3, the ILA released a bland and laconic public [statement](#) that a “tentative agreement on wages” has been reached and that all have “agreed to extend the Master Contract until January 15, 2025.”

The real reason for this extraordinary turn of events is not hard to find. The ILA released a [statement](#) on October 2, the day before, that detailed how President Harold Daggett, and other senior union leaders, had been subject to numerous death threats, and how the New York Post attacked Daggett while offering his home address and photographs of his home to anyone wishing to do violence.

We citizens must quickly grasp the revolutionary implications of these strikes and we must

realize the full potential of such resistance before the hatchmen of the billionaires pull us apart using identity politics, false-flag operations, threats, and the corrosive narcissism of self-centered consumption. The fact that the powers that be have ruthlessly shut down the ILA strike is not a reason to be discouraged, but rather a *casus belli* to extend the struggle further.

I give my full support to these strikes, these efforts to oppose totalitarian corporate rule, and I call on all citizens to support the strikers, and other resistance in the United States, to the unconstitutional, immoral, and illegal rule of the plutocrats.

I do not claim to represent the striking workers in what I am about to say. I realize that many of them are naturally focused on trying to save their jobs and feed their children, and therefore are hesitant to grab the parasitic monsters who prey on them by the horns. But our focus, my focus, must be perforce on identifying the underlying causes and proposing a comprehensive solution.

There are different strands to the war against the citizens of the United States which are intertwined in the conditions that brought on these strikes. Those strands must be separated out and discussed so that we can understand what the workers, and all of us, are up against.

The Deadly Reign of Free Trade

The strikes at loading docks across the United States are linked to the destruction of the means of production for goods and food by multinational corporations, the imposition of a money economy that is controlled by multinational banks, and the enforcement of a dictatorship for trade, logistics, distribution, commercial sales, and advertising that has been carried out brutally under the banner of “free trade.” “Free trade” is the modern equivalent of “freedom is slavery” and “war is peace.” “Free trade” is a totalitarian economic system for controlling the transportation of goods around the world that destroys local economies here and there and forces dependency on supply chains that are owned by the rich.

Shipping firms like Mærsk, COSCO Shipping, Hapag-Lloyd AG, and Nippon Yusen take a pound of flesh from every transaction, from everything that we buy. They compel us to buy products that multinationals produce by destroying local communities on the other side of the world. These firms work in cahoots with distribution companies like Kuehne + Nagel, DHL, and SYX to make sure that multinationals control all production around the world. They also collaborate with massive retailers like Walmart, Amazon, Costco, and Walgreens to make sure that nothing is for sale from which multinational corporations do get their pound of flesh. They tax us indirectly even more than does the Federal government.

Automation

The front line of the battle undertaken by the dockworkers in their negotiations with USMX (United States Maritime Alliance) is the rejection of the complete automation of the systems for transporting and processing containers so as to create an economic system for production and distribution that contains no workers. This scheme is part of a greater drive to create a nightmare world wherein all labor is reduced to “useless eaters” that can be slowly contained, impoverished, and then eliminated.

The false praise of automation, and of technology as a whole, as means to improve the lives

of all when in fact it is a weapon for the rich that is explicitly focused on destroying the lives of workers, is one of the most pernicious lies propagated by the elite.

The automation of logistics is linked to the drive to implement radical digitalization of the economy and to transfer all commands and governance to the black box tyranny known as “AI,” a false god under whose capricious rule every decision that is made to destroy the lives of citizens is attributed to the rational calculations of supercomputers.

The use technology to replace workers, or to drive down their salaries, is justified by treasonous intellectuals as being the result some inevitable “fourth industrial revolution.”

The resistance against automation and the digitalization of the workplace made by dockworkers today will be our battle tomorrow. Our battle against this technological and economic assault on our lives, our work, and our bodies is at least as serious in import as the battle against chattel slavery in the 1850s and 1860s.

Wages and Living

The push to reduce workers’ wages and benefits, while the multinational corporations that control trade, distribution, and retail sales are able to make vast fortunes for stockholders, is the reason that workers in the United States face such a bleak future.

The calculation of the health of the economy in terms of the profits of corporations, rather than in terms of the long-term well-being of citizens is an equally pernicious defense of the destruction of our livelihoods.

A Military Economy and the Export of Weapons

Although the strikes at the docks where weapons are loaded onto ships to be transported to Israel and Ukraine, the strikes at the Boeing factories that manufacture the weapons, and the growing anti-war movement led by citizens who wish to stop the drive for world war are not integrated as a single movement for peace and an egalitarian society yet—they could easily merge in precisely such a manner.

Moreover, recent statements by workers on strike suggest that such a convergence is close at hand in light of the horrific drive for world war by bankrupt politicians who serve their financial masters. In any case, it is clear that the strikes are driven by the workers themselves, and not their leadership, and that they workers manifest an increasing self-awareness and historical awareness.

To be honest, the specifics of the contracts for the longshoremen are less critical for us than the potential for a highly organized and effective mass movement against both war and plutocracy, one that unifies hundreds of thousands of people and makes clear for the working woman and working man the relationship between the concentration of wealth, the drive for war, the control of the means of production and distribution, and economic suffering of workers.

No boutique anti-war gatherings on the Upper West Side will ever have such impact.

We must join forces with the striking workers to create an anti-war, anti-technocracy, and anti-plutocracy movement that will transform our society in a fundamental sense, and will establish peace, human agency and liberty, and egalitarianism as the primary goal of our

nation. Corporate profits and the assets of billionaires should not be the concern of our government, of our newspapers, or of our civil society in determining our direction forward.



[Watch the video here](#)

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This article was originally published on the [author's Substack](#).

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