

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Ché fought to extend socialist revolution in Latin America

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 19, 2024

The fight for political rights is at the center of U.S. politics

BY TERRY EVANS

Freedom of speech, assembly and worship and other rights working people need and use were won as a result of revolutionary struggles — the War of Independence, the Second American Revolution that overturned slavery and in many class battles since then, including the powerful mass working-class movement that tore down Jim Crow segregation in the 1950s and '60s.

The Bill of Rights, the Reconstruction-era 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, and other constitutional freedoms were adopted in the course of struggles by the toiling population. They provide protections against government interference with personal beliefs, political activity and union-organizing that workers use today.

Whenever workers strike for better wages or fight dangerous working conditions and life-draining schedules we use these freedoms. They're utilized when workers organize union solidarity, join actions opposing Jew-hatred or op-

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Newton teachers make gains in spirited strike, contract battle

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Striking teachers and aides in Newton, Massachusetts, returned to their classrooms Feb. 5 after winning a new contract with solid gains in wages and benefits. Their union, the Newton Teachers Association, didn't get everything it wanted, but by going on strike — which in Massachusetts is illegal — they made progress on some of their most important demands. Union members voted up the four-year agreement by 97%.

The new contract includes a 30% wage hike for teaching aides — the lowest-paid workers — and an agreement to hire more of them. Every union member won a 12% cost-of-living increase over the course of the four years, on top of regular wage increases.

They won three more days of paid family sick time, and what the union said is one of the best parental leave benefits in the state, guaranteeing a least eight weeks of paid time off.

"I wish that everyone could experience the joy that comes with having

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Watershed in world politics

New wars and social crises are inevitable

How Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Hamas' Oct. 7 slaughter of Jews upended the capitalist 'world order'



Houthi Media Center

Houthi helicopter hijacking cargo ship Galaxy Leader in Red Sea Nov. 19. After Houthi attacks on ships in January, U.S. and U.K. forces mounted airstrikes against their bases in Yemen.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Working people today face a world of deepening capitalist disorder and escalating competition over profits, markets and political influence, as well as a deepening war drive gripping all the major rival world powers.

Two recent watershed developments — Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the Tehran-backed Hamas pogrom killing over 1,200 Jews in Israel — have sharply intensified this trend. The march toward World War III by Washington and its rivals, announced by the

U.S. rulers' invasion of Iraq in 1991, continues to deepen.

Washington's grip at the top of the capitalist "world order" since the U.S. rulers emerged as the victors out of the second imperialist world war has been weakening for decades, but there is no serious challenger to their domination. Instead, the world's rival capitalist powers are tied together in their decline. Washington will be the last imperialist empire.

The necessity of halting the drive

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One year after the East Palestine rail disaster, workers discuss way forward



AP photo/Gene J. Puskar

Plumes of smoke in East Palestine, Ohio, Feb. 6, 2023, after Norfolk Southern rail bosses deliberately set toxic chemicals on fire in "controlled" burn, three days after derailment.

BY TONY LANE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — One year ago on Feb. 3 a Norfolk Southern train derailed and some 50 rail cars went on the ground here, including 11 cars of hazardous chemicals, five of which were loaded with toxic vinyl chloride. At the insistence of the rail bosses, local officials drained those five cars and set the vinyl chloride on fire, creating a towering cloud of contamination. Photos of

the fire's black plume were on the front page of newspapers around the world.

Ved Dookhun, a rail worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania, and Candace Wagner, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from the 12th District in Pittsburgh, visited East Palestine to join protests marking the anniversary.

They attended a program in nearby

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Immigration, amnesty and the fight to unify the working class

BY DAN FEIN

CHICAGO — Over 34,000 immigrant workers seeking asylum have arrived here since August 2022, sent by bus or plane by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Most are from Venezuela and

other countries in Latin America. Some 15,000 are currently staying in city-run shelters, with the threat of eviction hanging over their heads.

For months, thousands were camped inside and outside of police stations and at the city's airports. It's increasingly common to see women with young children, or whole families, begging or selling candy on the street, men seeking day labor outside Home Depot stores.

There have been protests against the city government's moves to use park facilities as temporary shelters, displacing

Continued on page 5

First execution using nitrogen turns grisly in Alabama prison

BY JANET POST

The first-ever execution by nitrogen gas suffocation was carried out Jan. 25 when Kenneth Eugene Smith writhed in pain as he was put to death in Alabama's Holman prison.

"When they turned the nitrogen on he began to convulse," Rev. Jeff Hood, Smith's spiritual advisor, told CNN. Smith "popped up on the gurney over

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Canada gov't, like Washington, closed doors to Jews in WWII 6

—On the picket line, p. 5—

UK unions march to protest against new anti-union law

Grocery prices bite despite Biden claims inflation is over

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Liberals desperate to boost President Joseph Biden's reelection hopes claim there is an unprecedented "upswing" in the U.S. economy underway today. At a meeting of the United Auto Workers in Warren, Michigan, Feb. 1, Biden bragged the U.S. has "the strongest economy in the whole damn world."

New York Times columnist Paul Krugman took this hoopla talk even further in a Feb. 2 piece titled "Our Economy Is Better Than Goldilocks." He crooned, "Growth is piping hot, inflation is refreshingly cool. So much winning!"

But working people face a far different reality. Persistently rising prices on groceries, soaring rents and high utility bills make it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

Grocery prices have jumped by 25% over the past four years, outpacing overall inflation of 19% during the same period. While cost increases in some groceries slowed last year, they keep on rising on a number of necessities for working-class families.

Groceries went up by 1.3% last year. This figure was kept somewhat lower by a few exceptions, like falling prices for eggs and lettuce. But prices for vital necessities — including beef, baby food, sugar and citrus fruits — rose by over 5%. And, of course, grocery store owners' profits remain higher than before the COVID pandemic began in 2020.

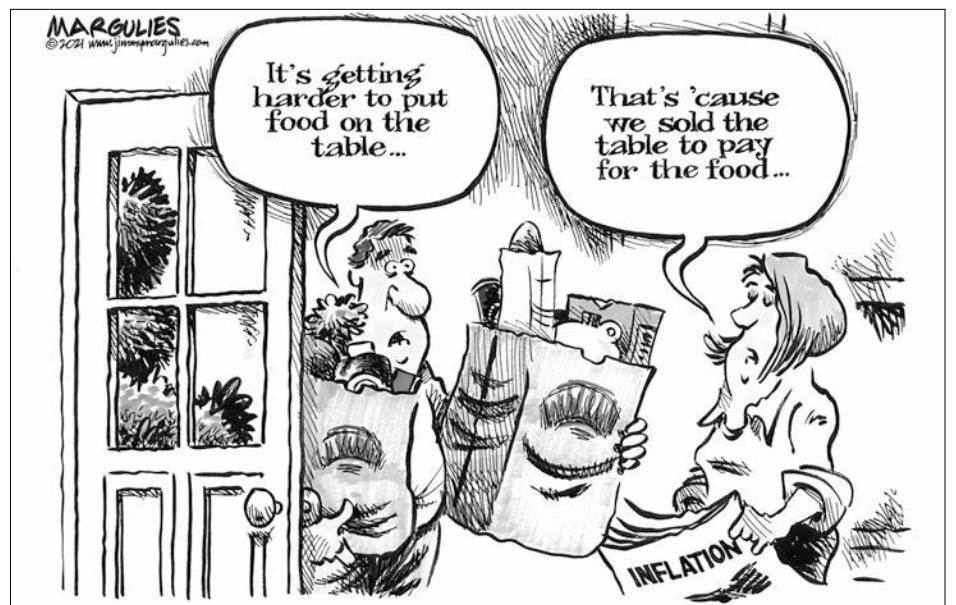
The impact of inflation is sharply class-divided. Working-class families with their lower incomes have been hit the hardest by rising grocery prices. They spend 31% of their income on

food, compared with 8% for bosses and their upper-middle-class hangers on.

Food banks around the country report increases in people seeking assistance. The Rhode Island Community Food Bank in Providence told the *Washington Post* they now serve 80,000 people a month, up 20% from a year ago.

Another food item whose price is jumping this year is Girl Scout cookies. The Scouts in New York say their price per box — sales start this week — is going up from \$5 last year to \$7 today. "Girl Scouts are not immune to rising costs," they opine.

In a Feb. 2 article aptly titled "Inflation has fallen. Why are groceries still so expensive?" the *Post* describes the situation facing Jasmine Sanders, 23. She works two jobs, at H&R Block and at a home health care company, while struggling to provide food for



herself and her two young children in Helena, Montana.

She said she wasn't planning to vote in this year's presidential election because both candidates seemed the same. But because of the difficulty she faces putting food on the table, she's rethinking her position.

"At the moment, Trump is looking

like the better guy," she said. "Last time, I thought he had too many scandals. But now with inflation going on, with prices the way they are, it seems like he wants to make the economy better for people like us."

The liberal media's "Bidenomics" ballyhoo isn't selling well in working-class neighborhoods.

Alabama execution using nitrogen turns grisly

Continued from front page

and over again. He shook the whole gurney." He gasped, heaved and had saliva or tears in the mask that covered his face, Hood said. It was "the most horrible thing I think I've ever seen." Corrections officers "were very surprised that this didn't go smoother."

Smith wore a full-face mask, with plastic tubing running through the death chamber's concrete wall. His body and arms were strapped to the gurney. Nitrogen suffocation occurs when the gas supplants all oxygen in the body.

"Tonight Alabama caused humanity to take a step backwards," Smith said in

his last words to witnesses. "Thank you for supporting me. Love all of you."

Spokespeople for Alabama's attorney general, Steve Marshall, had argued that the procedure would "cause unconsciousness within seconds, and cause death within minutes."

"There is no doubt what I saw last night, and that's not what happened," Hood said. The execution began at 7:53 p.m. and Smith wasn't declared dead until 32 minutes later.

"What occurred tonight was textbook," Marshall proclaimed after the execution. "I now suspect many states will follow. Alabama has done it, and so can you."

Oklahoma and Mississippi have authorized the procedure, and legislatures in Nebraska and Ohio are considering it. Twenty-seven states still have the death penalty. According to Gallup polls, support for capital punishment has plummeted from 80% in 1994 to 53% in 2023.

In November 2022 prison authorities had botched an execution of Smith by lethal injection. They stopped after stabbing him repeatedly with needles in the arms and hands for nearly four hours, and then were unable to set an intrave-

nous line near his heart.

Smith, who was 58, was first convicted of capital murder at the age of 23 and spent the majority of his life on death row. He denied killing Elizabeth Sennett, and the state presented no physical evidence against him. He was convicted of "aiding and abetting the murder."

Smith's conviction was overturned on appeal. At his retrial in 1996 he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. But Circuit Court Judge N. Pride Tompkins overruled the jury, sentencing Smith to death.

Sennett's family happened to be staying at the same hotel as Smith's. In an expression of working-class solidarity, Steven Tiggelman, Smith's son, hugged one of Sennett's sons, Mike. "It's kind of a bittersweet day. We are not going to be jumping around, whooping and hollering hooray and all that. That's not us," Sennett told reporters.

"The death penalty is a weapon in the hands of the capitalist rulers to terrorize and intimidate working people," Lea Sherman, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, told the *Militant*. "The SWP calls for its abolition."

THE MILITANT

Third year of Ukraine fight against Moscow invasion

On Feb. 24, 2022, the Russian government of Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, seeking control over its people. But Ukrainian working people rose up, determined to defend their independence. The *'Militant'* champions their struggle, covers protests in Russia against the war.



AP/Evgeniy Maloletka
Ukrainian volunteers carry survivor in Kyiv, Ukraine, Jan. 2, after Russian rocket attack.

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Oakland forum protests attacks on actions against Jew-hatred

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Jan. 28 Militant Labor Forum here featured a speakout against recent attacks on protesters in El Cerrito who defend the right of Israel to exist as a refuge for Jews and a discussion on how to most effectively fight the rise in Jew-hatred.

Faith Meltzer described an attack Jan. 6 when she and others were holding a peaceful counterprotest at a demonstration against Israel that included supporters of Hamas. “Those who attacked had their faces covered. They surrounded us, putting their megaphones in our faces,” she said. “I was assaulted. Another woman was thrown to the street and bloodied. They wrestled the Israeli flag out of my hands. They burned our flags and stomped on them.”

Following the attack, Meltzer and others expressed their outrage at city council meetings in El Cerrito and nearby Albany. “We need to continue to speak out. We should never forget Oct. 7,” Meltzer said, referring to the massacre of 1,200 Israelis and the seizure of some 250 hostages by Hamas death squads. “Hateful actions begin with hateful words.”

Dorthea Dorenz, who joined Meltzer at the protest and witnessed the attack, emphasized the reactionary threat posed by Hamas. She and others have been speaking in opposition to resolutions calling for Israel to sign on to a cease-fire, a move that would leave Hamas in power in Gaza, where it has sworn to rearm and pursue the destruction of Israel. “If you want to understand the nature of Hamas, read their founding charter where they call for killing Jews,” Dorenz said.

Socialist Workers Party congressional candidate Margaret Trowe underlined the importance of united action to get out the truth about the Oct. 7 massacre and to defend Israel’s right to exist and defend itself. In the face of the boos and chants against speakers at city council meetings, she said, “we’re insisting on freedom of expression, civil discussion and denouncing violence against Jews, from the death squads of Hamas to the assault in El Cerrito.”

“The attack on Jews is a working-class question,” Trowe said. “In times of capitalist crisis, despairing middle-class layers become open to fascist forces scapegoating Jews for the crisis instead of blaming the real culprits, the capitalist class.

“The Socialist Workers Party’s fight against Jew-hatred is in continuity with

Lenin and the Russian Revolution,” Trowe said. “Working people cannot rely on ‘democratic’ imperialism to protect Jews. Israel was born out of necessity after the Holocaust, as Washington and other imperialist powers refused entry to Jewish refugees trying to flee the death camps. The decisive question for humanity is building a revolutionary leadership capable of ending capitalist oppression, of leading the working class to take political power.”

Ilana Pearlman, a nurse-midwife in Berkeley, spoke about the fight she and other parents are waging against the rise of antisemitism in the public schools. Pearlman said antisemitism and hatred of Israel were evident immediately after Hamas’ Oct. 7 pogrom. “This is what lit a fire under me,” she said. “They had a ‘walkout for Palestine’ just after 1,200 Jews had been killed.”

“Teachers are pushing propaganda on the kids,” she said. “They say the



Militant/Eric Simpson

“We’re organizing to bring a stop to violence against Jews,” said Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, at Militant Labor Forum in Oakland, California, Jan. 28. Faith Meltzer, left, was assaulted by pro-Hamas thugs Jan. 6 in El Cerrito.

study of Jewish history should not be included because you cannot center ‘white stories.’” She pointed to the harm done by the “liberated” ethnic studies programs utilized by many Bay Area schools that present Israel as a “white supremacist colonizing

nation” that has no right to exist.

Pearlman said that some parents have taken their children out of the public schools, but she and others are staying and fighting back. At first it was Jewish parents, now they are winning others.

‘Militant’ finds audience among Ohio rail workers

BY JANET POST

“I find that paper very interesting,” rail worker Anthony Veach told Socialist Workers Party members Jacquie Henderson and Anthony Dutrow as they were introducing the *Militant* and Pathfinder books to workers going in to work at the CSX yard plant gate in Cincinnati Jan. 26.

Veach, a member of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, became a *Militant* subscriber when he first met the SWP members with the paper at the plant gate last year. “I also appreciate that book you sold me you’ve got in your hands,” he told them, pointing to *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

“There is a lot in it,” Veach said. “I sometimes read parts of it in the evening before I go to bed.”

Henderson and Veach discussed some of the *Militant*’s articles speaking out against Jew-hatred. “I think the Jews are the most persecuted people in the world,” Veach told her. He and Henderson also looked through the *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon. “That might be the book I read next,” he said.

The SWP members told Veach about the 2024 SWP campaign of John Hawkins for U.S. Senate from Ohio.

He said he hoped to get together with Hawkins to talk over a cup of coffee.

Another rail worker, after looking at the *Militant*, said, “I see you’re not against Israel. Well, that’s good. I can’t stand all these ‘socialists’ who want to destroy Israel.”

“Our party champions the right of Israel to exist as a refuge for Jews,” Henderson said, “unlike all those anti-working-class socialist groups that are for Hamas’ slaughter of Jews.

“And the U.S. rulers and their government in Washington are only interested in how they can better position themselves to defend their own economic and political interests against their rivals,” she said. “The working class is the only force that can end Jew-hatred. That’s why this is a central question for all unionists right now. This is explained in this paper.”

He responded, “Those socialists are also hell-bent to deny Trump all his rights.”

Henderson explained workers need to oppose the attacks on Trump’s constitutional rights. Workers need these rights, they’re central to the class struggle. “The Democratic Party is focusing their attack on Trump now,

but they will use any precedents they can set to go after the rights of the working class,” she said.

“I can see this paper is different,” he replied. “I’ll read it for sure.”

Henderson told the *Militant*, “Other workers waved as they drove by. One rail conductor who buys his paper every week had his dollar handy and said that day he was short on time. ‘See you next week,’” he said.

SWP members and supporters of SWP election campaigns take the paper to plant gates, union pickets and to workers on their doorsteps across the country. If you’d like to join in, contact the SWP branch nearest you listed on page 4.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Malcolm X and a Working-Class Road to Confront the Capitalist Crisis. Sun., Feb. 18, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 1. Tel.: (323) 643-4968.

Hear Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for U.S. Senate from California. Sun., March 3, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 1. Tel.: (323) 643-4968.

Oakland

Spike in Immigration Poses Need to Unify the Working Class. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Feb. 18, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Join the Fight Against Jew-Hatred, Defend Ukraine’s Sovereignty, Oppose Attacks on Political Rights. Speaker: Roy Landersen, Socialist Workers Party, staff writer for the *Militant*. Sat., Feb. 17. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: Reception, \$5; program, \$5. 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Does Capitalist Crisis Mean War Is Inevitable? Speaker: Hugo Wils, Communist League. Sat., Feb. 17, 6 p.m. Donation: £2.50. 329 Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Tel.: (0161) 312-8119.

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SAVE THE DATE
FEBRUARY 13TH



Join flight attendants’ rallies!

Flight attendants are urging fellow workers to join their picket lines at 30 airports worldwide Feb. 13, part of the fight for new contracts where they’re paid for all the hours they work and win better wages, schedules and pensions.

Che fought to extend socialist revolution in Latin America

The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. Guevara, an Argentinian who helped lead the Cuban Revolution, set out in Bolivia to forge a continent-wide revolutionary movement of workers and peasants. The introduction by editor Mary-Alice Waters explains how Fidel Castro led Cuba's workers and peasants to defend their socialist revolution against Washington's attacks and aid revolutionaries seeking to follow their example worldwide. Copyright © 1994 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

As Fidel Castro pointed out in his 1960 address to the United Nations General Assembly, the economic, social, and political conditions that made possible the first socialist country in the Americas were not unique to Cuba. The Cuban revolution was only the crest of the rising tide of mass struggles across the continent, which, in turn, registered a new level of energy and explosiveness in the wake of the Cuban victory.

Fear that the example of Cuba would spread and that other proimperialist regimes would be overthrown by mass revolutionary struggle underlay Wash-

ington's determination to crush the workers and farmers government in Cuba. At Wall Street's bidding, bourgeois governments throughout the hemisphere rushed to try to isolate the revolutionary regime.

The counterrevolutionary war drive orchestrated by the U.S. government included everything from the CIA-sponsored invasion of Cuba in April 1961 (the "Bay of Pigs" landing, which was wiped out in less than seventy-two hours), to the orchestrated expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States in January 1962, to the imposition of a brutal embargo on trade with Cuba by the United States a few days later.

On February 4, 1962, at a mass rally of more than a million in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution, Fidel Castro read the response of the Cuban people, known as the Second Declaration of Havana.

What is it that is hidden behind the Yankees' hatred of the Cuban revolution? What is it that rationally explains the conspiracy — uniting for the same aggressive purpose the richest and most powerful imperialist power in the contemporary world and the oligarchies of an entire continent, which together are supposed to represent a population of 350 million human beings — against a small country of only seven million inhabitants, economically underdeveloped, without financial or military means to threaten the security or economy of any other country?

What unites them and stirs them up is fear. What explains it is fear. Not fear of the Cuban revolution but fear of the Latin American revolution. ... Fear that the plundered people of the continent will seize the arms from their oppressors and, like Cuba, declare themselves free people of the Americas.

Disavowing decades of subordination by the official Communist and Socialist parties of the continent to various bourgeois political parties and currents, the Second Declaration of Havana boldly proclaimed the necessary proletarian leadership and socialist character of the revolution on the agenda throughout the region:

In the actual historic conditions of Latin America, the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the antifeudal



Fighters in 1952 Bolivian national revolution. Prerevolutionary crises in Latin America led Che Guevara, Bolivian fighters to try to open socialist revolution across the continent in 1966.

and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience shows that in our nations that class, even when its interests are in contradiction to those of Yankee imperialism, has been incapable of confronting it, for the national bourgeoisie is paralyzed by fear of social revolution and frightened by the cry of the exploited masses. ...

Young rebels from across the Americas made their way to Cuba to see the revolution with their own eyes. They hoped to learn from its successes and return home to emulate the "Cuban road." Frequently, in their inexperience and determination, they saw or understood only a one-sided piece of that reality. They saw in bold relief the audacious military victories registered by the guerrillas of the Rebel Army. They often missed the years of party-building work that preceded the landing of the *Granma*; the stature of the July 26 Movement and the mass support it had won even before beginning the struggle in the Sierra Maestra; the caliber of the leadership team carefully put together by Fidel Castro; the profound roots the movement had among the Cuban toilers and the political astuteness the leadership demonstrated in its feel for the tactical ups and downs of the struggle — in short, the factors that registered almost a decade of work forging and tempering a revolutionary movement that drew on the lessons of a century of struggle, and thus the factors that made possible the victory of the Cuban revolution.

During the first years after the triumph in Cuba, nuclei of guerrilla fight-

ers went into action in the countryside of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Argentina, and elsewhere. Coming from many different political origins, they adopted the banner of the Second Declaration of Havana as their own, challenging the long-established Communist and Socialist parties for leadership of the workers and peasants struggles. Although the majority of these efforts were soon defeated, in a number of countries they had significant and growing political impact.

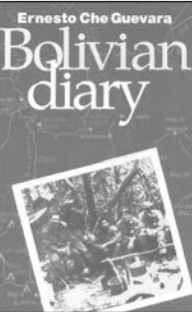
In hopes of stemming the rising revolutionary tide, the U.S. administration of John Kennedy proclaimed the Alliance for Progress with complicit regimes throughout the hemisphere. ...

More importantly, Kennedy responded to the growing popular struggles throughout Latin America by supporting murderous dictatorships; expanding operations by the Central Intelligence Agency, army special forces units, and others; and employing direct military action. ...

Che [Guevara] thought and acted as an internationalist. He knew that the future of the Cuban revolution did not ultimately depend on the efforts and capacities of the communist leadership in Cuba of which he was part, however deep-going that revolution might be, however capable the leadership. Only new revolutionary victories elsewhere, especially new socialist advances in the Americas, would change the relationship of class forces internationally and break the isolation that weighed so heavily on Cuba.

February
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

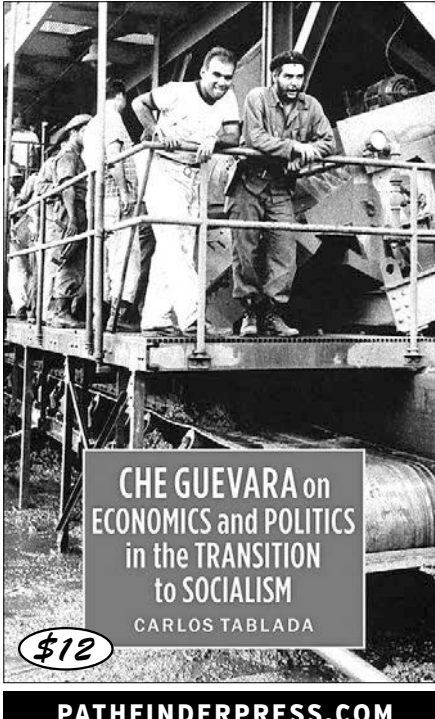
The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara



Guevara, an Argentine-born leader of Cuban Revolution, led workers and peasants to try to open socialist revolution across Latin American continent.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

UK unions march to protest against new anti-union law

CHELTENHAM, England — Some 5,000 workers marched behind union banners here Jan. 27 to protest against a new anti-union government law, the “Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act.” The law was passed to cripple the impact of union strike action.

Enacted after more than a million mainly public sector workers held strikes over the last two years, the new law aims to force striking workers in public sectors, like transport, education, health and the fire brigades, to ensure that 40% of their services are maintained. Refusal could lead to firings.

Spirits on the Trades Union Congress-backed march were boosted after the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the train drivers’ union, forced rail bosses to back off a threat to use the law.

In the face of one-day strike actions planned by ASLEF at a number of different rail companies from Jan. 29 to Feb. 5, one of the companies announced its intention to use the new law against the workers. The union responded by calling an additional five days of action.

“They backed off from their threat because of the union calling more action. It’s the way to stop these laws,” Gary Boyle, a train driver and union representative at Manchester Piccadilly train station, told the *Militant* on the picket line Jan. 31.

“We’ll keep striking until we get the pay rise we need without conditions.”

“Eleven of us came from our union branch, it was great to see all the different unions with workers from around the country there and all determined to stand up to these laws,” said Claudia Chianese, branch chair of the Manchester South branch of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union.

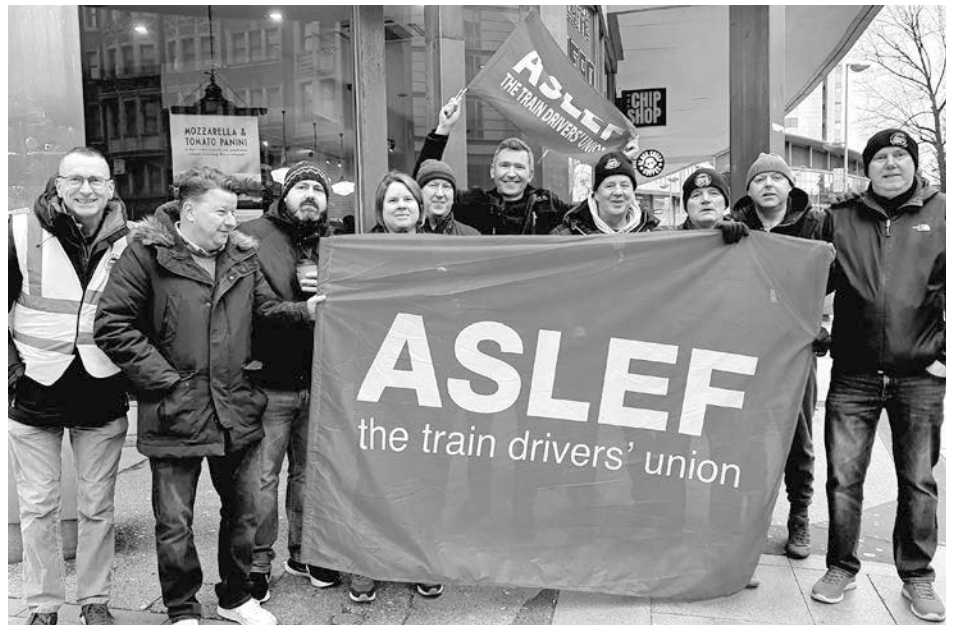
Union contingents included those who have taken strike action over the last couple of years — postal workers, health care workers, teachers,

civil servants as well as rail workers.

Others came to show they were prepared to use their unions to fight against the effects of continued inflation and attacks on workplace conditions. This included several dozen supermarket and warehouse workers, who are members of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

A group of GMB-organized Amazon workers fighting for union rights also joined the march, as well as Unite-organized steelworkers from Port Talbot in Wales, who are fighting to oppose cuts in over 2,800 jobs.

— Pete Clifford



Militant/Andrés Mendoza

Members of Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the U.K. train drivers’ union, picket Manchester Piccadilly Jan. 31, protesting new law limiting impact of strike action.

Immigration, amnesty, fight to unify the working class

Continued from front page

already scarce recreational programs. Plans to set up two “winterized” tent camps in neighborhoods on the city’s South Side have generated opposition, and were eventually abandoned. One of the proposed locations was contaminated with toxic chemicals.

There have been numerous reports of unsafe and unsanitary conditions in the shelters. Reporters aren’t allowed inside. Members of the City Council must give 48 hours notice if they want to visit.

Last fall officials set a 60-day limit for immigrants to stay in the shelters. The first evictions were scheduled to take place in January — the coldest month of the year. Mayor Brandon Johnson extended the deadline, with evictions now to begin in March.

The Illinois state government has offered some of the asylum-seekers rental assistance for a few months. But then residents are supposed to pay market rate. There is supposed to be a process for some immigrants to apply for work permits from the federal government, but so far only about 1,000 workers have received them.

Chicago is a self-declared “Sanctuary City.” The city government website says, “The City will not ask about your

immigration status, disclose that information to authorities, or, most importantly, deny you City services based on your immigration status.”

But what is unfolding in Chicago today underscores the fact there is no “sanctuary” for workers here, with or without “proper” papers.

‘Build unions, unite working class’

Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party here have been campaigning with a statement by Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, titled, “Amnesty for all undocumented workers! Fight for jobs for all workers! Build the unions to unite the working class!”

“Newly arrived immigrants are pitted against workers who already face a lack of jobs, affordable housing, decent schools and other needs,” Craine says. “The fight for jobs and unity among workers to cut across these divisions is a life-and-death question for the unions.”

“The Socialist Workers Party campaigns for the unions to lead a fight for amnesty for all workers who are here, so that we’re in a stronger position to fight together,” she says. “The unions must lead a fight to demand a government-funded public works program to put unemployed workers to work building

housing, schools, clinics and other facilities workers need.”

“I agree we need amnesty for the migrants and jobs for them, but too many are coming to Chicago,” Vickie Gilmore, a disabled worker who worked for the Salvation Army, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent at her door on the South Side. “They need to spread them out beyond the city.”

That has become a point of contention between Mayor Johnson and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, both Democrats, with the mayor demanding the state fund more shelters outside Chicago.

The city government is now imposing penalties on bus operators dropping passengers off outside designated time slots. So buses coming from Texas began dropping immigrants at suburban train stations, where they were provided with a ticket into the city. Some suburban governments have since passed ordinances putting restrictions on when buses can arrive there.

“I see both sides. People are hungry, desperate. I understand why they come,” Delilah Campos, who works as a caregiver, told SWP candidate Craine outside her apartment in the mostly Latino Little Village neighborhood Feb. 3. “But now is not a good time. Everything is so expensive, especially housing.”

In both 2021 and 2022, rent increases hit double-digits in Chicago, and in November 2023 rents were up again by 5.3%. Evictions by the Cook County sheriff’s office are rising.

“The bosses try to use immigration to increase competition for jobs and drive down wages for all workers,” Craine said. “That’s one reason we don’t support calls to ‘open the border.’ But our problem is not fellow workers from other countries — it’s the bosses and their profit drive.”

“That’s why we need to demand amnesty for undocumented workers, so we’re in a stronger position to build unions together and fight for jobs for all workers. And we need to organize our own party, a labor party, based on the unions, instead of looking to the capitalists’ Democratic and Republican parties,” Craine said. “We need to organize as a working class in our own interests.”

“That’s the opposite of looking for charity or government handouts. That’s the road to become strong enough as a class to replace this dictatorship of capital with a government of working people.”

Campos said she hadn’t thought about things that way, and decided to subscribe to the *Militant* to find out more.

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



February 22, 1999

NEW YORK — Four New York City cops killed Amadou Diallo, a 22-year-old vendor from Guinea, here Feb. 4 in a fusillade of 41 bullets. The unarmed man was struck by 19 bullets as he stood in the doorway of the Bronx apartment building where he lived.

More than 1,000 people jammed onto the block where Diallo lived Feb. 7, outraged at the killing. A majority were from the neighborhood, which is predominantly West African. Many residents hung signs of protest out their windows. Iris Baez, whose son Anthony Baez was killed in a police chokehold in 1994, was among those who addressed the rally. Some 2,000 protesters turned out two days later for a rally outside the federal court building in Manhattan.

The cops’ lawyer defended the shooting, asserting that they had been looking for a rapist and Diallo fit the description “in a generic way.”



February 22, 1974

With Prime Minister Edward Heath’s decision to dissolve Parliament and run for reelection against the striking coal miners, issues were posed highly relevant to the United States as well as Britain.

The militant struggle of the members of the National Union of Mineworkers has severely undermined Heath’s attempts to force British workers to bear the burden of inflation. Heath made it clear that a victory would be interpreted as a mandate for continued wage controls on the working class as a whole.

An election campaign based on scare tactics was virtually the only alternative left to Heath once the results of the mineworkers’ strike vote were in. With 81 percent voting in favor of a strike, there was no room left for a deal with the NUM leadership at the expense of the ranks. On Feb. 8, the NUM executive decided to begin the strike on schedule Feb. 10.



February 21, 1949

In both World War I and World War II Congress plunged America into the slaughter without consulting the people. The Socialist Workers Party has long advocated that the war-making powers be taken away from Congress and placed in the hands of the people where they belong.

How to amend the Constitution is now being argued in the capitalist press. The issue is the wording of a crucial clause of the secretly negotiated North Atlantic Pact. As formulated, this clause would require the United States to take “action forthwith” if it was decided that any of the signatories to the war alliance was under “attack.”

The intent is to knit together a world-wide alliance for imperialist war and to commit the United States to that war in advance, by-passing Congress and leaving the decision in the hands of one man — the occupant of the White House.

Israel's blows against Hamas open road to unite Arabs, Jews

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Israeli army continues to advance against Hamas in Gaza.

A decisive defeat of Hamas — which is armed, financed and trained by the reactionary bourgeois regime in Iran — would be a blow to forces that promote Jew-hatred, from Tehran to Paris, Cairo to Washington. It would open the door wider for uniting Jews, Arabs and other working people in the region to fight for their own class interests.

Israel Defense Forces officials say that they have destroyed the terror group's command structure in Gaza City in the northern part of the territory — and decimated its forces — and are close to doing the same in Khan Younis in the south. That leaves Hamas with significant forces mostly in tunnels around Rafah, close to the Egyptian border, which Israeli officials say is their next target.

Most army reserve units have been pulled out of Gaza and returned to civilian life — for the moment. The bulk of combat is now carried out by regular Israel Defense Forces units, which are able to crisscross Gaza with little resistance. Hamas rocket attacks on Israel are substantially reduced.

But the war is far from over. Scattered Hamas units are still able to ambush Israeli forces and terrorize Gaza residents. Hamas refuses to release more than 100 hostages it holds.

When Hamas death squads attacked Oct. 7, they slaughtered 1,200 people and wounded more than 5,000, carrying out the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. They also killed dozens of Arab, Thai, Nepalese, Filipino and African workers for the “crime” of working with Jews.

Hamas' own statements — vowing to carry out Oct. 7 massacres “again and again” — highlight why the Israeli government and people have no choice but to fight to completely dismantle Hamas.

Hamas tells Jews to get out

Sami Abu Zuhri, head of the Hamas political department, told Al Jazeera Jan. 28 that “Zionists” have to “leave our land and go back to where they came from.” In other words, they will wage war on Israel until it is destroyed and all Jews have fled the region.

Senior Hamas official Khaled Mashaal told Kuwaiti journalist Ammar Taki Jan. 16 that Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007 solely to gain “political

and administrative” cover for their real purpose, building tunnels, amassing weapons and preparing to attack Israel. Taki pointed to the widespread destruction and death in Gaza.

“Life was not good” before Oct. 7, Mashaal cynically retorted. He claimed, “Palestinians are not interested in improving their lives under occupation.”

Aided by Israeli blows weakening Hamas, more Palestinians and other Arabs are expressing a different point of view, including inside Israel where some 20% of the population is Arab and many have relatives in Gaza.

Palestinians: ‘Hamas is killing us’

“Israel is killing us, but Hamas is also killing us,” Zaid Alayoubi, a Jerusalem-based Palestinian lawyer, told Sky News Arabia Jan. 31. Hamas has been taking aid for civilians and distributing it “according to its whims and its own criteria,” he said.

“People’s houses have been destroyed, thousands have been displaced and some have lost their entire family” in the Israeli counteroffensive, he notes. “The Hamas leaders were responsible for going to war in this manner. ... This sentiment is shared by all the people of Gaza.”

“Where is the liberation you promised us?” Alayoubi asked.

Seeing the progress Israeli forces have made in the war, some immigrant workers who left Israel after Hamas' pogrom are beginning to return. One of those is Bobby Sorapot, a Thai farmworker who came under attack by Hamas at Kibbutz Nahal Oz, near Gaza. Sorapot told *Yedioth Aronoth* that some of his co-workers before Oct. 7 were Palestinians from Gaza. “They were our friends. We worked together.” He still doesn't understand, he said, why did Hamas “come to kill us?”

Liberals want to forget Oct. 7

While more Palestinians are speaking out against Hamas and its 16-year brutal rule in Gaza, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* instead print article after article blaming Israel for conditions in Gaza, to buttress their calls for a cease-fire that would leave Hamas intact. Liberal media say little about the massacre of Jews on Oct. 7, how Hamas continues to use civilians as human shields, the brutal imprisonment of some of the hostages or protests against Hamas in Gaza.



Protest in Gaza against Hamas near Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir al Balah Jan. 24. Demonstrators chant ed, “The people want to end the war!” “We want to go to our homes” and “Yes to handing over the hostages.” Israel's blows against Hamas are opening space for Palestinians in Gaza to speak out.

Applause by the middle-class left for the Oct. 7 pogrom and the silence of some feminist groups around the world in the face of the rape and mutilation of Jewish women by the Islamist thugs, show that fighting Jew-hatred is not a “Mideast” question, but one that confronts working people internationally, especially in the U.S.

On Feb. 1, so-called Free Palestine protesters calling for a cease-fire blocked the streets around the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. “The museum tells the story of the 6 million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis. It has nothing to do with Israel or the U.S. military,” Combat Antisemitism Movement spokesperson Sacha Roytman told the press. “This is antisemitism, plain and simple.”

The danger Jew-hatred represents today will grow. When the capitalist class fears that its power is threatened, it will step up the scapegoating of Jews, hoping to divert attention from the real cause of a deepening economic and social crisis. It will green light violent assaults on the working class by fascist thugs who march under the banner of Jew-hatred.

While advances against Hamas strengthen the fight against Jew-hatred, the capitalist government in Israel often takes actions that weaken that struggle. A just released report from Israel's public defenders office reveals the wretched conditions in Israeli jails. Since Oct. 7, the *Jerusalem Post* reported the number of prisoners held by Israel has increased from 16,000 to 20,000, including hundreds of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank accused of aiding Hamas.

In violation of a ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court, many prisoners are not ensured a minimum living space, which includes a bed and mattress. The report found that prisons are overcrowded, some are cockroach infested, ventilation is inadequate, and prisoners have to wait extremely long periods to use bathrooms.

Arabs in Israel
An important part of fighting Jew-hatred is ensuring the truth about Oct. 7 is widely known. Valerie Hamaty, a well-known musician who is an Arab citizen of Israel,

made a video in November in Arabic with Hebrew subtitles of her visit to one of the kibbutzim destroyed by Hamas. In it she answers conspiracy theories that claim Hamas' murder of civilians and rape and mutilation of women never happened.

Pointing to buildings destroyed by the Hamas death squads and describing the assaults on civilians, Hamaty said, “We know the truth and we want to convey the truth to the entire world, including the entire Arab world.”

Hamaty and other musicians have also been making hospital visits to civilians and soldiers wounded by Hamas to show their support for the fight for Israel's right to exist.

Canadian rulers, like Washington, closed doors to Jews before, during, after WWII

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — The deadly Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom targeting Jews in Israel highlighted the danger of Jew-hating violence worldwide as the crisis of capitalism grows. And it shows why the existence of Israel as a refuge for Jews is essential.

Israel was made inevitable by three key historical facts: the betrayal by counterrevolutionary Stalinist parties of the ripe prospects for workers to take political power in Europe in the 1930s; the refusal by the imperialist rulers in Washington, London, Ottawa and elsewhere to open their borders to Jews seeking to flee Nazi persecution before, during and after World War II; and the horror of the Holocaust — the slaughter of 6 million Jews, 40% of the Jewish population of the world.

The Stalinized Communist Party in Germany refused to forge an alliance with the Social Democratic Party to fight to stop Adolf Hitler, claiming the Nazis wouldn't be able to hold onto power and the Communist Party would take power next. Hitler was named chancellor Jan. 30, 1933, and this led to the crushing of the German workers and their unions. His murderous fascist party took the country into the second imperialist world slaughter.

Central to the Nazis' program was blaming the Jews for the deep economic and social crisis wracking Germany and their concerted campaign to wipe all the Jews off the face of the earth.

In face of the fascist terror, Jews attempted to flee Germany and Europe as a whole. But from 1933 to 1945 only 5,000 Jews were admitted to Canada,

Watershed in world politics

Continued from front page

toward war lies in the hands of working people worldwide. Out of today's struggles the working class will develop a leadership capable of leading us in our millions to take political power and end once and for all dog-eat-dog capitalism and its drive to war.

Increasing numbers of workers see the need to use their unions to fight, to affect the future. This is reflected both in the increased number of strikes in the U.S. and in workers' openness to the idea they can change history.

The U.S. rulers are being drawn more deeply into conflicts in the Middle East as they try to impose the stability their class needs to exploit the region.

Following Moscow's attempt to conquer Ukraine, “political and military alignments — ‘spheres of influence’ that had shaped the global imperialist order since Washington emerged as the dominant power coming out of World War II — are being shaken and new alliances between competing states put together,” explain Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*.

Tensions between Washington on one side and Beijing, Moscow and Tehran on the other have sharpened over the past two years.

Ukraine, Israel fight back

In Ukraine working people are determined to defend their country's in-

dependence. They've been central to driving back Moscow's attempt to conquer the country. Millions worldwide are inspired by their resistance as the first major ground war in Europe since World War II continues to rage.

As its own arsenal has been depleted, Moscow has turned to drones from Tehran and missiles from Pyongyang to continue its murderous assaults on civilians in cities and towns across Ukraine.

Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre was the worst single pogrom against Jews since the Nazi Holocaust. It was met with widespread revulsion by working people worldwide. The war launched by Israel is seeking to crush Hamas. It aims to prevent the terror group from carrying out its avowed goal of organizing ever-more murderous assaults on Jews until they are all killed or driven from the region.

The Oct. 7 slaughter was orchestrated by the bourgeois clerical regime in Tehran, the main reactionary power in the Middle East. Its leaders say their goal is the destruction of Israel and the elimination of Jews. From Hezbollah in Lebanon to its proxy militias in Syria and Iraq, and the Houthis in Yemen, Tehran has funded military forces across the region to advance its interests and launch assaults on Israel. At the same time, it tries to keep the scope of these attacks in check to avoid a major response.

The rise of Jew-hatred in the U.S. and elsewhere since the Oct. 7 pogrom underlines both the importance of defend-



Over 100,000 people lined up for blocks in Moscow, above, and other Russian cities in January to petition for candidate Boris Nadezhdin running on antiwar platform against President Vladimir Putin. Lines were largest show of opposition in Russia to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

ing Israel's right to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people and the virulence of Jew-hatred under capitalism. In times of deep crisis the capitalist rulers will turn to fascist gangs and Jew-hatred in an effort to crush the unions and maintain their rule. First and foremost, this battle will be fought out on U.S. soil.

Israel was established as a haven for Jews after the Stalinist betrayal of revolutionary opportunities across Europe, the horror of the Holocaust and the refusal of Washington and other “democratic” imperialist powers to admit Jews attempting to flee Nazi terror.

U.S. airstrikes hit Tehran's militias

Militias allied with the Iranian rulers have carried out more than 160 at-

tacks on U.S. forces in the region since Hamas' pogrom. Their aim is to pressure Washington to push Israel into a cease-fire and leave Hamas intact. President Joseph Biden's administration launched airstrikes and missile attacks Feb. 2 against militias in Iraq and Syria that are organized by Tehran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Washington says this was in response to a Tehran-backed militia drone strike on a U.S. base in Jordan that killed three U.S. soldiers Jan. 28.

The U.S. rulers gave the regime in Iran enough notice to allow it to move its military forces out of the line of fire in Iraq and Syria. The Biden administration says U.S. assaults on the militias will continue, but that Washington will avoid airstrikes on Iran.

The rulers in the U.K. sent warplanes to join Washington's attack against 13 Houthi military bases a day later, the third such joint operation against the Houthis in two weeks. Since mid-November, the Tehran-sponsored Houthis have seized one ship and launched more than 30 rocket and drone attacks on cargo vessels and warships passing through the Red Sea, choking off a key global shipping channel.

The Iranian regime is pushing to acquire nuclear weapons to bolster its position against Israel and to extend its reach in the Middle East and beyond. But Tehran faces a significant obstacle — working people inside the country. Sizable protests since 2017 have reflected the deep opposition to Tehran's adventures abroad.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in the region Feb. 5 to hold talks with the rulers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Washington wants to push the Israeli government into a long-term cease-fire, backing off from its war to destroy Hamas.

Jews and raped hundreds of women. Thirty thousand Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps.

Canada's borders remained largely shut to Jews. Between 1945 and 1948 Jews were only 8,000 out of 65,000 refugees admitted to the country.

With all other avenues for refuge cut off, Jews in the displaced person camps attempted to make it to Palestine. The best-known example was the ship *Exodus*, with some 4,500 Jews on board, which made it to Haifa harbor. But the British colonial rulers brutally attacked the boat, killing three and wounding many others, forcing the crew to return its passengers to France.

Some 52,000 Jews trying to reach Palestine were held by the British military in detention camps behind barbed wire on Cyprus. Given all these conditions, Jews in Palestine fought to create the state of Israel. In 1948 Israel was recognized by the United Nations and Britain. In total some 700,000 Jewish refugees found a way to get there despite all the attempts to block them.

How Canada's capitalist rulers closed their borders to the Jews confirms what Abram Leon said in *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*: “There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism just as there is no solution to other problems posed before humanity, without profound social upheavals.”

What is needed is socialist revolution, in Canada and worldwide. And for that, workers need to build communist parties to lead the fight to overthrow capitalism and take political power.

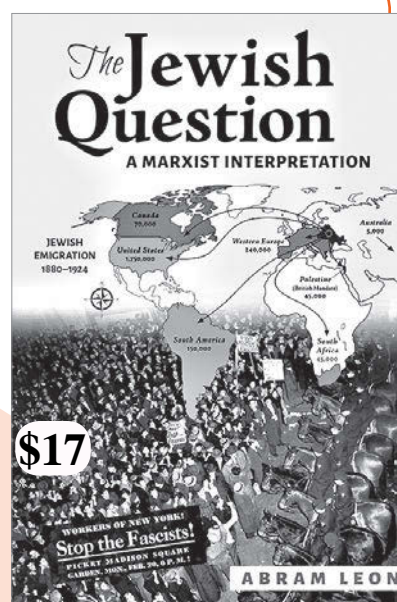
“There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to other problems before humanity...”
— Abram Leon

From antiquity to feudalism, to capitalism's rise and death throes of imperialism — Jews have been targets of persecution.

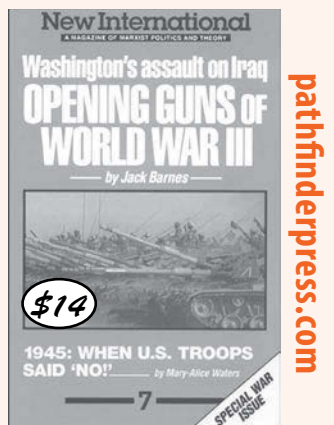
Why is Jew-hatred again raising its ugly head? What are its class roots? Why is there “no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism” without revolutionary struggles that transform working people as we fight to transform the world?

Abram Leon, 26, was killed in October 1944 in the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz.

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see distributors on page 4



The imperialist rulers are caught in the historic logic of their declining system of exploitation and oppression, headed towards World War III.



How can workers strengthen the union movement today?

BY ILONA GERSH

The U.S. Labor Department reported last month that union membership dropped last year to 10%. At the same time, more workers are using unions to resist the employers' assaults. As the Socialist Workers Party 2022 resolution explains, "The low point of labor resistance is behind us." In these conditions, how can workers build, extend and strengthen unions and use union power to fight for the interests of all working people?

Union membership remained at 6% in the private sector, while in public-sector jobs it dropped from 33.1% to 32.5%, reflecting a decline in the number of state and local government workers. While the overall number of union members increased modestly by 139,000, there was an increase of 2.7 million mostly

AS I SEE IT

nonunion jobs in 2023.

The decline in the rate of union membership "contrasts sharply with growing evidence that Americans are on the side of labor unions," says Lauren Kaori Gurley in the *Washington Post*. Last year was the most active for strikes in more than two decades, including strikes by autoworkers, Hollywood actors and writers and others.

Gurley concludes this discrepancy is a result of "how difficult it has become for American workers to join unions." She cites comments by Heidi Shierholz, president of the Economic Policy Institute think-tank, who says, "Workers want unions, but a broken system is undermining their efforts to organize at every turn. Employers have exploited weaknesses in U.S. labor law, and federal and state policymakers have failed to prevent this from happening. It's a long slog."

But this is not why the percentage of union members has been falling since one in three were union members in 1947. Right-to-work laws that the bosses got passed in the years after World War II weakened the unions, but they didn't stop workers looking for ways to join together to stand up for ourselves.

The reason for the decline of union membership since World War II is the top union officialdom's increasing reliance on collaboration with the bosses who exploit us and on the capitalist parties that serve them. It was not a "long slog," but an explosion of hard-fought battles in basic industry during the 1930s that forged powerful unions. Militant action by hundreds of thousands, including a powerful wave of sit-down

strikes in 1936-37, that organized auto, steel, packinghouses, the docks, oil and other basic industries.

As workers began to sense their class power, many were attracted to organizing independently of the bosses' political parties. But growing interest in establishing a labor party was opposed by union officials and the Communist Party, who did everything in their power to prevent workers breaking from reliance on Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who they touted as a "friend of labor."

As the U.S. rulers entered the Second World War, most union officials subordinated workers' class interests to Washington's imperialist war aims, signing up to a no-strike pledge for the duration.

In the decades since, most union officials have increasingly subordinated workers' interests to collaboration with bosses. They made the benefits workers could gain dependent on the profitability of the boss you worked for, rather than mobilizing the union ranks to rely on ourselves and to fight for what the working class needs as a whole.

Capitalism is not a "broken system," but a system built on the exploitation of the working class. The root of our problems is not one or the other of the bosses' Democratic or Republican parties.

"Our class enemy is the capitalists," writes Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

"Under the conditions of imperialist 'democracy' that have prevailed in this country for more than a century, illusions in the two-party system remain

Defense of political rights at center of US politics

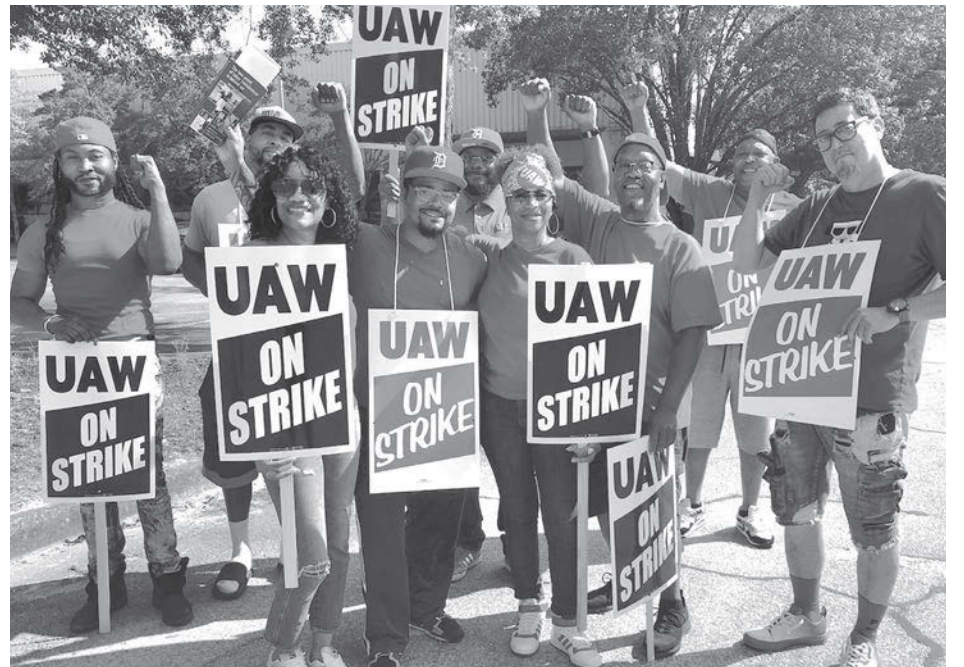
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pose Washington's wars abroad. These freedoms are needed more than ever as the economic, social and moral crises of capitalism deepen today, making more workers open to discussing why we need to act independently of the bosses and their two main parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

Defense of constitutional protections is a key part of the course presented by Socialist Workers Party candidates in 2024, as they join in the fight to unify the working class in action and present a road to fight for workers to take political power into our own hands.

At the same time that constitutional rights are increasingly needed, the capitalist rulers are determined to find ways to attack them. The biggest challenge to our rights comes from the Democratic Party, working with its allies in the liberal media and middle-class "socialists," and the FBI — the rulers' political police. At the urging of Joseph Biden's White House, Democratic Party prosecutors, aided by partisan FBI snoops, are generating frame-up criminal charges to try to prevent Donald Trump from running for president or to railroad him to prison. Their aim is to ruin his businesses, get him thrown off the ballot and deny tens of millions the right to vote for whichever candidate they choose.

On Feb. 8 the U.S. Supreme Court will begin hearing Trump's appeal against the Colorado high court's decision to throw him off the Republican Party primary ballot, claiming he "engaged in an



Militant/Bob Braxton

UAW picket at Stellantis plant in Morrow, Georgia, Sept. 22. Some 40,000 autoworkers walked out at GM, Ford and Stellantis for up to six weeks in 2023 contract fight. More workers are using unions to resist bosses' attacks, while percentage of workers in unions continues to fall.

the central political prop of capitalist rule in the United States," Barnes says. "We have no common interests with the employing class. Everything they try to tell us about 'our country,' 'our way of life,' 'our language,' 'our industry,' 'our factory' are lies. The 'our' is the heart of the lie. It's a diversion aimed at dividing us from those with whom we *do* have common interests — the workers, farmers, and exploited toilers of all countries."

Today's uptick in union battles shows that workers are looking for a road forward. During last year's strikes, unions registered some gains in wages, benefits, livable schedules, and the fight against the ravages of inflation, and took on the divisions that bosses use to try to weaken unions.

Most importantly, workers gained confidence in themselves and their unions, and showed that solidarity can be won from fellow workers and across

the labor movement. Participating in labor struggles and helping maximize union solidarity is crucial to scoring victories and is the starting point for organizing and strengthening unions.

There is no letup in the bosses' offensive. They're driving to hold down wages, push multitier contracts and impose speedup, forced overtime and "suicide shifts" that leave no time for family, rest, recreation, or union and social activity. The only check on their offensive against our class is our determination to fight back.

In the course of struggles against these assaults, more workers will see the need to break from the two bosses' parties and to recognize we need a party of our own, a labor party based on the unions. On this road, a revolutionary leadership can be forged to organize workers in our millions to take political power from the capitalist class and into our own hands.

insurrection" on Jan. 6, 2021. They say a clause in the 14th Amendment, barring Confederate secessionists from serving in office, extends to Trump.

But the former president hasn't been convicted of "engaging in insurrection," let alone faced a trial where he could defend himself. Similar lawsuits demanding Trump's removal from the ballot are pending in several other states.

"Voters, not judges choose our President," Terpeshore Maras wrote in a court brief signed by 3,000 voters backing Trump's appeal. "Neither the Constitution, Congress, nor the American people ever granted a state court the power to potentially exclude a Presidential candidate based simply on its interpretation of that candidate's prior conduct."

"Can one 'engage in' an insurrection by doing nothing?" asks another friend-of-the-court brief by Condemned USA. It points to Trump's urging a peaceful protest at the Capitol Jan. 6.

A brief submitted Jan. 18 this year by the Kansas Republican Party and 32 other state Republican Party organizations points to a ruling by the Michigan Supreme Court in 1982 in Socialist Workers Party v. Secretary of State. "The rights of individuals to associate for the advancement of political beliefs and of qualified voters to cast their votes effectively are basic to effective political expression," the Michigan judges wrote.

The successful lawsuit filed by the SWP overturned an onerous 1976 law requiring "minor parties" there to gather over 18,000 signatures to get on the

primary ballot and get at least 5,000 votes before they could get on the general election ballot. That law violated the First and 14th Amendments, the Michigan justices ruled.

SWP wins fight against FBI

The SWP's victory there came in the middle of the party's ground-breaking political and legal fight against spying and dirty tricks by the FBI.

The lawsuit was filed in 1973 and the SWP mobilized far-reaching opposition to the unconstitutional Cointelpro disruption program and other assaults by the government on the party's rights and those of other organizations over decades. In 1986 Judge Thomas Griesa ruled the FBI had broken the law and barred it from using informers to spy on SWP members and other working-class militants; that burglaries and wiretaps by the FBI violated constitutional protections from unreasonable search and seizure; and that the government's efforts to disrupt SWP activity by government spies were illegal.

The government fought against the SWP case under Republican and Democratic presidents — from Richard Nixon to Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan.

The victory won by the SWP carved out political space not just for the party, but for all working people to speak, act and organize, on the picket line, in the streets and in the electoral arena.

The Department of Justice and FBI tried to justify decades of spying on the

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Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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Fight for workers control of production

Fighting for workers to take control of production and transportation, including the railroads, is vital to protecting our lives and limbs and extending that protection to all who live near the plants, rail tracks and mines where we work.

In their relentless drive for profits, bosses have no consideration for workers' well-being. Cutthroat competition compels the bosses to push back-breaking speedup, ignore workers' safety and impose ever-longer schedules to crush their competition. Government "regulation" agencies work hand in glove with them.

Rail bosses will create more disasters like the derailment and fire of a Norfolk Southern train in East Palestine, Ohio, one year ago. Working people there face ongoing health problems and an insecure future.

Bosses in the airline industry are no different. Five years ago Boeing rushed to get its new 737 MAX in the air without necessary testing and training. Two of the new planes crashed with the loss of nearly 350 lives. Last October the Federal Aviation Administration certified the "airworthiness" of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9. In early January a door panel ripped off at 16,000 feet. Pilots and flight attendants were able to bring the plane down safely.

Unions on the railroads and airlines have a vital

place in fighting to change the perilous conditions created by the bosses, whose push for profits is backed to the hilt by the Democratic and Republican parties.

Rail and airline workers are both saddled with the notorious anti-labor Railway Labor Act, restricting their right to strike. Flight attendants fighting for a new contract are protesting at airports worldwide Feb. 13.

The working class is the only force with the power to enforce safety on the job and in all aspects of production. All work can be performed safely.

The fight for workers to wrest control of production and transport from the bosses is the road to preventing more injuries, deaths and catastrophes. To advance that struggle, unions need to demand bosses open their books for inspection by workers on the job and in the surrounding community. The fight to ensure that no worker dies or is maimed on the job is intertwined with extending working-class solidarity and strengthening class consciousness.

Only by organizing in our millions can the working class take political power into our own hands and establish a government we can call our own. The working class in power would mobilize to nationalize the bosses' factories, banks and land and begin to run them ourselves to meet human needs worldwide.

One year after East Palestine rail disaster

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Columbiana that included videos and presentations on the extent of chemical contaminants spread across the area, as well as fights against other toxic disasters in the region. Alisha Lange from Piqua, Ohio, told Dookhun about the fight working people in her community are waging against city authorities allowing companies to burn lithium batteries outside on a concrete pad near the Great Miami River.

"It's been going on for five years," she said. "The companies that did the burns were paid tens of thousands of dollars for each one, and the city government got paid off too.

"Because of our protests, they've stopped the burns for now. But we felt defeated because we weren't getting real testing done," she said. "Then we looked at the fight they've waged in East Palestine and saw power in numbers. That's why I drove four hours to be here."

"We salute the people of East Palestine," Dookhun said. "They've fought to get answers, and questioned the ones they've been given by the Environmental Protection Agency and the railroad.

'Workers control over production'

"The disaster in East Palestine is directly connected to the rail bosses' drive to run longer and longer trains; lay off workers, including track inspectors; and to cut crew sizes — all to jack up the profit rate," he said. "And the government agencies work hand in hand with all the bosses.

"I worked in the coal mines earlier and the federal mine inspectors would tell the mine management when they were coming to inspect," Dookhun added. "Then we'd be instructed to do a massive cleanup and then the company would promise to 'fix' whatever problems remained. All of these government agencies work hand in glove with the companies."

"Yes, if we don't fight, the EPA and the companies will continue to cover up the dangers of what they do," Lange said.

"My campaign points to the need for workers and our unions to take control of production and transportation," Dookhun explained. "We know what's safe for ourselves and for the public. We can fight together.

"It was very important that rail union officers came to East Palestine in June and testified at the National Transportation Safety Board hearings, detailing the impact of the rail bosses' profit drive," he added. "They made the connection between the fight of the residents of the area and that of rail workers for safe conditions. We need the power of the unions. We urge unions to get involved in these fights."

When Dookhun told Lange that flight attendants would be protesting in Cleveland Feb. 13, to demand a

new contract, she expressed interest in going and telling them about the fights in Piqua and East Palestine. She subscribed to the *Militant*.

That evening, Dookhun, Wagner and SWP campaign supporters took part in an event at McKim's Honeyvine and Winery across the road from the site of the derailment. They spoke with central activists in the East Palestine fight they knew and met others.

"I hear you're throwing your hat into the ring," former *Militant* subscriber Linda Murphy told Wagner. "Yes, I am. I'm the SWP candidate for Congress.

"You'll be glad to know we're demanding the Democrats drop all the charges they've filed against Donald Trump, and we defend his right to be on the ballot," Wagner said. "If the Democrats attack Trump's constitutional rights, we can be sure they'll go after my party and the unions."

Earlier in the day, Wagner and this *Militant* worker-correspondent visited other fighters SWP members had met in the area over the last year, including Malloory Aponick, from Darlington, Pennsylvania. They discussed the murderous Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom against Jews in Israel and events there since. She agreed that Hamas is a terrorist organization, but said she was concerned about the number of children dying in Gaza.

"Hamas does not act in the interests of the Palestinians," Wagner said. "They are for the destruction of Israel, and they use the people of Gaza as human shields. Hamas has to be destroyed for the future of the Palestinian people, as well as for the Jews and others in the region."

Aponick agreed that working people and small farmers should take power to save humanity, but debated whether that's possible. "I saw anarchists in action when I participated in a protest in Pittsburgh," she said. "They just wanted to destroy small businesses."

"To be successful we need a working-class leadership," I explained. "We need a party that views every question as a class question, where do our interests lie. The revolution made by Cuban workers and peasants is an example. They had a leadership worthy of their struggles. They took power and built a society based on human solidarity."

Aponick also plans to come with SWP campaigners to the flight attendants' picket in Cleveland. She bought a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

Dookhun and Wagner spoke at a Militant Labor Forum in Pittsburgh Feb. 4. Dookhun described the fighting spirit of people they talked to in East Palestine. They're a good omen for bigger struggles to come, he said, and for the SWP campaign in 2024.

Defend political rights

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SWP by claiming it was necessary to protect "national security."

That pretext is also at the center of the charges brought against Trump under the Espionage Act by Jack Smith, the Department of Justice special counsel. Trump is accused of keeping a few dozen classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida when he left office.

Smith is trying to get Judge Aileen Cannon to impose limits on the access Trump's lawyers have to evidence that Smith will use in the trial. Smith says the evidence should be kept secret because it's "classified." But ever since the FBI's raid on Mar-a-Lago, the Department of Justice has been selectively leaking material the FBI seized to try to convict Trump in the court of public opinion before the trial starts. It's assaulting his legal rights and his right to be presumed innocent unless he is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

In the government's latest assault on Trump's rights, Smith's office told ABC News Feb. 1 that it has questioned witnesses about an alleged "hidden room" at Mar-a-Lago that the FBI raiders did not find, where Trump may be holding more "classified" materials.

Trump's lawyers submitted a motion Jan. 16, saying that evidence made available to them so far shows that Smith cooked up the espionage case in collusion with the White House, the FBI and officials of the National Archives and Records Administration. Trump's lawyers are asking Judge Cannon to force Smith to turn over his communications with the Biden administration about this.

The case is just one of several trials Trump faces during the election campaign as Democrats try to use the courts to keep him from the White House.

Regardless of what anyone thinks about Trump or Biden, all these legal attacks on the former president endanger hard-won constitutional freedoms that workers and our unions have a vital interest in safeguarding. The charges should be thrown out.

Newton teachers strike

Continued from front page

stood up for yourself and your colleagues together," Kelly Henderson, a teacher in Newton, told the *Militant* Feb. 7. "Our schools are going to be so much stronger because our union became so much stronger."

The close to 2,000 union members walked out Jan. 19 after trying to negotiate with the city for 16 months, working without a contract since last August. The strike was the seventh and longest by teachers in Massachusetts since 2022, all of which were illegal and hit with heavy fines. During this strike the Newton Teachers Association was fined \$625,000, which they are fighting to get reduced.

The rising cost of living had left union members feeling they had no choice but to strike.

The strike won wide support. Parents and neighbors joined picket lines, often with meals in hand. Religious leaders from the area posted an open letter of support and many churches and synagogues opened their doors for pickets to warm up and offered child care. Rallies by students and others were held regularly at City Hall. The school district tried to mobilize opposition to the union, featuring parents pressing for strikers to go back to work.

Glenn Koocher, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, told the *Boston Globe* that 15 to 20 Massachusetts districts have been watching what happened in Newton. "A lot of districts that have contracts coming up are thinking about what this means if the unions are becoming more militant, if they're not afraid of a judge, if they're not afraid of being held in contempt," he said.

Max Page, president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, said strikes are "only a new trend if school committees, mayors, and city councils don't come to the table ready to bargain."

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